

Guidelines for Outcomes Assessment

Program Quality Metric – Programs engaged in outcomes based improvement processes

I. Key components for outcomes based improvement processes are:

1. Faculty control the curriculum and establish the outcomes for each program.
2. Processes are designed to gather evidence on program performance.
3. Programs offering certificates and degrees have written plans that describe the evidence-gathering process being used. The MAU may choose to establish common formats for plans and reports.
4. A program's assessment data, in their entirety, exhibit the properties of good evidence as described in II.4.c.

II. Evidence collected for Student Outcomes assessment is:

1. Verifiable through replication or third party inspection. It is archived for a minimum of 5 years in a format such that it can be readily retrieved and understood.
2. Relevant to program goals and student learning outcomes
3. Representative of the program's expectations for learning skills, abilities, and knowledge within the program's curriculum.
4. Direct or indirect. At least two kinds of evidence, including one kind of direct evidence, are needed.
 - a) Examples of direct evidence include:
 - i) Exams that assess knowledge relevant to a program's learning outcomes.
 - ii) Graded assignments related to learning outcomes
 - iii) Professionally judged demonstrations or performances
 - iv) Portfolios that include a collection of graded student work related to a program's learning outcomes
 - b) Examples of indirect evidence include:
 - i) Student self-perceptions of their skills, abilities, and knowledge relevant to the program
 - ii) Employer surveys or job placements related to the program's goals
 - iii) Focus groups
 - c) Properties of good evidence:
 - i) Comprehensive - relevant to the full range of learning outcomes identified for a program
 - ii) Internal and external, using standards set both within and outside of the University
 - iii) Shows relative strengths and weaknesses for different facets of student performance
 - iv) Direct - involving direct scrutiny of student performance
 - v) Timely - information is collected on a regular, planned schedule, with at least some information being collected each year.
5. Evidence used in assessing a program's performance will not be used for an individual faculty member's evaluation.

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III. Student learning outcomes evidence is:

1. Reviewed at least once every two years by program faculty and the department chair (or equivalent).
2. Used to assess the curriculum, in terms of whether students are attaining program goals. A written record of this assessment is prepared and archived. Recommendations for needed curricular change are included.

IV. The actions required in response to outcomes assessment are:

1. The program faculty initiate the curricular changes needed or document why the changes could not be made.
2. Administrators review and respond to program recommendations of the faculty.