FSU | INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT

INSTRUMENTS for DIRECT ASSESSMENT of SLOs

Glossary

Assignment Name	Assignment Description
Structured Response Exam/Test/Quiz	A structured response test, such as multiple choice, true/false, matching, labeling, is a type of assessment instrument composed of pre-determined, fixed-response formats where students select or identify correct answers rather than generating them. These tests are designed to measure knowledge, comprehension, and application of facts and concepts in a standardized and efficient manner.
Short Answer Exam/Test/Quiz	A short answer exam is an assessment instrument in which students generate brief written answers—typically a few words to a few sentences—in response to direct questions or prompts. These exams assess students' ability to recall, explain, or apply knowledge without the aid of answer choices.
Computational Exam/Test/Quiz	A computational exam is an assessment instrument that requires students to solve quantitative problems through mathematical or statistical calculations. These exams assess students' ability to apply formulas, perform calculations, and interpret numerical results accurately.
Pre/Post Test/Exam/Quiz	Pre/Post test is an assessment instrument used to measure students' knowledge, skills, or attitudes before and after instruction or intervention. The pre-test (diagnostic test) identifies existing knowledge gaps or learning needs, while the post-test evaluates the learning gains.
External Standardized Test/Exam (often a*ligned with National or State Standards*)	An external standardized test/exam is a formal assessment developed and administered by an external organization (not the institution or instructor) to measure student performance against predefined (national or state) standards. These exams use uniform procedures and scoring systems to ensure comparability of results across institutions. Before selecting this type of assessment instrument, make sure that student-level performance data will be available for SLO assessment.
Discussion Board	A discussion board is an online or in-class interactive platform where students post written responses to prompts, questions, or topics and engage in dialogue with peers and instructors. It is used as an assessment instrument to evaluate students' critical thinking, communication skills, and understanding of course material through collaborative discussion.

Case Study or Problem Set	This assignment presents students with a real-world scenario or detailed case and requires them to solve a series of structured, discipline-specific problems related to the case. Students must apply theoretical knowledge, analyze the situation, and use quantitative or qualitative methods to propose solutions, demonstrating both critical thinking and practical problem-solving skills.
Simulation or Lab Practice	Simulation or lab practice are hands-on assessment instruments that replicate real-world processes, experiments, or professional scenarios in a controlled environment. They require students to apply theoretical knowledge and technical skills to perform tasks, solve problems, or make decisions as they would in actual practice. Used widely in sciences and health fields to assess applied knowledge and skills.
(Real World) Project	Project-based assessment evaluates student learning through the completion of extended, real-world tasks that require the application of knowledge, skills, and critical thinking. Students investigate and address a complex question, a genuine problem, or an authentic challenge and create a final product, such as a model, or solution, that demonstrates a range of knowledge and abilities. SLOs demonstrated in this assignment are typically assessed using a rubric.
Written Report/Essay/Paper	A written report, essay, or paper is an assessment instrument that requires students to construct and organize a sustained written response to a question, prompt, or topic. This format evaluates students' ability to think critically, communicate ideas effectively, and demonstrate depth of understanding, analysis, and synthesis of information. SLOs demonstrated in this assignment are typically assessed using a rubric.
Performance or Presentation	A performance or presentation is an assessment instrument in which students demonstrate their knowledge, skills, or creative abilities through a live or recorded delivery of a task, project, or artistic performance. This format is commonly used to assess practical application, communication, and professional or creative competencies. A performance/presentation could be individual or team based. SLOs demonstrated in this assignment are typically assessed using a rubric.
Portfolio of Student Work	A portfolio of student work is a purposeful collection of student artifacts compiled over time that showcases the student's progress, achievements, and mastery of learning outcomes. Portfolios provide evidence of learning growth and the ability to apply knowledge and skills across different contexts.

Internship or Field/Clinical Observation	An internship or field/clinical observation is an assessment instrument, common in applied or professional programs, where a student's performance and behavior are directly observed and evaluated in a real-world or simulated professional setting, such as internships, practicums, clinics, or fieldwork. This method assesses practical skills, professional competence, and the application of theoretical knowledge in authentic contexts. Field or clinical evaluation/observation can be recorded as a narrative or in a highly structured format, such as a checklist, and they should be focused on specific demonstrated behaviors and skills.
Culminating Product (Capstone, Prospectus, Dissertation, Thesis)	A culminating project, such as a capstone paper, dissertation, or thesis, is a comprehensive, final academic project that demonstrates a student's mastery of program-level learning outcomes. It typically involves independent research, critical analysis, problem-solving, or applied practice, and serves as the final product of an academic degree program. SLOs demonstrated in this assignment are assessed using a rubric.
Oral Defense or Exam	An oral defense or exam is an assessment instrument in which students verbally respond to questions, present arguments, or defend their work (e.g., thesis, dissertation, project) in front of faculty or a review committee. This format is used to evaluate depth of understanding, critical thinking, and communication skills. Common in graduate programs, including but not limited to dissertation and thesis defenses.
Preliminary or Comprehensive Exam	A preliminary or comprehensive exam is a rigorous assessment at the graduate level (master's, specialist, and doctoral). It is designed to evaluate a student's in-depth knowledge of their chosen field, mastery of core concepts, and readiness for advanced research or professional practice. Typically taken after completing most or all coursework, the exam may be written, oral, or both. Passing the exam is often required to progress to the next phase of the program.
with a Rubric	Rubric is a scoring tool that outlines specific criteria and performance levels used to evaluate and grade student work or performance consistently and transparently. It is not a stand-alone assessment instrument but rather it complements an assignment by providing detailed descriptions of what is expected for each level of achievement across various dimensions of an assignment or task. Examples of different types of rubrics are available on the IPA website.