

ASSESSMENT REPORT REMOTE/DISTANCE LEARNING

NAME OF YOUR PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT/MAJOR OR MINOR/CERTIFICATE
<INSERT HERE>

ACADEMIC YEAR 2019 - 2020

REPORT DUE DATE: December 4, 2020

This is an alternative template.

Given the unusual circumstances of the 2019-2020 academic year, each program/department/major/minor/certificate has two options of assessment:

- (a) Usual assessment report based on attached template OR
 - (b) Alternative assessment reflections on distance learning pivot based on this template
- Every program/department/major/minor/certificate can choose ONE of the two report formats to submit

Please make sure to fill out Page 1 – Questions 1 and 2

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- Who should submit the report? – All majors, minors (including interdisciplinary minors), graduate and non-degree granting certificate programs of the College of Arts and Sciences.
 - Programs can combine assessment reports for a major and a minor program into one aggregate report as long as the mission statements, program learning outcome(s) evaluated, methodology applied to each, and the results are clearly delineated in separate sections. If you choose to submit a remote learning reflections document, it should also have separate segments for major and minor
 - Undergraduate, Graduate and Certificate Programs must submit separate reports. An aggregate report is allowed only for major and minor of the same program
 - It is recommended that assessment report not exceed 10 pages. Additional materials (optional) can be added as appendices
 - Curriculum Map should be submitted along with Assessment Report

Some useful contacts:

1. Prof. Alexandra Amati, FDCC, Arts – adamati@usfca.edu
2. Prof. John Lendvay, FDCC, Sciences – lendvay@usfca.edu
3. Prof. Mark Meritt, FDCC, Humanities – meritt@usfca.edu
4. Prof. Michael Jonas, FDCC, Social Sciences – mrjonas@usfca.edu
5. Prof. Suparna Chakraborty, AD Academic Effectiveness – schakraborty2@usfca.edu

Academic Effectiveness Annual Assessment Resource Page:

<https://myusf.usfca.edu/arts-sciences/faculty-resources/academic-effectiveness/assessment>

Email to submit the report: assessment_cas@usfca.edu

Important: Please write the name of your program or department in the subject line.

**For example: FineArts_Major (if you decide to submit a separate report for major and minor);
FineArts_Aggregate (when submitting an aggregate report)**

I. LOGISTICS

1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair, Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).

- Katrina Olds (kbolds@usfca.edu), Program Director, Saint Ignatius Institute
- Cathal Doherty SJ (cdohertysj@usfca.edu), Associate Professor, Theology & Religious Studies (Faculty Assessment Coordinator)

2. Please indicate if you are submitting report for (a) a Major, (b) a Minor, (c) an aggregate report for a Major and Minor (in which case, each should be explained in a separate paragraph as in this template), (d) a Graduate or (e) a Certificate Program.

Please also indicate which report format are you submitting –Standard Report or Reflections Document

- Certificate Program (Saint Ignatius Institute – living learning community)
- Reflections Document

3. Have there been any revisions to the Curricular Map in 2019-2020 academic year? If there has been a change, please submit the new/revised Curricular Map document.

- No.

II. MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program

- No.

Mission Statement (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

The St. Ignatius Institute is a living/learning community at the University of San Francisco ("USF"). The program satisfies the academic core requirements of USF while being distinctively Jesuit in its approach to learning.

The St. Ignatius Institute (“SII”) educates students in the great books tradition while exposing them to the challenging realities of our contemporary world, sharing community, and exploring spirituality in the Jesuit tradition so that they are able to use their imagination, creativity, and critical analysis to promote the common good, especially for those most in need.

(<https://www.usfca.edu/st-ignatius>)

Mission Statement (Minor):

3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.

The Saint Ignatius Institute currently has no PLOs on record. The following are under review in Curriculog and have passed all but the final stage:

Students will:

1. Analyze histories and traditions of human societies from antiquity to the present;
2. Construct clear arguments using relevant primary and secondary sources in oral or written form;
3. Evaluate challenges facing local and global communities through historical, philosophical, theological, or ethical reflection, and in community engagement;
4. Articulate own intellectual and personal gifts in light of in light of major world religions, particularly the Catholic, Jesuit traditions of *cura personalis*, finding God in all things, discernment of one's deepest desires, contemplation in action, or becoming people for (and with) others.

Note: Major revisions in the program learning outcomes need to go through the College Curriculum Committee (contact: Professor Joshua Gamson, gamson@usfca.edu). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

PLOs (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

PLOs (Minor):

III. REMOTE/DISTANCE LEARNING

1. What elements of the program were adaptable to a remote/distance learning environment?

In general, faculty were quite positive about their experience of online teaching, most rating it equivalent to, or near equivalent to, in person teaching in the classroom (with some significant exceptions). While many professors were already very conversant with Canvas and another had already taught a course entirely online prior to the shift in March 2020, others relied mostly on paper assignments, extensive blackboard use and in person student engagement exercises. Most professors agreed, however, that the delivery of class materials, including student engagement exercises, is equally possible

online as in person and that there is no necessary decrease in the quality of instruction. Faculty teaching in the visual arts, however, report facing much greater challenges in the online environment, nonetheless agreeing that short discussions and lectures, as well as seminar-sized discussions and oral presentations work “well enough” on Zoom.

Overall, faculty reported that student engagement is harder to track in the online modality, and some reported that student engagement suffers online, sometimes due to factors beyond the control of the instructor (e.g. a less than ideal home environment and general fatigue with computer screen time) but also because the online modality itself enables and facilitates multitasking and ‘hiding’ during synchronous class time. One professor, however, whose seminar was exclusively taken up with discussion of material read outside of class, reported that student engagement was about the same in both modalities, since students simply could not ‘hide’ during class discussion.

