

Glossary of Assessment Terms

Action Plans: Descriptions of what will be done to address the assessment results identified through the assessment of outcomes and objectives. Plans should be as explicit as possible and address the areas needing improvement for the next three years. Plans should indicate how progress will be evaluated and what measures will be used to gauge success.

Assessment of Student Learning: The systematic effort to gather, analyze, interpret, and use information about programs, services, and student learning for improving teaching effectiveness, student learning, and planning, to inform changes in courses or programs to improve student (learning) success. At the course and program levels, assessment indicates how well students are meeting program goals or outcomes.

Assessment Plan: A plan to assess student learning that should include which Student Learning Outcome(s) will be assessed during a specific cycle, which measure(s)/instrument(s) will be utilized for the assessment, which semester(s) and the point in the semester when assessment will occur. The plan should also include implementation of Action Plans developed based on assessment from previous cycle(s) and how the results of such Action Plans will be assessed. This document should include: Mission Statement, Goals, Student Learning Outcomes, Curriculum, Assessment Criteria, and Methods.

Assessment Report: A document that presents data and discusses how assessment results will be used to change curriculum and/or assessment procedure for the coming year.

Bloom's Taxonomy: The original model developed by Benjamin Bloom that established six different levels of learning: 1) Evaluation, 2) Synthesis, 3) Analysis, 4) Application, 5) Comprehension, and 6) Knowledge. For more information about Bloom's Taxonomy, click [here](#)

Closing the Loop: The term associated with completing a cycle of assessment in which assessment results are used to prompt program change and improvement. Faculty discuss assessment results, reach conclusions about their meaning, determine implications for change, and implement them.

Course-level Assessment: Assessment to determine the extent to which a specific course is achieving its learning goals and outcomes, as well as, assessment to improve teaching of specific courses or segments of courses.

Curriculum Mapping: A matrix showing where goals and student learning outcomes are covered in each program course/experience. A curriculum map shows where and how program outcomes are addressed in the curriculum.

Direct Measures of Learning: Evidence about student learning based on student performance that demonstrates the learning itself. Examples are written assignments, classroom assignments, presentations, test results, projects, portfolios, and direct observations.

Feedback Loop: Review of assessment results, how personnel are involved and how results will be communicated and made available to appropriate university constituents.

Indirect Measures of Learning: Evidence about how students feel about learning and their learning environment rather than actual demonstrations of outcome achievement. Examples include surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups.

Institutional Effectiveness: Assessment to determine the extent to which a college or university is achieving its mission. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

Mission Statement: Statement expressing the nature and scope of the impact the institution/division/department/program expects to have on the students it serves, on the context of character, purpose and uniqueness. A program's mission statement should provide an overview of the department/program's philosophy, goals, and objectives, thus embodying the program's purpose and the faculty's priorities for the program.

Program Goals: Faculty's general expectations for ideal graduates of their program. These goals should be in alignment with the program's mission statement.

Program-level Assessment: Assessment to determine the extent to which students in an academic program can demonstrate the learning outcomes for the program. An ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning, involving explicitly and publicly disseminating expectations; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to improve performance.

Program Objectives: specific statements about a program's desired achievement or need. A specific, measurable step to achieve a goal or outcome.

Program Review: Evaluation on the effectiveness of an institution/division/department based primarily on student satisfaction indicators, objectives, and outcomes. Program goals should be non-student in nature and indicates a program's viability and effectiveness. These outcomes may involve faculty productivity data, enrollment growth, grade distribution data, graduate, new student, and retention rates; perceptual survey data, etc.

Rubric: A scoring scale that contains specific sets of criteria that clearly define what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performance looks like. An assessment tool that uses a scale or scoring guide with assessment criteria, provides feedback to the student, and objectively displays grading criteria for the student for a specific assignment, project or activity.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's): Clear, concise, and measurable statements that specify what a student is expected to know or be able to do at the end of a course *or* program. Statements describing what students know, understand and can do with their knowledge as a result of their experience in or with a program or service. Learning outcomes can be thought of as behavioral criteria for determining whether students are achieving the educational objectives of a program, and, ultimately, whether overall program goals are being successfully met.