

HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT

1) Rationale for assessment

- Assess yourself before someone else is asked to do so
- Assess what you believe to be important
- Assess in a way that is meaningful to you
-

2) **Mission:** (The Big Picture)

The mission should be a clear, concise statement of the overarching purpose that drives curriculum, instruction, research, and co-curricular activities in your program/discipline.

In a few sentences, the mission statement should articulate what is distinctive about your discipline with respect to other disciplines and also, if appropriate, what is distinctive about the way your department/program animates disciplinary learning here at Whittier College.

Example: Whittier College Music Department Mission Statement

The Whittier College Music Department provides a challenging yet supportive environment to students of wide ranging experiences and accomplishments, for the purpose of guiding and preparing them for a lifetime of musical exploration ranging from casual but informed listening, to intense graduate study and musical career paths.

When writing a Mission

Questions to consider:

- What are our department's values, intellectual traditions, or guiding principles that should be evident in the department?
- What distinguishes education at our **institution** (link the mission to the College's mission) and **department**?
- What makes our institution or department distinctive from that at comparable campuses?
- How are our intellectual traditions or values reflected in our approach to assessment? Is there congruence between
- Education ends and assessment means?

3) **Goals: How We Will Accomplish the Mission**

Goals are more specific than the Mission. Goals often include specific activities/experiences that the department will provide in service of the mission.

Example: Music Department Goals

- a. To foster a sense of community within the department and promote musical activities that supports the wider Whittier community both on and off campus.
- b. To ignite a quest for musical knowledge through the development of active learning and critical thinking skills.
- c. To develop a complete understanding of the evolution and usage of the signs and symbols that constitutes the musical vocabulary of a wide array of musics.

4) Desired Learning Outcomes: How the Learner Will Be Changed as a Result of Participating in the Major or Program.

- Desired Learning Outcomes (hereafter, outcomes) express what students will be able to do as a result of participating in the program. Outcomes are what we measure to assess student learning. We typically situate learning outcomes in specific courses within our departmental curriculum.
- *One Example from Music:* When listening to given musical selections with which they are familiar, students will be able to discuss composers, genres, and forms within the context of the historical period in which the music was created.

When writing Goals and Outcomes

- Differentiate your Goals from Outcomes. Goals are broader, more global and outcomes are more narrowly focused and easily measurable.
- Make all outcomes measurable
- Make sure they measure student learning
- They should measure all levels of learning including higher learning: refer to Bloom's taxonomy (synthesize, integrate, apply) (see Appendix 3)
- The goals and outcomes should be linked to the mission