

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA SYSTEM

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC LEARNING COMPACTS

The Florida Board of Governors now requires that the universities publish an Academic Learning Compact for each baccalaureate degree program listed on the SUS Academic Degree Programs Inventory, the latest version of which may be found on the Provost's Office web site at <http://files.acad.usf.edu/edout/PROGINVENTORYFebruary2005.pdf>.

Departments are free to develop separate ALCs for tracks, concentrations, or specializations within their programs. At a minimum, however, the University must publish an ALC for each baccalaureate program on the Inventory.

ALCs must be developed and made available to students by the end of Fall semester 2005. The timeline for the initial implementation of ALCs is as follows:

- September 9, 2005 – Following Board of Trustees approval of the USF policy statement and guidelines on Academic Learning Compacts, departments/programs develop Academic Learning Compacts for approval by appropriate department committee (or college committee in the case of USFSP).
- October 15, 2005 – USF college deans forward Academic Learning Compacts (approved by the appropriate college committee) to the University Provost. USFSP college deans forward Academic Learning Compacts to the USFSP Regional Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
- October 21, 2005 – University Provost forwards Academic Learning Compacts to USF Undergraduate Council for review and approval. USFSP Regional Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs forwards Academic Learning Compacts to USFSP Faculty Council for review and approval.
- December 1, 2005 – Departments/colleges post Academic Learning Compacts to the USF Academic Learning Compacts web site or USFSP Academic Learning Compacts web site as appropriate.
- Spring 2006 – Departments/programs review and update their student learning outcomes assessment plans to ensure consistency with the outcome and assessment statements in the ALCs.

The student learning outcomes identified in the ALC must address three areas:

- Content/discipline knowledge and skills;
- Communication skills; and

- Critical thinking skills.

Department/program faculty may elect to include in the ALC the communication and critical thinking outcomes identified in the new General Education program:

- Written communication: Students will demonstrate well-organized, well-developed papers that reflect appropriate use of language. They will demonstrate specific knowledge, critical and analytical abilities, and appropriate use of technology consistent with assignment objectives.
- Oral communication: Students will demonstrate well-organized, well-developed oral presentations that reflect appropriate use of language and technology consistent with assignment objectives.
- Students will demonstrate critical thinking and analytical abilities, including the capacities to engage in inductive and deductive thinking and quantitative reasoning, and to construct sound arguments.

These learning outcomes will be assessed centrally as part of the General Education assessment process conducted by the Office of Decision Support.

Other departments/programs may prefer to identify program-specific outcomes in communication and critical thinking that will be assessed as part of the program-based assessment plan.

The Office of Decision Support (ODS) and the Center for 21st Century Teaching Excellence (C21TE) will provide assistance to faculty and departments with respect to the development of ALCs and the implementation of appropriately aligned student learning outcomes assessment plans. The assessment plans developed to support the ALCs will serve to fulfill the SACS requirements regarding assessment of student learning outcomes. Programs with professional accreditation should develop assessment plans that are consistent with the requirements of their respective accrediting agencies. No department or program should have in place more than one process for the identification and assessment of student learning outcomes.

ODS assessment staff and C21TE will also assist departments/programs in implementing the remaining requirements of the Florida Board of Governors' ALC policy directive, specifically evaluation systems to corroborate that the assessments measure student achievement against the expected core student learning outcomes, and a process for certifying that each graduate has completed a program with clearly articulated core student learning outcomes and that corresponding robust and effective assessment mechanisms have been used to ensure that graduates have met the criteria of the ALC.

The Office of Academic Affairs has approved a template for USF baccalaureate degree program ALCs that is based on one developed at the University of West Florida. The USF template is provided below. Sample content was extracted

with permission from the assessment plan of the Department of Criminology. Please note that the Communication and Critical Thinking categories have institutional (General Education-based) outcomes rather than program-specific ones. In addition to the sections on outcomes and assessments, departments/programs may wish to add to their ALC a section that addresses possible career or employment options for graduates.

ACADEMIC LEARNING COMPACT TEMPLATE

[Sample content added with permission of Department of Criminology]

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA SYSTEM

ACADEMIC LEARNING COMPACT

Department/Program: Criminology

Degree designation: Bachelor of Arts

Department/College Mission Statement:

Track/Concentration/Specialization (if applicable):

Identification of Core Student Learning Outcomes:

Graduates of this program should be able to do the following:

Content/discipline skills:

- Understand the structure of the US system of criminal justice.
- Be familiar with the theoretical explanations of crime and delinquency.
- Demonstrate knowledge of research methods used in the fields of criminology and criminal justice

Critical Thinking Skills

- Demonstrate critical thinking and analytical abilities, including the capacities to engage in inductive and deductive thinking and quantitative reasoning, and to construct sound arguments.

Communication Skills

- Create and deliver effective oral presentations
- Develop effective written presentations
- Contribute effectively to group discussions

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:

Through a variety of mechanisms, including examinations, capstone experiences and assignments, internships, and portfolio evaluations, the faculty of the Department of Criminology will measure students' achievement of the identified core learning outcomes. The results of the assessments will be used to improve student achievement and program effectiveness.

Career/Employment Options for Graduates:

(This section is optional.)