Period of reference in the template: 2006-07 to present

1. Please describe your program’s learning-outcomes trajectory since 2006-07: Has there been a transformation of organizational culture regarding the establishment of learning outcomes and the capacity to assess progress toward their achievement? If so, during which academic year would you say the transformation became noticeable? What lies ahead; what is the next likely step in developing a learning-outcomes organizational culture within the program?

   Over time, the department history department has made its assessment practices more regular and predictable. At present, assessment is conducted by a department assessment committee composed of three faculty members. This committee has a three-year cycle where one of our three assessment outcomes is examined in detail each year, so data are collected and reports drafted annually.

   The transformation of our learning outcomes began in 2005. The department has made changes to these outcomes to take into account changes in assessment strategies and department assessment priorities. For example, the number of learning outcomes was reduced from seven to three in 2007/08 to allow for more efficient data collection. We also decided to prioritize the most important professional skills in reading and writing over specialized content knowledge and to link these outcomes more directly to our keystone and capstone courses.

   While ten years ago many faculty members were skeptical about assessment, at present the great majority accept the need for assessment and support our system of annual reports. Over the course of the past five years, we have undertaken various initiatives in response to assessment activities, including adjustments to the curriculum of core seminar courses. The department expects to continue to develop its assessment plan to take into account further changes in assessment strategy and technique as recommended by the university.

2. Please list in prioritized order (or indicate no prioritization regarding) up to four desired learning outcomes (“takeaways” concerning such elements of curriculum as perspectives, specific content knowledge, skill sets, confidence levels) for students completing the program. For each stated outcome, please provide the reason that it was designated as desired by the faculty associated with the program.
The specific assessable learning outcomes of the History BA are formed out of the belief that history majors should be proficient in the use of historical methods and skills and be able to apply these research, writing, and analytical skills to a wide variety of professions. They are listed here in decreasing order of priority:

a) Students shall be able to write a clear expository essay in which they develop a coherent historical argument and marshal evidence to support an interpretation. This learning outcome is considered the most important. Since the discipline of history most often requires written communication, the ability to write a clear expository essay based on historical argument and evidence is the basic skill necessary for successful historical work on any professional level.

b) Students shall demonstrate adequate reading skills of primary and secondary historical sources. This learning outcome involves skills necessary for the completion of the first learning outcome but also shows that students are equipped to understand written texts in all contexts that they may encounter in their professional and personal lives.

c) Students shall use citation standards appropriate to the discipline of history (Chicago Manual of Style). A fundamental part of credible historical analysis rests on the proper use of historical sources. Students need to know when and how to cite primary and secondary sources correctly. In addition, the discipline of history has writing and formatting standards that differ from other disciplines. We would like our students to be versed in the standards of the history profession, for they may learn different standards in courses from other disciplines (such as MLA format, which is not used in history writing in the US).

3. For undergraduate programs only, in what ways are the set of desired learning outcomes described above aligned with the University’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals? Please be as specific as possible.

History department learning outcomes are focused on categories of the Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals that are linked to professional development in history. Through them we hope to certify that the student is competent in the most fundamental skills necessary for the practice of history (Competence in the Disciplines). The rubrics for all three learning outcomes (attached) check for Competence in the Disciplines in argument, use of evidence, grammar, use of primary and secondary sources, and citation format and use.

Beyond this certification of competence, our focus on reading different kinds of historical sources and writing an expository essay in the genre of history covers the goal of Intellectual and Practical Skills and Integrative Learning, since students learn more generally how to read, analyze, and integrate different kinds of sources in the process of learning to write a significant history essay. The rubrics for all three learning outcomes (attached) check for Intellectual and Practical Skills in argument, use of evidence, grammar, use of primary and secondary sources, and citation format and use. The rubrics for learning outcomes A and B (attached) check for Integrative Learning in argument, use of evidence, and use of primary and secondary sources.
Our learning outcomes also involve skills related to Personal and Social Responsibility, since both instruction and assessment take into account issues of personal ethics and professional ethical standards involving issues of plagiarism, proper citation of ideas of others, and so on. The rubrics for learning outcomes A and C (attached) check for Personal and Social Responsibility in argument, use of evidence, and citation usage (documents idea correctly).

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World is inherent in the content matter of all history classes, but because history students don’t have a universal or rigid program of content, this area is difficult to assess. Moreover, due to the nature of the assignment that currently is assessed (a written essay on a historical topic), we believe that every assessed assignment without exception would show accomplishment in the area of Knowledge of Human Culture. A separate assessment in this area would not produce information pertinent to improvement of our program (although it could be part of the BLGs).

4. For each desired outcome indicated in item 2 above, please:
   a) Describe the method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.
   b) Include a description of the sample of students (e.g., random sample of transfer students declaring the major; graduating seniors) from whom data were/will be collected and the frequency and schedule with which the data in question were/will be collected.
   c) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument” (e.g., survey or test), “artifact” (e.g., writing sample and evaluative protocol, performance review sheet), or other device used to assess the status of the learning outcomes desired by the program.
   d) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.

