

**Geography B.A./B.S.
Degree Program
Assessment of Student Learning Plan
Kansas State University**

Check the box if your program's student learning outcomes have been modified since November 2003. If so, please email (apr@ksu.edu) or attach a hard copy to this document.

A. College, Department, and Date

College: Arts & Sciences
Department: Geography
Date: 29 October 2004

B. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plans

Chuck Martin, Associate Professor

C. Degree Program

B.A./B.S. in Geography

D. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates will:

1. be able to interpret maps and use them to solve geographic problems
2. be able to comprehend and associate geographic patterns at various spatial scales
3. understand the processes and patterns of the physical world and how human actions impact and interact with natural systems
4. be able to address, solve, and communicate spatial problems using geographic techniques, including geographic information systems (GIS)

Program SLOs	University-Wide SLOs (Undergraduate Programs)				
	Knowledge	Critical Thinking	Communication	Diversity	Academic/Professional Integrity
1. Map interpretation	X	X			
2. Geographic patterns	X	X			
3. Physical/human processes	X	X			
4. Geographic techniques	X	X	X		

2. How will the learning outcomes be assessed? What groups will be included in

the assessment?

These particular learning outcomes may be addressed directly through specific courses required of geography majors. Exam questions and student papers or projects graded based on specific rubrics (to reflect achievement of particular learning outcomes) will be used to assess the learning outcomes listed above. Specific exam questions will vary by course and semester, but efforts will be made to assure comparability. Lab exercises address student learning outcomes and will be used as direct methods of assessment. In the more advanced class (GEOG 508), students complete projects that relate to learning outcomes. Rubrics will be applied to written and oral student products.

Students enrolled in the courses specified below will be included in the direct assessments. Statistics for students majoring in Geography versus the general student population can be separated for the exam-based assessments, since the learning outcomes are specific to the program, and non-majors may be less motivated to achieve the learning outcomes we have specified for our majors.

With respect to indirect methods, graduating seniors are questioned in exit interviews (all graduating seniors are encouraged to take part in this). This is voluntary, however, so the group included will be all those graduating seniors that participate.

Learning Outcome	Direct Methods	Indirect Methods
1. Map interpretation	Exam question(s) GEOG 221 GEOG 220 ¹ Lab exercises GEOG 221 GEOG 220 ¹	Senior exit interviews
2. Geographic patterns	Exam GEOG 220 ¹ Lab exercises GEOG 220 ¹ GEOG 302	Senior exit interviews
3. Physical/human processes	Exam GEOG 221 GEOG 220 ¹	Senior exit interviews
4. Geographic techniques	Exam GEOG 508 Lab exercises GEOG 508 Projects GEOG 508	Senior exit interviews

3. When will these outcomes be assessed? When and in what format will the results of the assessment be discussed?

Direct methods will be used each semester in the appropriate courses, beginning Fall 2005. Exit interviews are done at the end of Fall and Spring semesters. Those faculty members gathering the information will summarize data in writing and distribute them to the department. Discussion of learning outcomes achievement levels will

¹The current GEOG 220 is expected to be replaced with GEOG 321 in the near future.

occur at least annually, in the Spring semester in department meetings. Additional discussions may occur at other times, depending on data availability.

4. What is the unit's process for using assessment results to improve student learning?

Annual consideration of assessments will include charting of all data for the prior three-year period. At these discussions, faculty will make decisions as to needs for curricular and/or course-specific modifications to address any identified shortcomings. It is anticipated that individual instructors will be able to identify needs and approaches for improving outcomes assessments in their own courses; these would be mentioned in departmental meetings, with a potential for discussions or recommendations based on other instructors' experiences.

Past curricular changes (e.g., additional offerings related to geographic information systems) have followed from indirect outcomes/needs assessments, including input received during senior exit interviews. The department continues to be open to making adjustments for the good of our students.