

Learning Assessment Plan  
from  
Assessmentology Department  
Colgate University

**Assessmentology Department Mission Statement**

Our educational mission is to create an intellectual environment that fosters exploration and understanding of learning assessment. We do not believe in assessment for its own sake, and focus on assessment that can inform instructional, curricular, and institutional decision-making. Our work is relevant to all formal (and many informal) learning experiences across all fields of study at Colgate University and beyond the borders of our campus. We value innovation and rigor in our efforts to understand the refinement the educational opportunities.

**Student Learning Goals**

During their time in Assessmentology, students should:	<u>IG*</u>
1. build and apply fundamental knowledge of learning assessment.	2
2. develop an ability to critically analyze, interpret and learn from student learning data.	7
3. see assessment as a process and embrace the spirit of inquiry.	6,7
4. present in spoken and written language cogent data based arguments and opinions.	8
5. engage in innovative and integrative thinking to advance knowledge.	N/A
6. possess the skills needed for productive collaboration.	7,8

\* Relevant Institutional Goals from the “13 Goals of a Colgate Education” are identified as appropriate.

**Direct Assessments of Student Learning**

The Department uses multiple measures of direct assessment of student learning. All students are required to complete a capstone research project, and the assessment of the students’ performance is complemented by other measures collected from smaller samples of students.

*Senior Thesis Assessment.* The Department has consistently used the Senior Thesis as a major source for assessing student learning for nearly a decade. The updated assessment plan has brought with it an opportunity to revise the rubric for assessing student learning that has been demonstrated in the Senior Thesis. Two faculty members (including the student’s Thesis supervisor) read and score each thesis using the Assessmentology Rubric for Theses (ART). ART scores are used to assess student learning related to expectations described by departmental goals 1 through 5. Only the project supervisor responds to the ART items for departmental goal 6.

*GRE Subject Test.* The Department makes a proactive effort to collect the scores of all of its students that are taking the GRE Subject test in Assessmentology when faculty are asked to provide letters of recommendation. This direct measure offers the Faculty the opportunity to periodically benchmark its ability to meet the Department’s first goal with any of our peer institutions that do the same. This only contributes to our assessment of departmental goal 1.

*Advisor Assessments.* Faculty advisors assess 5-10 of their new sophomore and graduating advisees (10-20 students total) in the Spring using a structured interview and an associated rubric. This assessment covers departmental Goals 1 and 3-6. Though described under direct assessment, some facets of these interviews offer direct evidence and others offer indirect evidence of student learning. These differences are explicit on the Entry and Exit Interview protocols.

### **Indirect Assessments of Student Learning**

The Department uses multiple indirect measures of student learning that focus on both student and faculty perception of student learning. These capitalize on Institutional assessment efforts as appropriate.

*Departmental Survey.* Senior students complete a self-assessment of their learning prior to their meeting with the Advisor for an Exit Interview. The survey includes items for each of our student learning goals and other items focused on the students' experience in our Department.

*HEDS-S Surveys.* All senior students at Colgate complete a survey each year which includes items for each of the 13 Goals of a Colgate Education. The HEDS-S survey results are provided to the Chair annually, and we use the data from items focused on institutional goals 2 and 6-8 to inform and validate the information gained in the Departmental Survey.

*Faculty Focus Group.* At the end each academic year, the Faculty meet for a focus group, led by the Department Chair, to assess the Faculty's perceptions of their students' learning. This discussion focuses on the departmental goals, but it also offers the Faculty an opportunity to revisit those goals if they see opportunities related to student learning that fall outside of the Department's student learning goals.

### **Plan for identifying opportunities for improvement**

At the completion of each Academic Year, the Department Chair (or his/her designated liaison) compiles, aggregates and summarizes the year's student learning data. After the Faculty Focus Group, the Faculty has an initial discussion of the year's data and potential actions are discussed. Based on the content of that discussion, the liaison then prepares a proposal for responding to the data that can include modifications of the assessment plan, assessment instruments and/or the curriculum. Curricular modification may include changes within courses or proposals to change course offerings, with the former being more commonplace. Before the end of May, the Faculty determines the appropriate action based on the available data and prepares a report to be included with the Department Chair's Annual Report. At the beginning of each academic year, the Department Chair reminds the Faculty of the chosen action, and the Chair (or his/her designated liaison) reports on any necessary development efforts that occurred during the summer.