

# **Guidelines for Completing the 2017-2018 Assessment Report Template**

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**Fall 2017**  
**California State University, Sacramento**

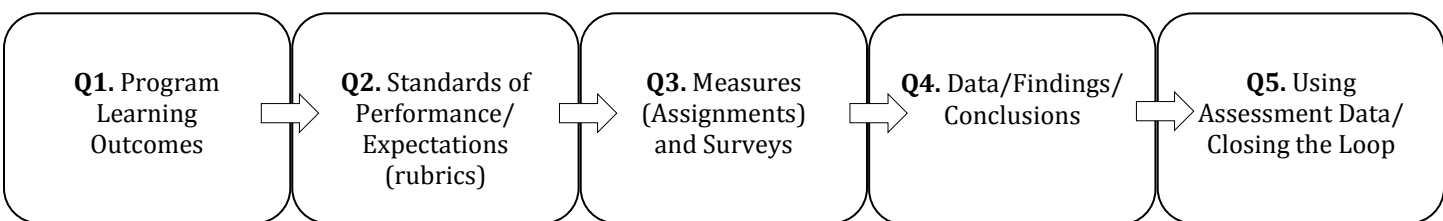
**Guidelines for Completing the  
Assessment Report Template**

This template has two goals:

1. To help departments and programs think more critically about their assessment procedures, the use of assessment results, and to report more accurately the outcomes of those procedures.
2. To provide the Office of Academic Program Assessment with the information necessary for reporting the campus assessment effort to our accreditation agency, WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

Based on user comments, revisions were made in last year's template to make the template easier to read and use. We also hope the current revision better reflects a focus on the whole assessment process, from the development of measurable Program Learning Outcomes, through the design of an appropriate and high-quality system for collecting and analyzing data, to the most important part of program assessment – the steps taken to improve the program and student learning.

Program Assessment follows this basic flowchart:



The template is designed to take you through this flowchart. You will report in detail on one program learning outcome that your program assessed. Then at the end of the report, the template asks for a brief summary of any other program learning outcomes that you assessed, using this flowchart to organize your answers.

These guidelines are organized to parallel the structure of the template.

These guidelines are organized to parallel the structure of the template, and are divided into four sections.

## Section 1: Report All of the Program Learning Outcomes Assessed

### Question 1: Program Learning Outcomes

**Q1.1:** This list of possible PLOs compiles the WSCUC Five Core Competencies, our Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs), Graduate Learning Goals (GLGs), and more specific learning outcomes that may be specific to your program. Check all that apply. If you did not collect data on PLO assessment, please skip to Q6.

**Q1.2:** Please provide your program's PLOs as stated in your most current assessment plan. If appropriate, add some explanation so that someone not in your field could understand that PLO. For general learning goals such as Critical Thinking, please define what that learning goal looks like in your discipline.

For example, **Internet Master's in Educational Technology (iMET)** has adopted language in Appendix 12A to come up with the following Critical Thinking learning outcome:

**6: Graduate students from iMET will demonstrate a habit of systematically exploring issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion: (PLO 6: Critical thinking adopted from the VALUE rubric) they will...**

6.1: Clearly state the issue/problem that needs to be considered critically, comprehensively describe the issue/problem, and deliver all relevant information necessary for a full understanding of the issue/problem **(Explanation of issues);**

6.2: Thoroughly interpret and evaluate the information taken from source(s) to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis **(Evidence);**

6.3: Thoroughly analyze their own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluate the relevance of contexts when presenting a position **(Influence of context and assumptions);**

6.4: Consider the complexities (all sides) of an issue. Limits of position and others' points of view are acknowledged and synthesized within position **(Student's position including perspective, thesis/hypothesis);**

**6.5: Form conclusions, consequences and implications that are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in order of priority (Conclusions and related outcomes).**

**Q1.2.1:** Many programs develop their own, or adopt or modify the Association of American Colleges and University (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics to measure their student work. Rubrics usually pertain to a single PLO and contain dimensions of the PLO along with levels of achievement per dimension.

