

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFF**  
**STUDENT ASSESSMENT PLAN**

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## **MISSION AND VISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFF**

### Mission Statement

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) is a public comprehensive HBCU 1890 Land-Grant institution. The University embraces its land-grant mission of providing cutting edge research, teaching, outreach, and service programs that respond to social and economic needs of the state and region. Its mission is to promote and sustain excellent academic programs that integrate quality instruction, research, and student learning experiences responsive to the needs of a racially, culturally, and economically diverse student population. Ultimately, the University is dedicated to providing access and opportunity to academically deserving students and producing graduates who are equipped to excel through their contributions and leadership in a 21st century national and global community.

### Vision Statement

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff will be widely recognized as the University of Choice for students, faculty, staff, and future employers of our students. UAPB will be renowned nationally and internationally for excellence in teaching, research, service, and

Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3% Native Hawaiian. In the fall semester of 2023 2,100 students were

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff implemented LiveText as its assessment management system in the fall of 2015. LiveText is the repository of assessments of Institutional learning outcomes (a six-year rotation of six learning outcomes with two learning outcomes assessed each year). The artifacts demonstrating the learning outcomes are archived in the LiveText system. The six institutional student learning outcomes are a subset of the Association of American Colleges and Universities VALUE Rubrics.

LiveText is also the repository for assessments of degree program learning outcomes. The artifacts demonstrating degree program learning outcomes are also archived in the LiveText system. Standardized rubrics and degree program curriculum maps associated with the assessments of degree program student learning outcomes are constructed before each academic year. The rubrics used for these learning outcomes are consistent across the degree program, allowing comparisons among classifications of students (i.e., freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, graduate students).

The Director of Assessment is working with Graduate Coordinators from the M.Sc. programs and the Ph.D. program to identify entry, mid level, exit, and follow up transition points and assessments. These data are being compiled within the respective units. This effort effectively extends comprehensive assessment to all programs at the graduate level.

The Office of Assessment supports assessment activities for the Higher Learning Commission Assessment Report (Criteria 4), Assessment Annual Reports, and unit self-studies necessary for unit accreditation or for the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The Office of Assessment is collaborating with units to facilitate appropriate feedback loops to improve learning outcomes.

The Office of Assessment is responsible for collaborating with non-academic units (e.g., Athletics or Student Affairs) to develop assessments of unit-defined student learning outcomes consistent with the assessment plan. The Student Academic Assessment Plan was renamed the Student Assessment Plan to reflect the importance of co-curricular units in student learning and success.

The Assessment Director is responsible for authoring an Annual Assessment Report. This includes summaries of data sources and learning outcomes at all transition points; analysis and interpretation of temporal trends in learning outcomes; analysis and interpretation of relationships among learning outcomes at different transition points; and clear articulation of plans to improve learning outcomes.

The Assessment Office acquired, from ACT, electronic data representing all the CAAP rising junior exam scores since fall of 2006. The Assessment Office also acquired senior comprehensive exam scores since 1999. These data were formatted for entry into a Microsoft Excel file that included approximately ten years of entry point data. The Assessment Office adds to the dataset annually and conducts analyses on temporal trends in learning outcomes and relationships among learning outcomes at different transition points (entry, mid-level, and exit).



sections related to specific knowledge areas, skills, or competencies (KSCs) such that performance on the exam can be disaggregated to assess mastery of specific KSCs. Comprehensive Examinations may be completed on Scantron Form No. F-1712-PAR-L-1 if a department wishes the Office of Assessment to score the exam. Scantron forms, along with the actual exam and an answer key, should be brought to Mr. Arthur Thomas in the Assessment Office. The actual exam or answer key should indicate which questions correspond to specific KSCs. Scantron forms are scored, and the data, in electronic format, are returned to the Department along with the overall performance (on a percentile basis) of each student. If an academic department scores the Comprehensive Examination, individual composite scores as well as all data necessary to conduct summaries of performance by KSCs should be provided to the Office of Assessment.

If students do not pass the Comprehensive Exam on their first attempt, the exam must be re-administered. It is the responsibility of the department Chair to ensure that all students pass the exam. The results of the re-administrations of the exam should also be provided to the Office of Assessment. Mr. Arthur Thomas is responsible for entering the final passing grade for graduating seniors into the U System.

Some academic units are using standardized tests generated by accrediting agencies or other professional entities as their Comprehensive Examination. For example, the School of Education is using the ETS® Praxis exam and the School of Business is using the ETS® Major Field Test in Business. These types of standardized exams serve as the Comprehensive Examination. The Assessment Office receives electronic scores from these standardized exams, allowing summaries of performance by knowledge, skill or competency areas.

