Program Learning Outcome Assessment

2019-20

Program Learning Outcomes Physics and Engineering

Graduates from the Physics B.S. and B.A. programs will demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

- Students will develop an understanding of the fundamental principles of physics
- Students will apply physical principles, mathematical reasoning, and computational techniques to solve real-world problems
- Students will design and conduct experiments as well as analyze and interpret data
- Students will effectively communicate complicated technical information in writing
- Students will effectively communicate complicated technical information orally
- Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and cite information for the task at hand.
- Students will effectively collaborate in teams

Graduates from the Engineering Physics program will demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

- Students will develop an understanding of the fundamental principles of physics and of engineering
- Students will apply physical principles, mathematical reasoning, and computational techniques to solve real-world problems
- Students will design and conduct experiments or complete an engineering design project as well as analyze and interpret data.
- Students will effectively communicate complicated technical information in writing
- Students will effectively communicate complicated technical information orally
- Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and cite information for the task at hand.
- Students will effectively collaborate in teams

Note: Because these program learning outcomes are very similar and the assessment points for them are the same, assessment date for physics majors and engineering physics majors has been combined into a single report.

Learning Outcome:

Students will develop an understanding of the fundamental principles of physics.

Outcome Measure:

Major Field Achievement Test in Physics taken by seniors in the capstone course PHY475.

Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):

At least 50% of students will score more than the 40th percentile on the MFAT in Physics.

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):

- 1. Specialized Knowledge
- 2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
- 3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
- 4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
- 5. Civic and Global Learning

Longitudinal Data:

		Percentage of Students at the 40 th percentile									
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19			
Physics MFT	71%	57%	33%	50%	50%	37%	57%	21%			

Conclusions Drawn from Data:

Note that in 2019-20 the department decided to stop using the MFT in Physics. The department was not getting useful data from the expense involved in the exam because it is not well aligned with the learning outcomes of the programs. We are in the process of revising learning outcomes and the related measures.

Generally students are just barely meeting the criteria established and in some years missing it (but the variability is partially the result of a relatively small sample size). Students are typically measured at the end of their senior year. This data suggests that the "typical student" is unable to recall ideas at the time they are taking the exam that we hope they would have.

There is a tendency for averages to be changed significantly by a few individuals, so these averages should be perhaps viewed cautiously. Often students who have reviewed material before the MFAT exam do significantly better. This occurs primarily from students who take the physics GRE, and to a lesser degree individuals who severed as TAs. However, the population doing these activities might naturally score higher on the MFT.

Brief interviews with students indicated that we may not be preparing the students to take this kind of exam very well (i.e. they almost never see multiple choice, and rarely problems that they are not completely working out.)

Changes to be Made Based on Data:

We are discontinuing the use of the test and will be replacing it with other embedded assessments.

The MFAT exam itself has more of a focus on material typically through the first 2-3 years in the curriculum. In 2015 there were changes made to the content of the Senior Lab course. In particular, the two advanced lab rotations more intentionally started with fundamental principles and then built on this material. Additionally, one class session of "big ideas" was added. To a small extent this exposes all students to some level of review.

We also have not had a system in place to guarantee that all our majors have taken the MFT. Beginning 2014-15 the has been embedded into a required upper division class for seniors.

As part of the program review process, we will be discussing if the ETS is really an appropriate measure of learning for the majority of our seniors who are engineering-physics majors.

Rubric Used

No rubric used since the results are provided by ETS.

Learning Outcome:

Students will apply physical principles, mathematical reasoning, and computational techniques to solve real-world problems.

Outcome Measure:

Embedded final exam questions given in upper division mastery class on a rotating basis (PHY361 and PHY431).

Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):

At least 75% of students will achieve an average score of 2.5 or higher on criteria described in application rubric.

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):

- 1. Specialized Knowledge
- 2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
- 3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
- 4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
- 5. Civic and Global Learning

Longitudinal Data:

	Percentage Over 2.5									
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20		
	PHY431	PHY361	PHY431	PHY361	PHY431	PHY361	PHY431	PHY3063		
Application Rubric	84%	88%	82%	80%	71%	96%	81%	92%		

* Note the courses were renumbered in the 2019-20 academic year. PHY361 became PHY3063.

Conclusions Drawn from Data:

Typically, our students are meeting the benchmark. Though not directly measured, we have noticed occasionally students struggle knowing when computational tools are most appropriate if not prompted in some way.

In establishing this learning outcome, review of the curriculum tended to show that we had previously not focused as much on applications within courses. The computational piece has been strengthened by utilizing tools such as MATLAB through several courses from freshman through senior level.