**Q1.3:** Find the University Mission Statement at <http://www.csus.edu/universitystrategicplan>.

**Q1.4 & 1.4.1:** You do not need to include the mission statement or learning outcomes of your accrediting agency with your Annual Assessment Report (AAR).

**Q1.5:** The Degree Qualification Profile (DQP) is a nationally recognized set of learning outcomes. DQP Grid:

[http://degreeprofile.org/press\\_four/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/DQP-grid-download.pdf](http://degreeprofile.org/press_four/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/DQP-grid-download.pdf)

Full description of the DQP:

[http://degreeprofile.org/press\\_four/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/DQP-web-download.pdf](http://degreeprofile.org/press_four/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/DQP-web-download.pdf)

**Q1.6:** When learning outcomes are phrased in broad terms such as “know” and “understand”, it is more difficult to measure student progress than when the learning outcome contains action verbs such as to **write, recite, identify, solve, construct, build, compare, or contrast**. See Appendices 10 and 11 for other examples of specific verbs to use. See examples in Q1.2. You can also find more information from the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics for measuring learning outcomes.

## **Section 2: Report One Learning Outcome in Detail**

**In Questions #2-5, programs will report in detail on one PLO that they have assessed. You will have an opportunity at the end of the template to report a summary of any other assessment work you did for any other PLOs, and for any other program improvement steps you took that are not directly connected to a PLO.**

The purpose of questions 2-5 is three-fold:

1. To provide your program an opportunity to think critically about the process you are using to assess the PLOs for your program. We encourage you to think about whether the measures you are using and the tools (such as rubrics) that you use to evaluate that data actually address the PLO you are trying to measure. We also encourage you to think about the quality of the data you are collecting. If you are sampling a larger student population, *does the sample adequately represent all your students? Are all the evaluators using the same standards in scoring student work?*
2. To help your program “close the loop” and use assessment data to improve student learning in your program. Ultimately the goal of assessment is to improve program quality. Assessment should be a useful experience for your program, not just a hoop to jump through.
3. To provide OAPA with evidence of the nature of assessment on the campus. This evidence is used both to give feedback to programs on making their assessment process more useful to the program, and in reporting to the Chancellor’s office and outside agencies such as WSCUC.

### **Question 2: Standards of Performance for a Selected PLO**

**In addition to** specifying what you want students to learn, you must specify what level of learning is acceptable for an **individual** student, and for **all** the students in your program. For example, the faculty in your program may agree that a score of 3 in all dimensions on a particular rubric is a reasonable standard to set for the students graduating from your BA program. As a program, you may decide that is a reasonable target that 70% of your students are scoring at this level or above, or you may adjust these targets over time, but it is essential to specify a target standard of performance for each PLO.

**Q2.1:** Please state which of the PLOs you described in Question 1 you are choosing to report in detail.

**Q2.2:** Answer the question **just for the selected PLO**. This is often simply stated as a percentage of students reaching a certain level of achievement on a rubric (e.g. 70% of students achieve a 3 or higher in all dimensions of the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric).

**Q2.3:** Describe/attach the **standard of performance AND the rubric**, criteria, or scoring device you used to evaluate the PLO. For purposes of program improvement, it is most useful to:

- Express the standard of performance as a percentage of students performing at a particular level, rather than as a mean.
- Use a scoring device (such as a rubric) that specifies varying levels of performance.
- **See Appendix 12A for an example.**

**Q2.4, Q2.5, & Q2.6:** It is considered good assessment practice to make the learning goals, standards and measuring devices (such as rubrics) available for others to see, including students, other faculty, administrators and the public. This question asks about the range of ways in which this information might be published. It is not necessarily appropriate that all of your assessment information be published in all of these ways. The University does need to know in which ways this information is currently being communicated to others.

