



**Annual Graduate Institutional Learning Outcomes
Assessment Report
2017-18 Academic Year**

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Executive Summary

This report provides a summary student achievement of institutional learning outcomes on key measures. Learning outcomes data is analyzed according to the academic year, which is July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. Methods of analysis for these learning outcomes looked at the capstone courses in order to determine mastery. In addition to looking at student achievement at the introduced and mastery level individually, a comparison of student achievement at the introduced and mastery levels was also done. Finally, student perception of their achievement of institutional learning outcomes was assessed through an alumni survey.

Results of the analyses in individual courses demonstrated student achievement of acceptable targets of proficiencies at the mastery level. In an analysis of student achievement for introductory levels as compared to mastery levels of institutional learning outcomes, students saw little change in performance for institutional learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 5 and their respective sub-outcomes. Institutional learning outcome 4 saw a decline in performance. This could provide an opportunity to review scaffolding across curriculum in terms of reinforcement of institutional learning outcomes within a student's major field of study. That being said, overall students perceived that they were mastering the institutional learning outcomes through their course work as indicated by the responses on an alumni survey.

Overall, it is recommended that each course undergo rubric calibration and norming activities. To support this initiative, analysis of assessment trends and variations between full-time and associate faculty would be beneficial. This could help determine areas of greatest need for calibration and drive a strategic approach to this initiative.

Introduction

Student learning is fundamental to the mission of Ashford University through clearly articulated learning outcomes occur at all levels and different points of the student experience and mission-driven assessment practices, essential to the achievement of the University's goals. The processes, measures, support systems, and activities related to the annual assessment of student learning at Ashford support a continuous cycle based on planning, implementing, assessing, analyzing the results, reporting, making institutional or instructional adjustments, and commencing the next cycle. The outlined assessment results for the undergraduate institutional learning outcomes in the 2017-18 academic year will be used to ensure that proposed and actual changes for the 2018-19 academic year are in clear alignment with Ashford's mission of providing high-quality, innovative educational programs.

Ashford University Mission Statement

Ashford University articulates its institutional identity and goals through its mission statement. This is the foundation on which the outcomes for student learning are developed.

The mission of Ashford University is to provide high-quality, accessible, affordable, innovative, educational programs that meet the diverse needs of individuals pursuing advancement in their lives, professions, and communities.

Graduate Institutional Learning Outcomes

With its commitment to achieving higher levels of student learning, Ashford University implemented a new set of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), which serve as a measurable set of expectations of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values, and competencies for undergraduate and graduate students in the 2016-17 academic year. These broad categories of competence enable students to be successful in their education and career and contribute to their broader communities and serve as a shared, university-wide articulation of expectations for all degree recipients.

2017-2018 Assessment Plan Findings

Institutional Learning Outcome 1 and Sub-Outcomes A and B

1. Synthesize core proficiencies in the major area of study in a manner appropriate to the degree level to important issues within the field.

1a. Utilize the relevant skills so that knowledge acquired can be utilized in a manner appropriate to the degree level in the major field and/or career.

1b. Provide scholarly support for conclusions related to issues associated with the field and/or career using discipline- appropriate reasoning.

Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in Capstone Courses

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

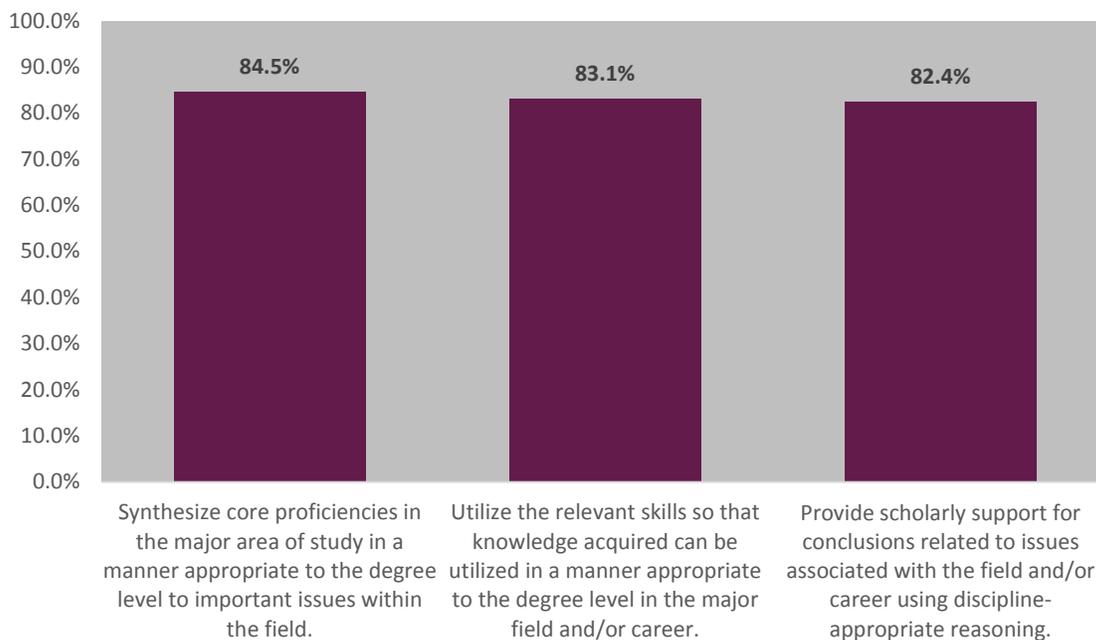
- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- *Ideal Target:* 90% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 1):

