Johns Hopkins University
Assessment Plan for Lifelong Learning

Learning assessment practices and processes for curricular and co-curricular offerings at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) are directed by the University Council on Learning Assessment (UCLA) formed by the provost's office to guide the divisions' efforts as they develop learning objectives guided by teaching and learning best practices and driven by evidence-based instruction. This document outlines an assessment plan for lifelong learning offerings and aligns with Johns Hopkins University's vision, mission, and values. This plan promotes reflective practices through a robust review of performance-based assessment measures that ultimately drive division and institutional level improvements aimed to increase students' knowledge, skills, abilities, and satisfaction while also impacting their practice and community. The UCLA members review the plan regularly and offer suggestions to enhance effectiveness of assessment and evaluation practices. Implementation of the plan is an iterative process of continuous quality improvement. UCLA is tasked with providing a high standard of assessment at JHU, one that is geared toward improvement and innovation in assessment practices using advanced techniques and innovative technology.

Additionally, each academic division has been tasked with developing and maintaining a lifelong learning assessment plan with educational objectives appropriate to the disciplines employers are looking for, to their practice, and to appropriate professional performance standards. They are also expected to maintain a level of academic performance that distinguishes Johns Hopkins University.

Lifelong Learning @ JHU

The University's vision on learning and learners' progress includes the whole person and their experiences in all spaces academic and experiential. The learning process starts before students matriculate at the University and continues long after they graduate. JHU also recognizes that learning occurs in formal and informal settings and collecting data in all these spaces is crucial in order to shape a holistic and complete picture of our learners. To achieve this objective, the University is implementing the JHU Comprehensive Learner Record (CLR) across all divisions, while allowing possible utilization of existing systems within each division. This tool is a dynamic portfolio of the learners' achievement throughout their lives, establishing a continuum of a lifelong learning journey.

The divisions at Johns Hopkins University have a variety of non-academic credit offerings that could fall under several categories depending on learner, employer, and practice needs. The offerings could range from Continuing Education Units, Executive Education, Continuing Medical Education, Professional Development, Internships, Experiential Education, Research Experiences, Pre-College Programs, and Practicums.

We propose two levels of credentialing in the non-academic credit environment: ***Badge of Completion*** and a ***Skill Badge***. If issuing certificates, micro-credentials, or digital badges[1] (Appendix A) to demonstrate acquisition of learning, abilities, or skills, otherwise labeled as a ***Skill Badge***, assessment of learning follows the stated policies, guidelines, and best practices outlined in this document. In cases

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[1] Consult Appendix A for a JHU adopted definition of micro-credentials and digital badges

where the participants are issued a certificate or a badge of attendance or completion, otherwise labeled as a **Badge of Completion**, the assessment process described in this document will not be required.

Assessment Plan & Process for Lifelong Learning

Mission, vision, and values define what JHU aspires to implement in affecting change and values in the community, and specifically in its own student body. Assessment analyses provide evidence that learning outcomes across divisions, whether curricular or co-curricular, align with JHU's mission, vision, and values as defined.
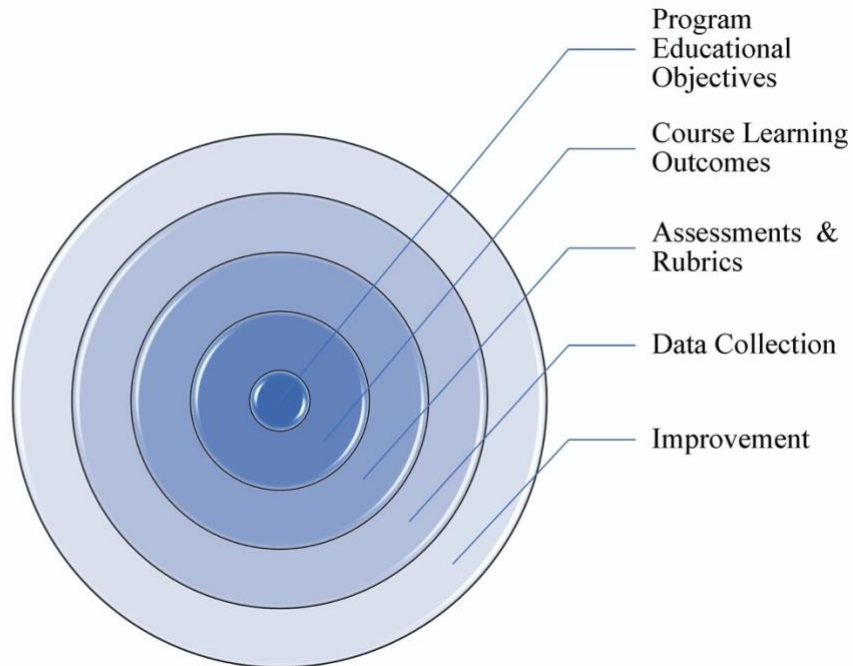

