Academic Program Assessment Report

Assessment is a term commonly used to encompass the process of gathering and using evidence to guide improvements.

SACSCOC requires that an institution "identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results".

Be sure to SAVE your progress as you work!

Academic Program
Sociology, B.S.

Submission Due Date
2024-2025

Assessment Coordinator Name
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Program Goal

Goal

Goal 1

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal
Demonstrate disciplinary knowledge in the field of sociology.

Pillar of Success Supported
High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

Outcomes

Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome

Percentage of graduating students demonstrating an ability to describe and use key sociological concepts by scoring at least 70% on Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment.

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2023-2024

Performance Target for "Met"
Over 75% of students score at least 70% on Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Between 50 and 74% score at least 70% on Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Less than 50% score at least 70% on Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment.

Assessment Measure Used	**Frequency of Assessment**
Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment	Yearly (spring), at the beginning of Sociology 499 capstone (or in the Crim 499 Capstone if they graduate in December)

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)	**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**
62.5%	2

Comments/Narrative
Eight graduating seniors took the in-house Sociological Knowledge Disciplinary Assessment at the beginning of Spring 2024. The average score was a 68%. 62.5% of students scored at least 70% or higher. This percentage is higher than 2022-2023, when the average score was a 59%, and 33% of students scored a 70% or better. These results are encouraging, especially since the low sample size and a couple of outliers brought down down the overall average. This data indicates that we continue to do well teaching students the disciplinary content of sociology.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome
Percentage of students demonstrating disciplinary knowledge by scoring at or above the national average (41-58 is the range for 50th percentile) on the Core portion of ETS Sociology Field Test.

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2023-2024

Performance Target for "Met"
Over 75% score at or above average national score on core portion of Sociology Field Test.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Between 50 and 74% score at or above average national score on core portion of Sociology Field Test.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Less than 50% score at or above average national score on core portion of Sociology Field Test.

Assessment Measure Used	**Frequency of Assessment**
ETS Sociology Field Test	Annually, in Soc 499 Sociology Capstone Experience (or in the Crim 499 Capstone if students are graduating in the fall).

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)	**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**
66%	2

Comments/Narrative
In the 2023-2024 AY, eight graduating seniors took the Sociology Field Test (ETS). The average score on the "core" portion of the test for our students was a 46 (on a scale of 20-100) with a range from 26 to 65. The national average score on the assessment is between 41 and 58. 62.5% of our students scored at or above the national average. This score is higher than AY 2022-2023 when 50% of our students scored at or above the national average, than 2021-22 when 58% of our students scoring at or better than the national average and also higher than 2020-2021 where 38% of our students scored above the national average. We are heartened to see that the scores have improved over the last four years.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments
Overall, we are pleased that we are meeting our goal of students demonstrating disciplinary knowledge in sociology. Hopefully these results can be sustained (or better yet, possibly improved) going forward. We have lost one sociology instructor in Dr. Kerr (and that line is currently going unreplaced), which means that the total sociological content that we can teach our students for the foreseeable future has been reduced significantly. We will simply not be able to offer as many regular and special topics courses, which means that, objectively, our program is not as robust as it could be.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal
As we reinvent the capstone course, more attention will be paid to ensuring that sociology majors are knowledgeable and informed about sociology as a discipline. One possibility will involve having students read and analyze a recent and important recent monograph in contemporary sociology, emphasizing key

concepts that they missed on the in-house assessment in instruction.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Goal 2

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal
Demonstrate the ability to think analytically.

Pillar of Success Supported
High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

Outcomes

Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome
Percentage of students demonstrating analytical knowledge by scoring at or above the national average on the Critical Thinking portion of the ETS Sociology Field Test.

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2023-2024

Performance Target for "Met"
Over 75% score at or above average national score on assessment.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Between 50 and 74% score above or at average national score on assessment.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Below 50% score above average national score on assessment.