83.7% (23,732 out of 28,358) of student records received a basic, proficient, or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this GELO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- *Acceptable Target:* Exceeded
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

FIGURE 1: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN CAPSTONE COURSES



Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in a Program Entry-Level Course versus the Program Capstone Course

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

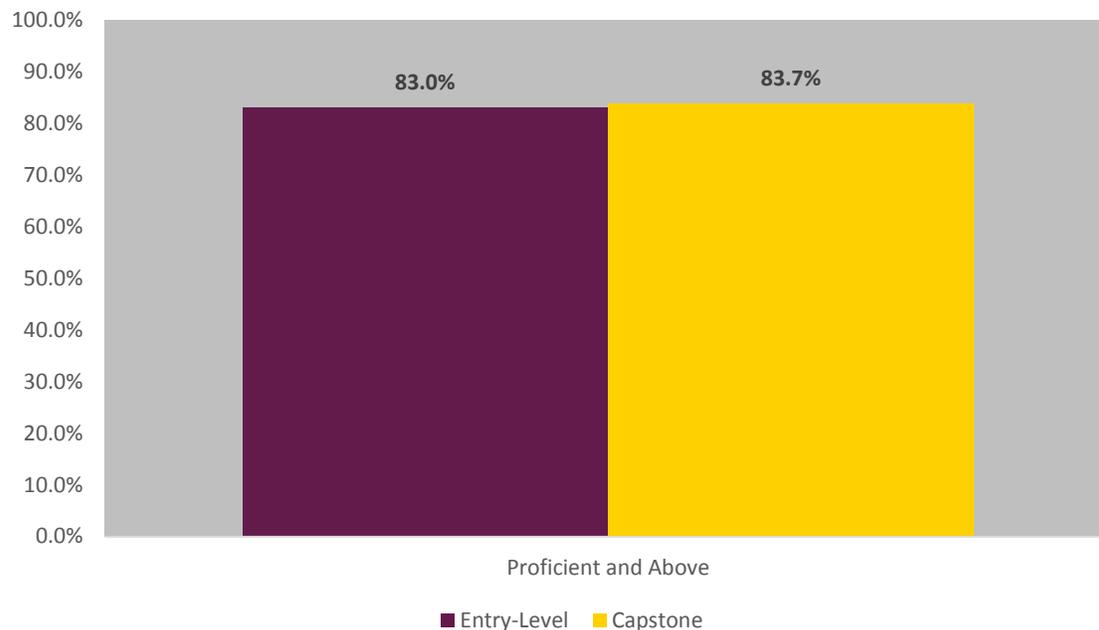
- *Acceptable Target:* The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be three percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- *Ideal Target:* The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be five percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 2):

Capstone students saw a 0.7 percentage point increase at the proficient or distinguished level on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- *Acceptable Target:* Not Met
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

FIGURE 2: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN PROGRAM ENTRY-LEVEL COURSE VERSUS PROGRAM CAPSTONE COURSE



Indirect Measure: Alumni Survey Completed at Graduation

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.
- *Ideal Target:* 90% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

Level of Achievement:

87.6% (1225 out of 1398) students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

- *Acceptable Target:* Exceeded
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

Institutional Learning Outcome 2 and Sub-Outcomes A through D

2. Integrate skills from core competencies in order to respond to civic, societal, environmental, and economic challenges.