The adjusted curriculum (starting Fall 2019) includes more labs and thus more opportunities for "hands on" work and computations.

Changes to be Made Based on Data:

Increased use of computational techniques including introductory physics lab, modern physics, and various upper division classes.

The degree to which students evaluate their solution is also varied. Typically this has not explicitly been a required part of problems being solved. It is recommended that at least periodically an evaluation of their solutions be an explicit part of problems rather than the hope that students have learned the good habit of evaluating their solution when they have finished it, and assume that this is taking place.

Physics and Engineering Application Rubric

	Outstanding	High satisfactory	Low Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Demonstrates knowledge of relevant physical principles	D Identifies all the appropri- ate physical principles nec- essary to solve the problem, and can provide clear rea- soning why these principles are applicable and useful	D Identifies all physical prin- ciples necessary to solve the problem, but cannot clearly articulate why each principle is applicable and helpful in arriving at a so- lution	D Identifies most of the relevant physics	D Cannot identify relevant physics
Correctly applies physical principles	D Efficiently uses identified physical principles to move toward solution	D Uses identified physical principles to move toward solution	D Application of physical principles contains few er- rors	D Application of physical principles contains many errors
Applies mathematical techniques, concepts and processes	D Mathematics are used cor- rectly and efficiently to move toward a solution	D Mathematical techniques are used correctly with few or no errors	D Mathematical techniques are used correctly with sev- eral errors	D Mathematical techniques contain many errors
Demonstrates knowledge of compu- tational techniques	D Can articulate why a par- ticular computational tech- nique or tool is useful	D Can identify relevant tools and techniques	D Identifies some tools or techniques which may work	D Cannot identify computa- tional techniques applica- ble to the problem
Application of computational techniques	D Uses appropriate tools to formulate a complete so- lution efficiently and cor- rectly	D Arrives at a solution which is correct	D Arrives at a solution which may contain some minor errors	D Does not arrive at a solution
Evaluation of solution	D Can evaluate solution for correctness either using al- ternate methods or rea- sonableness using physical principles	D Can evaluate the solution generally based on physical principles	D Rough evaluation of solu- tion without clear reason- ing	D Cannot provide any evalu- ation of correctness of solu- tion

Learning Outcome:

Students will design and conduct experiments or complete engineering design projects as well as analyze and interpret data.

Outcome Measure:

PHY475: Senior Lab final project highlighting design. The curriculum has changed and the assessment is now part of PHY4072 Senior Project.

Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):

At least 75% of students will achieve an average score of 2.5 or higher on criteria described in experimental rubric.

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):

- 1. Specialized Knowledge
- 2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
- 3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
- 4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
- 5. Civic and Global Learning

Longitudinal Data:

	Percentage of Students scoring 2.5 or higher								
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Design Rubric	75%	N/A	88%	93%	89%	86%	100%	69%	

In 2013-14 students did not complete an individual project, but rather reported on a particular topic, but did participate in lab rotations.

Conclusions Drawn from Data:

Students are observed to be strong at certain features on the rubric (error analysis, reach appropriate conclusions) while typically weaker in others (developing procedures independently). Perhaps not surprisingly, students are strongest in aspects that they have practiced the most.

An analysis of the data for 2019-20 shows that the students who did not meet the basic benchmark of an average score of 2.5 across all areas of the rubric showed weakness in:

- Develop adequate physics/engineering background to carry out novel experiments
- Devise a procedure for achieving the goals of the experiment or project

Changes to be Made Based on Data:

Upon establishing this learning outcome and developing the rubric the department recognized that we did not provide many opportunities for students to develop their own procedures (many procedures were described for them).

PHY4072 has improved students' abilities, but a stronger thread through the curriculum appears necessary. Building a more scaffolded approach, where they practice an increasing amount of independence would be helpful. To address this issue, our program review concluded that a curriculum that had more labs would be helpful with the junior and senior level labs involving a greater level of independence. These new labs are being added to the curriculum but the students in the 2019-20 course were not the beneficiaries of that curricular change. The students who take the class in 2020-21 will be the first cohort to have an increased number of labs.

Physics and Engineering Experimental Rubric

	Outstanding	High satisfactory	Low Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Develop adequate physics/engineering background to carry out novel experi- ments	D	D	D	D
Establish and communicate the pur- pose of an experiment or project	D	D	D	D
Operate and troubleshoot complex physical apparatus	D	D	D	D
Devise a procedure for achieving the goals of the experiment or project	D	D	D	D
Reach appropriate conclusions from data	D	D	D	D

Learning Outcome:

Written Communication: Students will effectively communicate complicated technical information in writing.

