

# INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR STUDENT LEARNING



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## Introduction

The purpose of the Institutional Assessment Plan for Student Learning (IAPSL) is to describe a systematic and continuous process for improving the quality of student learning at Excelsior College. The IAPSL is intended for faculty, staff, students, alumni, and others who share an interest in Excelsior learners. The plan reflects a culture that values learning, data-driven decisions, and works to continuously improve student learning and is underpinned by the organization’s philosophy, vision, and mission.

### Mission

Excelsior College provides educational opportunity to adult learners with an emphasis on those historically underrepresented in higher education. The College meets students where they are—academically and geographically, offering quality instruction and assessment of learning.

### Vision

Excelsior College is a provider of choice for adults seeking access to higher education and academic success, and it is a model for addressing societal and workforce needs.

## Institutional Effectiveness Plan

The IAPSL is one component of Excelsior College’s Institutional Effectiveness Plan, a plan to ensure that the College is effective at achieving its mission and preparing for the future. The Institutional Effectiveness Plan articulates how processes to assess student learning are related to strategic planning and the assessment of non-academic units. Figure 1 visualizes the Institutional Effectiveness Plan and the relationships between the IAPSL, the Strategic Plan, and the Operational Assessment Plan.

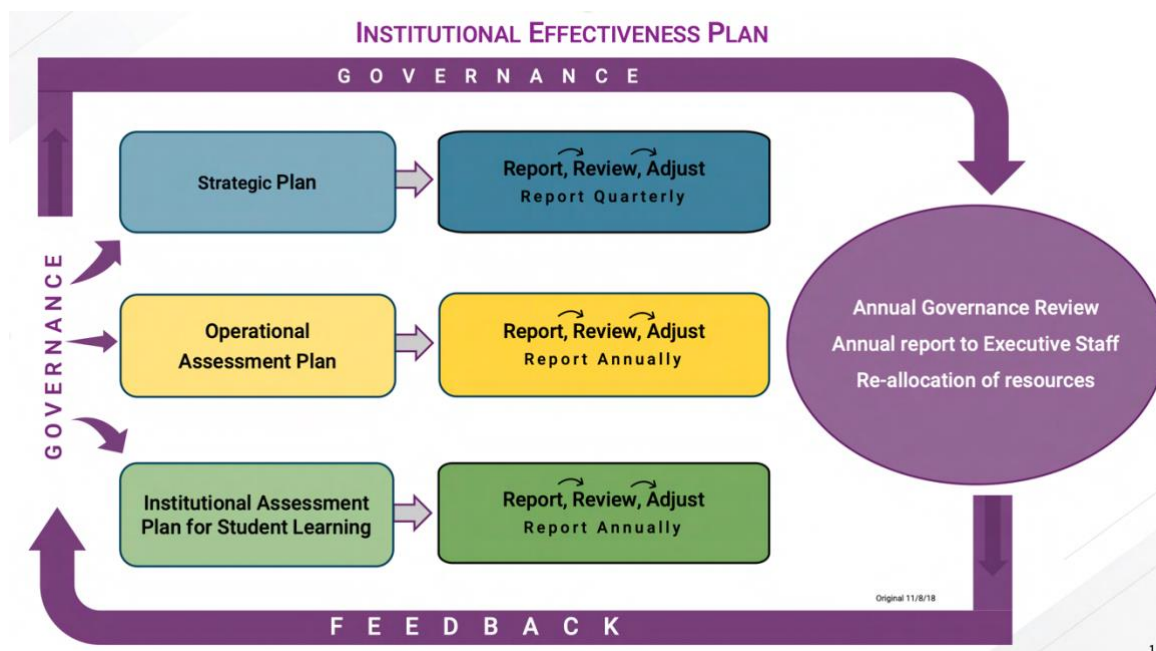


Figure 1: Excelsior College Institutional Effectiveness Plan

### **Fulfilling the Promise: Excelsior College Strategic Plan 2020–2023**

Congruence between assessment plans and the College’s strategic plan is assured through participation by the senior academic staff, faculty, and other staff members in the strategic planning process. The College’s strategic plan, *Fulfilling the Promise*, was created through a collaborative process comprising staff and faculty members representing all levels and functional areas of the institution as well as the board of trustees. *Fulfilling the Promise* reflects the collective input and values of the Excelsior College community and presents a dynamic and continuous process to meet institutional priorities and emerging opportunities.

