



**Feedback for the 2013-2014 Annual Assessment Report**  
**Department of Humanities and Religious Studies**  
*Humanities and Religious Studies Master's*

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**California State University, Sacramento**



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## I. Summary Memo to the Deans/Chairs/Program Directors

**To:** Chair, Department of Humanities and Religious Studies  
**From:** Office of Academic Program Assessment (OAPA)  
**Date:** Spring 2015  
**Subject:** Feedback for the 2013-2014 Annual Assessment Report  
**CC:** Office of Academic Affairs

The 2013-2014 annual assessment reports are based on responses to the [2013-2014 Annual Assessment Report Template](#) prepared by the [Office of Academic Program Assessment](#) (OAPA). The feedback for the *2013-2014 Annual Assessment Report* is summarized below:

| <b>Section:</b> | <b>Details:</b>   |
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We have used appropriate Western Associate of Schools and Colleges, WASC, rubrics for guidance on effective assessment practices in several areas, including the quality of learning outcomes, assessment plans, methods/data/analysis, program review, and the use of assessment data for curricular improvement, academic planning, and budgeting. These rubrics were provided in appendices in the *Feedback for the 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report*, and will not be repeated here.

We hope all the previous **feedback** reports that you have received in recent years from OAPA in addition to the current one (2011-2012, 2012-2013, and now 2013-2014 Annual Assessment Feedback) will be used to help the academic unit (department, program, or college) determine the extent to which its current assessment system is adequate and what additional components or processes may need to be developed or improved for **all the degree programs** in the academic unit.

We would like to thank Dr. Don Taylor, Interim Assistant Vice President, Academic Programs and Global Engagement, Janett Torset, and our student assistants, Christian and Paul Schoenmann, for their assistance in this assessment review process.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact [Dr. Amy Liu](mailto:liuqa@csus.edu) (liuqa@csus.edu), Director of OAPA.

Thank you.

## II. Detailed Feedback for the 2013-2014 Annual Assessment Report

### Humanities and Religious Studies MA

| Template Questions  | Detailed Questions/Criteria   | Comments |   |
|---|---|----------|---|
| Q1: Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Assessed in 2013-2014 | Q1.1. Which of the following program learning outcomes (PLOs) or Sac State Baccalaureate Learning Goals did you assess in 2013-2014?                                | Yes      | Critical Thinking   |
|   | Q1.1.1. Please provide more detailed information about the PLO(s) you checked above.  | Yes      | Demonstrate comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. |
|   | Q1.2. Are your PLOs closely aligned with the mission of the university?   | Yes      |   |
|   | Q1.3. Is your program externally accredited (except for WASC)? If no, skip to Q1.4.   | No       |   |
|   | Q1.3.1. If yes, are your PLOs closely aligned with the mission/goals/outcomes of the accreditation agency?  | N/A      |   |
|   | Q1.4. Have you used the <i>Degree Qualification Profile (DQP)*</i> to develop your PLO(s)?  | No       |   |
| Q2: Standards of Performance/Expectations for EACH PLO    | Q2.1. Has the program developed/adopted EXPLICIT standards of performance/expectations for the PLO(s) you assessed in 2013-2014 Academic Year? If no, skip to Q2.2. | No       |   |
|   | Q2.1.1. If yes, what are the desired levels of learning, including the criteria and standards of performance/expectations, for each PLO?                            | N/A      |   |
|   | Q2.2. Have you published the PLO(s)/expectations/rubric(s) you assessed in 2013-2014? If no, skip to Q3.1.  | Yes      |   |
|   | Q2.2.1. If yes, where were the PLOs/expectations/rubrics published?   | Yes      | In some course syllabi, assessment report, new course proposal.   |
| Q3: Data, Results, and Conclusions for EACH PLO           | Q3.1. Was assessment data/evidence collected for 2013-2014? If no, skip to end, Part III.   | Yes      |   |
|   | Q3.2. If yes, was the data scored/evaluated for 2013-2014? If no, skip to end, Part III.  | Yes      |   |
|   | Q3.3. If yes, what DATA have you collected? What are the results, findings, and CONCLUSION(s) for EACH PLO assessed in 2013-2014?                                   | Yes      | Collected rubric scores for assignments—now have suitable data to create formal expectations  |
|   | Q3.4.1 First PLO: Critical Thinking   | No       | No expectation.   |

