



**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**MID-SOUTH**

**2020-2023**

**Academic**

**Assessment Plan**

## Academic Assessment

Arkansas State University Mid-South is committed to quality instruction that supports documented student learning outcomes. General education and technical/occupational learning outcomes are listed in the Academic Program sections of the college catalog. To insure the continuous improvement of its academic programs and services, college personnel support a variety of evaluation activities such as the following:

- Placement testing of students upon initial enrollment
- Course-level assessment of learning outcomes
- General education and major field tests prior to graduation
- Tracking student retention and graduation rates
- Student evaluations of instruction
- Student satisfaction surveys
- Employer satisfaction surveys
- Alumni surveys
- Program Reviews

Information gathered from these instruments and activities is analyzed and used to make improvements in instructional strategies, facilities, curricula, services, and scheduling for the purpose of improving student learning. Responsible participation by students is necessary to many of these activities. Students are encouraged to perform their best on tests and to answer evaluation questions with care and honesty so that the College's strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. In addition, student input to the College assessment program is vital for its success. Such self-analysis by College constituencies will ensure that ASU Mid-South continues to improve and respond to student and community needs in Crittenden County and the surrounding area.

## Review of 2017-2020 Assessment Plan

The 2017-2020 assessment plan emphasized instructor submission of grade averages on a representative assignment aligned to each course's learning objectives. Courses were scheduled for assessment at least once over the course of the plan. This process was facilitated through the Taskstream software. This platform was to be the home for academic, program, and service area assessment.

In year two of the plan, the Assessment committee also piloted Portfolio Assessments. For this, students graduating with an Associate's degree were asked to submit one or more samples of their work that aligned with the college's General Education Outcomes. This was framed as a voluntary exercise. Submissions were assessed via rubrics and awards given for the highest rated portfolios.

### Successes:

- Most faculty responded and attended trainings on the new system in the first two years of the plan.
- Faculty comments on the assessment data they provided were aggregated and assessed to identify common issues. The sheer volume of responses provided an opportunity to assess trends across disciplines.
- Faculty concerns about critical thinking skills were used to support the creation of a Critical Thinking GEO and to inform conversations regarding future curriculum development
- The creation of Portfolio Assessments partially stemmed from this emphasis on critical thinking skills and a review of the first year of assessment results. Portfolios served to provide students with recognition and identify examples of student work that represents a high level of achievement as measured by the institution's General Education Outcomes.

### Challenges:

- Taskstream proved challenging to occasional users and support required periodic training from assessment leaders.
- Questions arose regarding the value of quantitative data collected at the course level given that differences in assignments from instructor to instructor and timeframe when assessment data was college.
- While there were significant results at the broader level through the creation of GEO 5 and faculty engagement through the assessment process, there were limited opportunities to provide substantive feedback at the program and course level.

# SWOT Analysis

The following is an examination of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats identified by the Assessment committee over several meetings. This analysis provides an overview of internal and external factors impacted the development and implementation of the next assessment plan



## **Program Assessment Goals 2020-2023**

The primary goal of the Assessment Plan in relation to program level assessments is to support the Program Review Process by providing valuable data that allows each program to meet its unique requirements for success or external accreditation. Course level assessment should focus on both general education courses and course within specific technical programs. However, this assessment plan supports will support a valuable collection of data and data reporting structures specific to program level assessment. From there, program leaders will be able to set objectives specific to their area.

Goals:

- Create and maintain a central record of industry certification attainment as well as certification exam attempts with success rates
- Produce longitudinal studies, starting with developmental education cohorts, which compare the retention and success of students in each program to the average for the college.
- At the Institutional level, provides points of comparison between on-site and online courses in terms of enrollment, success rates, and other available course level data.
- Support the Program Review process through data on retention, graduation, and course level assessment
- Set objectives based on the above data sources for the next assessment cycle

## **Course Assessment Plan and Goals 2020-2023**

A primary focus of this plan is creating sustainable assessment practices. In the area of course level assessment that means crafting a process that is broadly supported by faculty, can be maintained without straining resources, and above all produces demonstrably useful results. Literature on academic assessment produced over the past fifteen years balances the value of fundamental measures such as retention rates and success percentages with dynamic strategies that employ course-embedded assessments linked to learning outcomes.

Over the course of this three-year cycle, the assessment committee will implement a new course level assessment process. A form will be provided to lead faculty surveys instructors on key aspects of the course. This Course Assessment Template begins with specific questions regarding the success and challenges instructors encounter in teaching the course as well as the quality of available resources and future needs to support improvement. The template concludes by seeking examples of coursework that aligns with the course learning outcomes. The template also requires instructors to work with the office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to provide data on student success percentages and other quantitative measures.

The Course Assessment Template for each course will be reviewed by a team comprised of the appropriate lead faculty, instructors who teach the course, the AVC for Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a representative from the Assessment committee. The purpose of this review is to identify ways the assessment committee can support areas of need identified by the faculty and complete any outstanding form elements.