Changes to teaching and learning processes are routinely informed by findings from outcomes assessment processes. School leaders use assessment results to support budgetary requests and in their decisions to create, modify, or phase-out courses, programs, or concentrations. The relationship between the use of assessment results and the allocation of budget resources is facilitated through these participatory strategic planning and evaluation processes.

### **Operational Assessment Plan**

The Operational Assessment Plan provides the academic, administrative and academic support units with a framework for engaging in continuous improvement and documenting unit processes.

## Guiding Framework and Principles

### Academic Ecosystem

Excelsior's academic ecosystem is positioned to reflect our philosophy that what students know is more important than where or how they learned it. Students earn credit toward a graduate or undergraduate degree through four different approaches: 1) Excelsior College courses; 2) the transfer and aggregation of previously earned credits; 3) credit-bearing exams; and 4) prior learning or portfolio assessment.

### Guiding Principles for Learning Assessment

The Assessment Working Group ([Appendix A](#)), a group of staff, faculty, and administrators, works to create dialogue about assessment practices, processes, findings, and policies. The College adheres to the American Association for Higher Education's (AAHE, 1997) "Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning" ([Appendix B](#)) as guiding principles for assessment processes. Additionally, Excelsior community members synthesized the following principles to guide academic assessment processes and practices:

- What you know is more important than where or how you learned it and prior learning can be effectively measured through valid and reliable assessment methods.
- Assessment must be focused on the essential learning outcomes determined by the faculty.
- Since students earn credits in a variety of ways and from a variety of institutions, end-of-program assessments are vital measures of student learning.
- The extent to which learning outcomes are achieved is the most important measure of institutional performance.
- Sufficient resources must be devoted to meaningful assessment activities.
- Stakeholder involvement is essential for cultivating and sustaining a culture that consistently moves beyond reflection to action.
- Assessment processes must be collaborative and participatory.
- Assessment results should inform quality improvement initiatives.
- Clear expectations are necessary for improving accountability.
- Multiple perspectives give the most complete picture of institutional performance.
- Assessments must be conducted in a non-threatening environment, and effective measures are fair and ethical.
- Learning outcomes must be achievable and measurable within reasonable timelines.
- Academic program evaluation allows for evidence-based judgments and data-driven decision making.

## A Process for Continuously Improving Learning

Academic outcomes assessment processes at Excelsior are grounded in a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Learners create their own meaning and integrate new knowledge with past learning and experiences. Most Excelsior College students are adults who bring various academic and life experiences to the learning environment. Improvement processes help to ensure that curricula are relevant, rigorous, and that opportunities exist to help them make connections between their experiences and new learning. Students are expected to engage in at least two high-impact learning practices: the Excelsior Cornerstone course and a program-specific capstone course. Such practices engage learners by helping them to create their own meaning and integrate new knowledge with past learning and experiences. Therefore, assessments of learning are designed to measure deep conceptual knowledge as well as application of information to the selected discipline.

### Four-Step Assessment Process

Academic assessment at Excelsior consists of a four-step process of: 1) “establish[ing] clear, observable expected *goals* for student learning; 2) ensur[ing] that students have sufficient *opportunities* to achieve those goals; 3) systematically gather[ing], analyz[ing], and interpret[ing] *evidence* of how well student learning meets those goals; and 4) us[ing] the resulting information to understand and *improve* student learning” (Suskie, 2018, pg. 8). This process is visualized in Figure 2 below.