2a. Apply the principles of critical thinking to contemporary issues.

2b. Exhibit clear, sustained, and coherent arguments and narratives in written and oral communication.

2c. Utilize information literacy skills appropriate to the graduate degree level, by contributing to, expanding, evaluating or refining the information base within the field of study.

2d. Construct and defend solutions to problems through qualitative or quantitative analysis and/or computational skills and practices.

Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in Capstone Courses

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

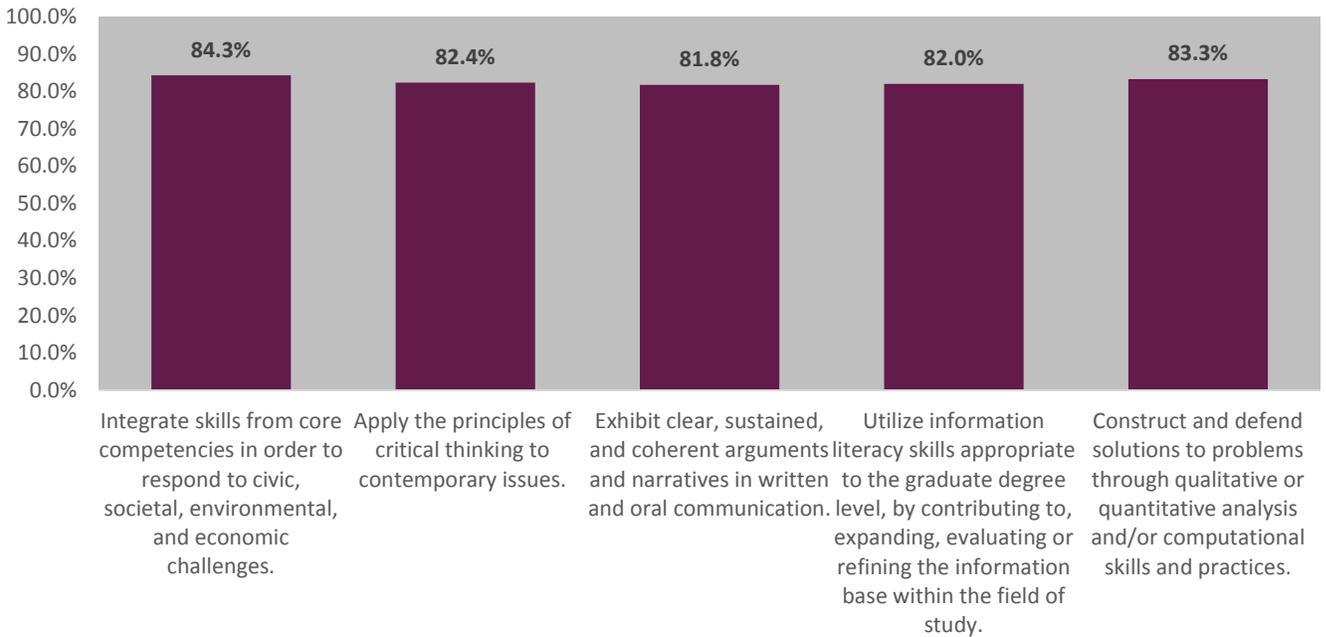
- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- *Ideal Target:* 90% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 3):

82.7% (47,291 out of 57,158) of student records received a basic, proficient, or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this GELO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- *Acceptable Target:* Exceeded
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

FIGURE 3: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN CAPSTONE COURSES



Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in a Program Entry-Level Course versus the Program Capstone Course

