

**Program Assessment Plan/Report
(UGRD Agricultural Business Major)
University of Arkansas
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1. Department Name & Contact Information

Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness

Name: Michael Thomsen, Undergraduate Coordinator

Phone: (479) 575-2256

Email: mthomsen@uark.edu

2. Department Mission

To be the premier agricultural business and applied economics program in Arkansas, provide concentrations and specializations that are responsive to the needs of both students and industry stakeholders, and prepare students for success in the global marketplace.

3. Program Goals

The goals of the agribusiness program are embodied within the following three learning outcomes: (1) discipline specific knowledge, (2) professional problem solving, and (3) professional communication.

4. Student Learning Outcome 1. [Discipline Specific Knowledge]

Demonstrate knowledge of in the areas of

agribusiness management

agricultural marketing

agricultural economics

agricultural, food and environmental policy

A. Assessment Measure 1.

- Describe the measure.

Response:*The difference in a pre-test administered to entering freshmen and post tests administered in higher-level courses on each topic above.*

- Indicate whether it is *direct* or *indirect*.

Response: *This is a direct measure.*

- Provide enough information for reviewers to understand how the outcome was measured.

Response: *The pre-post test was not administered in the 2015-2016 academic year. This was a new requirement. The faculty have approved the concept of pre-post tests. These are under development and will be administered for the first time during the 2016-2017 academic year.*

- If appropriate include the scale/scoring criteria here, or refer to supporting documents.

Response: *NA the pre-post tests are being developed for the upcoming academic year.*

B. Acceptable and Ideal Targets (not required for indirect measures).

- State targets in aggregate terms as opposed to individual students. For example: “70% of graduating seniors will score an ‘average’ or above . . .” as opposed to “Each graduating senior will score an ‘average’ or above . . .”
- Resist the urge to set “acceptable” targets too high or too low. Give yourself room for growth, without calling into question the ability of your students (or teaching faculty/staff).

Response to the above two bullets: *Faculty will determine appropriate targets for this direct measure at an upcoming faculty retreat to be held in the summer of 2016.*

C. Key Personnel (who is responsible for the assessment of this measure).

- Include *names* of faculty/staff, or indicate that the class instructor, major professor, graduate committee, etc. is the responsible party.
- Simply stating “Faculty” is not acceptable.

Response to the above two bullets: *Primary responsibility for this assessment measure is with the undergraduate coordinator, Michael Thomsen, along with the department's undergraduate committee. As this pre-post test measurement strategy becomes ready to implement, faculty teaching the freshmen introductory course, AGEC 1103: Principles of Agricultural Microeconomics and faculty teaching select upper-division courses will play a role in implementing the assessment measure.*

D. Summary of Findings.

- Include a *general determination* of the extent to which *students* are *achieving the outcome*.

Response: Not applicable. This measure is still in the pre-implementation phase.

- Summarize or provide averages for important results.
 - Judicious use of charts and graphs are also acceptable.
 - Interpret results in the context of the Learning Outcome *and* the program.
 - What does this mean for your program?
 - How does it compare to last year?
 - Any surprises?

Response: Not applicable. Results from this measure will not be available until the next academic year.

E. Recommendations (not required for indirect measures)

- Include recommendations designed to improve student achievement. **OR**
- Where achievement is high, specifically comment on the efficacy of existing heuristic strategies.
- Use *original verbiage* for *each* measure. Do *not* copy/paste the same blurb for each measure. This does not show evidence of thoughtfulness!
- Show evidence that data collected were (or will be) used to address program improvements.
- BEWARE: Do *not* report “no changes recommended” for more than 1-2 measures. No program is perfect. Only a perfect program could report “No Changes” for everything.

Response: *Not applicable. Results from this measure will not be available until the next academic year.*

5. Student Learning Outcome 2. [*Professional Problem Solving*]

Understand, identify, analyze, and formulate solutions to economic problems in the private and public sectors related to food and fiber, agribusiness, and natural resources.

A. Assessment Measure 2.

- Describe the measure.

Response: *Faculty observation of an orally presented student case assignment.*

Response: *This is a direct measure.*

- Provide enough information for reviewers to understand how the outcome was measured.
Response: *On May 2, 2016, one faculty member assessed six students during oral presentations for AGEC 3313, Agribusiness Sales. On May 4, 2016, another faculty member assessed six additional students. Each session lasted two hours, roughly 20 minutes per student. The assessment criterion was “Did the student use valid economic logic and analysis to support his or her conclusions during the presentation and in responses to questions from a panel of judges.”*
- *If appropriate include the scale/scoring criteria here, or refer to supporting documents.*
Response: *A three-point scale was used to assess the question in the prior response with evaluator responses of: “Yes”, “Partially”, and “No”.*

