



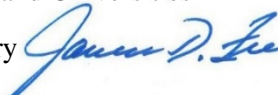
Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Andrew R. Smarick
Chair

James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph. D.
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 3, 2021
TO: Presidents of Public Colleges and Universities
FROM: Dr. James D. Fielder, Secretary 
SUBJECT: 2021 Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Please distribute this memo to appropriate staff of your campus including your institutions' Chief Learning Assessment Officers.

Maryland's performance accountability process for public colleges and universities includes provisions for the assessment of student learning. Since 1996, Maryland public colleges and universities have submitted periodic reports on assessment of learning outcomes to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). These reports are aggregated and published as the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report (SLOAR).¹

In 2007, a workgroup was formed to revise the guidelines for the report. This workgroup completed its work in 2011, recommending a shift from a three-year reporting cycle to a five-year reporting cycle. The last SLOAR report was completed in 2016; the next report is due in 2021.

Institutional submissions for SLOAR

For the 2021 SLOAR, each institution should focus on how an institution, department, or program *measures* specific student learning outcomes. A description of the primary sections of the institutional SLOAR submissions follows.

I. Survey

Institutions are required to complete a brief survey (found at: bit.ly/2021_SLOAR). Results will be aggregated and reported within the final Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report. A pdf copy of the survey is included in this communication for reference/planning.

II. Report

Institutions are asked to complete a narrative report -- **not to exceed three pages**, and up to two additional pages of appendices -- that must include the following descriptions:

¹ Maryland Higher Education Commission 2016 Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports, Volume 1, <https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/2016StudentLearningOutcomesAssessmentReportVol1.pdf> and Volume 2 <https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/2016StudentLearningOutcomesAssessmentReportVol2.pdf>.

- **PROCESS:** A description of the institution's general process for operationalizing (i.e., measuring or assessing) student learning outcomes. This should include who is typically engaged in these processes (i.e., dean, department chair, faculty, students), a general timeline of how often specific measurement tools for student learning outcomes are revised, and if the measurement tool is standard for all applicable students (e.g., the same final exam for all sections of the same course).
- **IMPLEMENTATION:** A description of how faculty are generally informed of specific learning outcomes and applicable measurement tools. This should also include a description of how faculty are expected to incorporate specific measurement tools in their teaching/supervision.
- **META-ASSESSMENT OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS:** A description of how an institution's assessment activities have been leveraged to improve teaching and learning. This should include specific examples of (a) how an institution, department, or program evaluates the quality of a specific measurement tool of a student learning outcome and (b) how results of any measurement tool can be used for improvement in teaching and learning (e.g., a cohorts performance on a standardized licensure exam to inform what specific course material is or is not being covered adequately).
- Any additional information that highlights how your institution measures specific student learning outcomes and how those measures are evaluated to support student learning and success through improved teaching practices.

III. Case study (optional)

Institutions are invited to submit case studies on the development of measurement tools specific to student learning outcomes. For the 2021 report, MHEC would like to include institutional case studies regarding program-level assessment of learning outcomes for students. One case study would center on the development or implementation of measurement tools for student learning outcomes within a specific academic program *as required by a programmatic accreditor*. The second, alternative, case study would center on the development and implementation of measurement tools for student learning outcomes within a specific academic program *not* under the review of a specific programmatic accreditor. These case studies can be for either an undergraduate or graduate program.

If your institution is interested in providing a brief narrative (not to exceed three pages) on either one or both of these scenarios, please notify MHEC (via Barbara Schmertz at barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov) by **April 1, 2021** via email.

The Case Study Report should include the following information:

- Basic program description (title, degree level, program objectives, brief history of the program, name of accreditor, if applicable),
- A list of specific student learning outcomes either at the program level or course level and specific measurement tools used for a learning outcome,
- A summative timeline of events in establishing, implementing, and, if appropriate, revisions (to either the learning outcome or measurement tool),
- Identification of key individuals (both inside the institution and outside), and
- Best practices learned to share with other institutions (institutions may also include practices that did not work; please provide details as to why it did not work)

Institutions that include a case study (or studies) will be highlighted in the summary report (Volume 1). The case studies allow MHEC to demonstrate institutions' specific activities regarding the identification and implementation of measurement tools used to assess student learning outcomes and showcase the good work of Maryland's institutions.

The case study should be **no more than three pages** and any number of applicable appendices (e.g., course syllabi, example measurement tools) may be included.

As appropriate, institutions are **strongly encouraged** to use materials from their most recent Self Study Report or Periodic Review Report as submitted to the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (or other programmatic accreditors) to provide content for the Report and Case Study sections of the submission. Direct excerpts from, and summaries of, the appropriate report are welcomed.

Timeline and Survey/Submission Form

The institutional submissions for SLOAR (institutional report, completed survey and, if applicable, case study) are due no later than **August 9, 2021** to MHEC. Earlier submissions are welcomed.

Reports will be submitted as part of the Google survey form; it is strongly encouraged for the survey to be completed and materials uploaded at the same time (to help with planning responses to the survey, a copy of the survey is attached to this email and will be posted on the agency's FY 2022 calendar page); email submissions will not be accepted. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dr. Barbara Schmertz, Director, Research and Policy Analysis, via e-mail at barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov.

Note: in the Google survey and submission form (url: bit.ly/2021_SLOAR), you will be asked to upload the following:

1. An attachment of a common set of learning outcomes (in pdf format) when the reply is "yes" to the first survey question "*Does your institution have a common set of student learning outcomes that applies to all undergraduate students across all majors?*"
2. The Report – in pdf format only
3. The Case Study (optional) – pdf format only

cc: Dr. Bernie Sadusky, Maryland Association of Community Colleges
Dr. Jay Perman, University System of Maryland