|  |  |     |                                     |
|--|--|-----|-------------------------------------|
|  | Q3.4.1.A. Can the readers come to the SAME conclusion as the program that students meet the expectations/standards for this learning outcome?  | Yes |                                     |
| Q4: Evaluation of Data Quality: Reliability and Validity       | Q4.1. How many PLOs in total did your program assess in the 2013-2014 academic year?   | Yes | One                                 |
|  | Q4.1.A: According to you (the reader) has the program EXPLICITLY assessed each of the PLOs listed above?   | No  |                                     |
|  | Q4.2. Please choose ONE ASSESSED PLO as an example to illustrate how you use direct, indirect, and/or other methods/measures to collect data. If you only assessed one PLO in 2013-14. If ONE PLO, skip. | N/A |                                     |
|  | Q4.3. Were direct measures used to assess this PLO? If no, skip to Q4.4.   | Yes |                                     |
|  | Q4.3.1. Which of the following DIRECT measures were used?  | Yes | Key assignments.                    |
|  | Q4.3.2. Please provide the direct measure(s) [key assignment(s)/project(s)/portfolio(s)] that you used to collect the data.  | Yes | Research paper, interpretive essay. |
|  | Q4.3.2.1. Was the direct measure(s) [key assignment(s)/project(s)/portfolio(s)] aligned directly with the rubric/criterion?  | No  |                                     |
|  | Q4.3.3. Was the direct measure (s) [key assignment(s)/project(s)/portfolio(s)] aligned directly with the PLO?  | No  |                                     |
|  | Q4.3.4. How was the evidence scored/evaluated? If no, skip to Q.4.3.7.   | Yes | Rubric by a group.                  |
|  | Q4.3.5. What rubric/criterion was adopted to score/evaluate the above key assignments/projects/portfolio?  | Yes | Modified VALUE rubric.              |
|  | Q4.3.6. Was the rubric/criterion aligned directly with the PLO?  | Yes |                                     |
|  | Q4.3.7. Were the evaluators (e.g., faculty or advising board members) who reviewed student work calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way?   | Yes |                                     |
|  | Q4.3.8. Were there checks for inter-rater reliability?   | Yes |                                     |
| Q4.3.9. Were the sample sizes for the direct measure adequate? | Yes  |     |                                     |

|  |  |     |  |
|--|--|-----|--|
|  | Q4.3.10. How did you select the sample of student work (papers, projects, portfolios, etc.)? Please briefly specify:   | Yes | Randomly selected seven papers from two sections of HRS 296 (enrollment 7)   |
|  | Q4.4. Were indirect measures used to assess the PLO? If no, skip to Q4.5.  | No  |  |
|  | Q4.4.1. Which of the following indirect measures were used?  | N/A |  |
|  | Q4.4.2. If surveys were used, were the sample sizes adequate?  |     |  |
|  | Q4.4.3. If surveys were used, please briefly specify how you select your sample? What is the response rate?  |     |  |
|  | Q4.5. Were external benchmarking data used to assess the PLO? If no, skip to Q.4.6.  | No  |  |
|  | Q4.5.1. Which of the following measures was used?  | N/A |  |
|  | Q4.6. Were other measures used to assess the PLO? If no, skip to Q4.7.   | No  |  |
|  | Q4.6.1. If yes, please specify:  | N/A |  |
|  | Q4.7. Please describe how you collected the data? For example, in what course(s) (or by what means) were data collected? How reliable and valid is the data?                     | Yes | Committee of four faculty, randomly selected seven papers from two courses. One paper was read by all four for norming purposes. |
|  | Q4.8. How many assessment tools/methods/measures in total did you use to assess this PLO? If only <u>one</u> , skip to Q5.1.   | Yes | One  |
|  | Q4.8.1. Did the data (including all the assignments/projects/portfolios) from all the different assessment tools/measures/methods directly align with the PLO?                   | N/A |  |
| Q4.8.2. Were ALL the assessment tools/measures/methods that were used good measures for the PLO? |  |     |  |
| Q5: Use of Assessment Data   | Q5.1. To what extent have the assessment results from 2012-2013 been used for?   | N/A | First year assessing   |
|  | Q5.1.1. Please provide one or two best examples to show how you have used the assessment data above.   | N/A | See above.   |
|  | Q5.2. As a result of the assessment effort in 2013-2014 and based on the prior feedbacks from OAPA, do you anticipate making any changes for your program? If no, skip to Q.5.3. | Yes |  |
|  | Q5.2.1. What changes are anticipated? By what mechanism will the changes be implemented? How and when will you assess the impact of proposed modifications?                      | Yes | New tasks in the term paper, implement five-year assessment cycle  |
|  | Q5.2.2. Is there a follow-up assessment on these areas that need improvement?  | D/K |  |

