

Western Oregon University
Academic Effectiveness
Glossary of Assessment Terms

Outcomes and Goals

- **Undergraduate learning outcome (ULO):** A statement of what students know, are or can do when they complete a WOU *undergraduate degree*.
- **Graduate learning outcome (GLO):** A statement of what students know, are or can do when they complete a WOU *graduate degree*.
- **Program outcome:** A statement of what students know, are or can do when they complete a *program* (major, certificate).
- **Course goal:** A statement of what students know, are or can do when they complete a *course*.

NWCCU requires that program outcomes and course goals be aligned with evidence of student learning and be meaningful, assessable and verifiable.

- **Meaningful:** Aligned to something larger we value – e.g., course goals may align with program outcomes, ULO's or external standards.
- **Assessable:** Measurable, either directly, if the goal/outcome is stated specifically enough **OR** Indirectly, through a preponderance of evidence that points to the achievement of a more abstract goal
- **Verifiable:** Student demonstrates achievement, reasonable inter-rater reliability, evidence retained.
- **Evidence:** Artifacts that reflect student learning.

NWCCU requires a university wide system for alignment, assessment and improvement.

- **Align:** Coordination of curriculum so that courses contribute to stated outcomes.
- **Assess:** Collective study of curricular effectiveness as revealed through studentwork.
- **Evolve:** Courses, curriculum and pedagogy change when assessment findings point to areas needing improvement.
- **Close the loop:** Generally refers to steps 3 & 4 of this process. (1) Try something, (2) study results, (3) evolve in response to findings, and (4) study change to see how that goes.