### **Question 3: Data Collection Methods and Evaluation of Data Quality**

The question differentiates between direct measures, indirect measures, and other measures.

**Direct measures** are those that measure **student performance in their program**. These measures can include key assignments in courses within the program, performances in capstone projects, portfolios either within courses or as program culminating experiences, and the like.

**Indirect measures** are those that ask students and others for their **impression of your program**. The measuring device might be surveys, focus groups or interviews; those involved might include students, alumni, employers or others familiar with the program.

Your program may have access to **other measures** aside from student performance or survey data. Students in some programs undergo examinations for licensing or credentialing. In some fields there are recognized tests that can be used to compare student performance at different institutions. Some fields have specialized GREs or other achievement exams.

**Q3.1 & 3.1.1:** If data was collected, please indicate how many tools and/or classes were used. For example, a capstone portfolio might be one tool, and a key assignment in a specific course would be another.

**Q3.2 & 3.2.1:** Please describe how **all** assessment data for this PLO was collected.

**Q3.3 & 3.3.1:** Indicate if direct measures were used and what kind.

**Question 3 (Q3). Direct Measures** (key assignments, projects, portfolios, course work, student tests, etc.) **used to assess the PLOs**

This question is where you describe how you plan to align your data to your direct measure, using key assignments, projects, portfolios, course work, student tests, etc.

**Q3.3.2.** Please 1) **provide** and/or attach the direct measure you used to collect data, THEN 2) **explain** how it assesses the PLO:

**Example Answer to Q3.3.2:**

The key assignment for the iMET program assessment is the **Action Research Report**. iMET used this **Action Research Report** (Master's Thesis) included in an accessible ePortfolio as its direct measure to assess its Critical Thinking PLO.

**This culminating experience report (the master thesis)** includes the following tasks:

1. Designing and implementing a study using data collection tools that will allow the students to "show" the reader what happened during and as a result of the intervention.
2. Sorting through the findings after collecting the data, looking for data that reveal some information pertinent to the study.
3. Looking for relationships (patterns) between the data. These patterns emerge from a variety of sources such as things that have happened, things that students have observed, things that people have said, and things that students have measured. These are the findings (conclusions) of the study.

**Q3.4:** The VALUE rubrics are nationally recognized and can be used to measure various aspects of post-secondary education. We encourage your program to use VALUE rubrics where possible to assess your PLOs. Use of a common rubric allows us to aggregate data and understand more about student learning across the University, and to compare the performance of our students to students at other institutions. If you find that a particular VALUE rubric does not quite work for your PLO, perhaps some items on the rubric may work, and you can use a modified VALUE rubric. If the VALUE rubrics just won't work for your program, you might use a rubric from elsewhere. There are also some kinds of data for which a rubric is not needed (for example, student performance on a diagnostic exam).

**Q3.4.2, Q3.4.3 & 3.4.4:** Alignment: These questions investigate how well the direct measure you have chosen and the way you evaluate performance on the measure (using a rubric, setting criteria for evaluation, a grading sheet, etc.) actually measure progress on the PLO you are assessing. For example, if your PLO is addressing Critical Thinking, and your direct measure is a multiple choice test that measures Content Knowledge, then there is poor alignment between your goals and your instrument for measuring progress toward that

goal. If your PLO addresses Civic Engagement, then the measure should address the aspect of Civic Engagement with which you are the most concerned.

Likewise, you should consider how well the device you are using to evaluate the direct measure actually fits the task students will be doing in that direct measure. For example, if your PLO addresses student competency in Writing in the discipline, and your measure asks students to write a technical report, then your rubric should apply to that kind of writing.

Finally, *does the rubric or other scoring device support the PLO?* For example, your PLO may call for students to be effective writers in the discipline. If your scoring device is much more heavily geared toward the mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, etc.) than toward the larger issues of writing (clarity, organization, depth of discussion), then it may not be accurately capturing progress toward becoming an effective writer.

