The Assessment Portfolio

Background
Every program of study at Kaplan University has an overall set of goals for each student. These goals, also known as program outcomes, provide you with a description of what you can expect to achieve as a result of completing your program. Each program at Kaplan University has two sets of outcomes: Core Outcomes and Program Outcomes. Core Outcomes are general education goals for every student. Program Outcomes are discipline-specific goals.

Core Outcomes and Program Outcomes
Every program has a different set of Core Outcomes and Program Outcomes. The number and type of Core Outcomes may vary depending on the kind of degree or certificate. For example, a bachelor's degree has a few more Core Outcomes than an associate's. The following list of outcomes provides a good idea of the kinds of Core Outcomes you will be expected to meet in an associate's program (depending on your program of study, the outcomes below may be slightly different than those listed on your assessment).

1. Composition: Demonstrate college-level writing, research, documentation, and critical thinking skills.
2. Communication: Communicate effectively, reflect critically, problem solve logically and apply these skills to achieve personal and professional goals.
3. Diversity and Culture: Recognize and critically evaluate the impact of diversity on individual and group behavior.
4. Ethics: Demonstrate sound ethical reasoning and judgment skills by analyzing and debating significant ethical issues by explaining, defending, and assessing personal ethical perspectives.
5. History: Reflect critically on the impact of historical and contemporary events on society.
6. Humanities: Critically evaluate human experience as expressed through literary, artistic, religious, philosophical or other cultural achievements.
7. Mathematics: Use quantitative information to systematically arrive at reasoned decisions in solving everyday problems.
8. Professional Development: Evaluate and apply skills that enhance academic, professional and personal success.
9. Science: Apply scientific principles and methods of inquiry to arrive at reasoned decisions and solve everyday problems.
10. Social Science: Demonstrate the ability to understand and critically evaluate the social or psychological issues that impact human behavior.

The ASIS Program contains an additional outcome: “Demonstrate the ability to successfully complete a student selected, focused sequence of elective course work.”
Program Outcomes, on the other hand, are specific to the discipline you're studying. You can find a specific list of the Core and Program Outcomes for your degree plan by clicking on the "Degree Plan" link on the Student Portal home page.

When you take a course at Kaplan University, you're taking a course that was designed specifically to meet one or more of your Core and Program Outcomes. For example, CM102-107 Effective Writing I (for discipline specific professions) helps you measure your ability against Core Outcome 1, Composition ("Demonstrate college-level writing, research, documentation, and critical thinking skills").

So let's say you take Effective Writing 1 and you get an "A" for your grade. What does that mean? Have you mastered college-level writing, research, documentation, and critical-thinking skills? Not necessarily. A lot more goes into your course grade than just your achievement of that one outcome (e.g., timeliness, participation). And, you will learn a lot more about writing as you move through the other courses in your program. So how can you find out how you're doing on that particular outcome if not by just looking at your grade?

The Assessment Portfolio
The Assessment Portfolio is a tool you can use to find out how well you are meeting your general education and program-specific educational goals. Your Assessment Portfolio is a collection of your work, instructor evaluations of your work, your own reflections on your work, as well as two self-assessments—pre- and post-assessments you complete when you start the program and when you finish the program.

As you take courses at Kaplan University, you'll be given assignments to complete. One or more assignments from each course have already been earmarked by the academic leadership for use in your Assessment Portfolio. Once you have completed your course, your instructor will assess the earmarked assignment to determine how well you are meeting a particular Core or Program Outcome. Once the project has been assessed, and after your instructor has submitted final grades, your assessment scores and instructor comments for each of the selected projects will be displayed in your Assessment Portfolio. You also will be able to enter your own comments about your performance on each project, and your thoughts about how your instructor assessed your work. Your comments cannot be viewed by your instructors.

The evaluation of your work in the Assessment Portfolio will not impact your grades—it is an assessment of your achievement of program outcomes that is independent of your grade on an assignment. While we think that the Assessment Portfolio will provide you with a rich, useful tool that you will want to use, the amount of work you put into it will determine the level of feedback you receive. The pre- and post-assessments require very little time, but you can also add reflections to it, read your portfolio, think about the work in your portfolio, discuss your work with someone, ask questions about it, or use it to see what you have learned, where you are, and where you are going in your program of study.

