

**Student Learning Assessment Program  
Response to Summary Form  
Undergraduate Programs 2005**

Department: Biological Sciences

Category	Level*	Comments
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	Level 3, B.S. Biological Sciences	They are clear, measurable, and programmatic.
<b>How, Where, and When Assessed</b>	Level 2, B.S. Science w/ T.C.	Objective three is much more specific than this objective was last year. You may want to be similarly specific with objective 2. What is the content knowledge in the biological sciences that you wish majors to learn?
<b>Expectations</b>	Level 3, B.S. Biological Sciences	<p>The use of direct and indirect measures is good here—surveys, in-house labs and exams and an external, national exam. What percentage of students actually take the Major Field Test? You mention in Part Two that getting students to take the exam and to take it seriously is a problem, yet it seems to be embedded in your capstone course, so all students should be taking it. Is there a way to give students credit/points for taking the exam? The problems you describe are very common for those using standardized tests for which students are not graded. Sometimes it is helpful to discuss results and how you have used the information with current students throughout their time in your department—whether it is the MFT or the exit survey. If students understand how you use the information, sometimes they are more willing to participate. Show how their test scores and comments could change the future of a course or the whole curriculum.</p> <p>Using data from the Basic Skills and Certification exams is a good start for the direct measures of this plan. The measures for the third objective are still vague. You've listed where the assessment will take place, but not always what measures are used and collected for your assessment plan. You don't need to list everything that is graded for the class—just what artifacts are used for assessment purposes. Are any indirect measures used for this program?</p> <p>Expectations have clearly been established, and most importantly, data is analyzed to determine if students are meeting expectations. Has the department agreed on what a C on lab reports means? That is, is the grade connected to primary traits that may be compared across sections and across years? If not, I would encourage you to have that discussion. Primary traits can then be linked to the objectives you are assessing.</p> <p>You may want to be more specific about your expectations as you collect and analyze data. That is, after 3 years worth of data, you may be able to say what percentage will excel and will exceed expectations,</p>

\* Levels should not be interpreted as grades or scores; they are stages of implementation based on patterns of characteristics described by North Central Association/Higher Learning Commission. These levels are approximations based on the information provided in the summaries. Please refer to the checklist on the assessment web site ([www.eiu.edu/~assess](http://www.eiu.edu/~assess)) for the Primary Traits listed for each level.

	Level 2, B.S. Science w/ T.C.	<p>what percentage will meet them, and what will fail to meet them.</p> <p>I would caution you to understand that grades often encompass many issues/criteria that do not speak to the objective, so they do not often provide good assessment data. Are the grades connected to primary traits that can be compared across sections and across time? The expectations for objectives 1 &amp; 2 are specific.</p>
<b>Results</b>	Level 3, B.S. Biological Sciences	This program is clearly collecting and analyzing results. The descriptions in Part Two and Part Three of the summary of what has been done and what is planned show that the faculty are engaged in determining what their students know and how to continually improve. Good report!
	Level 2, B.S. Science w/ T.C.	Data for state exams is collected, but it is not clear what assessment is in place for the third objective other than tracking course grades.
<b>How Results Will be Used</b>	Level 3, B.S. Biological Sciences	The assessment committee and chair have established an effective feedback loop. Areas of concern based on data have been identified and are being monitored as data is collected each year. Concerns are shared with the faculty and are reported and solutions to these concerns are discussed. I'll be interested to see what happens with the numbers next year and how you proceed with the internship supervisors. If you do not already do this, you may want to give students who intern a chance to evaluate their experience in the middle and at the end of the internship. That would help you gather data on which supervisors are successful. You may also want to invite supervisors to campus for a discussion session on internships, your expectations, and the feedback from the students.
	Level 2, B.S. Science w/ T.C.	The feedback loop for this plan is not specified in terms of BIO 3400. Are the students in the teacher certification track assessed in any way in the same manner as those in the straight biological sciences track? There doesn't seem to be as much discussion of data from this program as from the B.S. without certification.