

Characteristics of an Assessment Plan For Proposed New Degree Programs

The California State University system and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges requires an assessment plan for evaluating educational effectiveness to be included in proposals for new degree programs.

The items below are those normally found in an assessment plan:

1. Mission – the mission statement embodies the program’s purpose and faculty priorities for the program.
2. Program goals – a listing of program goals and methods for communicating these goals to students (e.g., catalog, departmental website, student orientation, syllabi).
3. Student learning outcomes – a listing of outcomes and methods for communicating to students (e.g., catalog, departmental website, student orientation, syllabi).
4. Curriculum map – normally, a matrix that illustrates student learning outcomes and required courses and that indicates where curricular content (e.g., knowledge, values, and skills) is introduced, reinforced, and practiced at advanced level.
5. Description of methods – a description/identification of both indirect (e.g., surveys of students, alumni, employers) and direct methods (review of student work) for assessing program goals and each of the stated student learning outcomes. Includes rubrics for significant milestones (e.g., thesis, qualifying examinations, capstone courses, portfolios); includes level of student attainment expected for each student learning outcome.
6. Timetable – a description of the timeline for methods conducted annually and periodically.
7. Faculty evaluation of student performance – a description of how faculty will use data obtained from the methods to evaluate student performance as they progress throughout the program.
8. Use of assessment findings ("closing the loop") – a description of the ways in which program faculty will discuss the findings to determine if changes need to be made to the program and appropriate actions taken.
9. Communicating assessment results – a description of methods for communicating overall assessment results to students, campus, and external community (e.g., advisory boards).
10. Academic Program Review – a statement that the program will be reviewed five years after program initiation and every seven years thereafter in accordance with campus and CSU system policy.