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | Q5.3. If your program/academic unit has collected assessment data in this way, please briefly report your results here. (optional)    | N/A   |   |
| Q6: Which program learning outcome(s) do you plan to assess next year? |   | Information Literacy and Oral Communication |   |
| Appendix   | Are appendices related to the assessment reported?  | N/A   |   |
| Summary  | S1. Does the program follow the required assessment template?   | Yes   |   |
|  | S2. Is the assessment report easy to read and understand?   | Yes   |   |
|  | S3. Can the reader conclude that students in this program meet the standard(s) based on the data AND results provided in this report? | No  | No desired levels of learning or standards of performance provided. |

### III. Commendations and Recommendations

#### Commendations:

The program is commended for addressing the following areas well:

#### **Standards of Performance at Graduation:**

-Included PLOs, rubrics, and standards of performance at graduation in **some** course syllabi, the assessment review, and the new course proposal.

#### **Measures, Rubrics and their Alignment:**

-Adopted nationally developed [VALUE rubrics](#) to explicitly assess student complex skills and values.  
 -Used direct measures to assess student learning outcomes.

#### **Data Collection and Presentation:**

-Made sure to norm readers using one paper

#### Recommendations:

As the program continues its annual assessment efforts we encourage it to address these areas:

#### **Standards of Performance at Graduation:**

-Include PLOs, rubrics, and standards of performance at graduation in **all** course syllabi, catalogs, handbooks, and websites so everyone, including students, faculty, and the general public, would know them.  
 -Develop **explicit** standards of performance for **all** assessment tools and PLOs and report the percentages of students who meet these standards **at graduation**.

#### **Measures, Rubrics, and their Alignment:**

-Make sure the direct measures used to evaluate/assess student work **align** directly and explicitly with rubric/criterion and PLOs.

#### **Program Learning Outcomes and their Alignment:**

-Clearly articulate the PLOs, what students should know, value, and be able to do at or near graduation, and align them with the mission and vision of the university and academic unit.  
 -Use curriculum maps to demonstrate **explicitly** where learning and assessment occur in the curriculum and co-curriculum for each learning outcome.

#### **Data Collection and Presentation:**

-Make sure the data collected is reliable and valid, and the data presented is simple and clear for the faculty and the general public to interpret.

## Appendix 1: WASC “Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes”

<http://www.wascsenior.org/search/site/Rubrics%20combined>

| Criterion                | Initial   | Emerging   | Developed   | Highly Developed   |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 1.Comprehensive List     | The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly detailed, inappropriate, and disorganized. It may include only discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to real-world problems). | The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored. Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs may be unclear. | The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs. graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered. | The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students’ level of mastery of each outcome.                      |
| 2.Assessable Outcomes    | Outcomes statements do not identify what students can do to demonstrate learning. “Statements understand scientific method” do not specify how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.  | Most of the outcomes indicate how students can demonstrate their learning.   | Each outcome describes how students can demonstrate learning, e.g., “Graduates can write reports in APA style” or “Graduate can make original contributions to biological knowledge.”   | Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria statements such as rubrics, and have identified example of student performance at varying levels of each outcome.   |
| 3.Alignment              | There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the curriculum that students experience.  | Students appear to be given reasonable opportunities to develop the outcomes in the required curriculum.   | The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design may be summarized in a curriculum map.   | Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services, and co-curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum map indicates increasing levels of proficiency.   |
| 4.Assessment Planning    | There is no formal plan for assessing each outcome.   | The program relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which outcome(s) to assess in current year.   | The program has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. The plan may explicitly include analysis and implementation of improvements.   | The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.  |
| 5.The Student Experience | Students know little or nothing about the overall outcomes of the program. Communication of outcomes to students, e.g. in syllabi or catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.   | Students have some knowledge of program outcomes. Communication is occasional and informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.  | Students have a good grasp of program outcomes. They may use them to guide their own learning. Outcomes are included in most syllabi and are readily available in the catalog, on the web page, and elsewhere.  | Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcome levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents. |