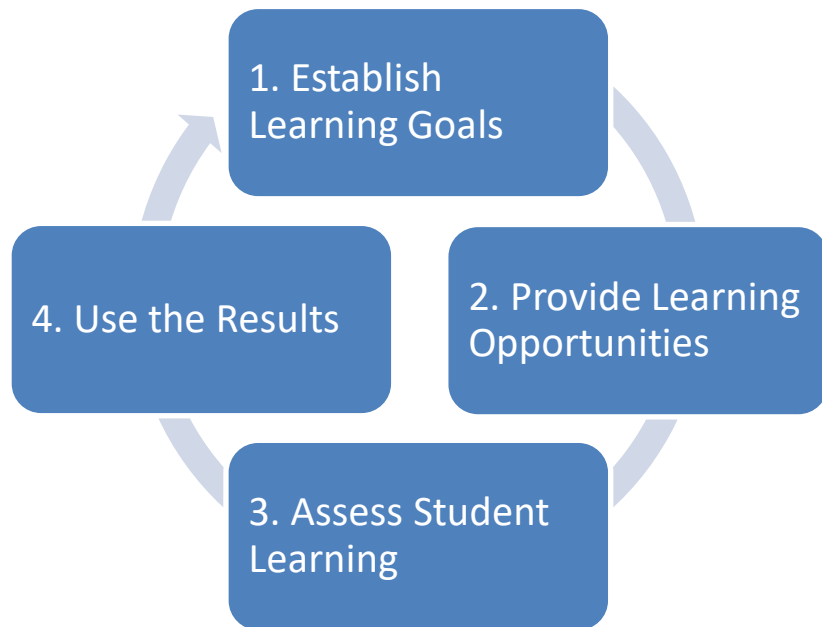


Figure 2: Continuous Four-Step Assessment Cycle (Suskie, 2018, pg. 9)

To implement the IAPSL, Outcomes Assessment (OA) Unit staff (see [Appendix G](#)) facilitate assessment and continuous improvement practices and processes throughout the College using a participatory and collaborative process in which these staff support faculty, staff, and students in helping to improve the learning process. OA staff work in close collaboration with academic leadership and faculty to identify and track outcomes that help create understanding, confirmation, and improvement of student learning.

Program learning outcomes are established by faculty program directors. Deans or their designees oversee faculty who develop and facilitate courses that include assessments of student learning. OA Unit staff work with faculty to develop and refine program learning outcomes and approaches to assess student learning. Each school dean is responsible for ensuring that assure that sources of credit are congruent with program requirements and learning outcomes. End-of-program assessment approaches, such as assessments embedded in capstone experiences, are an important means for measuring the extent to which students are able to demonstrate program learning outcomes. All programs incorporate some form of capstone experience.

Figure 3 depicts a localized interpretation of Huba & Freed's (2000, pg. 108) "designing backward and delivering forward" plan for designing and delivering learning outcomes approach. This approach is used by Excelsior College faculty and administrators when establishing and evaluating intended learning goals—program learning outcomes and career competencies. This approach allows for a connection to the organizational mission when focusing on outcomes related to student learning and institutional performance. Courses and examinations are created by aligning outcomes from highest specificity (e.g., module outcomes) to broadest (e.g., institutional competencies). Intended institutional learning outcomes refer to the College's Institutional Career Competencies, a broad set of expectations of learning which encompass learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels. General Education and Graduate Student Career Competencies are the institution's expectations of learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

