

Accreditation Resources from Office of Institutional Assessment, Research & Testing/WWU

A list of student learning outcomes assessment materials that could be submitted by departments/programs to indicate compliance with accreditation Standard #2.

Indirect measures

- Surveys: of employers, alumni, students.
- Student or graduate profiles.
- Interviews, exit or other
- Focus group transcripts or summaries.
- Transcript analyses.
- Periodic review of syllabi, textbooks, exams, or other curricular materials.
- Mission statement.
- Strategic Plan statement.
- Inventory of degree programs.
- Number of degrees granted.
- Existence of and participation in first-year experiences or seminars.
- Existence of and participation in student learning communities.
- Evidence of collaborative projects, individual projects, “authentic” tasks.
- Availability of service learning projects and/or internships/field placements, plus evidence of participation and effectiveness.
- Availability of interdisciplinary study, plus evidence of participation and effectiveness.

Direct measures

- Course portfolios constructed by instructors that could include some or all of the following: syllabi, expectations, scoring rubrics, examples of student work.
- Related to above but of lesser depth: assignments from individual courses; results of common assignments.
- Curriculum mapping matrices. (These are particularly useful for indicating links between department/program learning objectives and thus make it easier to develop assessments of student learning outcomes.)
- Milestone and/or Capstone projects/courses, and analyses thereof.
- Student portfolios built over the program’s durations.
- Entering student tests or assignments, especially comparisons that reveal beginning and ending competencies.
- Embedded assignments of students in the course (papers, exams, projects, journals, portfolios).
- Writing samples completed for upper division writing intensive courses.
- National standardized tests – commercial or otherwise.
- Local content or competency exams, papers or projects.
- Skills tests, projects, reports, demonstrations, recitals, or performances. (Analyses of findings from these activities, aggregated, especially over time, is very effective.)

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- Certification and licensing exams and/or overview by external examiners.
- Specialized accreditation reviews, or other reviews by external experts or agencies.
- Longitudinal evaluations of capstone experiences or portfolios.
- Grade distribution studies.
- Attrition rate from the program over the past 5 years and reasons why it is increasing or decreasing.
- Exit interviews and/or focus groups.
- Email or online discussion board content.
- Evidence of significant writing and speaking opportunities.
- Evidence of research and problem-based learning, both independent and with faculty, and its effectiveness.

Related

- General education materials: statement of degree objectives for each degree program; description of curriculum development bodies and advisory groups, with rules of procedure and recent minutes; complete departmental/program self-studies; evaluation forms and summary reports of student evaluations of faculty and courses; self-study and evaluation committee reports from external reviews and the most recent professional accreditation visits and documentation of resulting actions
- Policies regarding public service. (For instance: compilation of entering freshmen ability measures; sample of course examinations and other instruments used to assess student achievement or competency and, when possible, available work products determined to be of different levels of quality; funds devoted to research, if applicable, for each of the past 3 years, and the principal sources of such funds.
- Curricular and assessment process: careful planning of a few demanding assignments over several years can provide evidence of most of all outcomes. Assignments progress toward “graduation level” abilities of all outcomes both for general contexts and within the major or professional area of concentration. Smaller scale assignments could cover outcomes otherwise missed. Most desirable, however, is a full integration of the learning outcomes in sophisticated, authentic tasks.
- Best practices department/program assessment documents two kinds of learning outcomes: basic mastery of fundamental knowledge and abilities, and sequential development through a hierarchy of professional and personal abilities, including elements which foster social interaction and personal maturation, such as volunteerism, internships, capstone experiences, field-related employment experiences, collaborative learning experiences, interaction with faculty, and other experiential mechanisms.

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Also to consider

To assess individual courses: Sampling the work of all students in a course can reveal how well the course content and assignments are helping students achieve the expected outcomes.

To assess multi-section courses: Common assignments across sections (or common requirements such student or course portfolios) can be sampled, averaged, compared, discussed, or otherwise reviewed by the faculty involved and/or by departments or committees to ensure consistency across sections.

To assess both individual courses and multi-section courses: Student portfolios and end-of-course reflections can provide evidence of both cognitive and affective learning outcomes aggregated at the level of the individual student.