
Assessment Plans Program Level

April 29, 2005

Middle States Commission on Higher Education Characteristics of Excellence

- Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning
 - “Assessment of student learning demonstrates that the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional goals and that students at graduation have achieved appropriate higher education goals.”
 - “Articulated learning goals or objectives and various levels (institution, degree/program, course.” *Institution Choice of Level Permitted*
 - A plan that describes outcomes assessment activities being undertaken by the institution.
 - Evidence that assessment information is utilized to improve teaching and learning.
 - Documented use of assessment information as part of institutional assessment.
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Statement of Need for Outcomes Assessment

- Outcomes assessment is needed to assist the University in carrying out its responsibility to be accountable for its effectiveness
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Definition of Outcomes Assessment

- It is defined as a systematic process of continuous improvement within a functioning unit to ensue through a formalized approach that learning experiences are maximized to produce optimum effectiveness
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Purpose of Outcomes Assessment

- To measure the effectiveness of the overall performance of the University.
 - To engage a campus community collectively in a systematic and continuing process to create shared learning goals and to enhance learning.
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Characteristics of Outcomes Assessment

- To provide multiple measures of learning outcomes
 - To identify changes and improvements that are needed in the University
 - To produce evidence support of making changes and improvements
 - To determine whether the University is operating effectively by providing a formalized method of evaluation to show whether planned outcomes are realized
 - To actively involve the faculty throughout the assessment process
 - To link outcomes assessment with departmental and institutional planning
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Direct Methods

- In assessing student learning outcomes, at least 3-5 direct measures should be used.
 - Direct methods of evaluating student learning are those that provide evidence of whether or not a student
 - Has command of a specific subject or content area,
 - Can perform a certain task,
 - Exhibits a particular skill,
 - Demonstrates a certain quality in his/her work (creativity, analysis, synthesis, or objectivity),
 - Or holds a particular value
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Direct Measures of Student Learning- Program Level

- Comprehensive examinations for seniors and graduate students in their major field of study (either standardized national exams or locally developed exams)
 - Capstone experience assessment to evaluate subject matter competency in a particular program of study
 - Capstone projects, senior theses, exhibits, or performances
 - Employer and internship supervisor ratings of student's performance
 - Multi-measure assessment of a **program** through a combination of:
 - Competency test
 - Workplace competency
 - Evaluation of job performance with program using GPA
 - Longitudinal assessments of students performance and their perception of their learning experience
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Direct Measures of Student Learning- Program Level

- Pass rates or scores on
 - Licensure
 - Certification
 - Or subject area tests (professional exams)
 - Performance-based mastery test for formative and summative assessment of student achievement
 - Pre- and post-test assessment of course knowledge and attitudes
 - Portfolio assessment of capstone projects, theses, or dissertations
 - Portfolio system to assess formative and summative outcomes for students (embedded in curriculum)
 - Student publications or conference presentations
 - Other:
 - Oral examinations
 - Internships
 - Juried reviews
 - Reading competency
 - Writing proficiency
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Benefits of Direct Measures of Student Learning

- The benefits of the direct measures of student learning are that the following questions can be answered:
 - What did students learn as a result of their educational experience?
 - Did the students learn what they were supposed to learn?
 - What did the students fail to learn?
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Limitations Direct Forms of Evaluation

- They do not tell the whole story of student learning
 - It provides evidence of *what* the student has learned, but does not provide evidence as to *why* the student has learned or *why* he/she has not learned
 - The *why* is important because one of the primary goals of assessment is to make future learning experiences more effective
 - The Commission (MSA) does not require that its member institutions demonstrate that the institution's learning outcomes are consistent with its goal.
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Indirect Measures of Student Learning- Program Level

- Alumni surveys
 - Completed satisfaction surveys from alumni, employers and students
 - Department or program review data
 - Employer surveys
 - Exit interviews and focus groups
 - Focus group interviews with
 - Students
 - Faculty members
 - Or employers
 - Graduation follow-up students and job placement data
 - Graduation rates
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Indirect Measures of Student Learning- Program Level

- Graduate school placement rates
 - Job placement data
 - Length of time to degree
 - Proportion of upper-level courses compared to the same program at other institutions
 - Registration or course enrollment information
 - Retention and transfer studies
 - Student perception surveys
 - Student satisfaction surveys
 - Success of students in subsequent institutional settings
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Benefits of Indirect Measures of Student Learning

- The indirect measures of student learning produce data that are *related* to the act of learning but in and of itself does not reflect student learning
 - It is acquired through the use of self-report type surveys, questionnaires, and interviews.
 - Frequently, student perceptions of their learning and educational experiences are obtained in the self-reports such as ratings of quality of teaching by students.
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Non-Measures of Student Learning

- Questionnaires about whether the personal goals of students are being met
 - Curriculum reviews
 - Evaluation of quality of programs by specialized accrediting bodies, peer groups and visiting committees
 - Faculty publications and recognitions
 - Faculty/student ratios
 - Enrollment trends
 - Diversity of student body
 - Course enrollments and profiles
 - Grades and GPA's
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Context of General Questions

- Responsibility

- What person or unit is responsible for carrying out the objective

- First Column

- Intended Educational Outcomes (first column)

- What is expected to occur

- Conditions

- What conditions must be met before the objective can be accomplished
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Context of General Questions

- Second Column

- Measurement (or assessment)

- What will be used to measure accomplishment of the objective

- Performance standards

- What level of attainment is required
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Context of General Questions

- Third Column
 - Frequency of Assessment (third column)
 - When the goal will be completed



References

Green, J. L. & Jonas, P. M. (1997). *Outcomes assessment in higher education linked with strategic planning and budgeting*, 2nd ed. Strategic Planning/Management Associates, Inc.: Kansas.

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Nichols, J. O. (1995). *Assessment case studies: Common issues in implementation with various campus approaches to resolution*. Agathon Press: New York.

Nichols, J. O. (1995). *A practitioner's handbook for effectiveness and student outcomes assessment implementation*, 3rd ed. Agathon Press: New York.

Assessment Plans

- We will be using Dr. Nichols' model for the Programs Assessment Plans.
 - If you need more information, please call Mrs. Alma Ríos at (787) 284-1912 Ext. 2224.
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