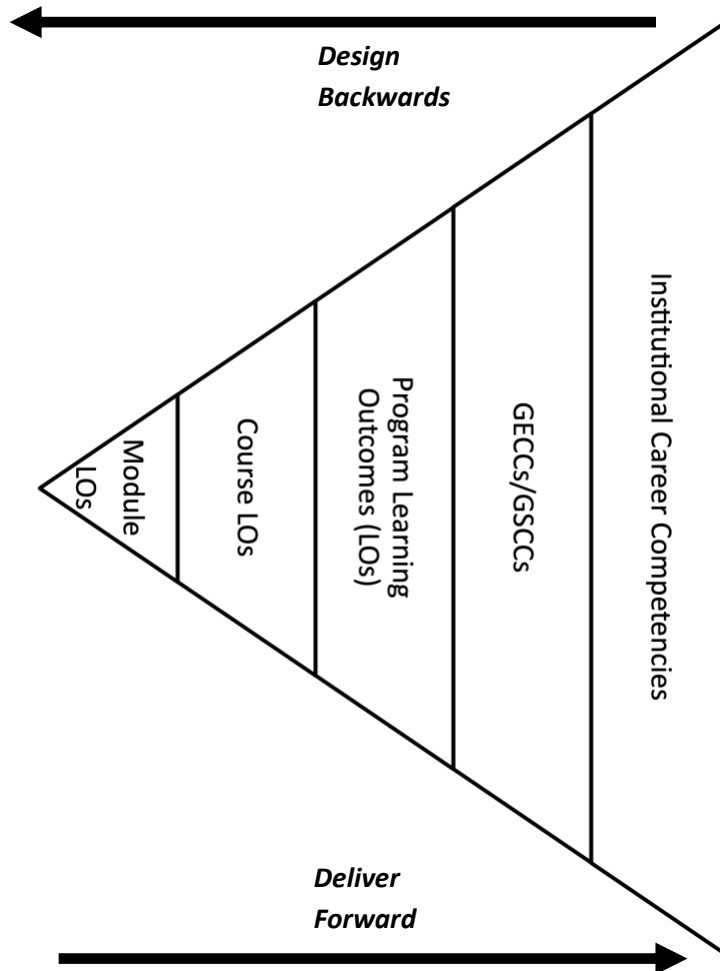


Figure 3: Plan for Designing and Implementing Learning Outcomes (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 108)

Academic Assessment at Excelsior occurs at multiple levels, in every course, academic program, and at the general education and institutional levels. Assessment activities are documented and stored in Nuventive Improve, an assessment management system.

### Academic Assessment at the Institutional Level

The College has three competencies, or learning outcomes, at the institutional level.

Upon completion of a degree program, students should be able to:

1. Apply appropriate and professional communication skills (Communication).
2. Explain different ethical courses of action (Ethics).
3. Locate, synthesize, and analyze relevant information, evaluate alternatives, and make rational conclusions (Critical Thinking).



Academic programs are designed to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate the achievement of these competencies throughout their curriculum. The design of courses begins with an understanding that these competencies are the foundation of Excelsior curricula. These competencies summarize broadly the skills and abilities which are most important to Excelsior graduates. The Institutional Career Competencies (ICCs) are aligned to the GECCs and GSCCs. The process for assessing these competencies is described below.

## General Education Assessment

Excelsior College’s general education assessment process is focused on improving the overall effectiveness of the curriculum and helping to make transparent the skills and abilities students take away from their Excelsior experience. General education assessment is course-embedded, faculty-driven, and improvement focused.

Student learning assessment is based on student work or performance on exams. Courses that meet general education requirements are aligned to the GECCs addressed in the course. GECCs are listed in [Appendix C](#). Faculty design or identify assignments that align with GECCs. Assignments are chosen by faculty program directors and include written exams, oral presentations, objective assessments, essays, capstone projects, or other assessments of student learning. When courses are taught, faculty members assess the extent to which students have demonstrated competence of the GECCs in the course.

Faculty groups have developed specific criteria for each GECC to guide instructional faculty in categorizing students into three competency levels: *below expectations*, *meets expectations*, and *above expectations*. The criteria developed to assess GECCs are articulated in the GECC Rubrics. The GECC Rubrics were informed by the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics (Rhodes, 2010).

	<b>Above Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Below Expectations</b>
5.1. Explain how social, political, economic, or cultural forces shape relations between individuals and groups around the world.	Significantly and fully explains how cultural, social, political, or economic forces shape individual and group relations. Uses multiple examples from a global context and relates them to those forces in a unique and insightful way.	Adequately and correctly explains how cultural, social, political, or economic forces shape individual and group relations. Uses examples from a global context and relates them to those forces at an acceptable level.	Offers little to no coherent explanation of how cultural, social, political, or economic forces shape individual and group relations. Does not use adequate examples from a global context or relate them to any of those forces at an acceptable level.

Each time students complete courses aligned with the GSCCs, student learning data is collected and reported using a shared rubric embedded in the Canvas Learning Management system. This information is used to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum, not faculty performance.

Responsibility for college-wide assessment and reporting of Graduate Student Career Competencies lies with groups of faculty or staff responsible for graduate student learning. OA unit staff members support faculty groups in assessment efforts. The College Curriculum Council (CCC) works with OA staff members and faculty to compile and evaluate data from these assessments. Assessment results are recorded in the Nuventive system. The assessment process is intended to be dynamic and open to ongoing modifications or improvements as needed.