Overall, therefore, despite the abrupt practical adjustment required for professors who previously relied on traditional methods (paper assignments and in class student engagement exercises), faculty mostly reported a very positive initial experience with online teaching, with the significant exception of teaching in the visual arts, as explained in the following section.

2. What elements of the program were not adaptable to a remote/distance learning environment?

In general, faculty reported, in various ways, that it was the relationality of the teaching experience which suffered online, both the ‘vertical’ instructor-student relationship, but especially, the ‘horizontal’ relationship between students themselves in the learning experience. One professor lamented that even the simple act of walking around the classroom and engaging groups of students, which strengthens both these relationships, becomes impossible in the online environment.

While almost everything is, in principle, achievable on Zoom that is possible in person (with significant exceptions in relation to the visual arts), the experience somehow works against these two fundamental relationships that inhere in teaching and learning. One professor reported: “I am able to look at and interact with each student on my screen, as I could in person”. Nonetheless, the same professor reports that the class does not have the same “zing” to it that an in-person class would have.

Part of that lack of “zing” is the mitigation of the social aspect of learning. Students are simply not interacting with each other online as they are in a real-life classroom. Instead, the ‘vertical’ teacher-student relationship dominates.

Professors report varied experiences using the breakout room feature on Zoom, which would theoretically at least, work towards strengthening the ‘horizontal’ student-student relationship. Some report that the breakout room feature was mostly a failure as a pedagogical tool, because students either disengaged totally, or chatted about other things than the topic in question. This can be a feature of the in-class experience too, of course. Others, especially with seminar-type classes consisting mostly of discussion, reported that the breakout feature worked well.

At the risk of generalization, it may be true to say that the breakout room feature was less successful in classes which consisted of a mixture of lecture and discussion, and much more successful in smaller seminar sized classes in which discussion played an indispensable role.

Some serious technological shortcomings with Zoom come to light in visual arts teaching, however:

- (i) Most fundamentally, the quality of images or videos ‘broadcast’ on Zoom is poor in comparison with the in-class experience. The same level of detail is not

possible, making the presentation, analysis, and discussion of artwork extremely challenging.

(ii) Secondly, it is currently not possible in Zoom to broadcast separate images or videos to individual breakout groups, making it impractical to assign different works of art to individual groups. Instead, students are forced to use a secondary device (if they have one), or the professor is forced to do all discussions in the larger group instead. Again, the student-student relationship suffers. In general, Zoom does not facilitate group collaborations and art making, rendering small exhibitions and other group-related research projects very challenging.

3. What was the average proportion of synchronous versus asynchronous learning for your program or parts thereof? A rough estimate would suffice.

It seems that professors overwhelmingly chose to teach synchronously, without any asynchronous elements. Without precise figures and with optional participation from the faculty in the preparation of this report, it is impossible to estimate the overall proportion for the program accurately.

There were three significant exceptions to 100% synchronous teaching, however

One professor taught 2-1 asynchronous classes (2 recorded lectures and one synchronous Zoom class per week), providing the rationale that a third of students were located around the globe, in such a way as to make their participation in synchronous classes impractical. Attendance at the weekly synchronous Zoom class was optional for this reason, but a recording was distributed to the entire class. In other words, for roughly one third of the students, participation was 100% asynchronous.

Another professor reported that the proportion of synchronous to asynchronous classes varied from week to week given the difficulty of the topic in question and on student need: “Students were required to keep open all scheduled class times and we decided week by week when we would meet depending on need.”

Finally, one professor reported that 90% of instruction was synchronous with only 10% asynchronous elements.

4. For what aspects of learning is synchronous instruction effective and for which ones is asynchronous instruction more effective?

Those professors who provided asynchronous instruction report positive experiences, relating that “time and media-rich” recordings made the course content equivalent to the “on the ground” experience. Two remarked that it was the mixture of synchronous and asynchronous elements that worked particularly well. Providing course content in the form of recorded lectures allows students to learn on their own time, when they best feel able to engage with the material, rather than as dictated by a timetable. Combined with some proportion of synchronous teaching, this hybrid model seems to offer the best of both worlds.

That said, the preparation of quality asynchronous classes is extremely time-consuming, much more so than a synchronous Zoom class. One professor reported spending 8-10 hours preparing each recorded lecture and so questions whether the time spent was worth the effort, given that some students simply did not download all the recorded lectures and others simply skipped quickly through them, as revealed in the analytics feature on Canvas.

In general, it seems that asynchronous delivery presents a temptation for less motivated students to disengage and fall behind in the progression of the course, lessening the quality of their participation in synchronous classes, and giving a false sense of

confidence that they can catch up when they want to in the period prior to examinations.

Finally, asynchronous delivery obviously works against the ‘horizontal’ relationship among students in the learning experience — another reason why some mixture of synchronous and asynchronous learning seems optimal. One professor reported, however, that “the students seemed to get far more out of synchronous instruction and valued the time all together”.

5. As remote/distance learning continues in the current environment, what changes has the program instituted based on experiences with remote instruction?

No changes have been instituted at the program level for this provisional and hopefully short-lived situation that has arisen because of the Covid-19 emergency.

Generally speaking, the faculty is confident that the technology made available is providing the means necessary to continue to provide high-quality instruction in this unprecedented situation, with the exception of the visual arts. Therefore, it has not been felt necessary to effect any short-term changes either to the curriculum or to the course offerings in the upcoming semesters likely to be affected (Spring 2021, Fall 2021). Some report that they look forward to ‘hyflex’ teaching as a means to overcome the practical limitations of synchronous Zoom teaching.

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

(Any relevant tables, charts and figures, if the program so chooses, could be included here)