Assessment Measure Used	Frequency of Assessment
Sociological Field Test (Critical Thinking)	Each time Soc 499 Sociology Capstone Experience is offered (or in the Crim 499 Capstone

class if they are graduating in the fall term).

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)
62.5

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)
2

Comments/Narrative
Eight sociology graduates took the Critical Thinking portion of the ETS Field Test during the 2023-2024 62.5% of our students scored at or above the national average (40-57) on critical thinking skills. This means that on this measure, we have partial met our goal of getting students to think analytically. Our students' average score was a 44, with a high score of a 54 and a low score of a 20. This is the second highest percentage in five years (it was 66% in AY 22-23, 50% in AY 2021-22; 56% in 2020-2021 and 44% in AY 2019-2020. While we are happy this assessment provides evidence that our students continue to think critically and analytically.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome
Percentage of students demonstrating analytic knowledge by scoring grade of 70 % or higher on analytical essay question.

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2023-2024

Performance Target for "Met"
Over 75% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Between 50 and 74% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Below 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Assessment Measure Used

Frequency of Assessment

Students are given an essay question which asks them to pick a theorist, discuss their life and work, a concept associated with their work, what the concept means and apply the concept to a social institution in society. The essay is graded on a 50 point scale, with 10 pts. for each part of the question. Scores are then converted to percentages.

Each time Soc 499 Sociology Capstone Experience is offered (or in the Crim 499 Capstone class if they are graduating in the fall term).

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)
75%

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)
3

Comments/Narrative
Eight students completed the assessment in the spring 2024 term. The average score was a 71.5%. With a high score of 82% and a low score of 44% In 2023-24, 75% percent of students scored at least a 70%, which indicates that our goal was met. This score is higher than 2022-2023 when 66% scored at least a 70%. This score is the same as in lower than 2021-2022 when 75% also scored a 70% or better, and a bit higher than AY 2020-2021 when 70% of students earned a 70% or higher. These results demonstrate that, despite the small size of our program, theory continues to be one of our strengths, and that our students graduate with the ability to use sociological concepts to analyze the social world.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 3

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome
Percentage of Students Satisfactorily completing an assignment that demonstrates the ability to read and comprehend a peer reviewed journal article.

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2023-2024

Performance Target for "Met"

Over 75% of students score at least 70% or better on assignment

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Between 50 and 74% students score at least 70% on assessment.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Below 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Assessment Measure Used	**Frequency of Assessment**
Students were given a peer-reviewed article from a sociology journal and tasked with summarizing several dimensions of it: what is already known about the topic, what gap in knowledge the author(s) are attempting to fill, what type of method was used, and what the results were. Students were also asked to reflect on how they would change parameters if they were to repeat the study in order to generate new knowledge.	Every semester.

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)	**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**
91% (average over both semesters).	3

Comments/Narrative
In the fall of 2023, 18 students completed the assessment and all 18 passed for an average of a 92% on the assessment score. Seventeen students took the assessment in the Spring of 2024 and averaged an 88.2% on the assessment. Of those 14 of the 17 obtained grades that would be considered passing.

Last year we wrote that the scores had declined somewhat (for AY 2022-2023), and in this past year (AY 2023-2024) those scores have regressed back to an ongoing mean that we've observed previously. This supports our speculation that the previous year's group were somewhat of an outlier, perhaps an ongoing vestigial struggle from COVID. We had also previously speculated that LINK is using a similar assignment, and it may affect our metrics. However, Professor Rubin always asks before the assignment how many people have read and honest to goodness peer reviewed journal article and it is still not a majority of the class. Therefore, we think that this assignment is a useful form of assessment for what we're trying to teach majors about research methods.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments
Of our three measures of student ability to think analytically, we met our expectations twice, and partially met our expectations once. Overall, the data shows we continue to be successful in getting our students to think analytically.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal
The major change in this section was the transfer of SOCI 499 from Dr. Harrison to Dr. Kerr, so not the assessment themselves but putting a new person in charge of them. Unfortunately, Dr. Kerr has moved on to another position outside of Lander, and so we will be reverting back to Dr. Harrison to teach 499.

