Outcomes Assessment Plan/Report

University of South Florida

Outcomes Assessment Plan/Report
for Academic Programs

Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.

An outcomes assessment plan is completed by faculty members for each program, at each degree level, each academic year. Completed outcomes assessment plans are e-mailed to: Oaplan@acad.usf.edu

At the end of the assessment period, summary items are completed. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to this address: OAReports@acad.usf.edu.

Information about outcomes assessment activities is located here: http://www.acad.usf.edu/programs/outcomesassessment.html

Information about this Plan/Report

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<td>Who prepared this plan/report? Please list the faculty members involved. Elizabeth Shaunessy</td>
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Outcomes Assessment Plan/Report

Mission/Goals:

**Mission:**

The University of South Florida is a [multi-campus](#) national research university that supports the development of the metropolitan [Tampa Bay Region](#), Florida, the United States and the world. Building upon unique strengths inherent in Florida’s population, location, and natural resources, the university is dedicated to excellence in:

- Teaching and lifelong learning in a student-centered environment
- Research to advance knowledge and promote social, cultural, economic, educational, health, and technological development
- Service based on academic excellence and the ethic of community responsibility
- Community engagement to build [university-community partnerships](#) and collaborations

**College Mission or Goal(s):**

USF’s Special Education faculty developed a philosophy that guides our work:

**About Our Core Values**

- The appreciation of cultural diversity is a moral duty and an explicit feature of programming.
- Persons in position of power should use their power to promote other's well being, not to protect self-interests. Educators need to be aware of and sensitive to the ethical implications of their use of power with students, families, peers, and supervisees.

**About Learning**

- Learning results from a creative process of construction. New information and experiences transform existing knowledge and understandings. Learning experiences, therefore, need to be responsive to individuals.
- Learning occurs best within the context of trust and mutual respect. Learners learn best from persons whom they admire and respect. Trusting relationships develop over time, thus learners benefit from continuity in their relationships with their peers and their teachers.

**About Teacher Preparation**

- Reflective teachers are teachers who can learn from their teaching and continuously improve their teaching. While this is a skill that is natural to some, it is also a skill that can be acquired. Students should be informed at the beginning of their program that this is an expectation of them and they should have ample
opportunities to receive and give feedback that contributes to the reflective process.
Student Learning Outcome #1
What will students know or be able to do or believe by the end of the assessment period? Be specific.

Students completing the Master’s program in Gifted Education will demonstrate knowledge of advanced student learner characteristics.

It is recommended that **two means** of assessment be prepared for each student learning outcome.

**Action items:** These items define assessment activities. The completed assessment plan is e-mailed to: oaplans@acad.usf.edu at the beginning of the assessment period.

**Means of Assessment:** Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.

- In their final semester, students will submit a portfolio that reflects their understanding of student characteristics and resultant programmatic responses by examining the aspects of collaboration and affirmation of diversity. Assignments from the full range of their classes will be tied together by self-penned narratives in which the student will reflect on the many opportunities of interaction with learners of diverse gifts. These reflections will reveal both the student’s understanding of personal and professional growth as well as how the program provides for such growth. It will become a document that engenders and supports the student’s role as an advocate for gifted (and all) learners.

- In the required course, Nature and Needs of the Gifted, students will explore and analyze their school district’s response to gifted students’ needs. This project will include interviews with pertinent staff, exploration of the history of the district’s service to Gifted Learners, and recommendations toward improving the nature of that service. All stakeholders in the district—parents, counselors, administrator, teachers, and students—are to be considered in this project.

**Criteria for Success:** Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.

*A rubric for both means of assessment is attached to these outcomes; students were evaluated on their knowledge of intellectual and affective characteristics of the gifted, from Not Evident (0 points) to Accomplished (3 points).*

**Summary items:** These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: oareports@acad.usf.edu

**Findings:** Using the portfolios, a team of 5 evaluators independently scored the documents and found an average score of 1.43 in evaluating 3 portfolios (5 had been submitted during the semester under review). Only 1 district investigation (the second means of assessment listed above) was on file, so no formal assessment of this means was undertaken. The targeted score was a 2 or higher, but this evaluation provided evidence that students are not demonstrating proficiency in this outcome.
**Use of Results:** The program coordinator is redesigning the portfolio requirements so that students will address this objective in the final document. Consideration of student products generated during the program is also being undertaken to reevaluate a more suitable second means of assessment for this outcome.

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**Means of Assessment:**
- In their final semester, students will submit a portfolio that reflects their understanding of student characteristics and resultant programmatic responses by examining the aspects of collaboration and affirmation of diversity. Assignments from the full range of their classes will be tied together by self-penned narratives in which the student will reflect on the many opportunities of interaction with learners of diverse gifts. These reflections will reveal both the student's understanding of personal and professional growth as well as how the program provides for such growth. It will become a document that engenders and supports the student’s role as an advocate for gifted (and all) learners.
- Learners will write a detailed case studies of 3 gifted learners in Nature and Needs, which will evidence their knowledge of characteristics of gifted learners.

Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.

**Criteria for Success:** A rubric for both means of assessment is attached to these outcomes; students were evaluated on their knowledge of intellectual and affective characteristics of the gifted, from Not Evident (0 points) to Accomplished (3 points).

**Summary items:** These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: oareports@acad.usf.edu

**Findings:** What findings resulted from assessment activities? The instructor for Nature and Needs did not require case studies in the course as was recommended, so no data for the case studies above was collected, therefore the reflective paper was substituted for this evaluation.

