

Student Learning Guide

2020



Navajo Technical University
Navajo Nation

**REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE STUDENT LEARNING COMMITTEE &
THE FACULTY CONGRESS
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Purpose

The purpose of the **Student Learning Guide** is to promote optimal student learning and development at Navajo Technical University (NTU) through planning, assessment, and reporting processes based on Diné Philosophy of Education, accreditation criteria, and best practices. The guide is for NTU's faculty, staff, administrators, and students.

Diné Philosophy of Education

Diné Philosophy of Education is rooted in efforts at NTU to indigenize Western education and is the centerpiece of NTU's mission. The philosophy is based on Blessing Way and Protection Way teachings that constitute Navajo ways of knowing. Blessing Way teachings help individuals live a good life and stay on a pathway of harmony and balance. Protection Way teachings protect individuals against life's imperfections, evil, and corruption. They help one cope with hardships and difficulties.

Diné Education of Philosophy aims to weave together Blessing and Protection Way teachings in ways that complement all of life around us. Through these teachings, individuals internalize Sa'áh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón: knowledge, balance, connectivity, and strength – glossed in Navajo as K'é.

Sa'áh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón connects Blessing and Protection Way teachings to the four cardinal directions and a set of Life Principles:

- Nitsáhákees (intellect, imagination, critical thinking)
- Nahat'á (self-reliance, preparation, motivation)
- Iiná (respect, humor, collaboration)
- Sih Hasin (wisdom, reflection, self-actualization)

The Life Principles undergird everything in this guide about the organization of student learning and development at NTU. Critical thinking, planning, implementation, and reflection are iterative steps for continuously improving what we do for and with students, inside and outside of NTU classrooms. These Life Principles provide the basis for academic program planning, implementation, assessment, and continuous improvement.

The inter-relationship of teachings, directions, and Life Principles in the Diné Philosophy of Education, and connections to academic planning, assessment, and reporting, are depicted in Figure One on the following page.

Assessment

Assessment is the process of establishing learning goals, providing learning opportunities, assessing student learning, and using results to implement improvements.¹ The process is ongoing. It follows the logic of the Life Principles of Diné Philosophy of Education: Nitsáhákees (critical thinking), Nahat'á (planning), Iiná (implementation), and Sih Hasin (reflection).

¹ For a full explanation, see Suskie, L. (2018). *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide, Third Edition*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.s



FIGURE ONE: *Diné Philosophy of Education at Navajo Technical University*

Every degree and certificate program at NTU should have a student learning plan that operationalizes the Life Principles of Diné Philosophy of Education (see **Appendix 1**). The plan's focus is program-level learning, as opposed to class-, course-, or institution-level. What do faculty want the students to know, be able to do, and value and believe by the time they graduate? This is the focus. The plan describes the program's mission, student learning outcomes, measures for gathering data on student learning, and relationship of outcomes, courses, and measures. These program elements, along with assessment data and notes pertaining to analysis and program improvements, are archived by the faculty using online tools.

A student learning plan articulates measures to be used by the faculty to determine levels of student achievement and program effectiveness in attaining the program's mission and goals. Ideally, the measures provide direct and indirect evidence of student learning and include a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. Individual program plans may be driven by specific requirements of specialized accreditation agencies.

Courses in a program are designed to promote the program's goals and student learning outcomes. Syllabi articulate these connections (see **Appendix 2**). In addition to providing logistical

information about the course and instructor (e.g., course description, dates, location, contact information, readings, and course schedule), syllabi must describe class- and course-level assessments, as well as connections to program-level assessments.

Accreditation

Accreditation criteria stipulate that institutions evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning through processes that promote continuous improvement, reflect good practice, and include the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.² The guidelines herein are designed to help NTU faculty, staff, administrators, and students achieve these standards.

Assessment and Grading

Assessment and grading overlap. Both aim to identify what students have and have not learned. That said, their foci differ. Grading tends to focus on individual student achievement and ranking; assessment focuses on program effectiveness, which is what the assessment project is all about – continuous program improvement.

There are points at which grades can be used for program assessment purposes, for instance, in analyzing student achievement on a program assessment measure: a test, exam, or performance-based rubric. These data can be analyzed in light of other direct and indirect information on student learning. In general, however, grades by themselves – and especially end-of-semester course grades – do not provide useful information on what students are familiar with, are able to do, and value and believe.