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

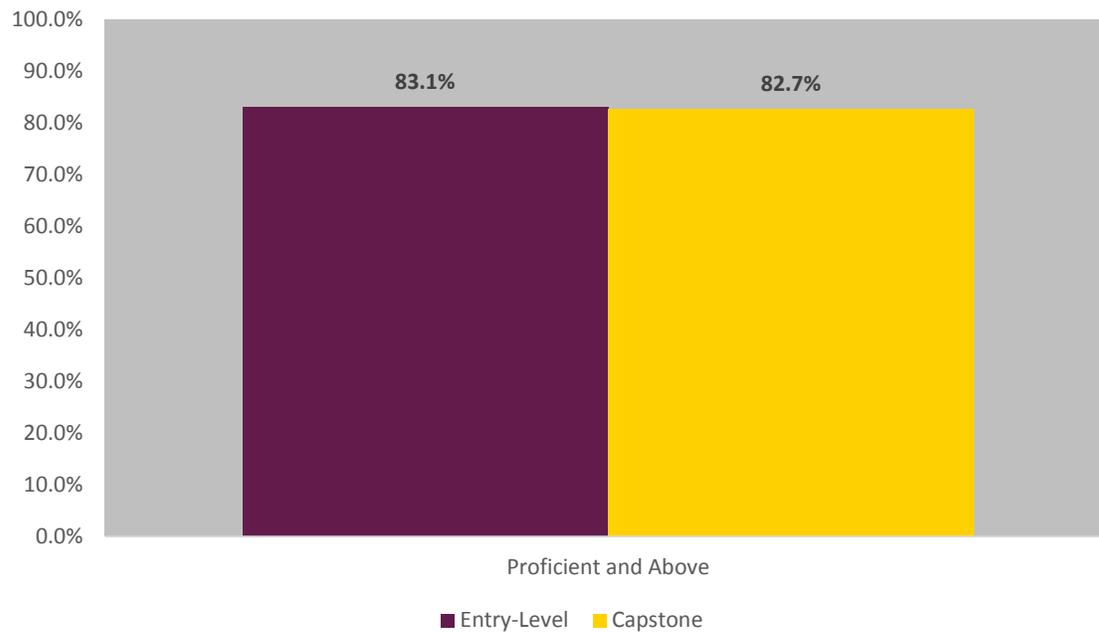
- **Acceptable Target:** The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be three percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- **Ideal Target:** The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be five percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 4):

Capstone students saw a 0.4 percentage point decrease at the proficient or distinguished level on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- **Acceptable Target:** Not Met
- **Ideal Target:** Moving Away

FIGURE 4: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN PROGRAM ENTRY-LEVEL COURSE VERSUS PROGRAM CAPSTONE COURSE



Indirect Measure: Alumni Survey Completed at Graduation

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

- **Acceptable Target:** 80% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.
- **Ideal Target:** 90% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

Level of Achievement:

88.7% (2050 out of 2310) students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

- **Acceptable Target:** Exceeded
- **Ideal Target:** Approaching

Institutional Learning Outcome 3 and Sub-Outcomes A and B

3. Synthesize theories and approaches to the discipline in solving complex problems.

3a. Develop problem solving framework and construct solutions to complex unstructured issues and problems through reasoned analysis, including consideration of diverse views.

3b. Apply knowledge of commonalities and differences across varying cultural, economic, and geographic populations as part of global citizenship.

Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in Capstone Courses

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

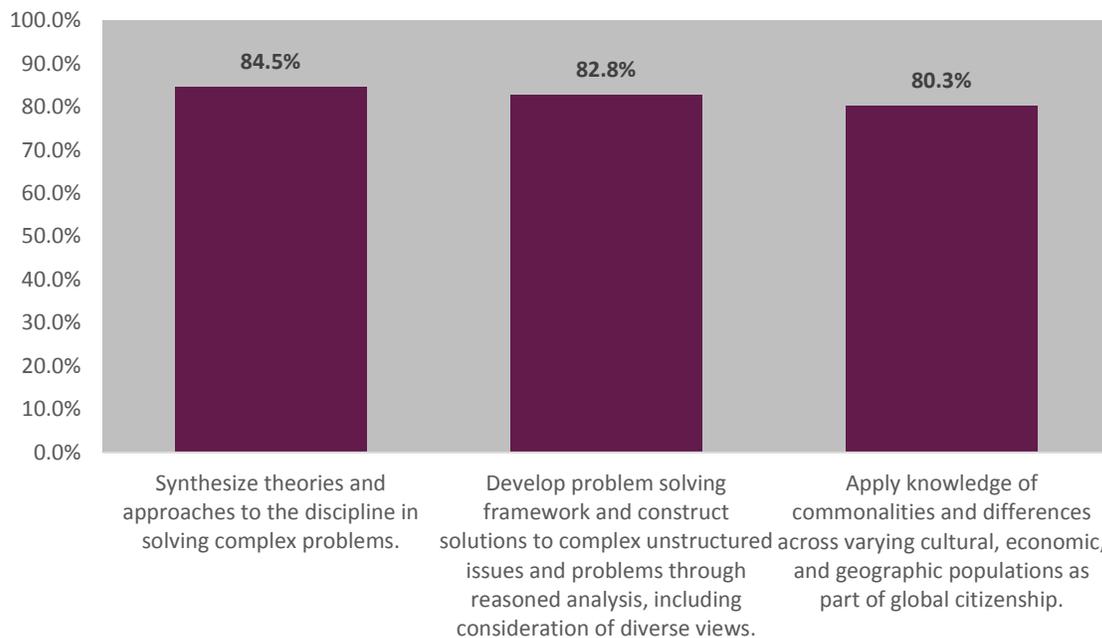
- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- *Ideal Target:* 90% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 5):

