

## **O&A on Academic Learning Compacts**

### **Who mandated academic learning compacts and who will enforce them?**

The state Board of Governors mandates academic learning compacts be identified and used within each bachelors' degree offered by each university in the SUS. They are part of the regulations governing the university. Specifically, each university must establish a process for certifying that each baccalaureate graduate has completed a program with clearly articulated expected core student learning outcomes. These outcomes and the associated assessments constitute the learning compact. In addition, universities must collect data based on these assessments and report, analyze and develop improvement/action plans based on the analysis of these results. The improvement/action plans must demonstrate continuous improvement or provide examples of actions taken to sustain good results.

The compacts are part of the accountability system developed by the Board of Governors. The system contains information on several aspects of university performance and be available on the Board web page. Universities submit information for inclusion in the accountability system, according to Board guidelines, on demand, usually annually.

The Board allows each university to define its own guidelines in the implementation of the compacts. Universities are expected to oversee their own implementation. The university will use its institutional effectiveness approval process to review and approve the compacts. The Board enforces compliance with a required annual report and staff review.

### **What exactly is being required of the faculty, students and university?**

The state wants universities to certify that each Baccalaureate graduate has completed a program with clearly stated core learning expectations in critical thinking, communication, and discipline and content knowledge and skills. The faculty is supposed to identify the expected core learning outcomes that will be attained by graduates of each baccalaureate program. These outcomes must then be communicated to students. This is done at FSU on the academic program guide.

In order to ensure graduates have met the expectations of each compact, each program is expected to develop and deploy assessment mechanisms that determine how well student learning matches stated expectations. These assessment methods will also be reviewed in the required state seven year program review. The results of the assessments are to be used to improve student performance and program effectiveness. The university must report annually on the results of the academic learning compacts.

### **What “guidelines” are used to comply with the requirement for a state mandated academic learning compact?**

The university uses its institutional effectiveness guidelines to comply with the state mandate..

### **How will the compacts affect my work in the classroom?**

The compacts require agreement by faculty within a program about what the outcomes of the program are to be and how progress in attaining these results is to be measured and assessed. For most programs, this means little change in classroom activities since curriculum committees typically have this role. However, the state requirement, along with university accreditation requirements, will require faculty to document and report results on specific assessments, as decided within each program.

### **How will the compacts affect degree programs?**

Compacts should not affect most degree programs. Programs that have course requirements that can be associated with learning outcomes can comply without difficulty. Programs where course requirements do not allow easy association will have to construct means to ensure that every graduate has completed a program that has those core learning outcomes. This can be done through methods such as a required examination, a capstone experience, specific requirements such as portfolios or essays, or structured sampling. The required state program review process will review elements of each compact.

### **Will my department have the opportunity to revise the outcomes it measures?**

Yes, annually in the fall.

### **Will faculty, programs, departments, colleges or the university have to keep records on individual students majoring in our department?**

There is no requirement that faculty, programs, department, colleges or the university will have to keep records on the individual outcomes for individual students majoring in each department. The assessments, by policy and guidelines, are tied to requirements for graduation. The satisfaction of graduation requirements is certified by the program to the registrar, who maintains the associated course records. If the satisfaction of graduation requirements occurs outside required courses, then the satisfaction of such requirements will have to be communicated to the Registrar as is now the case. Summary records about performance on the outcomes will be maintained in the institutional effectiveness portal.

### **Are program assessments subject to audit, and if so, by whom?**

State officials have not audited program assessments in detail. Experience indicate that they will determine if the university is generally in compliance. University Boards of Trustees must certify the university is in compliance and that graduates have completed Baccalaureate programs with state mandated academic learning compacts. Program assessments will be reviewed within the program, by the college and by the Office of Provost and Academic Affairs. They may also be considered by the Undergraduate Policy committee or other committees of the Faculty Senate.

### **How will the State Mandated Academic Learning Compacts be disseminated to students?**

As noted above, the State Mandated Academic Learning Compacts for each Bachelor's degree

program will be made readily available to students electronically at the university Academic Program Guide site. <https://www.academic-guide.fsu.edu/> The web site provides current and prospective students access to the requirements of the State Mandated Academic Learning Compacts. See, for example, mathematics at <https://www.academic-guide.fsu.edu/computing-mathematics> .

The information posted on the web site includes “your outcome statements”, “what type of outcome they are”, and a list of the types of assessment you will use.