

NBS Assurance of Learning

Assurance of Learning (AOL) ensures our graduates achieve the goals and outcomes we state they will achieve (refer to the Program Handbook → Program Learning Outcomes). AOL also refers to the systematic process of collecting data about student learning outcomes, reviewing and using the data to continuously develop and improve degree programs.

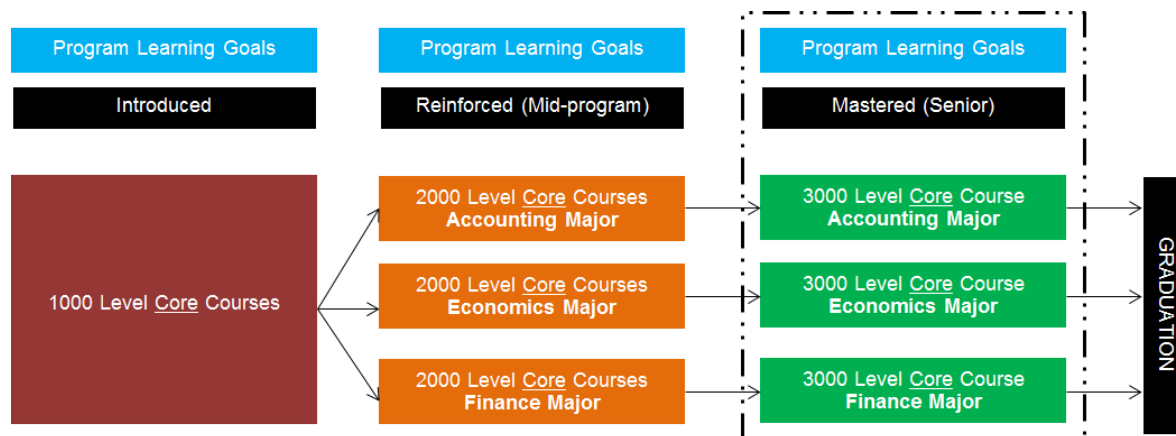
This process is a means of holding ourselves *accountable* to delivering what we say we will deliver to students and other stakeholders, as well as a way of supporting the *continuous improvement* of our degree programs.

AOL is embedded in course assessment and is conducted across all locations and modes of delivery.

It is expected that program learning outcomes are introduced, reinforced (mid-program) and then mastered (senior) across a program. It is also intended that students, irrespective of the major(s) they choose to complete, will progress from the introductory learning outcomes to the mastery stage of these outcomes across their program. It is at the time of the outcome being mastered that AOL is conducted (e.g. 3000 level courses at the Undergraduate level, refer to Figure 1). AOL is conducted in core courses rather than elective courses (as we cannot ensure students will select the same electives as they progress through a program).

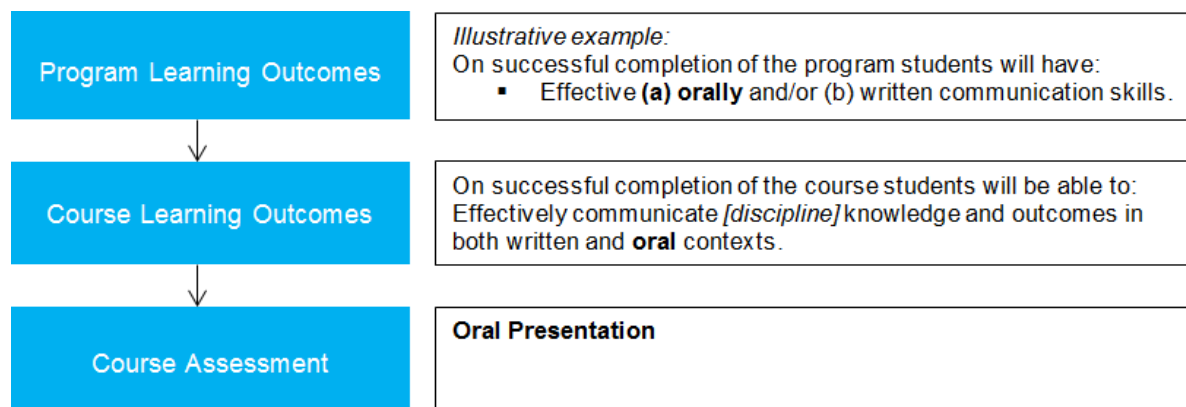
Figure 1: Program Structure and AOL

Illustrative Example: B. Commerce



Constructive alignment should be used when developing course assessment. Specifically, course learning goals should be aligned to meet one (or more) program learning outcomes and course assessment should effectively assess course learning outcomes (illustrated in Figure 2).

Figure 2: Aligning Program and Course Learning Outcomes with Course Assessment



AOL begins with the Program Convenor mapping Program Learning Outcomes and Learning Objectives (sub-learning outcomes) to core courses (mastery-level) within the program to be assessed (refer to Figure 3).

