

Educational Programme Learning Outcomes Assessment Methodology

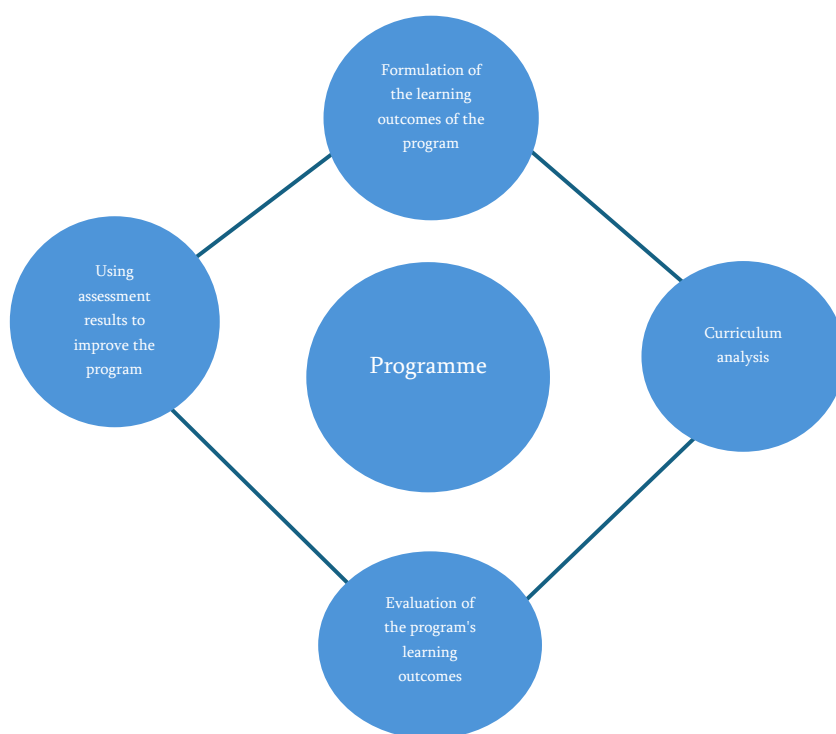


Alte University

Educational Programme Learning Outcomes Assessment Methodology

The assessment of learning outcomes of an educational programme is a consistent and continuous, participatory and transparent process, serving to identify the weak or strong points of the programme, to eliminate the weak points and develop the strong ones and as a result, to improve the programme.

The first stage of this process is the formulation of expected learning outcomes of the second stage is the construction and analysis of the curriculum, the third stage is the assessment of achieved learning outcomes, and the final stage is the use of assessment results to improve the programme.



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Formulation of Programme Learning Outcomes

In accordance with the goals of the programme, we must define the learning outcomes of the programme (see "Formation of Learning Outcomes of an Educational Programme and Additional Aspects").

Curriculum Analysis

After defining the learning outcomes of the programme, a curriculum must be built - a combination of educational courses/other components necessary for obtaining a higher education qualification (hereinafter - educational courses), which ensures students the opportunity to achieve learning outcomes. To ensure that this opportunity is real and that there is consistency between the learning outcomes of the programme and the curriculum, we must build a map of the formation of learning outcomes of the programme - a curriculum map. This map reflects which learning outcomes of the programme are developed in students through which educational courses. This map should be presented in the form of a table (see "Formation of Learning Outcomes of an Educational Programme and Additional Aspects," pp. 21-23). The table should reflect which learning outcomes are developed by which educational courses and at what level (e.g., introduction - deepening - reinforcement). It is important that all learning outcomes are developed at all three levels. At the same time, it is possible that one educational course introduces a certain learning outcome, another deepens it, etc., or one educational course introduces and deepens a certain learning outcome or deepens and reinforces it. One educational course can participate in the development of two or more learning outcomes.

The learning outcomes of each educational course should reflect a connection with the corresponding learning outcome of the programme (to clearly demonstrate the connection between the learning outcomes of the given educational course and the learning outcomes of the programme, a map of learning outcomes should be built in the syllabi). It is not mandatory that all learning outcomes of a given educational course relate to the learning outcome of the programme; the educational course may also have its own "own" learning outcome.

After the curriculum map is formed, it should be analysed to determine whether the curriculum ensures the development of the programme's learning outcomes in students, whether we have a mandatory educational course in the programme that does not develop any of the programme's learning outcomes or whether there is a learning outcome in the programme that is not developed by any educational course.

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Participating Subjects

Along with the programme director(s), the head of each educational course must be involved in the preparation and analysis of the curriculum map. Each educational course author/implementer must know what role the relevant educational course plays in the programme, what contribution it makes to the formation of the programme's learning outcomes. In the process of joint work, many important issues are better analysed, for example: what learning outcomes do we want students to achieve at the end of the programme, what is taught in which educational course and at what level, whether there are overlaps (duplications) in educational courses, or whether there are issues missing from the programme, the teaching of which is important to achieve the programme's learning outcomes; in what sequence this or that issue is taught in the programme, etc.

