

**Assessment Methods and Sources**  
**Used by Academic Programs:**  
**Categories and Definitions**  
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The following categories have been developed to describe methods used by academic departments and 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 Exit Survey
- Graduate Alumni Survey

### **Adapted from:**

Allen, M.J. (2004). *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing  
*Assessment Methods Guide*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 31, 2007 from University of Central Florida Assessment at [http://iaaweb.ucf.edu/oas/cqi\\_menu.asp](http://iaaweb.ucf.edu/oas/cqi_menu.asp)

*Assessment methods used by academic departments programs*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2, 2007, from University of Colorado at Boulder at <http://www.colorado.edu/pba/outcomes/ovview/mwithin.htm>

*Dictionary of Student Outcome Assessment* (n.d.) Retrieved February 5, 2007 from James Madison University at <http://people.jmu.edu/yangsx>