**Use of Results:** What changes, if any, were made in response to the findings? Rather than require students to write case studies in Nature and Needs, a reflective paper will be required, in which educators evaluate their knowledge of the characteristics of gifted learners and their growth in this understanding. The reflective papers indicated students had a strong understanding of the characteristics and instructional needs of gifted learners.
Student Learning Outcome #2

What will students know or be able to do or believe by the end of the assessment period? Be specific.

Students completing the Master’s program in Gifted Education will demonstrate knowledge of and application of differentiated curriculum and instructional strategies designed to meet the needs of gifted learners.

It is recommended that **two means** of assessment be prepared for each student learning outcome.

**Action items:** These items define assessment activities. The completed assessment plan is e-mailed to: oaplans@acad.usf.edu at the beginning of the assessment period.

**Means of Assessment:** Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.

- In their final semester, students will submit a portfolio that reflects their understanding of differentiated curriculum and instructional strategies by examining their instruction and classroom management practices. This portfolio not only documents achievements of classes taken and taught, it provides narrative explanations of work accomplished and growth attained. As differentiation is a hallmark of quality gifted educational pedagogy, it will be a major component of the portfolio’s presentation of understanding.
- In a required course, Advanced Instructional Strategies for Gifted Learners, students will develop a curriculum unit that demonstrates differentiated and advanced instructional strategies. These strategies will include, but not be limited to, assessment plans, rubric design, and individualized unit goals for the many different kinds of learners within the classroom.

**Criteria for Success:** Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.

A rubric for both means of assessment is attached to these outcomes; students were evaluated on their knowledge of intellectual and affective characteristics of the gifted, from Not Evident (0 points) to Accomplished (3 points).

**Summary items:** Only portfolios were available to the assessment team to review. Five evaluators scored the portfolio based on how well 3 students demonstrated knowledge of this outcome; an average score of 1.23 was found. These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: oareports@acad.usf.edu

**Findings:** The program coordinator has determined that the score for this outcome is below the acceptable range of 2 to 3, indicating that students are not evidencing proficiency in this outcome based on this finding.

**Use of Results:** Future analysis will include the following two means of assessment: the curriculum unit and an Individualized Education Plan. Also, the guidelines for both of these assignments will require students to show proficiency in designing and executing a differentiated curriculum for the gifted.
**Action items:** These items define assessment activities. The completed assessment plan is e-mailed to: oaplans@acad.usf.edu at the beginning of the assessment period.

**Means of Assessment:**
1. A curriculum unit that illustrates the learner’s ability to design a differentiated curriculum.
2. An Individualized Education Plan, written in the curriculum course, will allow students to focus on differentiation for an individual student.

**Criteria for Success:** Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.

**Summary items:** These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: oareports@acad.usf.edu

**Findings:** What findings resulted from assessment activities? Results of the requirement that teachers provide individualized, differentiated lessons for students indicated that educators in the course were not yet proficient in this skill.

**Use of Results:** What changes, if any, were made in response to the findings? To address the deficiencies evident in the advanced educational strategies course, the program coordinator has recommended a specific sequence of courses in the MA in Gifted so that students will take 4 of the 5 gifted courses prior to taking Advanced Educational Strategies (Curriculum) so that learners are more well prepared through the program to address individual needs of diverse populations of the gifted. Specifically, students will be advised that the course in Special Populations of Gifted Learners be completed prior to Advanced Educational Strategies for the Gifted.
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Student Learning Outcome #3
What will students know or be able to do or believe by the end of the assessment period? Be specific.

Students completing the Master’s program in Gifted Education will present an action research project or an in-depth research paper that demonstrates their skills in systematic inquiry.

It is recommended that two means of assessment be prepared for each student learning outcome.

Action items: These items define assessment activities. The completed assessment plan is e-mailed to: oaplans@acad.usf.edu at the beginning of the assessment period.

Means of Assessment: Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.

- In their final semester, students will submit a portfolio that reflects their understanding of research-based decision-making by providing evidence of systematic inquiry and reflective practice.
- In the required course, Foundations of Educational Research, students will evaluate a research project that include problem statements, research design, data analysis, interpretation of results and research improvements.

Criteria for Success: Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.
A rubric for the first means of assessment is attached to these outcomes.
The second means of assessment includes data from the Measurement program in the Outcomes Assessment Score Reports.

Summary items: The evaluation team considered the student portfolios and found an average score of 1.6 for 3 portfolios. The results of the evaluation from Foundations of Educational Research indicate that students are proficient in demonstrating this outcome. These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: oareports@acad.usf.edu

Findings: Our findings indicated that the portfolios did not provide sufficient evidence to show student proficiency in this outcome. The score reports from Foundations of Educational Research show proficiency. What findings resulted from assessment activities? Student portfolios demonstrated limited understanding of the importance of research-based decision making as part of their systematic inquiry and reflective practice.

Use of Results: Future means of assessment will not include the portfolio, but will include the action research project, which students write in their practicum, and students will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate this outcome. What changes, if any, were made in response to the findings? The portfolio requirements and directions must be expanded to more fully address how students are to discuss their knowledge of research-based decision making through systematic inquiry and reflective practice. Furthermore, the program coordinator will require students in the action research
project to evaluate their growth in understanding and incorporating research-based decisions in their teaching.

**Action items:** These items define assessment activities. The completed assessment plan is e-mailed to: oaplans@acad.usf.edu at the beginning of the assessment period.

**Means of Assessment:** Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.

**Criteria for Success:** Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.

**Summary items:** These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: oareports@acad.usf.edu

**Findings:** What findings resulted from assessment activities?

**Use of Results:** What changes, if any, were made in response to the findings?

Duplicate this sheet to assess additional student learning outcomes.