Outcome Measure:

PHY4072 and PHY4082 Senior Project Written Report.

ETS Proficiency Profile Exam

Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):

<u>PHY4072/PHY4082</u>: At least 75% of students will achieve an average score of 2.5 or higher on criteria on the Written Report rubric.

ETS: 75% of the students will be marginal or proficient at Level 2 Writing.

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):

- 1. Specialized Knowledge
- 2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
- 3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
- 4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
- 5. Civic and Global Learning

Longitudinal Data:

PHY4072:

		Percentage of Students at 2.5 or higher							
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	
Written Report Rubric	75%	N/A	100%	100%	84%	64%	100%	No Data	

ETS:

		Percentage of Students Marginal or Proficient							
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	
ETS Proficiency									
Profile Level 2	100%	100%	75%	62%	94%	73%	87%	60%	
Writing									

*COVID-19 Year

Conclusions Drawn from Data:

The students are consistently hitting the benchmarks in both the written report and the ETS exam. The dip in the ETS exam in 2015-16 was due to small sample size (if one student had a slightly higher score the benchmark would have been met). However in there was a significant drop in 2019-20 in the ETS score. This may be attributable to COVID or to the students not taking the exam particularly seriously because of not taking it in a classroom setting.

The reports that students are writing in the senior lab have been uneven. Examining the data from 2017-18 the main areas of weakness are:

- Information literacy (multiple references and the references cited)
- A well-written conclusion
- Uncertainties and error propagation discussed in the paper.

In 2018-19 the students met the benchmarks. 2019-20 was the year of the COVID-19 outbreak and spring writing data was not gathered.

Changes to be Made Based on Data:

The department will be undergoing program review in the coming year and will look at the alignment between the ETS exam and the written report expectations. It is clear that the students are not fully understanding the expectations for the final lab report that is being used in this class.

ETS: No rubric.

PHY457 Written Report Rubric:

	Outstanding	High satisfactory	Low Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Structural pieces	D abstract is a clear and concise sum- mary of all relevant results and de- scriptions in the order emphasized in the paper.	D abstract could be made clear and/or concise with minor changes.	D abstract is missing some informa- tion and/or contains unnecessary information.	D abstract does not contain necessary information
-	D introduction indicates precise sub- ject, scope, and purpose	D introduction is missing one of the following: precise subject, scope, and purpose.	D introduction is missing two of the following: precise subject, scope, and purpose.	D introduction does not give precise subject, scope and purpose.
	D main body is a well-organized, logi- cal and contains all necessary infor- mation without extra information.	D main body lacks some organization	D main body is missing some impor- tant pieces and/or is not well orga- nized	D main body is not well organized, lacks logical arguments and rele- vant data
	D conclusion appropriately sums up, gives conclusions, and recommen- dations	D conclusion does two of the follow- ing: sums up, gives conclusions, and recommendations	D conclusion does one of the follow- ing: sums up, gives conclusions, and recommendations	D conclusion does provide any sum- mation, conclusions, or recommen- dations
	D multiple references from reputable sources.	D most references from distinct rep- utable sources	D some references from reputable sources	D no bibliography, or all references from untrusted sources
	D references cited in the body of the document	D some citation of reference in body	D limited citation of references	D no citation of references
Data	D data is clearly presented in prop- erly formatted tables, figures and graphs where appropriate.	D some data could be presented more clearly	D data is poorly presented and some key data is missing.	D several pieces of key data are miss- ing
	D all uncertainties are shown and error propagation are carried out where appropriate.	D most uncertainties are shown and propagation of error carried out.	D many uncertainties are missing and/or propagation or error not carried out correctly	D no uncertainties of measurements are show
~	D no grammatical or spelling errors	D few grammatical and spelling errors	D some grammatical and spelling errors	D many grammatical and spelling errors
Grammar Spelling,	D equations well formatted, and variables introduced as needed.	D a few errors in formatting equations	D poorly formatted equations	D incorrect equations
and Style	D appropriate style (no first person, past tense when reporting what was done)	${\bf D}$ a few informal statements and/or tense	D several areas with are too informal and tense errors	D very informal and/or use of future tense where not appropriate
	D clear sentences and ideas are pre- sented in a way that won't be mis- understood	D a few unclear sentences	D many complex and unclear sen- tences	D many sentences are unclear and have overly complex construction
	D concise and quantitative as subject matter permits	D a few unnecessary words and ideas	D frequent extra and inexact words	D many vague, inexact, many idle words
	D arguments are complete and logical	D most arguments are complete	D several arguments are difficult to follow	D arguments are incomplete, illogical, and may contain unnecessary infor- mation and specialized jargon

Learning Outcome:

Oral Communication: Students will effectively communicate complicated technical information orally.