Given the personnel changes, we have looked at only minimal changes to these assessment instruments this cycle, such as the addition of a monograph in 499 suggested above. We will continue to have conversations about the utility and significance of our measures at our sociology program meetings.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Goal 3

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal
Demonstrate the ability to apply sociological theory.

Pillar of Success Supported
High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

Outcomes

Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome
Percentage of students demonstrating ability to apply of sociological theory by scoring at least 70% on Soc 202 final paper assignment.

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2023-2024

Performance Target for "Met"
Over 75% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Between 50 and 75% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Less than 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Assessment Measure Used	Frequency of Assessment
The Sociology 202 final paper allows students to	

pick a social problem and report its nature and potential solutions using sociological theories. Students are assigned to apply at least two of the four major theoretical paradigms of sociology presented in the class to their understand of the nature of the problem (E.g. conflict, functionalist, feminist, and symbolic interactionist theories).	Each semester in Soc 202 Social Problems.

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)
80% average across both terms.

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)
3

Comments/Narrative
In the fall of 2023, 49 students completed the assessment and 40 passed. Of these, the pass rate was 75% for online students and 88% for face-to-face students. In the spring of 2024, 41 students completed the assessment and 36 passed. Of these, the pass rate for online students was 84% and the pass rate for face-to-face students, was 88%. In both cases, we can see that the pass rate for face-to-face students is slightly higher than online students.

There could be any number of reasons for this, but our current assumption is that many students are taking the online class when it is not necessarily the best environment for them to learn in. As a point of contrast, the fall online section is open to all students and the spring online section – where the pass rate on the assessment is higher - is restricted to only those enrolled in fully online programs.

As we have now used this assessment for four years, we are starting to see a better picture of what the average of yearly averages is, and compared to the previous academic year the pass rate and overall average grade didn't vary by much. We will continue to use this measure for the foreseeable future given that the long term data we're accumulating has started to yield insights like the one above about the differences between open and restricted online sections.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome
Percentage of students demonstrating ability to apply sociological theory by earning at least a 70% on

Analytic Memoranda # 2 (a Durkheimian Analysis of a Social Ritual) in Soc 399.

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2023-204

Performance Target for "Met"
Over 75% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Between 50 and 74% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Less than 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Assessment Measure Used	Frequency of Assessment
Analytic Memoranda: Durkheimian Analysis of a Ritual. Students observe and analyze a ritual (social, political, cultural) from a sociological (Durkheimian) perspective.	Every semester in Sociological Theory

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)	Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)
81%	3

Comments/Narrative
Twenty one students were given this assessment in Sociological Theory in Fall 2023. This was the first time using this assessment, which is given as part of an assignment that requires students to go out and observe and analyze a social ritual in the community. 81% of students scored over a 70% on this assessment, meaning that we met expectations. This indicates that our students are doing well taking the theoretical knowledge they gain in the classroom and applying it to events they are observing in society.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 3

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome
Students will score 75% or above on a "controlling images" media analysis.

Timeframe for this Outcome
Spring AY 2024

Performance Target for "Met"
Over 70% of student score 75% or better on the assessment.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Between 50 and 74% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Less than 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

Assessment Measure Used	**Frequency of Assessment**
Students complete an assignment where they summarize the representation of a particular racial or ethnic group in a media outlet of their choice. They follow the prompt "if all media represented one racial group portrayed in those visuals, what would consumers be led to believe about the nature of that group?"	Every spring semester in SOCI 329 - Race and Ethnicity

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)	**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**
81.8%	3

Comments/Narrative
Eleven students completed this assessment in the Spring semester of 2024, and nine received a grade of 75% or higher.

This is our first year using this assessment, as was planned previously. Originally, it was developed with Dr. Rubin in cooperation with Dr. Kerr to be done in both SOCI 329 and SOCI 328, but the latter has left to work elsewhere and so we don't have all the necessary data from her class. Her course will be transferred to an adjunct for the time being, who will be asked to deploy this assessment in their course this coming spring. While this is done in courses with different topics, the grading rubric remains consistent between them.