Figure 1. Assessment Process in Lifelong Learning

The Assessment process outlined in Figure 1, presents an overview of what is expected from each division when creating assessments in non-academic credit offerings and co-curricular activities. As stated, assessment processes need to align with the divisional vision, mission, and values as they align with the University's mission, vision, and values.

The process articulates the following steps:

1. Clearly define program or certificate learning objectives, and clearly articulate these objectives when advertising for programs and on the division's website.

2. Link program learning objectives to courses learning outcomes.

3. Embed assessment activities that are aligned to descriptive rubrics.

4. Articulate plans for data collection.

5. Develop a plan for continuous improvement in each program, certificate, or course as advertised. Systematically gather, review, and respond to the collective results of the assessments and apply changes or improvements.

Quality and Rigor

UCLA recognizes that assessment in the non-academic credit space is not as deep or as extensive as in academic spaces. Tracking learners' growth in these spaces is sometimes unrealistic, and the need for evidence of learning using one assessment may be sufficient to collect evidence of mastery of the content. Regardless, assessment in lifelong learning still needs to follow the quality and rigor outlined by UCLA's vision for best practices and quality assessments. In order to maintain the quality offerings in lifelong learning expected at JHU, there is a need for: 1) programs, certificates, or courses to articulate program/certificate-level and course-level competencies and learning outcomes that accurately describe the expected performance required by the end of the course or program; 2) learning materials to align with well-defined course competencies and learning outcomes, and to provide learners with the skills, knowledge, and abilities they need to succeed; 3) competencies and outcomes to be evaluated using effective and authentic assessments that measure attainment of knowledge, skills, and abilities, and; 4) programs, certificates, or courses to deliver a quality and rewarding learning experience that enables participants to achieve the expected competencies and stated learning outcomes.

Figure 2, affirms UCLA's vision on the need of evidence of learning, using quality materials and assessments. Assessments need to measure and be a part of learning and be outcome-based.
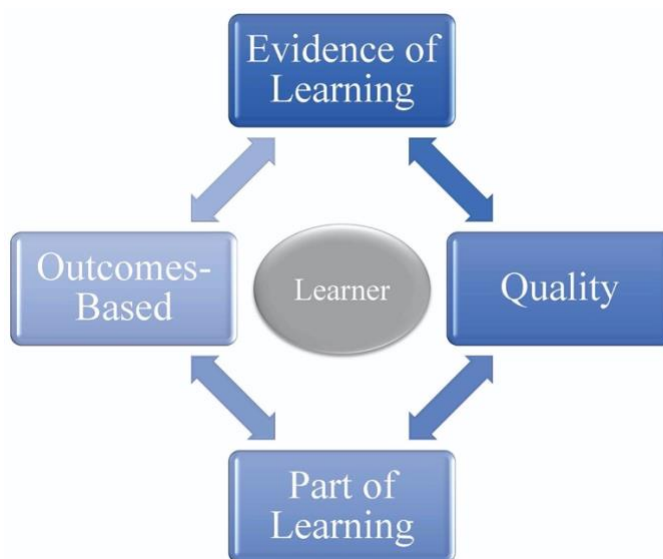

Figure 2. Assessment Expectations in Lifelong Learning

Creating Effective Competencies and / or Learning Outcomes

Competencies and learning outcomes are related terms but are not interchangeable. Competencies are general statements that define applied skills and knowledge enabling participants to perform successfully in their own practice. Learning outcomes are very specific statements that are measurable and describe what a participant will be able to do by the end of instruction. Each competency may have more than one learning outcome associated with it ([Hartel & Foegeding, 2004](#)).

UCLA recommends that when creating program, certificate, and course competencies and / or learning outcomes, the divisions need to ensure that these competencies and outcomes reflect the following best practices: 1) **Mastery -** Need to reflect the level of mastery necessary for the learner to demonstrate level of knowledge, skill, or performance; 2) **Measurability -** Are stated using measurable outcomes or in the case of competencies, performance standards using clear and direct language; 3) **Relevancy -**

Demonstrate skills and knowledge relevant to the learner's work, licensing, practice, performance expectations to work, or other performance expectations, and 4) **Accuracy -** Accurately reflect performance requirements associated with workplace and professional standards of performance.