**Q3.4.2** asks you to consider the rubric or scoring device in light of the PLO. *Does that scoring device actually capture progress toward the PLO?*

**Q3.4.3** asks whether the rubric or other scoring device is appropriate for the direct measure you are using.

**Q3.4.4** is effectively asking, *does your direct measure actually measure student performance on this PLO?*

**Q3.5 & 3.5.1:** If you have a lot of data, or data from multiple sections of a course, or data from multiple assessment tools, you may have more than one person evaluating the data. A **norming process** helps ensure that everyone uses the same standards when scoring (unless your direct measure is a multiple choice exam of something similar). In a typical norming process, all the scorers score a select set of papers, and then compare their scores and discuss the results to help find consensus. Please enter the number.

**Q3.6 - 3.6.4 Sampling:** These questions investigate how you chose the samples of student work that were evaluated during this assessment process. Please enter the actual number for Q3.6.2 and Q3.6.3.

**Q3.6:** *What selection process did you use?* For example, a key assignment from every student in a specific class. If your program is large, you probably only chose some student work to examine for assessment. For example, perhaps you chose work from five students in five different sections.

**Q3.6.1:** Please explain your thinking in how the sample was selected.

**Q3.6.2 - 3.6.4:** These questions help us see how the size of your sample compare to the amount of student work that was available to sample. *Do you think your sample was adequate to accurately represent student performance in your program?*

**Q3.7 - 3.8.3:** These questions address **indirect measures**, such as surveys, focus groups and interviews, and **any other measures**, like external benchmarking or licensing exams. Please be sure to **attach copies** of any indirect or other measures used.

#### **Question 4: Data, Findings and Conclusions and Quality of Assessment**

This question is where you present your data. You may paste data tables into the form or attach documents.

**Q4.1:** Data should be presented in clear, easy-to-read tables. The most useful way to present the data is as **percentages** of students scoring at various levels of performance. If a rubric is used, show the percentage of students scoring at each level of the rubric. If the data is something like test scores, break out student performance at **different percentage levels** (e.g., % of students scoring 0-20%, 20-40%, etc.). This kind of data presentation gives a more complete picture of student performance than simply presenting averages. Please see Appendix 12C for an example.

**Table 1: Summary for the Results, Discussion, and Conclusions for the Critical Thinking Skill**

Different Levels Five Criteria (Areas)	Capstone = (4)	Milestone = (3)	Milestone = (2)	Benchmark = (1)	Total (N=130)
<b>6.1: Explanation of Issues</b>	38%	54%	0%	8%	(100%, N=130)
<b>6.2: Evidence</b>	15%	46%	24%	15%	(100%, N=130)
<b>6.3: Influence of Context and Assumptions</b>	15%	46%	24%	15%	(100%, N=130)
<b>6.4: Student's Position</b>	23%	54%	8%	15%	(100%, N=130)
<b>6.5: Conclusions and Related Outcomes</b>	15%	54%	16%	15%	(100%, N=130)

**Q4.2:** This question refers to the program standard of performance (Question 2). Please detail how students are meeting or not meeting the standard, and plans to improve student performance. **See Appendix 12C for an example.**

We can see from Table 1 above that students meet the criteria of 6.1 (92%) and 6.4 (77%) based on the assessment of our selected Critical Thinking PLO and our identified program standard of performance (70% of students should achieve a score of 3 or higher in all dimensions of the Critical Thinking Rubric). Students do not meet the criteria of 6.2 (61%), 6.3 (61%), and 6.5 (69%). **Students meet some of our program standards for the Critical Thinking Skill, thus they “Partially Met Program Standards.”** Two areas need improvement: 1) Criterion 6.2: Evidence (61%), and 2) Criterion 6.3: Influence of context and assumptions (61%).