How Do Instructors Assess Your Projects?
Each project that is selected for assessment will be evaluated based on a rubric. A rubric is a road map that instructors follow to assess your achievement of program outcomes. All program outcomes, including both the general education outcomes and the discipline-specific outcomes, have rubrics. You will be able to read these rubrics, so that you can better understand your assessment scores and the kind of work required to achieve mastery. There are seven levels of scoring for any rubric. The following is an example of the composition rubric that instructors might use to rate a particular composition project in your Assessment Portfolio:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Performance Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Assessed (0)</td>
<td>No work was received by the instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Progress (1)</td>
<td>Work demonstrates little understanding of the composition criteria or the mechanics of writing; contains severe and persistent writing and formatting errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory (2)</td>
<td>Work demonstrates a basic recognition of the composition criteria; cites some factual support; however, writing errors and formatting problems obscure the paper’s meaning. Supporting evidence may be listed or outlined, but it is not incorporated skillfully into the paper to lend support to the author's thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent (3)</td>
<td>Work demonstrates an operational comprehension of the composition criteria; cites factual support; occasional writing errors and some problems in organizational structure detract from the paper’s content. The author correctly comprehends, interprets, and paraphrases outside sources, but may not apply this evidence skillfully to supporting the paper's claims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practiced (4)</td>
<td>Work demonstrates an operational and applied comprehension of the composition criteria; synthesizes ideas; cites factual support; well-organized with few writing errors; few formatting problems, if any, are present. The thesis and all supporting claims are well developed and skillfully supported using logical argument and outside sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient (5)</td>
<td>Work demonstrates an operational, applied, and a theoretical comprehension of the composition criteria; synthesizes ideas; cites factual support; well-organized with few writing errors; few formatting problems, if any, are present. The thesis and all supporting claims are well developed and skillfully supported using logical argument and outside sources. The paper contrasts arguments and counterarguments and justifies the paper's claim exceptionally well. It also sees beyond the claim at hand to predict its implications to other related issues in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery (6)</td>
<td>Work demonstrates an operational, applied, and a theoretical comprehension of the composition criteria; synthesizes ideas; evaluates reasoning; cites factual support using exceptional detail to support or illustrate all points; demonstrates unusual fluency, language control, and sentence variety; addresses all points in a clear and articulate manner; exceptional quality of content and organization. The thesis and all supporting claims are exceedingly well developed and skillfully supported using logical argument, original thought, and outside sources. The paper contrasts arguments and counterarguments and justifies the paper's claim exceptionally well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. A Composition Class Rubric

Remember, this is a program-wide evaluation of your work. If you're in a 100- or 200-level course, you probably will not receive an assessment score higher than "Practiced"—and that's okay. Generally, students must take several different courses, including 300- and 400-level courses, before they achieve mastery of a given outcome. The idea is that as you progress through your program track toward your degree, you'll get better at what you do and therefore score higher in your Assessment Portfolio.

While you take different courses at Kaplan University, you can review your Assessment Portfolio to get a feel for where you are and where you're going in your program of study. But first, you'll need to take a look at where you're currently at by taking the Pre-Assessment.

Pre- and Post-Assessments

When you start your degree program, you will be asked to complete a pre-assessment to assess how well you think you have achieved the outcomes for your chosen area of study. This will allow you to think about the educational goals of your program and where you are in meeting them before you begin your studies. Then, at the end of your program of study (after your Capstone Course, discussed below), you can complete the post-assessment. Completing both the pre- and post-assessments will allow you to compare how you have perceived your accomplishments during your studies at Kaplan University. You may find that your self-assessment scores increase, but then again, at the end of the program you may find that your increased knowledge of the field causes you to evaluate yourself more critically and your scores therefore don't increase. In either case, you will understand more about yourself as a learner and specifically what you have learned while in school with us.
Where Do You Find the Assessment Portfolio?

To access your Assessment Portfolio, follow the directions and screenshots below.

To access your Assessment Portfolio, select the “Degree Plan” link on the left menu bar of the student portal home page. From the Degree Plan page, click on the “View Assessment Portfolio” link.

![KU ACE Student Portal Home Page](image1)

**Figure 2. KU ACE Student Portal Home Page**

To access your Assessment Portfolio, select the “Degree Plan” link on the left menu bar of the student portal home page. From the Degree Plan page, click on the “View Assessment Portfolio” link.

