This Year 1 report includes a description of the evaluation plan, the baseline data collection process and draft instruments for subsequent data collection.

**Evaluation plan**
The external evaluator worked with the grant PIs and participants to develop a comprehensive evaluation plan which includes three broad goals and five measurable objectives. Each of the objectives is linked with multiple measures in order to facilitate reliable conclusions about student achievement of the desired objectives. The complete evaluation plan may be found in Appendix A.

**Goal 1**: Students will develop an understanding of at least 3 of the 5 thematic challenges confronting contemporary cities.

  **Objective 1A**: Students will gain knowledge of the urban challenges facing the two cities in which they study.

  **Objective 1B**: Students will identify and describe appropriate theories, methods and models for studying the urban challenges facing the two cities in which they study.

**Goal 2**: Students will develop an understanding of issues surrounding urban sustainability through community based learning.

  **Objective 2A**: Through interdisciplinary perspectives and their practical experience, students will compare and evaluate proposed solutions to urban challenges.

  **Objective 2B**: Students will apply their knowledge of urban challenges to the lived experiences of community members with whom they interact as they evaluate the feasibility of possible solutions to those challenges.

**Goal 3**: Students' non-native language skills will improve.

  **Objective 3A**: Students will increase their ability to communicate in a non-native language, both orally and in writing.

**Baseline data collection**
Baseline data will be collected for each objective. The background knowledge questionnaire described in the data collection portion of the evaluation plan (related to Objectives 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B) was integrated with the student application for participation in the program. Key
questions were included (see below) related to applicant’s knowledge of the cities in which they
would be studying and their previous community based learning experiences.

1. Why you are interested in participating in the FIPSE/Atlantis Student
Exchange? Please describe your interests in the study of the city in general,
and the particular city in which you would like to study (Bologna or
Nottingham). Please include reference to your knowledge of the urban
challenges which may face cities in general and the city you selected in
particular, including those related to demographic, socioeconomic, spatial,
ecological, and/or aesthetic issues.

2. What community based learning experiences (service learning, civic
engagement, etc.) have you had, domestically and/or internationally, and how
have they impacted you?

3. What language skills do you have? If you have Italian language skills, how
many years have you studied and what is your language proficiency?

4. Please describe any international or intercultural educational or learning
experience(s) you have had, including previous study abroad experiences.

5. How do you foresee building on this experience upon your return? How
would this experience contribute to your ongoing studies and future career
plans?

6. What do you anticipate to be the most challenging aspect of this exchange?

Student responses to these questions are included in a comprehensive student tracking folder
in the respective locations (Denver and Portland). This comprehensive student tracking folder
also includes important demographic information for the student (student name, student ID #,
email address, major, participation term, and expected graduation year). These data are also
entered into an electronic project database so additional data may be linked to individual
students, given the small population expected to participate in this project.

Before their departure in the fall, students in from Denver and Portland will undergo baseline
language testing by completing an Italian language Placement Exam that has been developed
by the Italian section of the Department of Languages & Literatures, University of Denver. The
test covers the linguistic skill areas of Listening, Grammar, Reading and Writing and also
includes a modified Oral Proficiency Interview in Italian to confirm the level. While in Italy
students will enroll in an intensive Italian language course before the beginning of the academic
term and will be tested through that program. Upon return, students will take a post-Italian
language test for comparative data. Scores will be recorded in the project database. These
data relate to Objective 3A. Native Italian students were required to demonstrate English-
speaking skills prior to acceptance for the program.

**Subsequent data collection**

Students will be asked to participate in data collection in a number of ways. A checklist has
been created for them as a reminder of this participation (See Appendix B).

Key sources of data for Objectives 1A and 1B are the course-embedded assignments where
students demonstrate their knowledge of the cities in which they are studying and the urban
challenges those cities face and of the applicable theories, methods and models for studying
these urban challenges. Students will be asked to submit a course syllabus for each course in
which they are enrolled. They will also be asked to retain an electronic copy of each
assignment they produce for these courses. A rubric will be developed, with input from the
grant PIs and key faculty participants, which will be applied to selected assignments in order to ascertain the degree to which students attain the desired objectives. The PIs fully acknowledge that student assignments will differ, but are confident that they will provide evidence of the multiple paths available to achieve the stated objectives. Application of the rubric to the student assignments will be conducted by trained faculty and student identities will be obscured in order to reduce potential bias.

Key sources of data for Objectives 2A and 2B are the reflective journal and/or portfolio, the activity log (see Appendix C), and the community based learning experiences survey which will be administered upon the students return to their home city. Details and instructions for the reflective journal/portfolio are still under discussion, but an electronic portfolio which includes reflection components is anticipated. The activity log will be integrated with these reflection components in order to provide context for the reflections. Sample reflective prompts for the journal include:

- To what degree has your coursework influenced your thinking about the urban challenges facing the city in which you are studying?
- To what degree has your community based learning experience influenced your thinking about the urban challenges facing the city in which you are studying?
- To what degree have your informal interactions with residents of the city in which you are studying influenced your thinking about the urban challenges facing this city?
- To what degree are the urban challenges facing the city in which you are studying similar and different from the urban challenges facing the city in which you live?
- Which of the urban challenges facing the city in which you are studying presents the most difficulty in terms of possible resolutions? Which of the urban challenges facing the city in which you are studying may be more easily resolved?

The community based learning experiences survey is still under construction, but will include follow-up questions similar to the questions asked in the initial application which is being used as a baseline. Sample questions include:

- In what ways did your academic coursework and your community based learning experiences complement each other? How might the connection between them be enhanced?
- Please provide some examples of specific experiences you had which contributed to your knowledge of the demographic, socioeconomic, spatial, ecological, and/or aesthetic aspects of the city in which you studied.
- In what ways did your community based learning experiences contribute to your personal growth and development?
- What, if anything, would you suggest to improve your community based learning experiences?

A key source of data for Objective 3A is the post-testing of language skills which will be conducted upon the domestic students’ return to their home institution. A variation of the University of Denver Placement test will again be used for this data collection.