Language of Academic Planning and Assessment

Creating a common language about assessment, student learning, and student development is essential to academic planning and reporting. Here are definitions of important assessment terms (in addition to those discussed in Diné Philosophy of Education, above). A more complete list is spelled out in the Glossary (see **Appendix 3**).

Term	Definition	Other terms with similar meaning
Student learning	The cognitive internalization of information received from instructional services and retention as new knowledge that may be used to further academic and professional goals.	Education
Assessment	Establishing clear, measurable outcomes of student learning, ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes, systematically gathering and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations, and using the information to improve student learning.	Evaluation
Evaluation	Reviewing the results of data collection and then determining the value and ranking of those results.	Assessment

² Criterion Four, and especially Core Component 4B, in the HLC's "Revised Criteria for Accreditation." Retrieved on Sep 18 2019 from http://download.hlcommission.org/policy/updates/AdoptedCriteriaRevision_2019_INF.pdf.

Mission	A short, memorable statement that expresses the purpose and uniqueness of the program.	Purpose statement
Outcomes	Statements that describe specifically what students are expected to be familiar with, be able to do, or value by the time they graduate.	Objectives, standards, goals, indicators
Curriculum map	A grid or map that lists all of the courses in a program cross-tabulated with the program's learning outcomes, and that indicates in which course each outcome is taught.	Outcomes grid, objectives grid
Measures	Assessment instruments, tools, or activities designed to ascertain levels of student learning achievement	Tool, instrument
Assessment map	A grid or map that lists all of the courses in a program cross-tabulated with the program's measures, and that indicates in which course each measure is assessed.	Assessment grid, measures grid
Analysis	Data-driven narrative that indicates program strengths and/or progress made plus logical steps for addressing outcomes partially met or not met.	Improvements, improvement plan, action plan

Assessment Cycle

Consistent with the cyclical and ongoing nature of Diné Philosophy of Education, assessment and program improvement efforts are also cyclical and ongoing. Faculty members administer assessment instruments throughout the academic year. Utilizing web-based resources, they collect, archive, and analyze the data. The analyses culminate in the development of an Annual Student Learning Report, which is made available to all members of the University community. The timeline below summarizes the annual assessment cycle:

Activity	Person(s) responsible	Timeframe
1. Develop and refine program assessment plan(s).	Faculty	Fall semester
2. Gather and archive student learning data that follow program assessment plans.	Faculty and chairpersons	Each semester
3. Analyze student learning data.	Faculty and chairpersons	Spring semester
4. Implement program, curriculum, and assessment improvements as needed.	Faculty and chairpersons	Spring semester
5. Request additional funding based on feedback through assessment.	Chairpersons and Budget Committee	Spring semester
6. Review selected programs every three years (or as stipulated by the appropriate Dean).	Student Learning Committee (SLC) and Deans	Spring semester
7. Produce institutional effectiveness report that summarizes programs' enrollment, retention, graduation, and placement rates.	Office of Institutional Research (OIR)	Mar 1
8. Produce Annual Student Learning Report for the prior academic year.	Student Learning Coordinator and SLC	Jun 1

General Education and Co-Curricular Planning and Reporting

Academic year 2018-19 marked a transition in NTU's GenEd program, from a focus in prior years on course-level development and assessment, to an emphasis on program-level coherence, assessment, and ongoing improvement. The transition will continue in 2019-20. Core competencies and suggested measures (primarily of the New Mexico Higher Education Department) now provide a framework for articulating NTU's student learning outcomes across GenEd disciplines.

Opportunities for including Co-Curricular learning and development in the GenEd Program will be explored, as will web-based tools for compiling and analyzing student learning data. GenEd and Co-Curricular Program assessment will follow the same Assessment Cycle followed by the faculty for program assessment.

Student Learning Committee

Program, GenEd, and Co-Curricular design, planning, assessment, reports, and professional development are overseen by the Student Learning Committee. This committee combines and replaces two former committees: the Assessment and GenEd Committees. The SLC consists of members of the Faculty Congress who represent each academic department and degree-granting campus location. Members are nominated by Department Chairpersons and serve staggered two-year terms.