B. Acceptable and Ideal Targets (not required for indirect measures).

- State targets in aggregate terms as opposed to individual students. For example: “70% of graduating seniors will score an ‘average’ or above . . .” as opposed to “Each graduating senior will score an ‘average’ or above . . .”
- Resist the urge to set “acceptable” targets too high or too low. Give yourself room for growth, without calling into question the ability of your students (or teaching faculty/staff).
Response to the above two bullets: *The department was required to thoroughly revise its assessment plan this year. What constitutes and appropriate target still needs to be determined by the faculty at large. Nevertheless, 70 percent achieving a “Yes” response is a reasonable target. This year’s assessment indicates that target is being reached.*

C. Key Personnel (who is responsible for the assessment of this measure).

- Include *names* of faculty/staff, or indicate that the class instructor, major professor, graduate committee, etc. is the responsible party.
- Simply stating “Faculty” is not acceptable.
Response to the above two bullets: *Primary responsibility for this assessment measure is with the undergraduate coordinator, Michael Thomsen, along with the department’s undergraduate committee. This year’s assessment was conducted by Michael Thomsen and Andrew McKenzie, both are professors in the department. The assessment took place during a presentation session that served as course requirement for AGEC 3313, Agribusiness Sales. H.L. Goodwin, also a professor in the department, is the instructor of the course.*

D. Summary of Findings.

- Include a *general determination* of the extent to which *students are achieving the outcome*.
Response: The majority of students assessed were scored with a “Yes” response on having met the desired criteria for professional problem solving.
- Summarize or provide averages for important results. (**See responses beneath each bullet**)
 - Judicious use of charts and graphs are also acceptable.

Tabulation of Assessment Results (N = 12)

Yes	Partially	No
9	3	0

- Interpret results in the context of the Learning Outcome *and* the program.

The majority of students assessed in an upper division class demonstrated the ability to use economic logic in a specific case example.

- What does this mean for your program?

Overall, students are developing solid problem-solving skills by the time they enroll in this upper-division course. Typically, enrollment in AGEC 3313 is restricted to seniors or 2nd semester juniors.

- How does it compare to last year?

Not applicable. This metric is new for 2015-2016.

- Any surprises?

No.

E. Recommendations (not required for indirect measures)

- Include recommendations designed to improve student achievement. **OR**
- Where achievement is high, specifically comment on the efficacy of existing heuristic strategies.
- Use *original verbiage* for each measure. Do *not* copy/paste the same blurb for each measure. This does not show evidence of thoughtfulness!
- Show evidence that data collected were (or will be) used to address program improvements.
- **BEWARE:** Do *not* report “no changes recommended” for more than 1-2 measures. No program is perfect. Only a perfect program could report “No Changes” for everything.

Response to item E: *Results will be presented to the faculty at the annual summer retreat and will inform the discussion of ways to improve the undergraduate program. The department may need to revise this metric as part of its ongoing assessment plan to obtain better insight into why some students may not be reaching this learning outcome and how to help these students meet this outcome.*

6. Student Learning Outcome 3. [Professional Communication]

Prepare, organize, and deliver information to effectively communicate with scientific, professional, and non-technical audiences.

A. Assessment Measure 3.

- Describe the measure.

Response: *Faculty observe an orally presented student case assignment and scored each observed student's performance according to the “Oral Communication Value Rubric” recommended to us by the College's Assessment Consultant.*

Response: *This is a direct measure.*

- Provide enough information for reviewers to understand how the outcome was measured.

Response: *On May 2, 2016, one faculty member assessed six students during oral presentations for AGEC 3313, Agribusiness Sales. On May 4, 2016, another faculty member assessed six additional students. Each session lasted two hours, roughly 20 minutes per student. The presentations were an ideal setting to assess professional communications because students presented to a mixed audience that included both faculty judges and industry professionals.*

- If appropriate include the scale/scoring criteria here, or refer to supporting documents.

Response: *A four-point scale was used for assessment of five oral communication items: (1) Organization, (2) Language, (3) Delivery, (4) Supporting Material, and (5) Central Message.*

B. Acceptable and Ideal Targets (not required for indirect measures).

- State targets in aggregate terms as opposed to individual students. For example: “70% of graduating seniors will score an ‘average’ or above . . .” as opposed to “Each graduating senior will score an ‘average’ or above . . .”
- Resist the urge to set “acceptable” targets too high or too low. Give yourself room for growth, without calling into question the ability of your students (or teaching faculty/staff).

Response to the above two bullets: *As noted above, the department was required to thoroughly revise its assessment plan this year. What constitutes and appropriate target still needs to be determined by the faculty at large. Nevertheless, 70 percent achieving a rating of “above average” or higher is a reasonable target.*

C. Key Personnel (who is responsible for the assessment of this measure).

- Include *names* of faculty/staff, or indicate that the class instructor, major professor, graduate committee, etc. is the responsible party.
- Simply stating “Faculty” is not acceptable.

