

Bachelor of Liberal Arts

Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
The University of New Mexico

A. College, Department and Date

1. College: University College
2. Department: Liberal Arts & Integrative Studies [LAIS]
3. Date: September 4, 2013 revised: Monday, December 16, 2013

B. Academic Program of Study

Bachelor of Liberal Arts [B.L.A.]

C. Contact Person for the Assessment Plan

Dr. Tracy Skipp, Associate Dean, Director LAIS Program

D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

1. Broad Program Learning Goals for this Degree Program

The B.L.A. degree provides the opportunity for students to develop a unique program of study combining courses from more than one UNM department and/or college. The program of study will lead to critical thinking skills, information gathering and analysis, and communication skills in the following areas.

- A. Students will take responsibility for developing and implementing an integrated (multidisciplinary) independent curriculum at the university level.
- B. Students will develop skills in critical thinking through information collection/analysis that may include library, electronic, survey, field, studio and laboratory research methodologies as appropriate for their program of studies.
- C. Students will develop written communication skills.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this Degree Program

The SLOs are grouped into three categories. **Category A** addresses the student's ability to accept responsibility for independently developing and completing a rigorous academic curriculum — an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Plan of Study. **Category B** deals with the student's critical thinking abilities, especially knowledge of methods and tools associated with generating and analyzing data and information relevant to their area of study. **Category C** addresses a student's written communication skills.

- A.1. Students will demonstrate their ability to **integrate knowledge** from multiple fields of knowledge into a coherent and organized program of study. This will be accomplished

by designing a *Plan of Study* that shows disciplinary relationships in an IEP to a multidisciplinary theme. It may also be assessed by a reading of the *Statement of Purpose* discussed below.

- B.1. Students will demonstrate the **intellectual and applied skill of integration** of library, electronic, survey, field, studio and laboratory research methods for collecting and analyzing data relevant to their area of study. This will be best demonstrated through the writing of a *Graduation Essay* where they recount the principles and methods learned through completing their program of study and connections to advanced study or career goals, and UNM values.

- C.1. Students will demonstrate effective written communication skills. This will be measured by an analysis of the students *Statement of Purpose* where they **take responsibility for**, and explain in detail the goals of designing their own unique degree program. It may also be assessed by an analysis of the *Graduation Essay* described above.

E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

"Application to the Liberal Arts program includes a preliminary advisement session with an LAIS Academic Advisor. The meeting is the student's opportunity to discuss their ideas and goals for their degree, and ask any questions they may have before admission to the program. "
UNM Catalog 2013-2014

The Statement of Purpose is a brief 250-word essay wherein the student-applicant discusses their educational/career goals and reasons for seeking a self-designed degree. This statement is composed after meeting with an Academic Advisor and discussing their goals for the degree plan. Before applying to graduate an exit essay of 500-words is required that asks the student to reflect on their learning goals, and those of the University of New Mexico. Specifically, KNOWLEDGE of human cultures and the natural world; SKILLS gained, both intellectual and applied; and, RESPONSIBILITY both personal and social.

TIMELINE: While the essay is required to complete the students graduation file - a random sample of *Statements of Purpose*, and *Graduation Essays* will be selected each year and reviewed by the Director of LAIS and Dean of University College for closer assessment. All *Plans of Study* are reviewed before admission to the program is complete. A rubric has been developed for analysis of the student essays.

Rubric for assessment...

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| Plan of Study | Plan will show coursework from multiple disciplines. | Plan will show relationships of disciplines to a theme. | Plan will show integration of thematic disciplines towards advanced study or career goals. |
| Statement of Purpose | Student will explain why they want to design their own degree. | Student explains the relationship of goals to post-degree plans. | Student will have a rationale for grouping coursework thematically that relates to an academic or career goal. |
| Graduation Essay | Student will discuss the skills learned in their coursework. | Student will recount the principles and methods learned through completing their program of study. | Student will reflect on learning goals - specifically tied to UNM values of knowledge, skills, and responsibility. |