Academic Program Review

The Deans, Committee on Institutional Effectiveness, and Program Review Committee conduct a thorough self-study of each academic program every five years using the **Academic Program Review Process**. The review focuses on the following:

- Curriculum
- Student data
- Program assessment and improvements
- Strengths and challenges
- Faculty
- Recognition
- Cost
- Action plan

For detailed information consult the latest Program Review Guide, published on the Academics section of NTU's website.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students. Assessment information that demonstrates student learning starts with students. Basic responsibilities of students are to participate in both direct assessment activities (tests, projects with rubrics, portfolios, etc.) and indirect assessment activities (surveys, focus groups, etc.). Other roles that students can assume include:

- Provide feedback on assessment activities.
- Facilitate assessment activities by acting as assessors themselves. (Critiquing class projects and presentations of others students, group work evaluation, conducting campus surveys, etc.)
- Participate in departmental analyses of assessment data and deliberations about program improvements.

Full-time Faculty. FT faculty participation in academic planning and reporting should be substantial in all phases of the assessment cycle. Responsibilities include:

- Design and implement program assessment.
- Collaborate with other faculty on the development and implementation of program assessment, as approved by department chairpersons.
- Implement instructional strategies and course and program revisions that promote continuous improvement of student learning.

Part-time Faculty. PT faculty participation in academic planning and reporting is valuable and recommended. To the extent that they are able to participate in departmental assessment activities, PT instructors should be invited to do so. They are expected to participate in all program assessment activities that are spelled out in master syllabi that they are given to teach. Responsibilities include:

- Implement course-embedded assessments are spelled out in master syllabi.
- Provide assessment data to department chairpersons at the end of each semester as appropriate.

Department Chairpersons. Chairpersons should be knowledgeable about academic planning and reporting and passionate about continuous program improvement. Responsibilities include:

- Ensure that all FT departmental faculty are involved in assessment.
- Explain assessment protocols to all PT faculty.
- Ensure that assessment plans and reports are submitted as requested.
- Provide opportunities for departmental discussion about assessment plans and progress.
- Facilitate the implementation of faculty recommendations resulting from assessment of student learning.

Student Learning Committee. The SLC is a standing committee of the Faculty Congress. Its responsibilities include:

- Monitor the assessment of student learning in academic programs, including the General Education and Co-Curricular programs.
- Serve as consultant-evaluators to the academic departments on the development and implementation of program assessment plans.
- Develop and communicate to the college community annual goals on assessment that are consistent with the Student Learning Guide.
- Develop plans for assessment workdays.
- Provide feedback annually to faculty and departments on program assessment efforts.
- Review and revise as needed the Student Learning Guide.

Student Learning Coordinator. The Student Learning Coordinator serves as point person for all academic assessment activities. Responsibilities include:

- Chair SLC meetings. Set agendas and write up meeting minutes.
- Maintain the Student Learning web page.
- Manage assessment budget.

- Facilitate the review of program assessment plans.
- Identify faculty development priorities.
- Work with the Deans to plan intercampus meetings, end-of-year assessment workdays, and faculty development activities.
- Assist in the preparation and implementation of budgets in support of the Student Learning Guide.
- Coordinate the production of an annual student learning report. Present the report to the Faculty Assembly, President's Cabinet, and Board of Regents.

Office of Institutional Research. In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, personnel in the Office of Institutional Research are key in gathering and making available data on institutional effectiveness, assisting departments and warehousing assessment information. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinate institution-wide work-flows so as to maintain accurate and up-to-date information on student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.
- Gather student, faculty, and staff survey and focus group data so as to gauge institutional effectiveness.
- Gather employer satisfaction data as they pertain to graduates.
- Assist departments in designing academic assessment plans and in warehousing assessment data.
- Assist in the production of an annual student learning report.

Deans. The Deans of Undergraduate Studies and of Graduate Studies are responsible for the coordination and implementation of assessment activities among the departments that they supervise. Responsibilities include:

- Support and verify assessment at the department level.
- Facilitate opportunities for departments to meet together to work on assessment.
- Coordinate periodic review of academic programs that includes results from assessment of student learning.

Provost. As chief academic officer, the Provost is responsible for administrative oversight, coordination, and implementation of assessment throughout the University. Responsibilities include:

- Support and verify assessment at all levels.
- Demonstrate institutional commitment to assessment of student learning and the use of its results by department faculty, chairs, and deans.
- Coordinate professional development activities that support academic planning, reporting, and student learning assessment.
- Submit reports on the assessment of the New Mexico Core Competencies.
- Ensure that adequate funds are budgeted for university-wide assessment activities.

