

GUIDELINES, FORMATS AND CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT PLANS

We should establish very firm expectations for what is to be included in program assessment plans. Each plan needs to have a Mission statement, Goals, and Objectives (MGOs) that are directly related back to the goals. Here are the criteria we should use:

Criteria for Review of Mission, Goals and Objectives Statements

1. Is document clearly written in terms that can be understood by students, faculty outside the disciplines, and public?
2. Do the objectives relate back to the goals?
3. Are the objectives concrete and specific enough to be measured and evaluated? Do they lend themselves to assessment of tangible student learning outcomes?
4. Are there enough objectives to evaluate the entire degree program? Are there too many to measure? Is more focus or detail needed?
5. Are there objectives for each subprograms (options, specializations, tracks, emphases, etc)?
6. Do the goals and objectives reflect the uniqueness or special characteristics or strengths of the program?
7. Overall, is the document:
 - Excellent, (ready to go on to development of assessment plan, criteria and methods)
 - Acceptable, with minor revisions, formatting changes or cleanup of text
 - Marginal, needing substantial revision before proceeding to assessment plan
 - Unacceptable, needs to be reworked and resubmitted.

We also should have a format that must be followed for the plan, criteria and techniques of assessment:

Required Components of All Program Assessment Plans:

Mission Statement Goals for program (and each sub-program)

Objectives (related directly back to each goal)

Criteria (How will you know if students have met each object? What level of achievement expected?)

A Methodology and time line for carrying out assessment

Procedures for evaluation/reporting/use of findings

While we should allow programs the flexibility to devise their own MGOs and methods of assessment, we should be insistent that the format specified be followed. This format has an inherent logic and pattern that guides the program in developing a clear, organized, and concrete set of assessment measures. Here are the criteria we should use for our discussion in reviewing and approving assessment plans.

Criteria for Review of Program Assessment Plans

1. Are Goals and Objectives clearly labeled and listed?
2. Have criteria to be used and levels of achievement expected been identified? Are there one or more stated outcomes for each goal? (Other than completion of a particular course or series of courses.)
3. Are assessment methods adequate to measure student achievement? Are multiple measures used? Is there over-reliance on only one type of measure?
4. Is the time frame described appropriate and workable? Is diagnostic or baseline data collected? Are growth and improvement expected?
5. Are formative and summative methods of assessment used? Are students provided early warnings and directions for change?
6. Is it clear who will do the assessments, collect and analyze data? Is there appropriate faculty involvement and sharing of task?
7. Will data be used to inform department and curricula for possible improvement? Is there a formal mechanism for reporting results of assessment and for summarizing results?
8. Does the plan appear feasible, workable and affordable, given resources available?
9. General comments on the assessment plan and suggestions for improvement or clarification:

Overall rating of plan

_____Acceptable as is, ready to carry out assessments

_____Needs minor revision

_____Unacceptable in present form

Specific Assessment Techniques That Could be Used

Some departments will inquire about what possible types of assessment might be used. As you can see from the listing below, there is no one "best" or most appropriate model. The techniques employed to measure student achievement on our campus can be broad and varied:

Senior Capstone Seminar Comprehensive

Criterion-Referenced or Nationally-Standardized Exams

Portfolios (Holistic Scoring according to established rubric and rating scale)

Group Projects (Peer evaluations and/or faculty rating)

Field experiences

Analysis projects, research paper

Course-Based Proficiency Exams

Diagnosis/Placement on entrance to program

Mid-program barrier exam before upper-division status

Senior-level assessment course (Pass/Fail Basis)

Public Presentations

Recitals, exhibitions, colloquia,

Ratings by department faculty

Outside jurors and professional critics
Use of Community Advisory Groups
Multiple Measures of Proficiency Using Performance-based Standards
Music: piano, sight singing, listening, repertoire, and performance exams
Quarterly progress report and feedback by faculty
Course-based Assessment by Individual Faculty
Cumulative record of course achievement according to program standards
Review of papers and exams over time
Locally-developed Comprehensive Examination in Senior Year
Course-based Assessment Using "Embedded" questions
Common questions in all required or core courses
Common syllabi and standards of achievement and/or grading for all sections
Internship or Field Placement
Rating of Competency by Employers and/or Field Supervisor and Instructor
Check off sheets of required Skills and Proficiency-level
Student reports and self-assessment of experience
Standardized Exams
GRE scores
Comparative Data from other similar programs
Theses, Written Projects
Committee review approval, assessment of final product
Common format, methods, content, and structure
Standardization of Content and/or Course Methods
Syllabus review and approval by department
Agree upon level of expectation of achievement and amount\depth of coverage
Strict Enforcement of Prerequisites, Sequencing of courses
Use of Diagnostic Exams at next level courses in program
Exit Interview
Student Program Ratings
Surveys of Employers

Dan Balik
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Portions of this document were adapted from material found on the UC-Santa Barbara, Skidmore College, and Bucknell University websites.