Figure 3: Mapping Program Learning Outcomes to Course Learning Outcomes

Illustrative Example:

Learning Outcome	Learning Objectives	Economics Major
		ECON3008
Students will communicate effectively, both orally and in writing	BC1OBJ1: Students will deliver an oral presentation relevant to a key business issue	X
	BC1OBJ2: Students will demonstrate writing skills sufficient to convey required information in a Bachelor of Commerce written assignment	X
Students will work effectively independently and in teams	BC2OBJ1: Students will work effectively in a team environment to examine a case or issue, or complete another specified task	X
	BC2OBJ2: Students will work independently to complete an assigned task within specified guidelines	X
Students will be proficient in their utilization of information and technology in business	BC3OBJ1: Students will appropriately use valid academic information in a written assignment	X
	BC3OBJ2: Students will be able to utilise relevant technology to analyse and identify solutions for complex problems	X
Students will be able to engage in critical thinking and analytical problem-solving	BC4OBJ1: Students will identify, explain and contrast at least two different perspectives in their analysis of a relevant case or issue, and recommend sound solutions	X
Students will have business skills that incorporate understanding of global, ethical and cultural issues	BC5OBJ1: Students will identify and explain theories, concepts and models relevant to the global, ethical and cultural context of a contemporary business issue or case	X
Students will have knowledge of theory, models and concepts relevant to business	BC6OBJ1: Students will utilise theory, models and concepts relevant to a relevant issue or case	X

The Program Convenor will also map the Learning Objectives to the Course Assessments in which they will best demonstrate the mastery-level performance of the student (refer to Figure 4).

Figure 4: Mapping Program Learning Objectives to Course Assessment

Illustrative Example:

Major	Course	Assessment	Critical Thinking	Knowledge and Theory	Global, Cultural and Ethical Awareness	Technology Use	Information Use	Independent Work	Teamwork	Oral Communication	Written Communication
Economics	ECON3008	1									
		2	X	X	X			X			X
		3				X	X		X	X	
		4									

Discussions are then held with the Course Coordinator to discuss the AOL process and how this will be implemented as part of the course teaching and assessment. For each of the Learning Objectives, there is a specific rubric that is to be used to assess the students' performance. However, as there will normally be existing marking rubrics in place for assessments, we don't require that these be replaced in favour of the AOL rubrics. These existing rubrics will be used as part of the normal assessment process while the AOL rubrics will be used alongside these to assess the specific Learning Objectives associated to that assessment (refer to Figure 5).

Figure 5: Rubric for AOL

Illustrative Example: Information Use

Use of Information

Trait	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Determine the Extent of Information Needed	Defines the scope of the research question or thesis completely. Key concepts identified. Types of information (sources) selected clearly relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines research question or thesis completely. Key concepts identified. Types of information (sources) selected relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines research question or thesis completely. Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines the research question or thesis incompletely (parts are missing, remains too broad or too narrow, etc.). Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or answer research question.	Has difficulty defining the scope of the research question or thesis. Has difficulty determining key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected do not relate to concepts or answer research question.
Access the Needed Information	Accesses information using variety of search strategies and relevant information sources. Demonstrates ability to refine search.	Accesses information using a variety of search strategies and mostly relevant information sources.	Accesses information using simple search strategies, retrieves information from limited and similar sources.	Accesses information using simple search strategies, some irrelevant sources used.	Accesses information randomly, retrieves information that lacks relevance and quality. May not use academic sources to support assignment.
Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose	Communicates, organises and synthesises information from a range of sources. Intended purpose is achieved.	Communicates, organises and synthesises information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved.	Communicates and organises information from sources. In most instances, the information is synthesised to achieve the intended purpose.	Communicates and organises information from sources. Limited inappropriate use of information (misquoted, taken out of context, or incorrectly paraphrased, etc.). The information is not yet synthesised, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved.	May not communicate information from sources. Communication of information is fragmented or information is used inappropriately (misquoted, taken out of context, or incorrectly paraphrased, etc.), so the intended purpose is not achieved.

The NBS has a bank of rubrics used for AOL, one for each of the:

- **Nine Undergraduate level learning objectives**

Critical Thinking	Knowledge and Theory	Global, Ethical and Cultural awareness
Technology Use	Information Use	Independent Work
Teamwork	Oral Communication	Written Communication

- **Ten Postgraduate level learning objectives**

Critical Thinking	Knowledge and Theory	Reflection
Technology Use	Information Use	Independent Work
Teamwork	Oral Communication	Written Communication
Global, Ethical and Cultural awareness		

- **Ten Honours level learning objectives**

Critical Thinking	Knowledge and Theory	Theoretical Application
Technology Use	Information Use	Independent Work
Teamwork	Oral Communication	Written Communication
Global, Ethical and Cultural awareness		

- **Seven PhD level learning objectives**

Oral Communication	Written Communication	Collaboration
Critical Thinking	Planning and Organisation	Knowledge and Theory
Global, Ethical and Cultural awareness		

For each course that is being assessed for AOL, a sample group of students will be selected to be assessed against the Learning Objectives – this is especially helpful for courses that have a large enrolment. A data spreadsheet will be provided to the Course Coordinator which will contain the list of students in the sample group and the Learning Objective rubrics to be assessed. This spreadsheet will be used to collect the data on the students' performance and once completed, is to be sent back to the Assurance of Learning team (Matt Chester).

Data will then be collated at the Program Level and reports will be prepared for the Program Convenors, highlighting any areas of concern. Program Convenors will be required to review the findings of the Assurance of Learning report and make recommendations as well as a strategic plan to implement these recommendations to the School Executive as part of the Closing the Loop process. If you would like further information on the AOL process and/or access to the existing bank of rubrics please contact the DHOS T&L.