

Oakland University
B.A. in International Relations
Assessment Plan

1. Citation of appropriate goals from Oakland University's Mission Statement.

- a) "...develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential for successful living and active concerned citizenship."
- b) "...prepare students for post-baccalaureate education (or) professional schools directly after graduation."

2. Specification of academic unit goals that flow from each of the cited university goals.

- a) The B.A. in IR degree is a multi-disciplinary degree that seeks to develop in students a knowledge base about world affairs, an understanding of the diversity of world politics, economies, and history, and an ability to analyze global political systems and structures.
- b) The B.A. degree in IR degree is designed to serve students with an interest in world affairs or who intend to enter graduate school in international studies or work in international affairs (government or business).

3. Operationalization of the unit's goals into objectives for student learning.

- a) In the capstone course assignments, IR majors will demonstrate: appropriate use of IR concepts and methods; appropriate use of IR literature, documents, and/or references; critical thinking skills; and an ability to write well.
- b) B.A. graduates in International Relations will be adequately prepared for success in graduate school or international affairs (government or business).

4. Description of the methods by which progress toward the operationalized unit goals will be measured.

Direct Measure

a) Capstone course assignments. The capstone course assignments will integrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a student learned in courses throughout their IR degree program. These assignments will measure a student's ability to understand and correctly use the important concepts of international relations, skill in using analytical techniques (theories, models, analytical frameworks) to explain international politics and relations, and appreciate the importance of ethics in the field of international relations.

Indirect Measures

b1) Alumni surveys. Surveys of program alumni will be administered every three years. The survey asks a number of questions related to student learning objectives, such as how well their undergraduate degree prepared them for careers or graduate school. Surveys will be sent to all IR alumni.

b.2) Focus Groups. Focus groups of the undergraduate IR majors will be conducted every three years. We intend to set aside a one-hour period to conduct these focus groups, or embed them in a core IR course. Focus group questions explore learning objectives such as career/graduate school preparation, as well as curricular and student services issues.

5. List the individual(s) who have primary responsibility for administering assessment activities.

a) All political science faculty members who teach core or elective courses in the IR program will be considered part of the “IR faculty.” A representative from each of the other participating departments (history, economics, philosophy, and modern languages and literatures) also will be members of the IR governing body. As such, they will be responsible for program assessment. The department’s Curriculum and Assessment Committee has the overall responsibility of monitoring program assessment in all degree programs offered by the Department of Political Science.

b.1) The alumni survey is conducted by volunteer faculty members, usually those who teach the Research Methods courses. These volunteers also submit a written report to the Curriculum and Assessment Committee, which discusses and analyzes the results and makes a report to the full department faculty each year.

b.2) The focus groups have been conducted by volunteer departmental faculty, who also write the report, and submit it to the Curriculum & Assessment Committee. In turn, the Committee reports to the full department once each year (or as often as a focus group report is available) for discussion.

6. Describe the procedures used in your academic unit for translating assessment results into program changes.

Departmental faculty members meet on a monthly basis throughout the academic year. At least one meeting per semester is devoted in part or in whole to assessment. Additional meetings dedicated specifically to assessment are called if needed. Faculty members occasionally discuss assessment-related topics via email on an on-going basis.

Once results from the capstone assignments, the alumni survey, and the focus groups are analyzed and reported, all full-time faculty participate in a discussion of the results and their impact on the program’s objectives. Due to the nature of some of our information gathering – surveys and focus groups conducted every three years – changes usually aren’t contemplated until results across different methods and measures (and over multiple years) indicate a definite trend that suggests program or curricular revisions.

Departmental faculty members are committed to continuous, on-going self-assessment. Results from all of our assessment data collection activities are regularly evaluated to determine if any program changes are indicated.

Assessment Plan

Goal Cited In OU Mission	Relevant Goal Of Unit	Student Learning Objectives	Methods of Assessment	Individual(s) Responsible for Assessment Activities	Procedures for Using Assessment Results to Improve Program
<p>“...develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes essential for active, concerned citizenship.”</p> <p>“...prepare students for post-baccalaureate education (or) professional schools directly after graduation.”</p>	<p>“The B.A. in IR degree is a multi-disciplinary degree that seeks to develop in students a knowledge base about world affairs, an understanding of the diversity of world politics, economies, and history, and an ability to analyze global political systems and structures.”</p> <p>The B.A. degree in IR is designed for students with an interest in world affairs or who intend to enter graduate school in international studies or work in international affairs (government or business).</p>	<p>In the capstone course, students will be able to demonstrate: (1) appropriate use of IR concepts & methods; (2) appropriate understanding and use of IR literature, documents, and/or references; (3) demonstrate critical thinking skills; (4) an appreciation of the importance of ethics in the field of international relations.</p> <p>B.A. in IR majors will be adequately prepared for success in graduate school or for work in international affairs (government or business).</p>	<p>Capstone course assignments will integrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students learned in courses throughout their IR degree program.</p> <p>1) Alumni survey (every three years); 2) Focus Group (every three years) – not conducted in same years</p>	<p>Instructors of IR capstone course; IR faculty; political science faculty.</p> <p>1) Faculty volunteers administer alumni survey; 2) faculty volunteers conduct focus group, write report, and submit report to Curriculum & Assessment Committee</p>	<p>IR and Dept. faculty will review results of selected capstone course assignments annually and discuss ways to improve curriculum, course content, and clarify objectives</p> <p>Curriculum & Assessment Committee monitors results and reports to full department for discussion of ways to improve curriculum, course content, and to clarify student learning objectives</p>