We have deployed this new measure to try and branch out from the narrower selection of courses represented in other assessment measures. As we gather data from this assessment and its use matures, it will give us insight into how sociology students are performing beyond our core courses and into popular electives.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments
Students met our expectations on all three measures of ability to apply sociological theory. Theory

continues to be a strength in our program, as the data affirms.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal
This is the first year using the "controlling images" assignment. While the data collected has been useful, it will now need to be reported by our adjuncts rather than our now departed full-time instructor. While this situation is not optimal, Dr. Rubin has taken the lead to ensure that this data will be collected. Dr. Harrison is also considering reinventing the organization of the Soc 399 theory class, moving it away from an abstract treatment of theoretical perspectives, to an emphasis on the application of theoretical concepts.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Goal 4

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal
To comply with Program Productivity standards as defined by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

Pillar of Success Supported
High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

Outcomes

Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Operational Outcome

Enter Outcome
Major Enrollment

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2023-2024

Performance Target for "Met"
Using a five-year rolling average, the number of students enrolled in the major (a) for Baccalaureate programs is greater than or equal to 12.5, (b) for Master's/First Professional is greater than or equal to 6.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Not Applicable.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Using a five-year rolling average, the number of students enrolled in the major (a) for Baccalaureate programs is less than 12.5 (b) for Master's/First Professional is less than 6.

Assessment Measure Used	**Frequency of Assessment**
Enrollment and Graduation data extracted from Banner.	Annually.

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)	**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**
37.0	3

Comments/Narrative
As noted in previous years, we have lost a large number of majors to the development of new programs (criminology and human services) and have had to find creative ways to market the program to stabilize it. The five year average has declined, though the annual average from last year to this one is the same, so we're optimistic that some of our efforts are bearing fruit.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?
Operational Outcome

Enter Outcome
Completions (Degrees Awarded)

Timeframe for this Outcome
Academic Year 2019-2024

Performance Target for "Met"
Using a five-year rolling average, the number of degrees awarded (a) for Baccalaureate programs is greater than or equal to 8, (b) for Master's/First Professional is greater than or equal to 3.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"
Not applicable.

Performance Target for "Not Met"
Using a five-year rolling average, the number of degrees awarded (a) for Baccalaureate programs is less than 8 (b) for Master's/First Professional is less than 3.

Assessment Measure Used
Enrollment and Graduation data extracted from Banner.

Frequency of Assessment
Annually.

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)
13.4

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)
3

Comments/Narrative
Our number of graduates doubled from AY 2022-2023 (4) to AY 2023-2024 (8). While this is unlikely to continue growing, it is a welcome source of stability in the program.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments
After several years of changes, we are looking forward to seeing how these measures perform for a few years. The trend is still downward, though hopefully we are close to a nadir in program enrollment.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal
Last year we created a few new courses (SOCI 229 - Drugs, Alcohol, and Society; SOCI 294 - Sociology of the South), changed the pre-requisites for several others to make it easier for students to take our upper level courses, and added three classes (SOCI 202; SOCI 229; and SOCI 389). This year, we are planning to make a few additional minor changes. We plan to create a course, the Sociology of Film, which we will teach as an elective and also as a course with the the Film Studies minor. We are also discussing moving either Environmental Sociology or the Sociology of Sport from the 300-level to the 200-level.

There are quite a few other changes in the department that we will need to react to and accommodate for: First, Dr. Kerr left Lander for another job, which means we are back down to 2 sociology professors. Second, the department has hired three new faculty in other majors who will be offering new courses that may either attract new majors or interest people in double majoring. Finally, Profs Carson and King are also leaving the University, possibly leaving some gaps in curriculum that others in the department will have to fill. With so much continued uncertainty, we plan to maintain the current program structure and forms of assessment and at the present time.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Dean's Email Address
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Approved by Dean?

Signature of Dean

Comments from Dean's Review