## Appendix 2: Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals for The 21st Century & AAC&U's 16 VALUE Rubrics

<http://www.csus.edu/wascaccreditation/Documents/Endnotes/E044.pdf>

1. **Competence in the Disciplines:** The ability to demonstrate the competencies and values listed below in *at least one major field of study* and to demonstrate informed understandings of other fields, drawing on the knowledge and skills of disciplines outside the major.
2. **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World** through study in the *sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts*. Focused by engagement with big questions, contemporary and enduring.
3. **Intellectual and Practical Skills, including:** *inquiry and analysis, critical, philosophical, and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving*, practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.
  - 3.1 [Critical thinking](#) (WASC core competency)
  - 3.2 [Information literacy](#) (WASC core competency)
  - 3.3 [Written communication](#) (WASC core competency)
  - 3.4 [Oral communication](#) (WASC core competency)
  - 3.5 [Quantitative literacy](#) (WASC core competency)
  - 3.6 [Inquiry and analysis](#) (Sixth VALUE rubric)
  - 3.7 [Creative thinking](#) (Seventh VALUE rubric)
  - 3.8 [Reading](#) (Eighth VALUE rubric)
  - 3.9 [Teamwork](#) (Ninth VALUE rubric)
  - 3.10 [Problem solving](#) (Tenth VALUE rubric)
4. **Personal and Social Responsibility (Values), including:** *civic knowledge and engagement—local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence\**, *ethical reasoning and action, foundations and skills for lifelong learning* anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.
  - 4.1 [Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global](#) (Eleventh VALUE rubric)
  - 4.2 [Intercultural knowledge and competence](#) (Twelfth VALUE rubric)
  - 4.3 [Ethical reasoning](#) (Thirteenth VALUE rubric)
  - 4.4 [Foundations and skills for lifelong learning](#) (Fourteenth VALUE rubric)
  - 4.5 [Global Learning](#) (Fifteenth VALUE rubric)
5. **Integrative Learning \*\***, including: *synthesis and advanced accomplishment* across general and specialized studies.
  - a. [Integrative and applied learning](#) (Sixteen VALUE rubric)

*All of the above are demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities (values) to new settings and complex problems.*

*\*Understanding of and respect for those who are different from oneself and the ability to work collaboratively with those who come from diverse cultural backgrounds.*

*\*\* Interdisciplinary learning, learning communities, capstone or senior studies in the General Education program and/or in the major connecting learning goals with the content and practices of the educational programs including GE, departmental majors, the co-curriculum and assessments.*



### Appendix 3: Important Considerations for Program Review & Assessment

Please keep the following questions in mind when you (program, department, or the college) assess student learning outcomes and improve the programs:

- 1) What are your program learning outcomes (PLOs): **what should your students know, value, and be able to do (at the time of graduation)?** Are the PLOs aligned closely with the missions and vision of the university and the college/department/program? Is each program learning outcome aligned closely with the curriculum, the key assignment, pedagogy, grading, the co-curriculum, or relevant student support services?
- 2) Is each PLO assessable? What **rubrics** are used to assess a particular program learning outcome? What are the explicit **criteria** and **standards of performance** for each outcome? Have you achieved the learning outcomes: **the standards near or at graduation?**
- 3) **What are the data, findings, and analyses for EACH program learning outcome? What is the quality of the data: how reliable and valid is the data?** Other than GPA, what data/evidences are used to determine whether your graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree (BA/BS or MA/MS)? If two or more pieces of assessment data are used for each outcome, is the data consistent or contradictory?
- 4) Are these PLOs (together with the data and the standards of performance **near or at graduation**) able to demonstrate the **meaning, quality, integrity and uniqueness** of your degree program?
- 5) **Who is going to use the data?** Are the data, findings, or analyses clearly presented so they are easy to understand and/or use? Is the data used only for the course or for the program where the data is collected, or is the data also used broadly for the curriculum, budgeting, or strategic planning at the department, the college, or the university?
- 6) **Are students aware of these learning outcomes?** Do they often use them to assess the learning outcomes themselves? Where are the program learning outcomes published for view, e.g., across programs, with students, in the course syllabus, the department websites or catalogs? Are they widely shared?
- 7) Has the program conducted **follow-up assessment** to evaluate the effectiveness of program changes made based on assessment data? **If yes, how effective are those changes to improve student learning and success?** If no, what is your plan to assess the effectiveness of those changes?
- 8) **Is there an assessment plan for each unit (program, department, or college)?** Have curriculum maps been developed? Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time such as within a six-year program review cycle? Is the plan sustainable in terms of human, fiscal, and other resources? Will the assessment plan be revised as needed?