82.6% (27,684 out of 33,518) of student records received a basic, proficient, or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this GELO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- *Acceptable Target:* Exceeded
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

FIGURE 5: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN CAPSTONE COURSES



Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in a Program Entry-Level Course versus the Program Capstone Course

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

- *Acceptable Target:* The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be three percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- *Ideal Target:* The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-

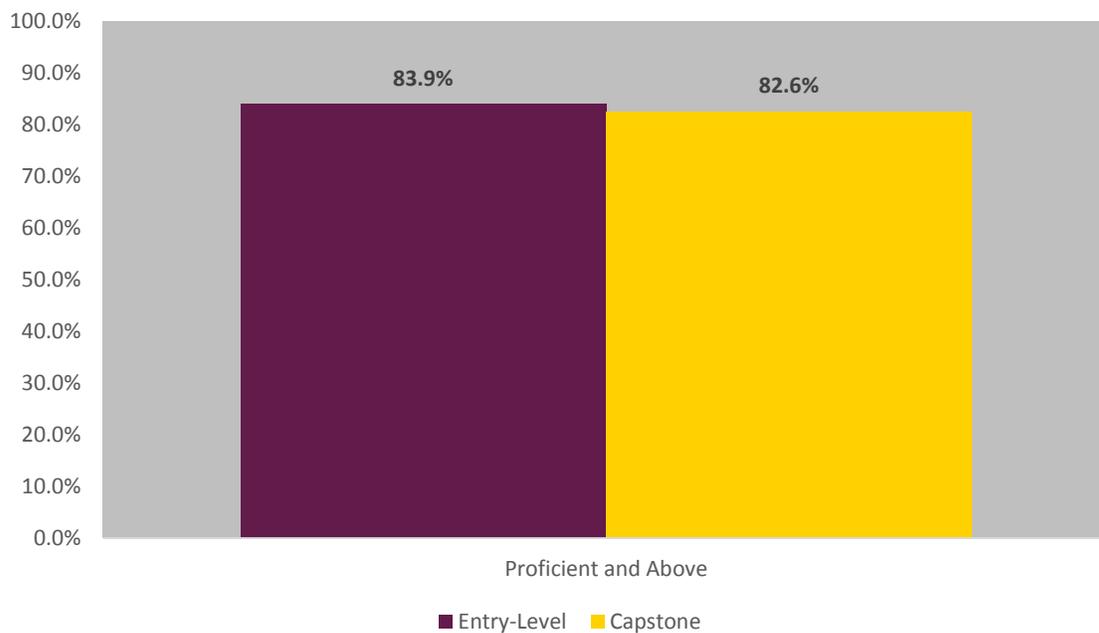
level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be five percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 6):

Capstone students saw a 1.3 percentage point decrease at the proficient or distinguished level on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- *Acceptable Target:* Not Met
- *Ideal Target:* Moving Away

FIGURE 6: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN PROGRAM ENTRY-LEVEL COURSE VERSUS PROGRAM CAPSTONE COURSE



Indirect Measure: Alumni Survey Completed at Graduation

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.
- *Ideal Target:* 90% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

Level of Achievement:

86.3% (1194 out of 1383) students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

- *Acceptable Target:* Exceeded
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

Institutional Learning Outcome 4 and Sub-Outcomes A through C

4. Construct ethical responses to contemporary issues.

- 4a. Evaluate key ethical issues and apply theory-based knowledge to the concerns of society.
- 4b. Demonstrate service to the community in responding to local, national, and global challenges.
- 4c. Evaluate the application of ethical standards in research and practice.

Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in Capstone Courses

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

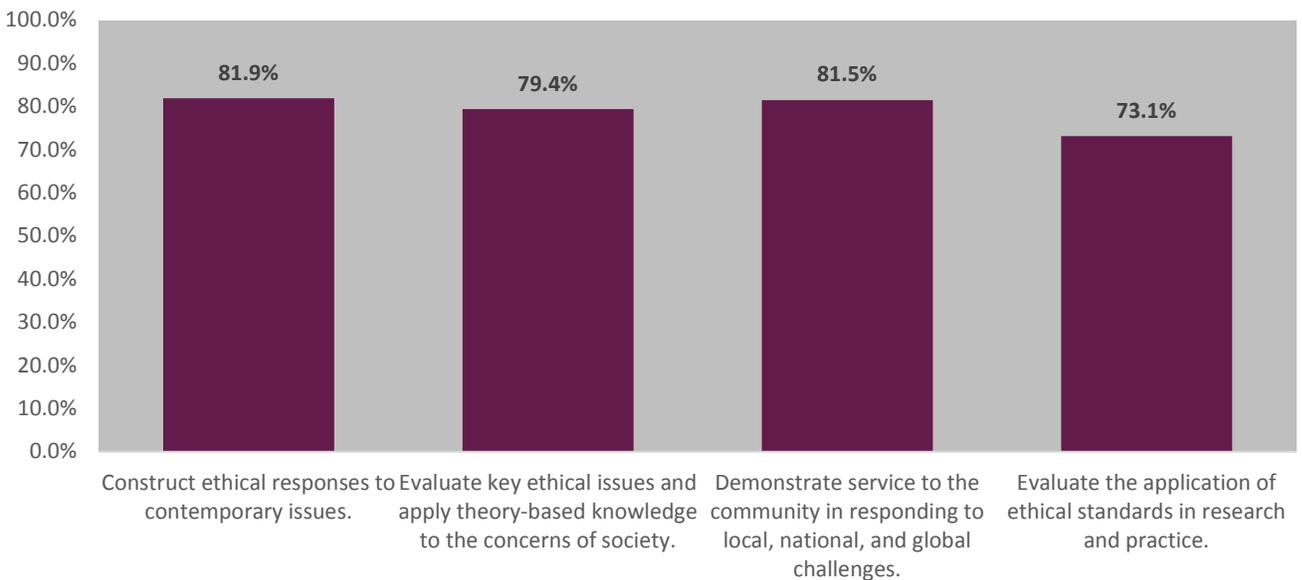
- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- *Ideal Target:* 90% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 7):

80.0% (22,598 out of 28,257) of student records received a basic, proficient, or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this GELO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- *Acceptable Target:* Met
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

FIGURE 7: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN CAPSTONE COURSES



Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in a Program Entry-Level Course versus the Program Capstone Course

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

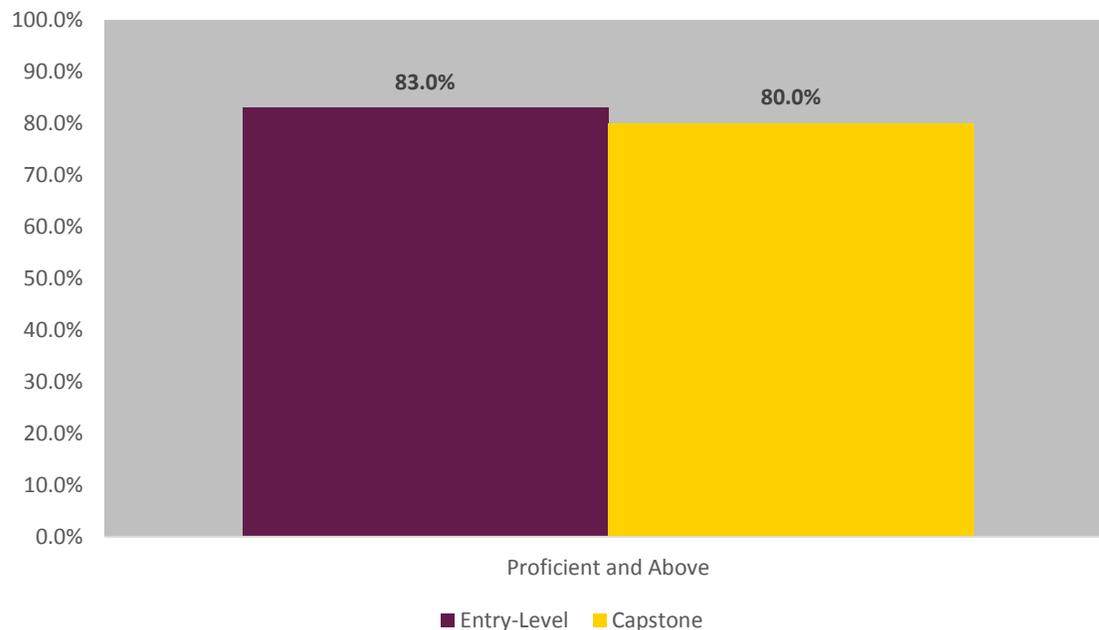
- *Acceptable Target:* The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be three percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- *Ideal Target:* The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be five percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 8):

