

**ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW**  
**LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT PLAN**  
**Adopted April 18, 2018**

**Introduction**

Roger Williams University School of Law's learning outcomes describe the foundational lawyering competencies that each student will develop by graduation. Every course in the School of Law's curriculum is designed to achieve some, but not necessarily all, of the student learning outcomes below, with each course emphasizing different outcomes and each student pursuing different career goals.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. **Doctrinal and Substantive Knowledge** – Students will be able to:
  - a. Define and explain the rule of law and the role of legal institutions and the structure of the legal system in the United States
  - b. Identify, explain and apply basic concepts, procedures and rules of law in core legal areas and in chosen areas of interest
  - c. Prepare themselves to succeed on the licensing exams required to practice law
2. **Legal Analysis Skills** – Students will be able to:
  - a. Analyze and form sound judgments on a range of legal issues
  - b. Draw and synthesize governing legal principles from a variety of sources
  - c. Identify the issues inherent in a given legal or client problem
  - d. Identify the legal rules and facts necessary to competently analyze a legal or client problem
  - e. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of potential legal arguments and counter-arguments
  - f. Differentiate the types and relevance of legal authorities
3. **Research Skills** – Students will be able to:
  - a. Conduct independent research into legal and, where appropriate, non-legal sources
  - b. Develop effective and efficient legal research strategies using current technology
4. **Writing Skills** – Students will be able to:
  - a. Draft a variety of formal and informal legal documents and written communications
  - b. Articulate in writing cohesive and logical legal assessments and arguments, applying legal analysis skills to a legal or client problem
  - c. Communicate effectively in writing with different audiences and for different purposes
  - d. Evaluate, revise and edit a written legal analysis
5. **Oral Communication Skills and Interpersonal Skills** – Students will be able to:
  - a. Communicate orally in an effective manner in a range of professional contexts, both formal and informal
  - b. Formulate and deliver persuasive oral presentations to further defined objectives
  - c. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity to a broad range of people with differing backgrounds, ideas, and experiences.

6. **Client Representation** – In simulated exercise(s) or real client setting(s), students will be able to:
  - a. Understand the importance of assessing a client’s goals within the context of a client’s life
  - b. Define and evaluate a client’s legal problems
  - c. Strategize and exercise appropriate judgment to solve client problems
  - d. Explain to a client the legal options and advise the client as to how best to effectuate the client’s goals
  - e. Articulate the skills and concepts involved in effective interviewing
  - f. Articulate the skills and concepts involved in effective negotiation
7. **Professionalism** – Students will be able to:
  - a. Demonstrate knowledge of the professional rules needed to effectively and ethically participate in a variety of legal practice settings
  - b. Identify and appropriately resolve ethical dilemmas that arise in law practice
  - c. Understand the importance of collaborating effectively with colleagues
  - d. Deal with adversaries, officials, and others in a professional manner while advancing a client’s interests
8. **Public Service** – Students will be able to:
  - a. Understand the responsibility of lawyers to improve access to the legal system
  - b. Understand the professional responsibility to provide pro bono legal service in law practice

### **Assessment Plan**

Assessment refers to a process of defining student learning outcomes for a course or degree program, measuring whether students are achieving the identified learning outcomes, analyzing the results, and determining how to use the results to make changes in teaching or the curriculum to improve student learning. This assessment plan articulates a process for ongoing assessment of the School of Law’s learning outcomes beginning in 2018-2019 academic year. The goals of this assessment plan are to improve student learning and to ensure compliance with various accrediting rules. Specifically, our goals are:

1. To strengthen the School of Law’s program of education by gathering data about student learning, analyzing that data, and adopting changes to respond to areas of strength and weakness.
2. To articulate a process to assess student learning outcomes at an institutional level over a 7-year period.
3. To identify the roles of the faculty and the administration in conducting institutional assessment.
4. To demonstrate compliance with the ABA’s requirement that, by the end of the 2017-18 academic year, every accredited law school must have a publicly available assessment plan.
5. To provide students with a certification under “Pathway 1” of 22 N.Y.C.R.R. § 520.18 that they have the requisite skills and values that the School of Law has identified as important to the practice of law.

## **Implementation and Roles**

The Dean shall appoint an Assessment Committee for each academic year beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year. That Committee will play the leading role in coordinating our institutional assessment activities, as per the following:

1. During each year, the School of Law will assess one or more learning outcomes, using a combination of direct and indirect measures, as set forth in the schedule below:
  1. 2018-2019: Learning Outcomes 3, 4(b), and 4(d)
  2. 2019-2020: Learning Outcomes 4(a) and 4(c)
  3. 2020-2021: Learning Outcomes 5(a) and 5(b)
  4. 2021-2022: Learning Outcomes 5(c), 6, 7(c), and 7(d)
  5. 2022-2023: Learning Outcomes 7(a) and 7(b)
  6. 2023-2024: Learning Outcome 8
  7. 2024-2025: Learning Outcomes 1 and 2
2. By September 15, the Assessment Committee will decide the method(s) by which each outcome scheduled to be reviewed will be measured. The Committee will subsequently develop rubrics, surveys, or other instruments as necessary, and collect data
3. The Assessment Committee will analyze the data and report its findings to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs by April 15. The Committee report will also make any recommendations for changes to the academic program it deems necessary or advisable based upon its findings as to whether outcomes were achieved.
4. The Associate Dean will review the report, refer any curricular recommendations to the Curriculum Committee, and refer any other recommendations, as appropriate, to another faculty committee, an administrative department, the faculty as a whole, or the Dean.
5. At the last faculty meeting of the academic year, the Assessment Committee will deliver an annual report on assessment to the faculty and any recommendations made by the Committee shall be considered.

## **Conducting the Assessment**

During each annual cycle, the Assessment Committee will create a plan for assessment of the learning outcomes identified for the academic year. The plan will identify what data will be collected and how the Committee will gather and analyze the data.

Assessment data will be analyzed and reported in an aggregated fashion. Identifiable student and faculty information will be redacted. The Assessment Committee will keep minutes and document findings. The Assessment Committee is responsible for following up on recommendations made year-to-year. In addition, in accordance with ABA Standard 315, the Assessment Committee will be charged with conducting an ongoing evaluation of the assessment process itself. It will report, on at least an annual basis, progress under this plan, recommending changes to the learning outcomes or assessment process.