**Appendix 4: Relevant Verbs in Defining Learning Outcomes**  
(Based on Bloom's Taxonomy)

| Knowledge | Comprehension | Application | Analysis      | Synthesis   | Evaluation   |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Cite      | Arrange       | Apply       | Analyze       | Arrange     | Appraise     |
| Define    | Classify      | Change      | Appraise      | Assemble    | Assess       |
| Describe  | Convert       | Compute     | Break Down    | Categorize  | Choose       |
| Identify  | Describe      | Construct   | Calculate     | Collect     | Compare      |
| Indicate  | Defend        | Demonstrate | Categorize    | Combine     | Conclude     |
| Know      | Diagram       | Discover    | Compare       | Compile     | Contrast     |
| Label     | Discuss       | Dramatize   | Contrast      | Compose     | Criticize    |
| List      | Distinguish   | Employ      | Criticize     | Construct   | Decide       |
| Match     | Estimate      | Illustrate  | Debate        | Create      | Discriminate |
| Memorize  | Explain       | Interpret   | Determine     | Design      | Estimate     |
| Name      | Extend        | Investigate | Diagram       | Devise      | Evaluate     |
| Outline   | Generalize    | Manipulate  | Differentiate | Explain     | Explain      |
| Recall    | Give Examples | Modify      | Discriminate  | Formulate   | Grade        |
| Recognize | Infer         | Operate     | Distinguish   | Generate    | Interpret    |
| Record    | Locate        | Organize    | Examine       | Manage      | Judge        |
| Relate    | Outline       | Practice    | Experiment    | Modify      | Justify      |
| Repeat    | Paraphrase    | Predict     | Identify      | Organizer   | Measure      |
| Reproduce | Predict       | Prepare     | Illustrate    | Perform     | Rate         |
| Select    | Report        | Produce     | Infer         | Plan        | Relate       |
| State     | Restate       | Schedule    | Inspect       | Prepare     | Revise       |
| Underline | Review        | Shop        | Inventory     | Produce     | Score        |
|           | Suggest       | Sketch      | Outline       | Propose     | Select       |
|           | Summarize     | Solve       | Question      | Rearrange   | Summarize    |
|           | Translate     | Translate   | Relate        | Reconstruct | Support      |
|           |               | Use         | Select        | Relate      | Value        |
|           |               |             | Solve         | Reorganize  |              |
|           |               |             | Test          | Revise      |              |

Page 37: Adapted from Gronlund (1991).

Allen, Mary. 2004. "Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education". San Francisco, CA: Anker Publishing, Part of Jossey-Bass.

## Appendix 5: Background Information for Academic Program Assessment and Review

Ideally, academic program assessment and review at Sacramento State should be an ongoing process that facilitates continuous program improvement and includes the following areas<sup>1</sup>:

**Assessment Plan:** Each program needs to develop a program assessment plan which contains the following elements: Program goals and learning outcomes, methods for assessing progress toward these outcomes, and a timetable. This plan should be updated annually or frequently.

**Annual Program Assessment Report:** Program learning outcomes (PLOs) should be directly aligned with course learning outcomes (CLOs) and the University Baccalaureate Learning Goals (UBLGs). Programs are asked to provide the Office of Academic Affairs with an annual report (annual assessment report -AAR) on program assessment activities that occurred during the past academic year. These reports should identify learning goals and outcomes that were targeted for program assessment, measures used to evaluate progress toward those outcomes, data and analysis, and changes made or planned in response to the results. Annual program assessment and the assessment reports provide a solid foundation and data for the six year program review at Sacramento State.

**Program Review:** Each department undertakes an extensive program review every six years. As part of the program review process, departments are asked to use annual program assessment data to evaluate how well students are meeting program learning outcomes and university learning goals.

Thus, each department in our university should have in place a system for collecting and using evidence to improve student learning. So far, not all departments have established program learning outcomes and/or approaches to assess learning for all degree programs; it is essential to make these expectations explicit. This will help departments and colleges to assure that every degree program has or will have in place a quality assurance system for assessing and tracking student learning, and use this information to improve their respective programs. Importantly, departments should also present learning expectations, data, findings, and analysis in a way that is easy to understand and/or to use by the faculty, students, administration, the general public, accreditation agencies, and policy-makers.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the information at <http://webapps2.csus.edu/assessment/>