Capstone students saw a 3.0 percentage point decrease at the proficient or distinguished level on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- *Acceptable Target:* Not Met
- *Ideal Target:* Moving Away

FIGURE 8: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN PROGRAM ENTRY-LEVEL COURSE VERSUS PROGRAM CAPSTONE COURSE



Indirect Measure: Alumni Survey Completed at Graduation

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where

5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

- *Ideal Target:* 90% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

Level of Achievement:

87.8% (1623 out of 1848) students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

- *Acceptable Target:* Exceeded
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

Institutional Learning Outcome 5 and Sub-Outcomes A through D

5. Demonstrate lifelong learning skills and self-reflective capacity by engaging in continuous professional and scholarly development.

5a. Apply discipline-specific content and skills to produce works appropriate to the field.

5b. Evaluate contemporary research within the field.

5c. Apply collaborative skills in teams to solve problems.

5d. Demonstrate professional dispositions and behaviors appropriate to the discipline.

Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in Capstone Courses

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

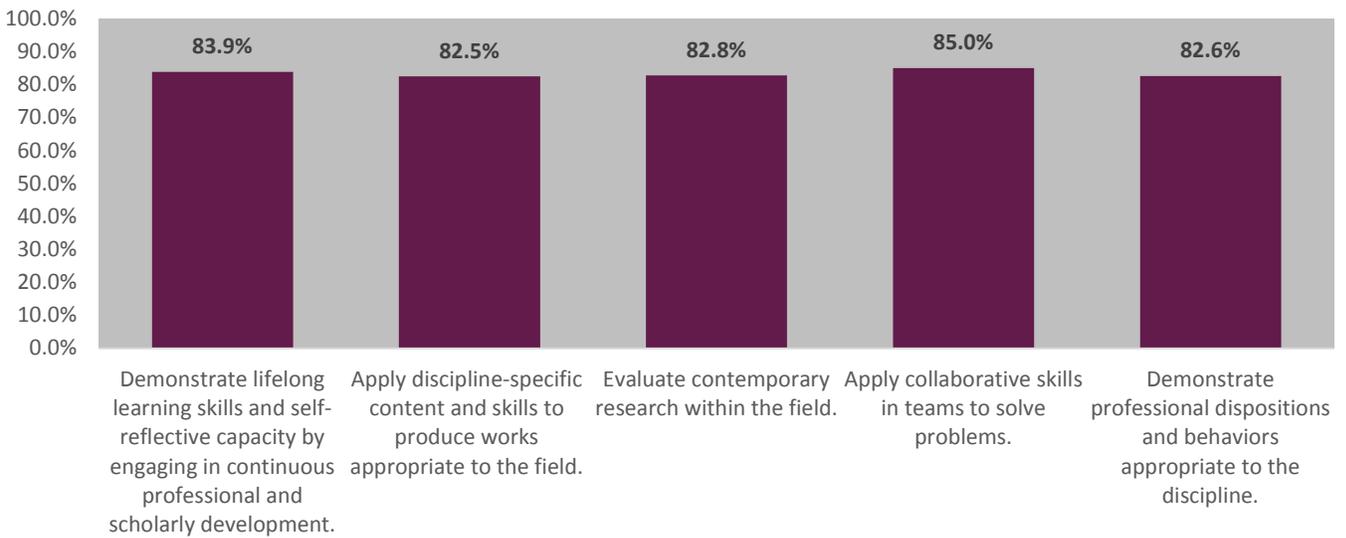
- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- *Ideal Target:* 90% of student records will receive a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 9):

83.2% (45,876 out of 55,137) of student records received a basic, proficient, or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this GELO, where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- *Acceptable Target:* Exceeded
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