A Senior Assessment can take the form of a Senior Project. Departments must construct a rubric with four levels of accomplishment for each knowledge, skill, or competency demonstrated by the Senior Project. This rubric must be provided to the Assessment Office. The Senior Project will be assessed by the Department according to the rubric. Departments must submit to the Office of Assessment individual composite scores for the Senior Project as well as all data necessary to conduct summaries of performance by knowledge, skill or competency area (see Appendix 2).

The Assessment Office has responsibility for reporting completion of the Senior Assessment in the . Departments must report the results of their senior assessments to the Office of Assessment for the Office of Assessment to fulfill its reporting requirement.

Behavioral, cultural, and economic attitudes, skills, values, and behavior are assessed through Exit interviews. The exact format of the Exit Interviews is up to each Department or degree program. However, the Assessment Office has requested Departments and degree programs include the following five questions in their Exit Interviews.

1. Have you looked for a job?
2. Have you looked for a job in your major field of study?





standards outlined by accrediting agencies. The Assessment Office also helps units design database tables of unit-specific key assessments.

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board revised their policy for review of existing academic programs (AHECB Policy 5.12) in 2008. The policy states that, "Accredited/licensed/state certified programs will follow the usual review practices and schedule of the accrediting/approval body." Academic units not program-specific accredited will be "externally reviewed every 7-10 years." The Assessment Office helps academic units not accredited by a discipline-specific accrediting entity to undertake self-studies by creating curriculum maps, key assessments, and rubrics in LiveText related to unit goals, by designing database tables of unit-specific key assessments, and by assisting with analysis and interpretation of relationships within and among unit-specific key assessments and transition point key assessments.

### **ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN CO-CURRICULAR UNITS**

Assessments occur in a variety of co-curricular units. Co-curricular units of the Academic Affairs division include Academic Skills and Developmental Services; the Student Success Quality Initiative, TRIO Student Support Services; the Carolyn F. Blakely Honors Program, Military Science, the Watson Memorial Library, the Viralene J. Coleman Computerized Writing Center, Band, Vesper Choir, the Office of International **Programs and Studies, and the STEM Academy.** Co-curricular units of the Student Affairs division include Career Services, Counseling and Student Wellness, the Emerging Scholars Leadership Institute, Disabilities Services, Veterans Affairs, Student Health Services, Student Involvement and Leadership, and **the Student Union Programming Board.** Co-curricular units in the Office of Enrollment Management and Student Success include **the Student Success Center and the LIONs Program.** Each of these co-curricular units works with the Assessment Office to identify specific student learning outcomes and key assessments of those outcomes. Assessment in co-curricular units may include indirect methods of assessment, including surveys, focus groups, or case studies. In this way, all the units on campus are included in the assessment of student learning outcomes.

### **USE OF ASSESSMENT DATA TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING**

The goal of assessment is to improve student learning. Students, instructors, and co-curricular personnel are all involved in the collection of data to support assessment of student learning. Adequate analysis and interpretation of assessment data is necessary to support the decision-making process at the University, Department, degree program, and co-curricular unit levels. The Assessment Office includes a director, responsible for all aspects of assessment of student learning at UAPB. One of the primary responsibilities of the Director is assessment data analyses

assessments from all academic and co-curricular units. In addition, the LiveText Administrator is responsible for maintaining the web pages for the Assessment Office, administering the ETS Proficiency Profile, and administering the follow-up alumni survey.

Appendix 1. Six-Year Rotation of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

Written Communication	Years 1&2		
Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning	Years 1&2		
Oral Communication		Years 3&4	
Critical Thinking		Years 3&4	
Problem Solving Teamwork			Years 5&6

## Appendix 2. Senior Assessments

Senior comprehensive exams and senior projects represent a key assessment of discipline-specific knowledge, skills, and competencies (KSCs). Together with entry-level and mid-level key assessments, senior assessments are critical to longitudinal assessment of student learning outcomes.

Graduating Seniors are required to pass a comprehensive exam or project and a baseline of 70% for passing has been set for the university. As of the fall 2015 semester, responsibility for administration of the senior comprehensive exam was moved to individual academic departments. Each department is required to maintain an up-to-date comprehensive exam or senior project rubric. The Office of Assessment strongly urges departments to create unique comprehensive exams for every concentration within a degree program, based on skills and competencies that all students within a concentration should acquire. For example, The Agriculture Department offers a baccalaureate degree in Agricultural Sciences. There are, however, several concentrations within the Agricultural Sciences degree program (e.g.,

percentage of correct answers. We urge Departments to use the Office of Assessment to have senior comprehensive exams graded.

It is acceptable to substitute performance on a standardized or other licensure exam for a senior comprehensive exam. The University recognizes that accrediting bodies using standardized tests have explicit criteria regarding passing scores. Any Department that uses a standardized test will use the criteria recognized by the testing entity or accrediting agency to determine a passing performance. Standardized licensure exam results should be reported to the Office of Assessment in a digital format to allow incorporation of the scores into existing data sets. Finally, just as with comprehensive exams created and administered by departments, standardized licensure exams are most useful when they are organized to allow assessment of learning in specific competency or content areas, rather than simply providing a pass/fail or percent correct answers reporting format.