Each of the three outcomes are measured and monitored in the same way. Each fall, data are collected from all sections of the following list of targeted courses: the lower division world history surveys (HIST 50/51), the history major keystone course (HIST 100), and the history major capstone courses (HIST 192/197). (In this way we can assess how our seniors achieve the outcomes compared to our juniors, sophomores, and first year students.) Each spring, the assessment committee drafts a report to discuss and to act on at the end of each academic year.

Two main instruments are used for history department assessment:

1) In each year of the three-year cycle, an objective sampling of student essays is taken to assess one of the three learning outcomes. Instructors from each section of all the targeted courses select a random sample of at least 3 student essays and send them to the assessment committee, a process that results in a sample 60-75 student papers. The assessment committee examines each paper to ascertain if the learning outcome has been met.
Each outcome has its own rubric, listed below, that is appended to this report:

a) **Students shall be able to write a clear expository essay in which they develop a coherent historical argument and marshal evidence to support an interpretation:** Rubric 1 (appended)

b) **Students shall demonstrate adequate reading skills of primary and secondary historical sources:** Rubric 2 (appended)

c) **Students shall use citation standards appropriate to the discipline of history (Chicago Manual of Style):** Rubric 3 (appended)

2) In each of the first two years of the three-year cycle, a subjective survey is administered that seeks to ascertain how students and faculty self-understand student progress toward meeting learning outcomes. The survey is taken from all students and faculty in each section of History 100, 192, and 197 only (i.e. lower division courses are excluded).

Each outcome has its own set of questions, listed below, that are appended to this report:

a) **Students shall be able to write a clear expository essay in which they develop a coherent historical argument and marshal evidence to support an interpretation:**

   - Survey questions, History 100: 5, 8, 10, 11
   - Survey questions, History 192/197: 4, 5, 10, 11, 12
   - Survey questions, faculty: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

b) **Students shall demonstrate adequate reading skills of primary and secondary historical sources:**

   - Survey questions, History 100: 6, 7, 11
   - Survey questions, History 192/197: 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12
   - Survey questions, faculty: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

c) **Students shall use citation standards appropriate to the discipline of history (Chicago Manual of Style):**

   - Survey questions, History 100: 9
   - Survey questions, faculty: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

The results of both instruments are released in the annual assessment report and brought to the attention of the department at the fall semester retreat for discussion. At the end of each three year cycle, the annual report becomes a summative report for that cycle.

5. Regarding each outcome and method discussed in items 2 and 4 above, please provide examples of how findings from the learning outcomes process have been utilized to address decisions to revise or maintain elements of the curriculum (including decisions to alter the
program’s desired outcomes). If such decision-making has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

a) In 2007, the assessment committee did not have enough papers to assess the results of learning outcome A because not all courses target required such assignments. In response, the department decided to set common expectations in HIST 100 to ensure that each would have a writing assignment capable of being assessed. Result: students are receiving more consistent instruction related to outcome A and the department now has an assessable sample.

b) In 2008, the assessment committee observed that the writing quality in HIST 100 could be improved and discussed whether to add a writing lab with tutors for students. Resources were not available to fund the writing lab idea. Instead, the department has decided to improve outcome performance by requiring the same style textbook (Turabian) for all HIST 100 sections and to hold the HIST 100 class enrollment cap at 25 rather than raising it to 30.

c) In 2010, based on the assessment report, the department discussed whether it might be more effective to have the same faculty teach HIST 192 and HIST 197 in sequence (i.e. 192 in fall, 197 in spring) to ensure more consistent experience for students in learning how to work with primary and secondary sources. We have a pilot project in AY 2012-2013 with one faculty member to see whether this change has a positive effect on assessment data.

6. Has the program systematically sought data from alumni to measure the longer-term effects of accomplishment of the program’s learning outcomes? If so, please describe the approach to this information-gathering and the ways in which the information will be applied to the program’s curriculum. If such activity has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

The department has not sought data from History BA alumni to measure longer-term effects of accomplishment of our learning outcomes since we are not aware of any way to assess our specific learning outcomes about reading and writing once students have left the university. We did an alumni survey in 2006 but it proved difficult to get adequate responses. Our current student survey does have a question (#12) that asks students to tell us whether they believe our programs has prepared them for a career, and we might be able to adapt such a question to a follow-up alumni survey. The main impediment is the more general problem of identifying former students to receive the survey (it would be nice if the university could provide us with follow-up contact information). Although we have some anecdotal evidence about more general outcomes for our students, such as acceptance to credential programs or MA and PhD programs in history, these goals are not currently part of our specific learning outcomes and have not been formally assessed. We are willing to take advice about how to measure our graduates’ use of their writing and reading skills after graduation.