Assessment Results and Evidence Tracking

Collecting data and tracking evidence of learning are crucial steps on the way to improvement. Therefore, collecting these evidence-based artifacts and evaluations in one system is paramount to ensuring the success of assessment best practices. To that end, UCLA recommends that all assessments are tracked in the JHU- Assessment Management System (JHU-AMS) and its associated JHU-CLR. Micro-credentials and badges are issued by the same system and can be shared on social media or directly with employers using the JHU-AMS.

Assessment data and results could be collected by administrative coordinators or TAs, and uploaded to the system, especially if instructors have not been expected to assess using any established system at the University. However, instructors or TAs can evaluate learners' performance directly in the JHU-AMS or the chosen Learning Management System.

Assessment Types & Evaluation of Learning

Assessment types[2] (Appendix B) in the non-academic credit space could be but are not limited to group activities, discussions, presentations, observations, or quizzes. They could be formative or summative depending on need. However, all these activities need to be associated with evaluative rubrics that represent the learner's performance in attaining mastery, proficiency, or not meeting expectations. The evaluation of these activities using an established rubric that carefully aligns to learning objectives, is expected to be completed by the instructor or a TA in the course.

Self and peer-evaluations are acceptable measures of learning when paired with other measures that are conducted by the instructor or the TA. Self or peer-evaluations cannot be used as the only measures that determine student performance, since they are not reliable in determining that the learner accurately attained the stated level of knowledge, skills, and abilities in the course.

Employers and other stakeholders will be looking for evidence of learning in specific skills, and it is the responsibility of the program to accurately confirm that the candidates, employers are hiring truly possess the stated knowledge, skills, and abilities.

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[2] Consult Appendix B for a proposed list of assessment types that would work for non-academic credit offerings.

Appendix A

Definition of Terms

Micro-Credentials
- Are digital artifacts
- Are flexible and portable
- Are competency-based certification through stackable credentials
- Display student skills, abilities, and knowledge as stated by established competencies
- Are offered in short and flexible timespans
- Are narrowly focused
- Can be offered online, in the classroom, or via a hybrid of both.

Types of Micro-Credentials or Digital Credentials
- Digital Badge
- Stackable Credentials
- MOOCs
- Licensure and Certificates
- Industry Recognized Credentials

Digital Badge
- Indicator of accomplishment
- Image-Based
- Badge for Completion
- Skill Badge

Badging and Credential Levels and Definitions

We propose two levels of badging and credentialing:

Badge of Completion
At this level, no assessments are necessary, the badge or credential is simply indicating that the participant completed the course or program.

Skill Badge*
In this instance, assessments must be conducted to determine that the participant gained mastery or any level of knowledge in the stated competencies or learning outcomes as evidence of learning.

* Employers will be looking for this level of credentialing when hiring. This is the level required when employers support and finance employees' learning.

Appendix B

Assessment Types

- Group activities
    1. Instructor evaluates participant performance based on observing activities.
    2. Have participants rate each other's performance based on a rubric.
- Discussions
    1. Evaluate participants answers in discussions.
    2. Determine level of understanding based on a rubric that directly maps to expected competencies.
- Presentations
    1. Ask students to present to the group and evaluate their understanding of the concepts.
    2. Evaluation could be done by instructor, TA, peers, or self.
- Quizzes
    1. Give a quiz at the end of the unit to determine attainment of knowledge of stated competencies.
    2. The quiz could be automatically graded by the system and links directly to competencies and a rubric.
- Observations
    1. Observe candidates applying skills that will demonstrate that they acquired the stated outcomes.
    2. Create a rubric that will evaluate all learning outcomes/competencies related to the desired skills.
    3. Observations can be completed during the performance of the desired task.
- Self-evaluations
    1. In addition of self-evaluating performance in the specific activities stated above, instructors could create a survey mapped to competencies, and built on a Likert scale that fits the pre-determined rubric.
    2. Ask students to evaluate their own performance, which could be normed against other evaluations, such as peer-evaluations.
- Peer-evaluations
    1. Ask participants to evaluate each other's performance using a pre-determined rubric, based on established competencies.

Note: Both self and peer evaluations are not reliable measures of participants' performance and should be used in conjunction with other types of assessments.