

George Mason University

AY 2019-2020

LAW : JD Law

Assessed Student Learning Outcome: Advocacy Skills

How was achievement of the student learning outcome measured? Discuss what work/assignment(s) was/were assessed and describe the instrument (rubric, etc.) or criteria (scoring sheet, exam answer key, etc.) that was used to measure learning.	Achievement of Student Learning Outcome 3 was measured using Performance Criteria B: "Students will demonstrate in writing the ability to propose and defend a solution to a legal problem or the ability to seriously evaluate an important legal question." The work/assignment(s) assessed were two Winter Term Writing Assignments completed in January 2020. Each day of the two day program, students were to complete a written assignment that required them to: read, understand, and evaluate cases (by identifying key components and synthesizing related cases); identify the legal issues, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant facts, develop a legal theory; articulate (in writing) the strengths and weaknesses in a client's position by analogizing to similar or favorable facts (and distinguishing dissimilar or unfavorable facts) and communicate their analysis effectively and appropriately in writing. The writing assignments that students produced were then assess in small group sessions with other students and a supervising faculty member. Students engaged in peer-review of the student work product with faculty guidance. Faculty were provided with sample answers in advance of the small group sessions and discussion guides (to prompt discussion and make sure students grasped the basic analysis and writing skills). Faculty and students were also given rubrics by which to evaluate and comment on student work product. Students used the rubrics to peer-review other students' written work and to also self-assess their own (so they could later compare their self-assessment under the rubric with their peer's assessment of their work).
Where did this assessment take place? Indicate the course and/or milestone (internship, exit interview, qualifying exam, thesis/dissertation defense, etc.).	The assessment took place in-person at the law school in a required Winter Term two-day session for all first-year law students. All first-year law students returned to campus early, prior to the official start of spring classes, to participate in the two day program designed to give students the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their legal writing: specifically, their analogical reasoning.
Who was primarily responsible for this assessment?	The Directors of the law school's first and second year Legal, Research, Writing, and Analysis (LRWA) program collaborated to create the two-day program. One of the Directors started the class each day to review the LRWA skills and introduce the writing assignments. Full-time faculty then led the small group guided discussion of of the problem where students engaged in peer-review with guidance from the faculty member. The Director closed each day reviewing the same writing exercise in a large group session, reviewing sample answers to exercise, and reflecting on the assignment. Students provided peer-review assessments directly to students in the small-group sessions, as did the supervising faculty member. Faculty were also asked to identify students who continued to struggle during the small group sessions so follow up support could be provided in the spring semester.
How many students were assessed?	All first-year law students were assessed (approximately 140)
What is the achievement target for this assessment?	The target of the assessment was to have all students be able to engage effectively in legal reasoning - more specifically, the ability to demonstrate in writing the ability seriously evaluate an important legal question.
Supporting Documentation (Attach rubrics, scoring sheets, or exam questions)	Peer Review Day 1.docx Peer Review Day 2.docx (supporting documentation included in assessment plan)
Is this a written communication outcome?	Yes
Is this an OSCAR/undergraduate research outcome?	No
Findings: What are the results of the assessment of this student learning outcome?	The finding of the assessment was that all students were able to engage effectively in legal reasoning (demonstrating in writing the ability to seriously evaluate legal questions). The faculty involved, however, noted that some students struggled more than others through the process and, at the outcome of the two day program provided feedback to the LRWA Directors about the students who struggled and what aspects they recommended we provide additional support with.
Analysis of Results: Based on the results for this student learning outcome assessment, what are the major conclusions? Describe the strengths and or challenges in your program that impact these results. Be sure to note areas that will require special/continued attention.	The major conclusions of the assessment were that: (1) while all students demonstrated the ability to engage effectively in legal reasoning, some students struggled more than others making them candidates for individualized follow-up assistance / academic advising; and (2) to the extent faculty were able to identify common areas where some students struggled more than others, there may be additional opportunities during first-year orientation and students' required first year courses where certain aspects of legal reasoning can be reinforced. The areas that were identified for additional reinforcement are: identifying rules; synthesizing cases, and fact application.
Since the last assessment cycle, what improvements have been made to increase student achievement of this outcome? Improvements may include new assessment plans, processes, instruments, assignments, faculty training and or curricular changes.	Since the last assessment cycle, changes have been made to student orientation to introduce and reinforce basis aspects of legal reasoning. Individual meeting were also held with students identified by the program faculty as potentially benefiting from additional follow-up. There was a planned outreach to all first-year faculty as well, to better learn what student challenges/struggles with legal reasoning they observed in the classroom (so as to better inform decisions about other new initiatives) but the abrupt move to remote learning in March 2020 and student needs related to the pandemic put the outreach on hold for the time being.
RESPONSE REQUIRED: How will these findings be used to improve student learning and achievement of this outcome?	As mentioned previously, changes have been made to student orientation to introduce and reinforce basis aspects of legal reasoning. The findings will also be used as a starting point for additional follow up with first year faculty to better learn what student challenges/struggles with legal reasoning they observed in the classroom (so as to better inform decisions about other new initiatives). The findings reinforced the need to weave as many opportunities as possible into the first year for students to work on identifying rules, synthesizing cases, and analogizing facts.
What resources will be needed to make the planned improvement(s)?	We do not anticipate additional resources will be necessary to make planned improvements beyond input from first-year faculty.
Who is primarily be responsible for the improvement plan?	Associate Dean Annamaria Nields and Assistant Dean Christine Malone
What is the target date for implementation?	08/02/2021