7. Does the program pursue learning outcomes identified by an accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization as important? Does the set of outcomes pursued by your
program exceed those identified as important by your accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization?

The history BA does not have an accrediting agency.

8. Finally, what additional information would you like to share with the Senate Committee on Instructional Program Priorities regarding the program’s desired learning outcomes and assessment of their accomplishment?

The history department has spent many years working with the university’s assessment office to develop a successful assessment program. Terry Underwood, the university faculty assessment coordinator, addressed the history faculty in 2009 and has had numerous meetings with the history assessment coordinator (Katerina Lagos) over the years. Dr. Lagos has also worked closely with the College of Arts and Letters assessment liaison to structure our assessment plans. Our current assessment model is based on these conversations and, as far as we know, it represents modern thinking about assessment as represented by the university. Indeed, the chair and the assessment committee have on occasion received requests from other departments about our system. We believe that our assessment strategy and data show that we have a strong and successful BA major.
Appendix

Rubric: Learning outcome a (expository essay).

1. **Argument**: proper, improper, no argument
2. **Use of evidence**: significant amount of evidence, some evidence, no evidence
3. **Grammar**: correct, incorrect

Rubric: Learning outcome b (reading skills)

1. **Primary sources**: present, not present
2. **Identification of primary sources**: correct, incorrect, no primary sources
3. **Secondary sources**: present, not present
4. **Identification of secondary sources**: correct, incorrect, no secondary sources

Rubric: Learning outcome c (citations)

1. **Footnote/endnote format**: proper, improper, no footnotes/endnotes
2. **Quotation format**: proper, improper, no quotations
3. **Bibliography format**: proper, improper, no bibliography
4. **Citation usage**: proper (documents idea), improper (documents fact), no citations

Student Survey: History 100

1. How would you rate the general quality of your history instructors? Please explain. Excellent/Very Good/Good/Not Very Good/Poor?
2. What courses (either currently in the catalog or not) would you like to have taken that have not been offered by the History Department?
3. How well did your high school education prepare you for college-level writing? Please explain. Excellent/Very Good/Good/Not Very Good/Poor?
4. Which, if any, of your lower-division courses, offered either in History or another discipline, had writing assignments?
5. Which lower-division course, offered either in History or another discipline, helped to develop your writing the most?
6. Did History 100 teach you the difference between primary and secondary sources? Explain. Yes/No?
7. Did History 100 teach you how to analyze both kinds of sources? Explain. Yes/No?
8. Did History 100 teach you how to structure a research paper? Explain. Yes/No?
9. Did History 100 teach you the Chicago citation style? Explain. Yes/No?
10. How well did History 100 prepare you for upper-division writing assignments? What was the most useful aspect of the course?
11. Was History 100 an effective course for developing your research and writing skills? How could the department improve this course? Explain. Yes/No?
**Student Survey: History 192/7**

1. How would you rate the general quality of your history instructors? Please explain. Excellent/Very Good/Good/Not Very Good/Poor?
2. What courses (either currently in the catalog or not) would you like to have taken that have not been offered by the History Department?
3. Did History 192 help your critical analysis skills? Explain. Yes/No?
4. Did History 197 help improve your research and writing skills? Explain. Yes/No?
5. Did History 197 help improve your research and writing skills? Explain. Yes/No?
6. Did History 197 build on what you learned in History 100? Explain. Yes/No?
7. How can the History Department improve its 100 and 197 courses?
8. Which upper-division course, offered either in History or another discipline, helped to develop your critical analysis skills the most?
9. Which upper-division course, offered either in History or another discipline, helped to develop your research skills the most?
10. Which upper-division course, offered either in History or another discipline, helped to develop your writing skills the most?
11. Do you think that being a history major has improved your research and writing skills? Explain. Yes/No?
12. Do you feel the critical analysis, research, and writing skills you learned as a history major will be helpful in your future career? Explain. Yes/No?

**Faculty Survey: History 100, History 192/7**

1. Which of the following classes have you taught: 100, 192, 197?
2. How long have you been teaching this/these course(s)?
3. What books do you feel are the most important for your course(s)?
4. Which of the books you assign for the course(s) you wish you could change and why?
5. By the end of the semester, what skills do most of your History 100 students master?
6. By the end of the semester, with what skills do most of your History 100 students still struggle?
7. By the end of the semester, what skills do most of your History 192 students master?
8. By the end of the semester, with what skills do most of your History 192 students still struggle?
9. By the end of the semester, what skills do most of your History 197 students master?
10. By the end of the semester, with what skills do most of your History 197 students still struggle?
11. What changes would you make in History 100 – structure, goals, assignments?
12. What changes would you make in History 192 – structure, goals, assignments?
13. What changes would you make in History 197 – structure, goals, assignments?
14. Any other comments – criticisms – recommendations?