Each year, faculty will review samples of student work from courses which meet graduate-level requirements. The review may lead to changes in the performance criteria, curriculum, androgogical technologies, or instruction. The review may also inform future course development or professional development for faculty and staff.

Assessment in the seven general education competency areas follows the cycle of assessing student achievement of each competency, evaluating the results, and taking actions in the form of instructional and/or curricular review and change. The following timetable depicts the assessment of general education career competencies.

	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023
<b>GECC 1. Oral and Written Communication</b>	A		
<b>GECC 2. Mathematical and Scientific Problem Solving</b>			A
<b>GECC 3. Information Literacy</b>	A		
<b>GECC 4. Cultural Diversity and Expression</b>		A	
<b>GECC 5. Global Understanding</b>		A	
<b>GECC 6. Ethics</b>			A
<b>GECC 7. Professional Presence</b>			A

*Figure 4: Timetable for General Education Assessment*

A = Assess

## Assessment of the Graduate Student Career Competencies

Excelsior College’s Graduate Student Career Competencies (GSCCs) are a group of skills and abilities expected for all graduate students to achieve upon graduation. GSCCs are listed in [Appendix D](#). Assessment of the GSCCs is focused on improving the overall effectiveness of the curriculum and helping to make transparent the skills and abilities students take away from their Excelsior graduate experience. General education assessment is course-embedded, faculty-driven, and improvement focused.

Student learning assessment is based on student work. Courses that meet general education requirements are aligned to the GSCCs addressed in the course. Faculty design or identify assignments that align with GSCCs. Assignments are chosen by faculty program directors and include written exams, oral presentations, objective assessments, essays, capstone projects, or other assessments of student learning. When courses are taught, faculty members assess the extent to which students have demonstrated competence of the GSCCs.

Faculty groups have developed specific criteria for each GSCC to guide instructional faculty in categorizing students into four competency levels: *developing*, *approaching expectations*, *meets expectations*, and *exceeds expectations*. The criteria developed to assess GSCCs are articulated in the GSCC Rubrics. The GSCC Rubrics were informed by the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics.

	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>3.1 Develop evidence-informed innovative processes, practices and/or solutions.</b>	Designs and fully integrates evidence-informed innovative processes, practices, and/or solutions into a clearly defined and executed measurable plan.	Develops evidence-informed innovative processes, practices and/or solutions. Identifies a clear measurement plan to evaluate success of the process, practice, and/or solution.	Attempts to develop evidence-informed innovative processes, practices and/or solutions could have been stronger, more relevant, or further developed. Measurement plan needs refinement to evaluate success of the process, practice, and/or solution.	Attempt lacks evidence and/or innovative processes, practices, and/or solutions. Measurement plan is not measurable, realistic, or attainable.

Each time students complete graduate courses aligned with the GSCCs, student learning data is collected and reported using a shared rubric embedded in the Canvas Learning Management system.

## Assessment at the Program Level

The faculty for each program establishes the program learning outcomes. Deans or their designees oversee faculty who develop and facilitate courses that include assessments of student learning. OA staff work with faculty to develop and refine program learning outcomes, course outcomes, and course-level assessments. Ultimately, the dean of each school is accountable to assure congruence between sources of credit (e.g., Excelsior College-developed courses, CLEP, transfer credits from courses) with program requirements and learning outcomes. End-of-program assessments, such as capstone requirements, are an important means for measuring achievement of program learning outcomes. Currently, all schools include capstone courses for all associate and baccalaureate students. For students admitted to the associate degree in nursing program before January 1, 2021, the curriculum includes a capstone assessment, the CPNE. The master's programs have appropriate exams, thesis, or course-based approaches for assessment of program learning outcomes.

In accordance with Excelsior's Program Evaluation Policy, each academic program engages in a program evaluation processes every five-to-seven years. Programs with professional accreditation must demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes through a process of ongoing program evaluation and self-study. OA units staff work with external curriculum reviewers to gather, document, and analyze evidence required for program quality improvement and accreditation processes. During reviews, internal faculty and external reviewers evaluate program rigor and coherence and identify areas of strength in the curriculum and areas of improvement.