![The Degree Plan Page](image2)

**Figure 3. The Degree Plan Page**
**Student Assessment Portfolio**

**Student Name:** Sandra  
**Program Name:** AA in Interdisciplinary Studies

**Outcome View**
The Outcome View allows you to see your self-assessments and all of your assessed projects at a glance, organized by program outcome. Use this view to check your performance on all projects related to a specific program outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition Description</th>
<th>Highest Level Achieved</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Project Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate college-level writing, research, documentation, and critical thinking skills</td>
<td>(4) Practiced</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>CM107-01 Submit Final Project Level: (4) Practiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate effectively, reflect critically, problem solve logically and apply these skills to achieve personal and professional goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity and Culture Description</th>
<th>Highest Level Achieved</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Project Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognize and critically evaluate the impact of diversity on individual and group behavior</td>
<td>(2) Introductory</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>CJ130-01 Unit 9, Final Project Level: (2) Introductory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethics Description</th>
<th>Highest Level Achieved</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Project Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate sound ethical reasoning and judgment skills by analyzing and debating significant ethical issues by explaining, defending, and assessing personal ethical perspectives</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History Description</th>
<th>Highest Level Achieved</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Project Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect critically on the impact of historical and contemporary events on society</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humanities Description</th>
<th>Highest Level Achieved</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Project Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critically evaluate human experience as expressed through literary, artistic, religious, philosophical or other cultural achievements</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4. The Assessment Portfolio Page**
The first thing you should do is take your pre-assessment. Click on the “Take Pre-Assessment Evaluation” link (See Figure 4).

To complete your Pre-Assessment, you will need to know how to evaluate your current understanding and achievement of each outcome. Select the “View Assessment Level Description” link to open the Self-Assessment Rubric. Read through the descriptions of the levels and then select the most appropriate level for each of the outcomes. Remember that the more honest your responses, the more this information will help you when you complete your Post-Assessment. Upon completion, select the “Save Assessments” button.

Note: You will be unable to enter or edit your self-assessments once you select the “Save Assessments” button; therefore, make sure you assess each outcome before saving.

After you take the Pre-Assessment, you'll return to your current Assessment Portfolio page. The Assessment Portfolio page contains a table that allows you to see your self-assessments and all of your assessed projects at a glance, organized by program outcome. Note: Since all assessment scores are posted at the end of the term, you may not see any assessment scores at this time. Use this view to check your performance on all projects related to a specific program outcome. You also can view your highest level of achievement on each Program Outcome.

There are several features on these pages that will help you read your assessment information. By selecting the “View by Outcome” or the “View by Project” link, you can view your assessment data either by project or by outcome. In addition, selecting the “View Printable Page” link at the top right corner of the page allows you to view all of your assessment information in printable form.
To view the assessment information for the selected project, simply click on the link under the "Project Information" column. You will then be taken to the assessment page for that particular project (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Portfolio Project page.

For example, Figure 6 depicts the assessment for CS115. This project received an assessment score of (4) Practiced and includes instructor comments that help clarify why this score was given. From this window, you also are able to add your own reflective comments about your performance on this assignment or the professor’s evaluation of your work. You can edit your reflections or add to them at any time.

To read the rubric by which the project was assessed, click on the "View Assessment Level Description" link. Each outcome has a unique rubric that is used to evaluate student work.

**Summary**

As you go through your academic career at Kaplan University, you can use the Assessment Portfolio to see how well you're meeting your overall goals. Prior to graduating, you'll take a Capstone Course—a special course with outcomes that directly measure your ability as it relates to your Core and Program Outcomes. When you finish your Capstone Course, you can view how well your projects were assessed in your Assessment Portfolio, and compare them with your Pre-Assessment levels.

At Kaplan University, we’re committed to providing you with the very best education possible. If you have any questions about the Assessment Portfolio, be sure to contact your Academic Advisor at 866-522-7747 (Toll Free) or use the link on your Student Portal Home Page.
FAQs

The following 10 questions and answers provide a focused review of the information contained in this document. You may want to use this section if you have a specific question about the Assessment Portfolio, or to test your own understanding of it.

1. **What exactly is an Assessment Portfolio?**
   
   Your Assessment Portfolio is a collection of selected projects that you have completed during your courses. These projects are assessed by your instructors to determine how well you have achieved a particular program outcome. Once the project has been assessed, your portfolio will contain your assessment scores and instructor comments for each of the selected projects. You also will be able to enter your own comments about your performance on each project.

2. **What are program outcomes?**

   Each program of study offered at Kaplan University has associated with it a list of educational goals that any student graduating from the program is expected to meet. To ensure the quality of these goals, they are developed by a team of Kaplan University faculty and administrators, scholars from peer institutions, and industry experts—a team called an Advisory Council. The Advisory Council develops a list that covers both general education (Core) goals as well as discipline-specific goals. To help determine how well students are meeting the goals, they are written in a specific format—they describe the goals in terms of observable, assessable activities. In this format, the educational goals are called program outcomes.