The goal of this process is to assess each course and to create a data record that can be support program review, grant applications, funding requests, curriculum development, and any other area where course level data may be useful. The AVC of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will maintain a record of courses assessed and work with the committee to ensure all regularly offered courses are assessed during the 2020-23 cycle.

An additional goal for this cycle is to establish a pilot group who will use functions in the Canvas LMS to embed course learning outcomes into their course shell and align one or more assignments to each learning outcome. Following the success of the pilot group, the committee will work to expand this practice to the college as a whole during the following assessment cycle or during the current cycle if possible.

<Course Assessment Template to be Placed Here>

## **Relationship of Assessment to the College's Mission, Purposes, & Goals**

Assessment of student learning is closely related to the College's mission and strategic goals. Additionally, strategic goals provide a framework for ASU Mid-South's planning process and emphasize the importance of expanding access to, improving, and supporting student learning. One goal of assessment in both the Academic Assessment and Enrollment Management Plan is to support the alignment of objectives from the college's mission down to course and service area specific goals. In this framework, the mission serves as the basis for the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan and General Education Outcomes provides a more detailed basis for planning and assessment in both academic and service areas.

### **College Mission**

The mission of Arkansas State University Mid-South is to enrich lives through high quality educational programming that fosters student success, workforce development, and lifelong learning

## **2018-2021 Strategic Plan**

**Strategic Priority 1:** Accessible & Affordable Education Goal: Arkansas State University

Goal: Arkansas State University Mid-South will provide increased access to affordable educational programs to the communities it serves.

**Strategic Priority 2:** Success through Effectiveness

Goal: Arkansas State University Mid-South will actively engage students and manage resources to ensure student success.

**Strategic Priority 3: Community and Workforce Development**

Goal: Arkansas State University Mid-South will seek new workforce partnerships and strengthen relationships with business, industry, and the community.

**Strategic Priority 4: Professional Growth and Employee Engagement**

Goal: Arkansas State University Mid-South will provide opportunities for leadership and professional development.

## **General Education Learning Outcomes**

ASU Mid-South is committed to serving the educational needs of the Arkansas Delta. While the College provides college transfer and employment-related education to meet the pressing short- and long-term needs of its diverse student body, it also recognizes the critical role of general education in preparing students for the demands of the workplace, personal growth, and civic responsibility.

In order to provide certificate and degree-seeking students with the communication, analytical, interpersonal, and research skills necessary to meet the challenges of a constantly changing world, the faculty and administration of ASU Mid-South require a coherent body of courses in English, speech, mathematics, history, social sciences, and computer fundamentals for all degree-seeking students. ASU Mid-South faculty members require reading, writing, research, and oral communication activities in all credit courses to help students strengthen critical communication, critical thinking, and information processing skills.

The ASU Mid-South general education curriculum provides the means by which associate degree students will accomplish the following outcomes. As part of the College's academic assessment program, faculty members have created rubrics which clarify how outcomes are measured and are used to evaluate students. Course rubrics are readily available to students as part of the electronic resources provided for courses in Campus Cruiser.

For ACTS Equivalent Course Numbers, please visit <http://acts.adhe.edu/studenttransfer.aspx>.

## **General Education Outcomes**

Arkansas State University Mid-South graduates are expected to --

**GEO 1: Communicate effectively in standard, edited American English.**

- Provide content that is clearly focused and supported by the writer's understanding of the topic.
- Use appropriate grammar, punctuation, spelling, and syntax.

- Logically organize and develop ideas in writing.
- Provide an appropriate introduction and conclusion to organize the speech.
- Provide main points that are well developed and clear.
- Use appropriate gestures, movement, and eye contact to give a poised and professional presentation.
- Speak clearly and understandably using standard, edited English.

**GEO 2: Solve problems using mathematical skills appropriate to the task.**

- Demonstrate ability to complete different mathematical tasks by using fundamental mathematical operations and principles.
- Perform and apply mathematical operations efficiently and effectively.
- Demonstrate understanding of mathematical tasks by communicating results in written form.
- Effectively use technology to help solve mathematical problems.

**GEO 3: Develop work ethic skills relevant to the students' future academic or professional careers.**

- Demonstrate the ability to effectively work in a team.
- Demonstrate effective communication, cooperation, and organizational skills to complete all assigned tasks.
- Demonstrate dependable character and the ability to respect others regardless of personal or cultural differences.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and the ability to appropriately handle criticism.
- Demonstrate that consistent attendance and productivity are a priority.
- Maintain an appropriate appearance for academic and professional settings.

**GEO 4: Use common computer applications to locate, communicate, process, and store information.**

- Demonstrate basic computer and operating system skills.
- Perform core application tasks within computer software packages, such as Word, Power Point, and Excel.
- Use a search engine and/or electronic databases to access, navigate, and evaluate information on the Internet.
- Communicate effectively using email and/or online discussion forums.



**GEO 5: Employ critical thinking skills to identify and solve problems in preparation for future academic and professional success.**

- Apply knowledge from course work to create solutions for detailed and complex challenges.
- Demonstrate the ability to acquire, evaluate, and apply knowledge to a specific task or project.
- Show good judgement of physical, written, or digital material in order to determine their relevance or effectiveness in a given setting.