Outcome Measure:

PHY4072 Senior Project technical talk.

Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):

At least 75% of students will achieve an average score of 2.5 or higher on criteria on the Oral Presentation rubric in a talk juried by department faculty.

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):

- 1. Specialized Knowledge
- 2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
- 3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
- 4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
- 5. Civic and Global Learning

Longitudinal Data:

		Percentage of Students at 2.5 or higher								
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*		
Oral										
Presentation	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%	93%	75%	100%		
Rubric Scores										

*COVID-19 Year

Conclusions Drawn from Data:

The students are generally achieving the benchmark.

Changes to be Made Based on Data:

In the future the department may want to analyze the data base on individual components of the Oral Presentation Rubric rather than using a single average score for each student.

Physics and Engineering Oral Presentation Rubric

	Outstanding	High satisfactory	Low Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Command of Material	D clearly knows materialD expands on PPT slidesD content appropriate for audience	D knows most key facts D some expansion on slides D partial adaption for audience	D reads some, knows someD no expansion on slidesD little adaption of content for au- dience	D reads many sentences from slidesD dependent on notesD lacks adaption of content to audience
Organization	 D clear and concise outline D relevant graphics and key text on slides D ±30 s of time limit 	D clear outline D too much information on slides D ±60 s of time limit	D some sense of outline D too much information and detail D ±1.5 m of time limit	 D no clear sense of outline D slides are paragraphed; too much detail on one slide D ±2 m of time limit
Presentation Skills	 D clearly practice several times; smooth transitions D free of uhms and the like D clearly heard and used inflection for emphasis D engages audience with eye con- tact D engages audience with gestures 	 D Practiced, but transitions not smooth D few uhms D understood much of the time and some inflection D some engagement with eye contact D some engagement with gestures 	 D practiced, but no transitions be- tween slides D many uhms D some difficulty hearing and little inflection D infrequent eye contact D some distracting gestures 	 D not practiced, doesn't anticipate content of next slide D uhms and the like detract from the presentation D cannot be heard and/or speaks in a monotone D no eye contact D frequent distracting gestures
Presentation Tools	D PPT background matched to content, legible font, graphics, seamless transitionsD Appropriate graphics used.	D appropriate background, font, transitionsD Some graphics used to enhance presentation.	D distracting backgrounds, transi- tions, fonts hard to readD graphics do not enhance presen- tation	 D no attention to backgrounds, transitions, fonts very hard to read D distracting use of graphics

Learning Outcome:

Information Literacy: Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and cite information for the task at hand.

Outcome Measure:

PHY4072 Senior Lab Written Technical Report.

Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):

<u>PHY4072/PHY4082</u>: At least 75% of students will achieve an average score of 2.5 or higher on criteria on the information literacy portion of the Written Report rubric.

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):

- 1. Specialized Knowledge
- 2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
- 3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
- 4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
- 5. Civic and Global Learning

Longitudinal Data:

		Percentage of Students at 2.5 or higher							
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	
Written Report Rubric IL	25%	N/A	63%	86%	53%	43%	44%	No Data	

*COVID-19 Year

Conclusions Drawn from Data:

The students are not achieving the benchmark. It is clear from looking at the individual scores in the writing rubrics, that this is the weakest category for students. For example in 2018-19 100% of the students hit the overall benchmark for writing, but when information literacy is considered separately, only 44% of the students have achieved the target. In 2019-20 due to COVID-19 writing data was not gathered.

Changes to be Made Based on Data:

The department needs to work with students to clarify expectations for the use and citation of material in technical write-ups. This will be part of the curricular adjustments made as the result of program review.