Annual assessment plans are completed by the faculty program director for each program. Results from program-level assessments are entered in the assessment management system, Nuventive Improve, as are outcomes and assessment methods with corresponding results, along with any action plan that may be necessary ([Appendix E](#)).

As part of the assessment cycle, if changes need to be made, the program improvement plans may include modifications to the following areas:

- Description of congruence between course learning outcomes and assessments of learning outcomes;
- Description of congruence between program learning outcomes, curriculum, and student learning program outcome assessments, e.g., capstones, portfolios, performance on licensure or certification examinations, other standardized assessments), as well as how validity and reliability of measures were ascertained;
- Measures of student achievement of learning and program outcomes over time (e.g., exit and post-graduation surveys);
- Information about program enrollments, persistence rates, graduation rates, and average time to program completion;
- Plan for improved pedagogical and assessment practices, based on self-evaluation.

## Assessment at the Course Level

Congruence between program learning outcomes, general education career competencies, graduate student career competencies, and required courses are documented in each program's curriculum map. Example curriculum maps are located in [Appendix F](#). These maps document where program learning outcomes or career competencies are assessed, introduced, and reinforced, and the assignment used to measure the outcome or competency.

## Assessment Using Credit by Exam

Mechanisms to assure congruence between program outcomes and examination content use the College's program-level curriculum maps. In the case of credit-bearing exams, exam objectives are aligned to the appropriate program learning outcomes or general education career competency.

## Additional Assessments Related to Student Learning

Several additional measures that are conducted regularly support the assessment of student performance to inform curriculum development and improvement. Measures related to student satisfaction and learning include:

- Measures of student satisfaction, i.e., student responses to end-of-course evaluations, post-graduation surveys at exit and one-year following graduation, and the Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL).
- Results of licensing exams.

## Using Results to Improve Learning

Data from measures of organizational strategic goals related to outcomes assessment and institutional research are used as a basis for program and policy revisions. Evaluation data from aforementioned multiple and varied sources are systematically reviewed by the leadership of the Office of Analytics and Decision Support. Recommendations for program improvement are made when AAHE's and Excelsior's principles for assessment are not adhered to and when learning outcomes are not adequately measured or achieved. Data are shared with the Provost's Council and other relevant College governance councils for the purpose of collaborative planning aimed at continuous quality improvement of student learning. Plans for improvement and follow-up evaluation in targeted areas are established collaboratively with the deans and faculty.

Clear policies and structures for addressing outcomes assessment are vitally important to Excelsior College and are facilitated through full integration of the IAPSL in all schools.

## References

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Assessment Working Group 2020–2021

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## Appendix B: 9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

\*Taken from The American Association of Higher Education

- 1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.** Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only *what* we choose to assess but also *how* we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.
- 2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.** Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.
- 3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.** Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations—those derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.
- 4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.** Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way—about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.
- 5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.** Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the process of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.



- 6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.** Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment's questions can't be fully addressed without participation by student affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/ae, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.
- 7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.** Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "results"; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.
- 8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.** Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.
- 9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.** There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation—to ourselves, our students, and society—is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

## Appendix C: General Education Career Competencies

The current General Education Career Competencies were approved in the spring of 2019. The College Curriculum Committee (CCC) is the recommending and policy-making body for the efficient and academically sound implementation of the general education program. The CCC facilitates communication among the schools and the Provost's Council by assisting with addressing the broad strategic issues related to developing curriculum, emphasizing cross-school and cross-unit collaboration, avoiding duplication, and integrating course- and assessment-based approaches to address general education requirements.

The following are the seven general education competency areas and their corresponding competencies as they are written to students.

### **1. Oral and Written Communication:**

Communication serves many purposes in the workplace and in society—to inform, persuade, argue, educate, and entertain. While you pursue your program requirements, you can expect to improve the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective communicator, both orally and in writing, in your career field and in everyday life. The competencies in this area will help you speak and write effectively for a variety of audiences, utilize communication technologies appropriately, and apply the standard conventions of the context you are in.