In order to help students in our program successfully become researchers with critical thinking skills, we will design more classroom activities and assignments related to: 1) Re-examination of evidence (6.2) and context and assumptions (6.3) in the research, and 2) Require students to apply these skills as they compose comprehensive responses for all their assignments.

**Q4.3:** Indicate the level of student performance.



**Q4.4 & 4.5:** Please evaluate how well your assessment process actually measured what you set out to measure. *Did all of your tools align with the PLO you set to measure? Were all of these tools useful and accurate ways to measure that PLO?*

### Question 5: Use of Assessment Data

Perhaps the most important component of program assessment is using the results to improve instruction and the program as a whole. Please tell us how your results will be, and have been, used.

**Q5.1:** Tell us about your program's plans based **on the current year's** assessment results.

**Q5.1.1:** Please describe what changes you plan to make in your program as a result of your assessment of this PLO.

#### Example Answer to Q5.1.1:

In order to help students in our program successfully become Critical Thinking researchers, we will design more classroom activities and assignments related to: 1) Re-examining evidence (6.2) and context and assumptions (6.3) in the research, and 2) Requiring students to apply these skills as they compose comprehensive responses for all their assignments.

**Note:** The following provide you examples of use of assessment data:

<b>Q5.2.</b> To what extent did you apply previous assessment results collected through your program in the following areas?	<b>(1)</b> Very Much	<b>(2)</b> Quite a Bit	<b>(3)</b> Some	<b>(4)</b> Not at all	<b>(8)</b> N/A
1. Improving specific courses					
2. Modifying curriculum					
3. Improving advising and mentoring					
4. Revising learning outcomes/goals					
5. Revising rubrics and/or expectations					
6. Developing/updating assessment plan					
7. Annual assessment reports					
8. Program review					
9. Prospective student and family information					
10. Alumni communication					
11. WASC accreditation (regional accreditation)					
12. Program accreditation					
13. External accountability reporting requirement					
14. Trustee/Governing Board deliberations					
15. Strategic planning					
16. Institutional benchmarking					
17. Academic policy development or modification					
18. Institutional Improvement					
19. Resource allocation and budgeting					
20. New faculty hiring					

21. Professional development for faculty and staff					
22. Recruitment of new students					
23. Other Specify:					

**Q5.2:** Tell us how **previous assessment results** have been used.

**Q5.3:** Tell us how **previous assessment feedback** has been used.

## Section 3: Report Other Assessment Activities

### Question 6: Other Assessment Activities

In this question, please provide any other assessment activities that are not reported above.

**Q6:** Sometimes programs/academic units conduct assessment of elements of their program not related to PLOs (i.e. impacts of an advising center, etc.), please provide those activities and results.

**Q6.1:** Explain how the assessment activities reported in **Q6** are associated with any of your PLOs and/or PLO assessment in the future and to the mission, vision, and the strategic planning for the program and the university.

## Section 4: Background Information about the Program

See the template for more details.

## Appendix 12A: Example: The VALUE Rubric for the Critical Thinking Skill

Criterion	Capstone = (4)	Milestone = (3)	Milestone = (2)	Benchmark = (1)
<b>6.1: Explanation of issues</b>	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
<b>6.2: Evidence</b> <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
<b>6.3: Influence of context and assumptions</b>	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions).
<b>6.4: Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</b>	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
<b>6.5: Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</b>	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

### An example of the Program Standard of Performance for the Critical Thinking PLO:

Seventy percent (70%) of our students should achieve a score of **at least 3 in all dimensions** of the above rubric by the time of graduation.

The program standard of performance helps programs identify how *well* students perform within and across the program learning outcome (PLO).