Rubric Used PHY457 Written Report Rubric:

	Outstanding	High satisfactory	Low Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Structural pieces	D abstract is a clear and concise sum- mary of all relevant results and de- scriptions in the order emphasized in the paper.	D abstract could be made clear and/or concise with minor changes.	D abstract is missing some informa- tion and/or contains unnecessary information.	D abstract does not contain necessary information
	D introduction indicates precise subject, scope, and purpose	D introduction is missing one of the following: precise subject, scope, and purpose.	D introduction is missing two of the following: precise subject, scope, and purpose.	D introduction does not give precise subject, scope and purpose.
	D main body is a well-organized, logi- cal and contains all necessary infor- mation without extra information.	D main body lacks some organization	D main body is missing some impor- tant pieces and/or is not well orga- nized	D main body is not well organized, lacks logical arguments and rele- vant data
	D conclusion appropriately sums up, gives conclusions, and recommen- dations	D conclusion does two of the follow- ing: sums up, gives conclusions, and recommendations	D conclusion does one of the follow- ing: sums up, gives conclusions, and recommendations	D conclusion does provide any sum- mation, conclusions, or recommen- dations
	D multiple references from reputable sources.	D most references from distinct rep- utable sources	D some references from reputable sources	D no bibliography, or all references from untrusted sources
	D references cited in the body of the document	D some citation of reference in body	D limited citation of references	D no citation of references
Data	D data is clearly presented in prop- erly formatted tables, figures and graphs where appropriate.	D some data could be presented more clearly	D data is poorly presented and some key data is missing.	D several pieces of key data are miss- ing
	D all uncertainties are shown and error propagation are carried out where appropriate.	D most uncertainties are shown and propagation of error carried out.	D many uncertainties are missing and/or propagation or error not carried out correctly	D no uncertainties of measurements are show
~	D no grammatical or spelling errors	D few grammatical and spelling errors	D some grammatical and spelling errors	D many grammatical and spelling er- rors
Grammar Spelling, and Style	D equations well formatted, and variables introduced as needed.	D a few errors in formatting equations	D poorly formatted equations	D incorrect equations
and Style	D appropriate style (no first person, past tense when reporting what was done)	D a few informal statements and/or tense	D several areas with are too informal and tense errors	D very informal and/or use of future tense where not appropriate
	D clear sentences and ideas are pre- sented in a way that won't be mis- understood	D a few unclear sentences	D many complex and unclear sen- tences	D many sentences are unclear and have overly complex construction
	D concise and quantitative as subject matter permits	D a few unnecessary words and ideas	D frequent extra and inexact words	D many vague, inexact, many idle words
	D arguments are complete and logical	D most arguments are complete	D several arguments are difficult to follow	D arguments are incomplete, illogical, and may contain unnecessary infor- mation and specialized jargon

Learning Outcome:

Students will effectively collaborate in teams.

Outcome Measure:

Teamwork survey used for students to rate their teammates. This survey and evaluation is done in PHY3004L.

Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):

At least 75% of students will achieve an average score of 2.5 or higher on criteria described in teamwork rubric.

Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):

- 1. Specialized Knowledge
- 2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
- 3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
- 4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
- 5. Civic and Global Learning

Longitudinal Data:

	Percentage scoring 2.5 or higher							
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Teamwork Rubric (teams)	86%	95%	94%	94%	91%	86%	100%	
Teamwork Rubric (professor)	100%	88%	89%	94%	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Conclusions Drawn from Data:

This is a highly cooperative class and the students ratings are consistent with observed behavior. Overall students tend to rate each other very highly. This motivated the addition of observations from the professor. However the professor observations aligned well with the student assessment, so the professor rating was discontinued after 2016-17.

Changes to be Made Based on Data:

The measurement instrument was changed after the first year. The second year a more detailed instrument was used to help shape their ratings of eachother.

	Evaluator:	Person Evaluated:			
	Outstanding	High satisfactory	Low Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	
Focus on Task	D Stays on task all of the time	D Stays on task most of the time	D Stays on task some of the time with some reminders from group	D Hardly ever on task. Lets others do task	
Extent to which works together	D A very strong group mem- ber who works hard and helps other in the group	D A strong group member who works hard	D Sometimes active group member but needs to try harder	D Frequently choosing not to help out	
Meeting Habits	D On time to meetings or any assigned tasks	D Usually on time, and com- pletes any assigned task	D Sometimes late for meeting or not completing tasks	D Late or absent for many or all meetings	
Attitude while listening and dis- cussing	D Respectful listener, dis- cusses, and helps direct the group in solving problems	D Respectful, listens and asks questions	D Has trouble listening with respect and takes over discussions without letting others have a turn	D Does not listen or consider other's ideas. Blocks group from reaching agreement	
Problem Solving	D Actively seeks and suggests solutions to problems	D Improves on solutions and suggestions given by others	D Does not offer solutions, but is willing to try solu- tions offered by others	D Does not try to solve prob- lems or help others solve problems	
Goal Completion	D Works to complete group goals	D Usually helps to complete group goals	D Occasionally helps to com- plete group goals	D Does not help to complete group goals	