Assessment of Programme Learning Outcomes

The next stage is the formulation of a plan for assessing the programme's learning outcomes. The plan for assessing learning outcomes should reflect how the programme's learning outcomes will be assessed, when (at the end of the programme/at the end of the formation of the corresponding outcome), and with what frequency. Also, a target benchmark should be established for each learning outcome of the programme, reflecting the expectation of what level students will achieve for each learning outcome.

Programme learning outcomes must be assessed using both direct and indirect methods. The direct assessment method is the one through which it is checked whether the student has achieved the programme's learning outcome through the assignment performed by the student. This can be a test, essay, portfolio, simulation, assessment by the practice mentor, etc.

It is best when the programme's learning outcomes are assessed in those educational courses (the so-called major syllabi) in which, according to the curriculum map, the programme's learning outcomes are reinforced. If a master's programme is being evaluated, it is a good practice to assess the programme's learning outcomes primarily in the master's thesis (in the bachelor's programme, it is also possible to assess learning outcomes in the bachelor's thesis).

Taking this into account, the target benchmark is defined as follows: for example, 70% of the programme's students will receive a grade of 15 to 25 points in the programme's first learning outcome (in the case where this learning outcome is assessed, for example, through a project, the maximum assessment of which is 25 points, which, in turn, is divided into

the assessment criteria that directly measure the given learning outcome (the assessment of the learning outcome in the major syllabus).

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If the number of students enrolled in the programme is very large, a part of them can be evaluated by the principle of random selection. It is important that the assessment carried out is valid and reliable.

Indirect assessment methods include student self-assessment, employer assessment of the student, employment rate, grades received in educational courses, programme completion rate, etc., which creates an idea of the student's knowledge, skills, and competencies, using indirect means of assessment, often without direct evidence. For assessing the learning outcomes of the programme, a questionnaire should be prepared, which will list the learning outcomes of the programme, and students/graduates will indicate their opinion on what level they have achieved this or that learning outcome. The same questionnaire will be sent to employers.

In this case, it is also possible to determine the target benchmark: for example, 60% of the programme's graduates will be employed in their profile within 1 year of the qualification being awarded, or 40% of the programme's graduates will move to the next level of study, etc.

Some methods can be used for both direct and indirect assessment. For example, a student's conference paper, in the case where we simply note the fact of writing the conference paper, this will be indirect evidence of achieving the learning outcome, but if its determining assessment occurs according to certain criteria that are directly related to the programme's learning outcome - then this will be a direct assessment.

The mechanism for assessing the learning outcomes of the programme should be presented in the plan for assessing learning outcomes, where it should be indicated which assignment(s), when, and by whom each learning outcome of the programme will be assessed (it is possible to indicate how many students will be assessed, if their number is large and it is difficult to carry out the assessment for all students). It is desirable to indicate (or attach) the criteria to be used to evaluate the assignments.

Note: The final grade received in the educational course is not an adequate (direct) assessment of the programme's learning outcomes, since it assesses not only those outcomes of the given educational course that are related to this or that specific learning outcome of the programme, but also what is not directly related to the programme's learning outcomes.

For an adequate (direct) assessment of the programme's learning outcomes, the result of that specific assignment that directly measures the indicated learning outcome is used.

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Participating Subjects

Along with the heads of each educational course, the head of the programme and the administration of the university, which ensures the collection of evidence, as well as employers, who directly or indirectly assess the achievement of the programme's learning outcomes by students; the students/graduates themselves, since it is the achievement of the programme's learning outcomes by them that is checked, must be involved in the assessment of learning outcomes.

Using Assessment Results to Improve the Programme

At the fourth stage, by comparing the obtained results with the target benchmarks and based on the analysis, it is clarified whether the students have achieved the planned learning outcomes and to what extent they have achieved them. A report on the assessment of learning outcomes is prepared by the quality management and compliance department, which is presented to all interested parties (at an extended meeting of the programme committee).

In the event that any learning outcome of the programme has not been achieved, or has not been achieved by the majority of students at a sufficient level, the programme development group (programme committee), in cooperation with those involved in the implementation of the programme, including the administrative staff of the university, in cooperation with employers and taking into account the opinions of graduates, will review those educational courses/components that develop this outcome and will make changes to them (prerequisite, semester of study, content, teaching or evaluation methods, literature, hours/credits, etc.).

It may be necessary to add a new educational course (or, conversely, remove an existing one), change the status of the educational course (transfer from elective to mandatory or vice versa); review the organization of the educational process; strengthen consulting work, etc.

If necessary, a correction of the programme's learning outcomes will be carried out.

The results of the assessment, their analysis, and the changes made because of the analysis (which will be implemented in the same procedure as established in the university for the

development of an educational programme) are reflected in the report on the assessment of the programme's learning outcomes.