Assessed Student Learning Outcome: Law and Economics

How was achievement of the student learning outcome measured? Discuss what work/assignment(s) was/were assessed and describe the instrument (rubric, etc.) or criteria (scoring sheet, exam answer key, etc.) that was used to measure learning.	We evaluated whether our students succeeded in learning four core concepts in law and economics: market structure, externalities, marginal cost/marginal benefit, and asymmetric information. These four concepts were selected as central to law and economics by the four teachers of Economics for Lawyers: Megan Stevenson, James Cooper, Murat Mungan, and Nuno Garoupa. To evaluate whether our students successfully understood these concepts we included two multiple-choice questions per concept in the final examination or the midterm. Megan Stevenson provided eight such questions to serve as a template; the other professors were free to either use those exact questions or use another question of comparable content and difficulty.
Where did this assessment take place? Indicate the course and/or milestone (internship, exit interview, qualifying exam, thesis/dissertation defense, etc.).	In-class midterm or final examinations in the Law & Economics course taken by all first year law students.
Who was primarily responsible for this assessment?	The professors teaching the course.
How many students were assessed?	139
What is the achievement target for this assessment?	70% proficiency or better.
Supporting Documentation (Attach rubrics, scoring sheets, or exam questions)	Learning Objectives in Law and Economics.docx
Is this a written communication outcome?	No
Is this an OSCAR/undergraduate research outcome?	No
This Student Learning Outcome was:	Met
Findings: What are the results of the assessment of this student learning outcome?	<p>for each of the four concepts across the different classes, as well as the individual scores per question and per class. Average across all four classes Market structure: 82% correct Externalities: 81% correct Marginal cost/marginal benefit: 79.5% correct Asymmetric information: 92.75% correct Murat Mungan Market structure: 100% (Q1, perfect competition) 88% (Q32, monopoly) Externalities: 50% (Q15, Coase theorem) 100% (Q19, externalities in general) Marginal cost/marginal benefit: 67% (Q12, Learned Hand formula) 50% (Q17, socially optimal precaution) Asymmetric information: 86% (Q21, adverse selection) 88% (Q20, moral hazard) Nuno Garoupa Market structure: . 81% (Q4, perfect competition/supply) . 96% (Q6, monopoly) Externalities: . 70% (Q30, general) . 70% (Q31, Coase) MC/MB . 100% (Q38, Learned Hand Formula) . 91% (Q45, social optimum) Asymmetric information . 94% (Q24, adverse selection) . 98% (Q25, moral hazard) Megan Stevenson Market structure: 92% (Q1, perfect competition) 19% (Q6, monopoly) Externalities: 85% (Q17, Coase theorem) 96% (Q40, externalities in general) Marginal cost/marginal benefit: 81% (Q28, Learned Hand formula) 77% (Q29, socially optimal precaution) Asymmetric information: 96% (Q37, adverse selection) 96% (Q38, moral hazard) James Cooper Market Structure: 100% (perfect competition equilibrium, M) 80% (monopoly, M) Externalities: 80% (property v. liability rules) 97% (tragedy of commons) MC/MB 93% (socially efficient level of activity) 77% (optimal precautions) AI 91% (moral hazard) 93% (adverse selection)</p>
Analysis of Results: Based on the results for this student learning outcome assessment, what are the major conclusions? Describe the strengths and or challenges in your program that impact these results. Be sure to note areas that will require special/continued attention.	The major conclusion is that the vast majority of students appear to be achieving the learning outcome being measured.
Supporting Documentation	Learning Objectives in Law and Economics.docx (supporting documentation included in assessment plan).
Since the last assessment cycle, what improvements have been made to increase student achievement of this outcome? Improvements may include new assessment plans, processes, instruments, assignments, faculty training and or curricular changes.	This was the first assessment cycle, and no shortcomings in achievement of this learning outcome were detected.
RESPONSE REQUIRED: How will these findings be used to improve student learning and achievement of this outcome?	Current student learning appears to meet or exceed goals. Similar assessment will be undertaken in future to ensure that learning outcome achievement remains stable.
What resources will be needed to make the planned improvement(s)?	None.
Who is primarily be responsible for the improvement plan?	Law & Economics professors
What is the target date for implementation?	08/22/2022