*\*Competency 1.1 is achieved through your Cornerstone and Capstone requirements. Competency 1.2 is achieved through your Written English requirements.*

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

1. Present oral communication with appropriate content, organization, and delivery for the audience and purpose.
2. Deliver written communication with appropriate content, organization, syntax, mechanics, and style for the audience and purpose.

### **2. Mathematical and Scientific Problem Solving:**

Successful professionals encounter increasingly complex problems in the workplace that require them to come up with innovative solutions. To advance and succeed, professionals require stronger quantitative and scientific reasoning skills than ever before. Our curricula are designed to prepare you to exercise sound judgment using technology, knowledge, facts, and data. This ability will help you develop the ingenuity, problem solving, scientific and quantitative reasoning skills needed for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*\*Competency 2.1 is achieved through your Natural Science requirement. Competency 2.2 is achieved through your Mathematics requirement.*

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

1. Apply scientific knowledge and reasoning to make evidence-based decisions.
2. Apply mathematical concepts and reasoning to solve problems that involve quantitative information.

### **3. Information Literacy**

You interact with information daily in your personal and professional life, whether it is conveyed via websites, newspaper articles, television, social media, business communication, or scholarly writing. An abundance of information is created daily in the digital age, but not all of this information is equally credible or suitable to the task at hand. As you engage in your program of study, you will learn to be a discerning and effective information consumer, communicator, and creator who can use information in an effective, ethical, and legal manner.

*\*Competencies 3.1 and 3.2 are achieved through your Information Literacy requirement*

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

1. Locate and evaluate sources to meet an information need.
2. Cite sources using appropriate academic conventions.

### **4. Cultural Diversity and Expression**

Excelsior College takes pride in providing an inclusive, collaborative educational environment that is respectful of differences. This competency will help you develop a grounded understanding of the human condition and an appreciation of the variety of forms of human expression. In addition, this competency promotes a respect for cultural diversity, a desire for equity, and an awareness of social identity, for example race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, social class, religion, ability, and national origin. Achieving this competency will equip you to interact professionally with a diverse range of people, a skill that is highly valued by employers.

*\*Competencies 4.1 and 4.2 are achieved through your Humanities distribution requirement*

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

1. Analyze human thought, creative expression, or cultural representations within their contexts.
2. Explain the dynamics of social identity or cultural differences within interpersonal and societal relations.

### **5. Global Understanding**

Workers today operate in a predominantly knowledge-based global economy. To be effective thinkers and communicators they need an understanding of the global forces that have shaped and continue to shape human behavior and interactions. Through this competency, you will develop a better

understanding of your own community and the complex and diverse global communities within which we all exist. The skills and knowledge that you will gain will help you meet the changing demands of a globally interdependent world.

*\*Competency 5.1 is achieved through your Social Sciences/History distribution requirement*

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

1. Explain how social, political, economic, or cultural forces shape relations between individuals and groups around the world.

## **6. Ethical Reasoning**

Ethics are the principles that guide human behavior and a cornerstone of every field and profession. Employers need workers who can find innovative, ethical, and practical solutions to a wide variety of problems. Through this competency, you will learn to reflect and analyze positions and issues from a variety of ethical perspectives. This will equip you to make ethically-informed choices in your personal and professional life.

*\*Competency 6.1 is achieved through your Ethics requirement*

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

1. Explain different ethical positions in relation to a problem or issue.

## **7. Professional Presence and Self-Awareness**

Successful workers are not only proficient in their roles, but also aware of their own strengths and interests, and able to exhibit the behaviors consistent with the rules, norms, and expectations of a professional setting. Surveys of employers confirm that professional presence and self-awareness are important competencies in the people they hire. These skills and habits of mind will help you to manage your career, portray a positive impression in your career field, and solve workforce problems by employing emotional intelligence and self-awareness.

*\*Competencies 7.1 and 7.2 are achieved through your Cornerstone and Capstone requirements*

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

1. Develop a career planning strategy that incorporates your strengths, interests, abilities, and values.
2. Explain the norms and conventions of the workplace for a career field.

## Appendix D: Graduate Student Career Competencies

The Graduate Student Career Competencies were approved in the fall of 2020. The following competencies are the four graduate student competency areas and their corresponding competencies as they are written to students.

