



Director of Academic Assessment

Sample Assessment Methods

The following are just some of the potential assessment methods that might be used in assessing student academic achievement in courses and/or programs. It is always recommended that you choose the assessment method(s) that seem most appropriate for the learning outcomes you wish to assess.

Capstone experience

A project or activity in which students demonstrate achievement of comprehensive learning outcomes that is usually completed at the end of a course or program. In a program, there may be a capstone course that includes the pertinent learning outcomes for the program.

Departmental exam

A common exam developed collaboratively by a department used in all sections being assessed; may be part of a graded final that is evaluated separately using a scoring rubric.

External certification/licensure exam

Exams developed by regional or national accrediting or licensing organizations to evaluate students on specific skills usually related to an occupational area, such as nursing or automotive technology.

Externally evaluated job performance

Evaluation of student competence, knowledge and skills by an employer in an internship, co-op, or job placement. Useful for program assessment in occupational areas.

Externally evaluated performance or exhibit

Useful in the visual and performing arts, a performance or exhibit that is evaluated or judged by experts in the field other than the instructor for the assessed course/program. The external evaluator may be an instructor at a different institution who teaches a similar course/section.

Portfolio

A compilation of student work, including perhaps projects, artwork or writing samples, demonstrating achievement of multiple learning outcomes. May be in paper or electronic form, and may be used for course or program assessment. Portfolios are generally externally evaluated.

Pre- and post-test or Entrance and Exit test

A test or other assessment activity that is administered to students both at the beginning of a course or program and at the end, with the intention of demonstrating improved knowledge or skill upon completion.

Prompt

An assessment activity in which something such as a newspaper article, poem, or piece of art is presented to the student in order to prompt a specific response, usually written. Useful particularly in the arts and humanities.



Director of Academic Assessment

Standardized Test

A test assessing academic achievement or of knowledge in a specific academic or vocational domain. Such tests are frequently objective (although some may be written tests with open-ended questions) and have scores referencing the scores of a norm group, providing comparative data. Standardized tests are generally commercial products and are useful in many areas. An example is the Criminal Justice Area Concentration Achievement Test (ACAT), a nationally benchmarked pre-test post-test design to measure students' knowledge and understanding of critical concepts, issues, case law in the fields of correction processes, criminal justice systems, criminal law, criminology, juvenile justice, and law enforcement.

Surveys

Surveys may be used to evaluate perceptions of student achievement. Surveys of graduates, employers, or advisory committee members may help determine if program outcomes relating to employment and skill attainment have been met. Students may also be surveyed regarding self-perception of their success or, if administered as a pre-and post-test, of the improvement following completion of a course or program. Because surveys are indirect measures of student academic achievement, they are ideally used in combination with more direct measures.

Transfer follow-up

In courses or programs that have a high degree of transferability to other institutions, it may be useful to examine student success in subsequent courses at the receiving institutions.