3. **What are the criteria by which my work will be evaluated?**

   Each project that is selected for assessment will be evaluated based on a rubric. A rubric is a road map that helps instructors assess your achievement of program outcomes. All program outcomes, including both the general education outcomes and the discipline-specific outcomes, have rubrics. You will be able to read these rubrics so that can better understand your assessment scores and the kind of work required to achieve mastery.

4. **Will this affect my GPA?**

   No. The evaluation of your work in the portfolio will not impact your grades—it is an assessment of your achievement of program outcomes that is independent of your grade on the assignment.

   For example, suppose you receive an A on a paper in a 100-level course. This grade is based on several criteria that may or may not relate to program outcomes, including timeliness, format, or grammar. However, for the portfolio this paper will be assessed on your achievement of very specific program outcomes. Even though you received an A on the paper, your assessment level most likely will be Emergent or Practiced (e.g., Proficient and Mastery are the highest levels) because the paper was written for a 100-level course and you are not expected to reach Mastery; additionally, the assignments are not designed for Mastery level achievement until your 300- or 400-level courses.

5. **What projects will be selected and from which classes?**

   The academic departments are responsible for selecting course projects to be assessed. The goal is to provide you with different opportunities to demonstrate your achievement of general education and discipline-specific program outcomes. The academic leadership selects these course projects so that all of the outcomes are assessed evenly throughout your coursework at Kaplan University.

   Almost all classes will have a project selected for assessment. However, some classes may not have an assessed project, while others may have projects assessed for some students and not for others. For example, suppose you are a criminal justice student and decide to take an IT course as an elective. You will be in a class with several IT students who will be assessed on the selected project.
for that course; however, since you are not being assessed on IT outcomes (you are a criminal justice student), you will not be assessed in the IT course.

6. **Who will be able to see or review my Assessment Portfolio?**

   Once a term ends and final grades and assessments are submitted, they are displayed in your Assessment Portfolio. At that time, other faculty will not have access to your portfolio, nor will other students. Advisors, as well as faculty mentors, may have access to your portfolio so that they can correct errors or help you better understand the information contained in the portfolio and how to use it to improve your educational experience at Kaplan University.

   In addition, academic leadership, advisors and the researchers in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will have access to the portfolios. The OIE prepares reports from the assessment data to assist in improving program courses and curricula (i.e., to make sure that you and other students are meeting your educational goals at the appropriate levels). However, any report that is created from the assessment data will not include student names or any identifying information.

7. **Does the Assessment Portfolio require any additional work on my part?**

   No. You will turn in the same course projects as you do now, and nothing more. The projects selected for assessment are graded just like other projects. But unlike other projects, in addition to grading, projects selected for assessment are also assessed by the faculty to determine how well you have demonstrated the achievement of one or more program outcomes.

   The only way that the Assessment Portfolio will require more work of you is if you decide to add reflections to it, read your portfolio, think about the work in your portfolio, discuss your work with someone, ask questions about it, or use it to see what you have learned, where you are, and where you are going in your program of study.

8. **Which students will have an Assessment Portfolio?**

   As of July 2004, all students enrolled in current associate’s, bachelor’s, or advanced start bachelor’s degree programs have access to their Assessment Portfolios. In future terms, students enrolled in current certificate programs will have access as well. Although students enrolled in phased-out programs or older versions of programs will not have access to the Assessment Portfolio, they will have access to the presentation portfolio when that rolls out later in the year.

9. **What if I don’t want to participate?**

   While we think that the Assessment Portfolio will provide you with a rich, useful tool, you are not required to use it.

10. **Why is the Assessment Portfolio important?**

    The Assessment Portfolio is important for three reasons:

    1. Most importantly, it provides Kaplan University with an innovative, cutting-edge tool that will help the academic leadership determine whether or not students are achieving their stated educational goals (program outcomes), and make improvements to courses and programs to better ensure that students are meeting these goals;

    2. It provides students with a means to track the progress of their learning, pinpoint areas of strength and weakness, and learn about themselves and how they learn, as well as reflect on where they started, where they are and where they are going in their programs of study; and

    3. It places Kaplan University among the best universities and colleges in the country in how we assess student learning, and by doing so strengthens the reputation of Kaplan University as an institution dedicated to high-quality, student-centered education.