## Appendix 12B.1: Example: Data Collection Sheet for the Critical Thinking Skill Individual Level

### Student A in Your Program

Different Levels	Capstone = (4)	Milestone = (3)	Milestone = (2)	Benchmark = (1)
Five Criteria (Areas)				
6.1: Explanation of Issues	4	3	2	1
6.2: Evidence	4	3	2	1
6.3: Influence of Context and Assumptions	4	3	2	1
6.4: Student's Position	4	3	2	1
6.5: Conclusions and Related Outcomes	4	3	2	1

You can use the rubric to collect data for each student. In this example, Student A achieved a score of 4 for criteria 6.1 and 6.3, a score of 3 for criteria 6.2 and 6.5, and a score of 2 for criterion 6.4.

## Appendix 12B.2: Example: Raw Data Summary for the Critical Thinking Skill for the Program Program Level

### Your Program

Different Levels	Capstone = (4)	Milestone = (3)	Milestone = (2)	Benchmark = (1)	Total (N=130)
Five Criteria (Areas)					
6.1: Explanation of Issues	49	71	0	10	(100%, N=130)
6.2: Evidence	19	61	31	19	(100%, N=130)
6.3: Influence of Context and Assumptions	19	61	31	19	(100%, N=130)
6.4: Student's Position	30	71	10	19	(100%, N=130)
6.5: Conclusions and Related Outcomes	19	71	21	19	(100%, N=130)

You can use the rubric to summarize your data of student work. For example, 49 students achieved Capstone 4 for criterion 6.1, and 10 students achieved Milestone 2 for criterion 6.4.

## Appendix 12B.3: Example: Data Summary for the Critical Thinking Skill for the Program Program Level

### Your Program

Different Levels	Capstone = (4)	Milestone = (3)	Milestone = (2)	Benchmark = (1)	Total (N=130)
Five Criteria (Areas)					
6.1: Explanation of Issues	38% (N= 49/130)	54%	0%	8%	(100%, N=130)
6.2: Evidence	15%	46%	24%	15%	(100%, N=130)
6.3: Influence of Context and Assumptions	15%	46%	24%	15%	(100%, N=130)
6.4: Student's Position	23%	54%	8% (N = 10/130)	15%	(100%, N=130)
6.5: Conclusions and Related Outcomes	15%	54%	16%	15%	(100%, N=130)

For direct and simple comparison, you can use percentages to summarize your data. For example, **38% of the students** achieved Capstone 4 for criterion 6.1, and **8% of the students** achieved Milestone 2 for criterion 6.4.

## Appendix 12C: Example: Summary for the Results, Discussion, and Conclusions for the Critical Thinking Skill

Different Levels Five Criteria (Areas)	Capstone = (4)	Milestone = (3)	Milestone = (2)	Benchmark = (1)	Total (N=130)
<b>6.1: Explanation of Issues</b>	38%	54%	0%	8%	(100%, N=130)
<b>6.2: Evidence</b>	15%	46%	24%	15%	(100%, N=130)
<b>6.3: Influence of Context and Assumptions</b>	15%	46%	24%	15%	(100%, N=130)
<b>6.4: Student's Position</b>	23%	54%	8%	15%	(100%, N=130)
<b>6.5: Conclusions and Related Outcomes</b>	15%	54%	16%	15%	(100%, N=130)

We can see (using the above table) that students meet the criteria of 6.1 (92%), 6.4 (77%), and 6.5 (69%) based on the assessment of our selected Critical Thinking PLO and our identified program standard of performance (70% of students should achieve a score of 3 or higher in all dimensions of the Critical Thinking Rubric). Students do not meet the criteria of 6.2 (61%) and 6.3 (61%).

**Students meet some of our program standards for the Critical Thinking Skill, thus they “Partially Met Program Standards.”** Two areas need improvement: 1) Criterion 6.2: Evidence (61%), and 2) Criterion 6.3: Influence of context and assumptions (61%).

In order to help students in our program successfully become researchers with critical thinking skills, we will design more classroom activities and assignments related to: 1) Re-examination of evidence (6.2) and context and assumptions (6.3) in the research, and 2) Require students to apply these skills as they compose comprehensive responses for all their assignments.