

Assessment Methods and Sources
Used by Academic Programs:
Categories and Definitions
California State University, Stanislaus

The following categories describe methods used by academic programs in their assessment of student learning objectives. The list is not intended to be exhaustive.

EVALUATORS

External Reviews

External reviews conducted by a qualified external evaluator who uses criteria (e.g., rubric) developed by the program, an external expert, or an organization, for the purpose of providing an evaluation of student work samples in support of academic department efforts to evaluate and enhance student learning.

Internal Reviews

Faculty from the department use a variety of methods (e.g. rubrics, exams) to assess student work at the program-level to evaluate and enhance student learning.

Specialized Program Accreditation

A form of external review, specialized/disciplinary program accreditation is a review process conducted within the context, requirements, and standards of a discipline-based accrediting body.

METHODS

DIRECT

Capstone Projects

Capstone projects are used to assess and reveal comprehensive student achievement on the established student learning objectives of their major program. They are either part of a course or completed independently as deemed by the program.

Comprehensive Examinations

An intensive examination (oral, written, or both) is an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter.

Credential, Certification and Licensure Examinations

National or state developed tests or examinations used to certify or license a student.

Embedded Assessment

Data collected from existing course assignments and/or course exams are used to assess achievement on one or multiple program learning objectives. Students generally are graded on this work.

Individual/Group Projects

Student produced work (e.g., art, music, web, power-point presentations), which demonstrate the application of skills and ideas taught in a course, are assessed using a rubric linked to specific student learning objectives.

Fieldwork/Internship/Service Learning

Student work performed in the field under supervision. Field supervisor assesses student preparation for and/or performance in the field.

Laboratory Reports

Laboratory reports which record processes in the laboratory setting are used to evaluate students' understanding of theory and their ability to apply the material.

Locally Developed Examinations

Locally developed examinations designed by program faculty members to measure student achievement of one or multiple learning objectives.

Nationally-normed Tests

Nationally-normed tests, developed by professional associations or professional testing agencies, are specific to a discipline. Student scores can be assessed for achievement as well as used in comparison to national norms.

Performance Evaluation

Student performance are assessed using criteria (i.e., rubric) to evaluate how well an objective is achieved through application (e.g., piano recital).

Student Portfolios

Students analyze their achievement of learning objectives and present evidence, comprised of existing student work, which supports their conclusions. They can also evaluate what changes are necessary and formulate a plan accordingly.

Student Presentations

Student presentations (oral presentations, audio/visual/ PowerPoint, website) evaluated using established standards and criteria (e.g., rubric).

Thesis/Projects/Dissertation

Undergraduate (e.g., Honors) and graduate (Masters) thesis or dissertations (Doctoral) are the culmination of a student's research that evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, and appropriate methodology.

INDIRECT**Employer Surveys**

Survey used to assess employer's perceptions of graduates' ability to perform skills and/or possession of the necessary knowledge.

Focus Groups/ Interviews

Planned discussions among groups of participants (e.g., students, employers, administrators) who are asked a series of carefully constructed questions about their beliefs, attitudes, experiences and observations.

Institutional Data

Institutional data such as graduation rates, demographics, time-to-graduation and enrollment used to display program effectiveness.

Student Evaluation of Courses

Student evaluations measure student perceptions of learning. These evaluations can be nationally published instruments such as the Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) forms or departmentally developed instruments.

Student Placement

Assess program effectiveness by evaluating student employment and graduate placement.

Student Surveys (Program)

Program-developed surveys administered to students and alumni to gauge student opinions on their overall experience with the program as well as their perceived achievement of student learning objectives.

Student Surveys (University)

The following surveys are administered annually and collect programmatic data which are provided to each academic program. Aggregate data from surveys are posted on the Office of Institutional Research website at <http://130.17.202.107/>

- Graduating Senior Survey
- Alumni Survey
- Graduate School Exit Survey
- Graduate Alumni Survey

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