### 1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Leaders today operate in both regional and global environments. To be effective leaders in your profession, it is important to understand how social constructions of identity are shaped through cultural, legal, and political practices. Leaders across professions strive together for diversity, equity, and inclusion at individual, group, community, institutional, and global levels. Through this competency, you will explore the ways in which power dynamics influence stakeholder groups in your profession. Using real-world scenarios, you will examine ways to ensure diversity, inclusion, and equity within your organization and the profession through influence of social and political advocacy.

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

- 1.1. Address the disparities in power, equity, and inclusion that are experienced and perpetuated in society.

### 2. Ethical Leadership

Effective leaders have a strong sense of ethics and an ability to influence people and positive change because of their strong professional presence. They have a vision for what could be. They identify, implement, and evaluate innovative, inclusive, and practical ethical solutions to a wide variety of problems. Through this competency, you will hone your skills in making decisions under a variety of circumstances, persuading and influencing strategic change. You will guide diverse stakeholder groups in achieving your organization's mission and vision. As an ethical leader, you will use data, research, analytics, and/or financial information as you challenge assumptions and biases to address harms and injustices.

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

- 2.1. Apply leadership practices based on evidence that promote ethical, and collaborative sustainable change.
- 2.2. Justify decisions informed by ethical principles and disciplinary standards that address complex issues.

### 3. Innovation

Innovation involves seeking new approaches, processes, technologies, practices, and/or solutions that improve personal, community, and/or organizational performance and well-being. True innovators have the courage to take calculated risks to increase the chances of success. Through this competency, you will address real-world issues and develop creative solutions.

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

**3.1.** Develop evidence-informed innovative processes, practices and/or solutions.

**3.2.** Recommend strategies for leveraging technologies for organizational innovation and Improvement.

**4. Communication**

Effective communication and emotional intelligence are vital in the workplace, in our personal lives, and in society. Communication is multifaceted and includes the ability to negotiate, persuade, advocate, argue, inform, educate, and engage diverse groups, individuals, and/or organizations on a variety of issues. Through this competency, you will use real-world experiences and influence others using a variety of skills and modalities.

Upon graduation, you will be able to:

**4.1.** Confidently and professionally, apply multiple methods of effective communication for diverse audiences.

**Appendix E: Sample Program-Level Assessment Report Template**

Program Assessment Report: Four Column Report			
Outcomes	Method	Results	Action and Follow-Up
Outcome 1			
Outcome 2			
Outcome 3			

**Appendix F: Sample Program-Level Curriculum Map**

Curriculum Maps are located on Excelsior College’s [Sharepoint site](#).

Academic Program Name			
Outcomes	ABC*123	ABC*223	ABC*323
Outcome 1	I	R, A	R, A
Assignment		M8.1 Report	M6.1 Examination
Outcome 2	I, A	R	
Assignment	M7.3 Paper		
Outcome 3	I, A		R, A
Assignment	M8.1 Case Study Analysis		M7.1 Term Paper
Outcome 4	I	R, A	R, A
Assignment		M6.1 Recorded Oral Presentation	M7.1 Term Paper

**Legend:** A = Assessed; I = Introduced; R = Reinforce

## Appendix G: Outcomes Assessment Unit, Office of Analytics and Decision Support

The Office of Analytics and Decision Support recognizes the importance for stakeholder involvement to build commitment and improve education and therefore maximizes student and faculty participation in decision making. Excelsior does not view outcomes and institutional assessment efforts as the sole responsibility of the Outcomes Assessment Unit. Rather, the unit provides leadership, orchestration, and facilitation of the work of various stakeholders in decisions of quality at Excelsior. Excelsior College uses a centralized approach to the coordination of assessment initiatives. There is a centralized Outcomes Assessment Unit in which staff members work with faculty on coordinating student learning assessment efforts. An Assessment Working Group (AWG) comprised of personnel responsible for assessments within their school meets regularly. The working group discusses challenges in implementing assessment practices, considers possible solutions, and shares best practices related to assessment of learning.

Focusing on accurate and varied measures of student learning is a complex undertaking for an institution where many students transfer in the majority of the credits for their degree and meet program requirements in varied ways, that is, through a combination of course work and examinations.