Response to the above two bullets: *Responses for the communications rubric reflect the same occasions and involved the same students as reported above for learning outcome number 2. Primary responsibility for this assessment measure is with the undergraduate coordinator, Michael Thomsen. The rubric itself was adopted upon recommendation of the College’s assessment consultant.*

D. Summary of Findings.

- Include a *general determination* of the extent to which *students are achieving the outcome*.
Response: The majority of students assessed were scored with a “Yes” response on having met the desired criteria for professional problem solving.
- Summarize or provide averages for important results. (**See responses beneath each bullet**)
 - Judicious use of charts and graphs are also acceptable.

Tabulation of Assessment Results (N = 12)

Item	Excellent	Above Avg.	Average	Needs Improv.
Organization	3	5	4	0
Language	2	7	3	0
Delivery	5	4	3	0
Supporting Material	4	3	4	1
Central Message	5	3	4	0

- Interpret results in the context of the Learning Outcome *and* the program.
The majority of students assessed in an upper division class demonstrated solid communication skills.
- What does this mean for your program?
Overall, most students are able to demonstrated excellent or above average communications skills by the time they enroll in this upper-division course. Nevertheless, there is also room for improvement. As noted above enrollment in AGECE 3313 is restricted to seniors or 2nd semester juniors.
- How does it compare to last year?

Not applicable. This metric is new for 2015-2016.

○ Any surprises?

No.

E. Recommendations (not required for indirect measures)

- Include recommendations designed to improve student achievement. **OR**
- Where achievement is high, specifically comment on the efficacy of existing heuristic strategies.
- Use *original verbiage* for each measure. Do *not* copy/paste the same blurb for each measure. This does not show evidence of thoughtfulness!
- Show evidence that data collected were (or will be) used to address program improvements.
- **BEWARE:** Do *not* report “no changes recommended” for more than 1-2 measures. No program is perfect. Only a perfect program could report “No Changes” for everything.

Response to item E: *These results will also be presented to the faculty at the annual summer retreat and will inform the discussion of ways to improve the undergraduate program. The department may need to also look for opportunities to evaluate written communications in a similar fashion within the curriculum.*

7. Overall Recommendations

- Present *a summary* of the recommendations from the learning outcomes, based on the *integrated* set of outcomes.
- This is not a reiteration of the recommendations listed for each outcome, but looks at the program as a whole.
 - Changes to Degree Program
 - Changes to Assessment Plan

Response to Item 7: *Because this is the first year under the new assessment regime, it is recommended that the AEAB department use output from this year's assessment activities to establish a baseline and identify ways to improve the usability of the assessment data being generated. Based on this year's results, the department's should look for ways to increase the percentages of students meeting expectations for learning outcomes 2 and 3.*

7. Action Plan

- Be strategic, do not try to address everything at once!
- Include an Action Plan for at least one (1) measure.
- In past reports, some action plans were extremely unclear regarding which measure was being addressed.
- Present specific action steps for the coming academic year. Include:
 - implementation details (e.g., lesson, course or curricular changes),
 - timeline,
 - the person/s responsible for the action/s, and
 - any anticipated resource needs.
- Ensure that whatever is written in the Recommendations (section D) is reflected clearly in the Action Plan (and *vice versa* – now is the time to use the same verbiage).

Response: *This year's assessment activities evaluated students in an upper-division agribusiness sales course that requires a mock sales presentation involving a real product to a panel of judges. The course is restricted to seniors or second-semester juniors, which means that these sales presentations are a good point in the program to assess problem solving and communication skills. Data this year indicate that the majority of students assessed this year met the desired criteria for professional problem solving and were able to demonstrated excellent or above average communications skills. Nevertheless, there is also room for improvement. This year's assessment data will inform the department's discussion and review of the undergraduate program and undergraduate curriculum. A key priority for the upcoming year will be to fully implement the department's new assessment plan, including the pre-post-test evaluation that will be used to assess learning outcome 1. The proposed timeline is as follows: (1) the undergraduate committee will summarize and prepare recommendations to be presented to the department's faculty at its annual summer retreat; (2) the faculty will provide feedback on this year's evaluation efforts and identify ways to better implement the department's assessment plan including whether an assessment of written communications is a feasible or necessary additional metric to assess learning outcome 2, (3) these recommendations will be incorporated into assessment activities beginning in Fall 2016 with the first pre-tests of incoming freshmen and post-tests of students in upper division fall-semester courses.*

8. Supporting Attachments

- Attach appropriate rubrics (scoring criteria) or instruments (assessments, interview questions, etc.) for each measure if appropriate.
- If the instrument uses a test bank, provide a sample of the questions.

Response: *See attached instruments used for direct measures of learning outcomes 1 and 2.*

NOTES:

ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

Adapted from AACU

Definition

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Needs Improvement
Organization				
Language				
Delivery				
Supporting Material				
Central Message				

Rubric for Learning Outcome 2.

Criterion	Yes	Partially	No
Did the student use valid economic logic and analysis to support his or her conclusions during the presentation and in responses to questions from a panel of judges.	There were multiple fact-based examples that demonstrate the student's ability to meet this criterion	There was one or more fact-based examples but the analysis was weak or economic principles could have been better applied to the problem context	There was little evidence that economic principles and analysis were used to support the key points of the case