Some departments prefer a senior assessment in the form of a senior project (e.g., senior art exhibit, senior recital). This is acceptable, provided certain conditions are met. The senior project should be designed to allow assessment of a comprehensive range of knowledge, skills, or competencies. A department should develop a 4-point grading rubric for a senior project. Each row of the rubric should correspond to a specific skill or competency demonstrated by the senior project. Each cell of the rubric should correspond to a clearly defined level of accomplishment, where level 4 = mastery of the skill or competency. Departments are responsible for defining the KSC areas and for assessing the senior project using the senior project rubric (see **Creating a Senior Assessment in the Form of a Senior Project**, below). The composite rubric score on the senior project, as well as data on performance in each knowledge, skill, or competency area should be provided to the Office of Assessment, thereby allowing analysis of overall performance and performance in each knowledge, skill, or competency area.

The University is requiring that senior comprehensive exams or senior projects be incorporated into a senior capstone course. Students planning to complete their degree at the end of a summer session should have taken the capstone course (with embedded senior assessment) during the preceding spring term. The timeline for Senior Assessments is:

1. Revisions of a Senior Assessment (Senior Comprehensive Exam or Senior Project Rubric) should be completed by the last day of instruction the semester before they are implemented. Electronic copies of the up-to-date Senior Comprehensive Exam (with correct answers) or the Senior Project Rubric should be provided to the and the Assessment Office by the aforementioned deadline.
2. No later than September 10 or January 31, the date/time/location of a Senior Comprehensive Exam administration or the Senior Project due date should be announced by departments. Since senior assessments are now embedded in a senior capstone course, this notification of date/time/location of a senior assessment should also be included in the syllabus of the capstone course.

3. Bi-weekly reminders of exam date or project due date should be provided throughout the semester.
4. No later than October 20 or March 15, the first administration of a Senior Comprehensive Exam should occur. This deadline is necessary so that re-administration of a senior comprehensive exam, in the event of an initial failure, can be undertaken prior to other graduation deadlines.
5. By

## Creating a Senior Assessment in the form of a Comprehensive Exam

This procedure assumes that each degree program has a multiple-choice comprehensive exam in MS Word format or embedded in Blackboard. It assumes that a separate answer key exists for the exam.

1. On the exam, highlight each correct answer and change the font color to red.
2. Group your questions by clearly identified knowledge, skill, or competency area (if this has not already been done). Alternatively, provide the Office of Assessment with a table indicating which questions correspond to respective KSC areas.
3. Tests can be up to two hundred questions long if using the Scantron form.
4. Check questions numbering and format. **Students should never see this file!**
5. Print out a hard copy of the exam for each of your graduating seniors.
6. The department may acquire Scantron answer sheets (**Scantron Form No. F-1712-PAR-L-1**) from the Assessment Office or on their own.
7. The exam proctor should fill out the answer key on a Scantron form.
8. The proctor administers the exam by providing each student a copy of the exam and a Scantron answer sheet.
9. Students fill out Scantron forms using No. 2 lead pencil. Students should include their UAPB ID and their Last and First Names.
10. When students have completed the exam, they return the Scantron sheet and the hardcopy of the comprehensive exam to the proctor.
11. The proctor delivers the Scantron answer key and the Scantron answer sheets to the Assessment Office.
12. The Assessment Office grades the comprehensive exam and provides an electronic data set

## **Creating a Senior Assessment in the form of a Senior Project**

If a Senior Assessment takes the form of a Senior Project, then the following procedures should be followed.

1. The department will generate a rubric for the Senior Project based on a 4-point competency scheme (see Figure 1, below).
2. The department will identify all the knowledge, skill, or competency (KSC) areas addressed by the Project. Each KSC area represents a row (or aspect) of the rubric. Each KSC area should be adequately described in the numbered cells of the first column of the rubric.
3. The department should generate verbiage in each cell of the rubric which (columns 2-5) clearly describes the level of learning displayed by the student receiving that score. Level 1 (column 5) represents the poorest level of learning in the KSC area, while level 4 (column 2) represents the highest level of learning.
4. When the rubric is complete, an electronic copy of the Project Rubric should be archived with the chair, the Assessment Office, and the individual in a department assessing Senior Projects.
5. The department should arrange for at least one assessment for each student undertaking a Senior Project.
6. Each assessor should complete their assessment on a unique copy of the rubric. The assessor should include on the rubric  
Names.
7. The assessor then assesses each KSC area addressed by the Project.
8. All assessments of senior projects, including the complete rubric, should be provided to the Office of Assessment.
9. The Assessment Office is responsible for entering the results of the Senior Project in the