President. The University President should be knowledgeable about academic planning, reporting, and assessment. She or he has ultimate responsibility to promote academic planning,

reporting, and assessment of student learning among all University stakeholders. Responsibilities include:

- Ensure implementation of recommendations to improve student learning and development.
- Ensure that necessary resources are available for faculty to conduct assessment and implement recommendations based on assessment results.

Appendix 1

Student Learning Plan Template

Mission

Outcomes: *Students should be able to...*

Direct measures and targets

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.

Indirect measures

Enrollments

Retention percentage

Graduates

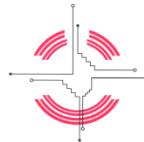
Curriculum and/or assessment map(s)

Findings (for each measure)

Improvements

Appendix 2

Syllabus Template (for face-to-face or online course)



Navajo Technical University

P.O. Box 849, Crownpoint, NM 87313-0849

Tel: (505) 786-4100

<http://navajotech.edu>

FAX: (505) 786-5644

Course Title:

Credit Hours:

Semester:

Cap:

Faculty:

E-mail:

Office:

Office Phone:

Office Hours (face-to-face or online)

Preferred Communication (email and/or text; will respond within 24 hours)

Class Location:

Class Meeting Times:

Required Materials:

Textbooks:

Tools:

Lab Fee (if applicable):

University Mission Statement

Navajo Technical University's mission is to provide University readiness programs, certificates, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees. Students, faculty, and staff will provide value to the Diné community through research, community engagement, service learning, and activities designed to foster cultural and environmental preservation and sustainable economic development. The University is committed to a high quality, student-oriented, hands-on learning environment based on the Diné cultural principles: *Nitsáhákees, Nahat'á, Iiná, Sii Hasin.*

Course Description

Course Outcomes

Course Assessments

Connections to Program Assessment (course-embedded measures)

Connections to General Education

Course Activities

Wk	Date	Reading	Assignments	Assessments
1				
		Last day to add/drop		
2				
3				
4				
5				
		Grad petition due		
		Midterm grades due		
6				
7				
		Last day to withdraw		
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				Finals
		Grades due		
		Graduation		

Grading Plan

Homework	%	A = 100-90%
Quizzes	%	B = 89-80%
Project(s)	%	C = 79-70%
Mid-term exam	%	D = 69-60%
Final exam	%	F = < 60%
Class participation	3%	

Grading Policy

Each student must do his or her own homework and case studies. Discussion among students on homework and cases is encouraged for clarification of assignments, technical details of using software, and structuring major steps of solutions - especially on the course's Web site. Students must do their own work on the homework and exam. Cheating and plagiarism are strictly forbidden. Cheating includes but is not limited to: plagiarism, submission of work that is not the student's own, submission or use of falsified data, unauthorized access to exam or assignment, use of unauthorized material during an exam, supplying or communicating unauthorized information for an assignment or exam.

Participation

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class activities as listed above, as it **is 3% of the grade**. Points will be given to students who actively participate in class activities including field trips, laboratories, and ask questions of guest speakers and other presenters.

Cell Phone and Head Phone Use

Please turn cell phones off or place them on silence or vibrate mode **before** coming to class. Also, answer cell phones **outside of class** (not in the classroom). Exercising cell phone courtesy is appreciated by both the instructor and classmates. Headphones are to be removed before coming to class.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to regularly attend all classes for which they are registered. A percentage of the student's grade will be based on class attendance and participation. Absence from class, regardless of the reason, does not relieve the student of his/her responsibility to complete all course work by the required deadlines. Furthermore, it is the student's responsibility to obtain notes, handouts, and any other information covered when absent from class and to arrange to make up any in-class assignments or tests if permitted by the instructor. Incomplete or missing assignments will necessarily affect the student's grades. Instructors will report excessive and/or unexplained absences to the Counseling Department for investigation and potential intervention. **Instructors may drop students from the class after three absences unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor to make up work and the instructor deems any excuse acceptable.**

Study Time Outside of Class for Face-to-Face Courses

For every credit hour spent in class, a student is expected to spend two hours outside of class studying the course materials.