FIGURE 9: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN CAPSTONE COURSES



Direct Measure: Summative Assessment in a Program Entry-Level Course versus the Program Capstone Course

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

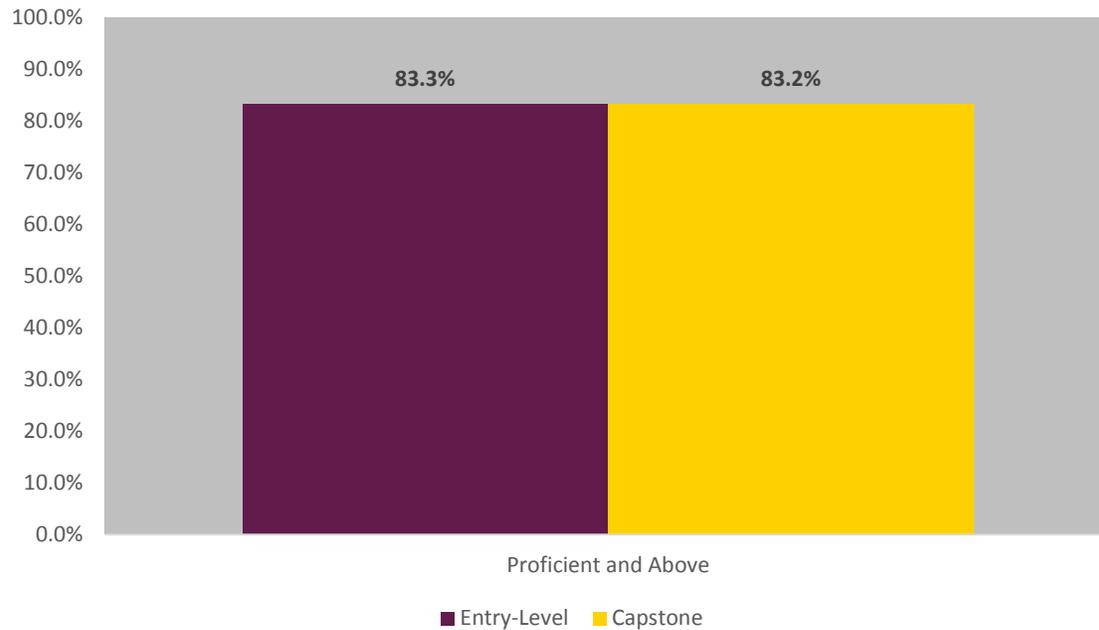
- **Acceptable Target:** The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be three percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.
- **Ideal Target:** The difference between the percent of capstone student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO and entry-level student records receiving a proficient or distinguished evaluation on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO will be five percentage points or greater, where the performance levels are Non- Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

Level of Achievement (Figure 10):

Capstone students saw a 0.1 percentage point decrease at the proficient or distinguished level on relevant content criteria mapped to this ILO where the performance levels are Non-Performance, Below Expectations, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished.

- **Acceptable Target:** Not Met
- **Ideal Target:** Moving Away

FIGURE 10: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN PROGRAM ENTRY-LEVEL COURSE VERSUS PROGRAM CAPSTONE COURSE



Indirect Measure: Alumni Survey Completed at Graduation

Expected Level(s) of Achievement:

- *Acceptable Target:* 80% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.
- *Ideal Target:* 90% of students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

Level of Achievement:

88.2% (2041 out of 2315) students will report high levels (4 or 5 on a five-point scale, where 5 is high) of learning on this outcome.

- *Acceptable Target:* Exceeded
- *Ideal Target:* Approaching

Recommendations for the 2018-19 Academic Year

Recommendation 1: Reinforcement of Institutional Learning Outcomes across Curriculum

A first step towards this scaffolding of learning could be presenting to program chairs at the graduate level the results of this assessment cycle and explore ways the institutional learning outcomes could be more integrated into existing curriculum or during the curriculum revision process.

Recommendation 2: Rubric Calibration and Norming

It is recommended that each course undergo rubric calibration and norming activities. To support this initiative, analysis of assessment trends and variations between full-time and associate faculty would be beneficial. This could help determine areas of greatest need for calibration and drive a strategic approach to this initiative. It is possible that the decline in student achievement at the end of a program is due to a perception that grading and assessment are the same. This can often lead to instructors assessing student work earlier in a program with slightly less rigor than they might at the end of a program. This is a common misconception and occurrence in the education field.