

Assessment Glossary

Assessment – A process designed to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning, where results are used to make improvements in pedagogy.

- ***Direct Assessment*** – Measures of characteristics of student learning (usually an action) that are immediately visible and measurable.
- ***Indirect Assessment*** – Measures of characteristics of student learning that are not immediately visible or measurable, but which can be inferred from related measurable items.

Action Plan – Series of steps designed to improve an SLO, PSLO, or Marketable Skill. Required to be entered, reviewed, and updated in eLumen for each learning outcome under 70%. Program outcomes action plans are required for all disciplines as a part of continuous improvement during SAC Scores.

Backward Design – A method of designing an educational curriculum by setting goals (Marketable Skills/PSLO/CLOs) before choosing instructional methods and forms of assessment.

Badging - A digital badge is a visual symbol of accomplishment. They can be awarded for any definable achievement and earned in many learning environments.

Core Objectives – The set of six broad skills - *Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility* – that the THECB has mandated be integrated into all undergraduate core curricula at Texas colleges and universities.

Curriculum Areas – The major divisions of general education fields of study – Communication; Mathematics; Life & Physical Sciences; Language, Philosophy, and Culture; Creative Arts; American History; Government/Political Science; Social/Behavioral Science – defined by the THECB.

Discipline Assessment Validation Committee – This committee is responsible for validating faculty/discipline assessment methods and documenting that process on the discipline level.

eLumen – Software used by SAC faculty and staff every part of term to automate the process for tracking mastery of student learning outcomes. Also used by student to access their SLO dashboard and ePortfolio.

Focus Areas – Components of general education competencies that serve to divide the scope of the competency into several more narrowly-defined concepts. They serve as a bridge for mapping specific course and program learning outcomes to general education competencies.

General Education Competencies – The set of broad skills, defined for SAC to include *Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility, Leadership, and Performance* that should be developed and mastered by all students completing the general education core curriculum.

Learning Assessment Validation Committee (LAVC) – This committee validates the Discipline Assessment Validation Committee (DAVC) processes by examining the connections between the assessment instruments and the Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) and Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)/Marketable Skills (MS).

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Learning Outcome – A statement of knowledge, skill, or ability that a student should gain, supplement, or perfect as a result of participating in an activity, course, or program.

Mapping Categories – The three categories used in the context of this document to determine how strongly individual, course, and program learning outcomes engage a general education competency.

- *Introductory* – A learning outcome, course, or program minimally touches a general education competency, usually in just a single Focus Area.
- *Reinforcement* – A learning outcome, course, or program engages multiple Focus Areas of a general education competency in some breadth and/or depth.
- *Comprehensive* – A learning outcome, course, or program engages all Focus Areas of a general education competency in significant breadth and depth.

Marketable Skills (also referred to as Institutional Student Learning Outcomes)– Generally, upon completion of an Associate Degree, the general education competencies (noted by the THECB-Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board) serve as the backbone for the program learning outcomes. At SAC, these are also known as our Marketable Skills.

Marketable Skills “Blitz” Week – One week, each semester is dedicated to a “blitz” week where faculty throughout the college present on Marketable Skills, and how they specifically align to their course.

Measurement Instrument – Any tool that is used by an instructor (or program) to evaluate the level of attainment of a student learning outcome.

Program – Any curriculum at SAC that leads to a degree or a certificate.

Reflection – assessment strategy that encourages students to think about their learning.

Standard of Mastery – The minimum level of performance that a student must demonstrate on an assessment instrument in order for an instructor to document attainment of an outcome.

SAC – San Antonio College

SAC Scores – Held each Fall and Spring, is an opportunity to assess all Student Success, Academic Success, and College Services units and plan strategies for improvement.

SACS-COC – Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges

Student Artifacts – The actual examples of work that students submit and against which they are evaluated for attainment of student learning outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) – Statements of the knowledge, skills, or abilities that students are expected to learn or develop upon completion of a course or program.

- *Course-Level* – Very specific, measurable statements of the knowledge, skills, or abilities that students will learn or develop upon completing a specific course. These are the SLOs against which instructors evaluate students each semester.
- *Program-Level* – Broader-based statements of the knowledge, skills, or abilities that students will learn or develop by the time they complete a program. Generally, upon

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completion of an Associate Degree, the general education competencies serve as the backbone for the program learning outcomes.

- *Institutional Student Learning Outcomes* – Generally, upon completion of an Associate Degree, the general education competencies (noted by the THECB-Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board) serve as the backbone for the program learning outcomes. At SAC, these are also known as our Marketable Skills.

THECB – Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Triangulation – The process of using multiple assessment instruments (both direct and indirect) to validate attainment of learning outcomes.

Validation (of measurement instrument) – The process of evaluating whether a measurement instrument is effectively assessing the SLO it purports to measure.

Validation (of student artifacts) – The process of evaluating whether a student’s performance on a measurement instrument is representative of their mastery of the SLO.