Study Time for Hybrid or Blended Courses

For a hybrid or blended course of one credit hour, a student is expected to spend three hours per week studying the course materials.

Study Time for Online Courses

For an online course of one credit hour, a student is expected to spend four hours per week studying the course materials.

Academic Integrity

Integrity (honesty) is expected of every student in all academic work. The guiding principle of academic integrity is that a student's submitted work must be the student's own. Students who engage in academic dishonesty diminish their education and bring discredit to the University community. Avoid situations likely to compromise academic integrity such as: cheating, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism; modifying academic work to obtain additional credit in the same class unless approved in advance by the instructor, failure to observe rules of academic integrity established by the instructor. **The use of another person's ideas or work claimed as your own without acknowledging the original source is known as plagiarism and is prohibited.**

Diné Philosophy of Education

The Diné Philosophy of Education is incorporated into every class for students to become aware of and to understand the significance of the four Diné philosophical elements, including its affiliation with the four directions, four sacred mountains, the four set of thought processes and so forth: Nitsáhákees, Nahat'á, Iiná and Sih Hasin which are essential and relevant to self-identity, respect and wisdom to achieve career goals successfully.

Students with Disabilities

The Navajo Technical University and the (insert the name of your department or school) are committed to serving all enrolled students in a non-discriminatory and accommodating manner. Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of disability or needs special accommodations should inform NTU in accordance with the procedures of the subsection entitled “Students with Disabilities” under Section 7: Student Support Programs, NTU Student Handbook.

Appendix 3

Glossary

Analysis

Data-driven narrative that indicates program strengths and/or progress made plus logical steps for addressing outcomes partially met or not met.

Assessment

Establishing clear, measurable outcomes of student learning, ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes, systematically gathering and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations, and using the information to improve student learning.

Assessment map

A grid or map that lists all of the courses in a program cross-tabulated with the program's measures and that indicates in which course each measure is assessed.

Benchmark

A standard or point of reference against which student performance may be compared or assessed.

Capstone

A final project or activity that provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate the learning outcomes that they have achieved, usually, in a program. Examples include projects, research papers, internships, portfolios, performances, or even capstone courses.

Classroom assessment techniques (CAT's)

CAT's provide quick, informative feedback on student learning. The most well-known of these is the "minute paper," in which a teacher asks students to write down the most important, or most unclear, aspect about what they learned.

Co-curricular learning and development

Activities, programs, and learning experiences that complement, in some way, what students learn in the classroom, that is, experiences that are connected to or mirror the academic curriculum. Co-curricular activities are typically, but not always, defined by their separation from academic courses.

Course-embedded measure

An assessment measure in a specific course whose data are analyzed for program assessment purposes.

Curriculum map

A grid or map that lists all of the courses in a program cross-tabulated with the program's learning outcomes, and that indicates in which course each outcome is taught.

Direct measure

Provides tangible and compelling information about what students have learned and not learned. Examples include tests, standardized exams, licensure or certification exams, essays, projects, performances, internships, and portfolios.

E-portfolios

Allow students to store collections of their intellectual work online, thus enabling them to document growth and development from program-entry to graduation and beyond.

Evaluation

Processes for reviewing the results of data collection and then determining the value and ranking of those results.

Formative assessment

Assessment that provides feedback for improving student learning and instruction rather than ranking or accountability.

Indirect measure

Asks students to reflect on their learning rather than demonstrate it. Techniques include surveys, exit interviews, alumni surveys, employer surveys, and focus groups.

Mission

A short, memorable statement that expresses the purpose and uniqueness of a program.

Outcomes

Statements that describe specifically what students are expected to be familiar with, be able to do, or value by the time they graduate.

Portfolio

A systematic collection of students' learning artifacts that offer direct and indirect evidence of learning, development, and achievements over time.

Reliability

The extent to which an assessment yields consistent results with similar populations in similar assessment circumstances over time.

Rubric

A scoring guide used to assess student performance according to specific criteria.

Student learning

The cognitive internalization of information received from instructional services and retention as new knowledge that may be used to further academic and professional goals.

Summative assessment

An assessment at the end of an instructional unit that gives information on students' learning as measured against some standard or benchmark.

Validity

The extent to which an assessment measures what it is designed to measure.