

Faculty Handbook

10.7.2 Student Outcomes Assessment

Introduction. Iowa State University endorses the philosophy of outcomes assessment stated in the Association of Public and Landgrant Universities (APLU) "Statement of Principles on Student Outcomes Assessment." These seven principles state that programs for student outcomes assessment should do the following:

- focus primarily on the effectiveness of academic programs and the improvement of student learning and performance
- be based on incentives rather than regulations or penalties
- be developed in collaboration with the faculty
- be appropriate to the particular mission and goals of the institution
- use multiple methods of assessment
- be fiscally conservative and not impose costly programs on institutions
- be linked to strategic planning and program review processes within the institution

All outcomes assessment procedures developed within the university must be consistent with these guidelines.

Policies. Within the framework of these APLU guidelines and the stated mission of the university, Iowa State University adopts the following policies regarding assessment of the outcomes of undergraduate programs:

- The primary focus of the assessment process will be on ascertaining the effectiveness of academic programs and instruction and on developing methods to improve the educational process. Although data may be collected from individual students, the purpose of the assessment will not be to certify the competence or skills of particular students. The outcomes of extra-curricular activities will be assessed to the degree that they relate to academic goals.
- The results of student outcomes assessment will be an integral part of the program review and strategic planning processes.
- Assessment of attainment of general educational goals will be conducted primarily at the college level, and at the department or program level when the outcomes are clearly related to the unit's mission and goals.
- Assessment of the outcomes of academic programs (for majors, and as appropriate, minors) will be conducted at the department or program level. Assessments should use methods and procedures appropriate to the nature of the discipline, the goals of the program, and the students in the program.
- Student outcomes will be assessed prior to graduation in all programs. There may also be assessments earlier in the students' college careers and after graduation.
- Use of multiple methods of assessment and multiple evaluators is encouraged, including methods independent of specific courses. Existing sources of information should be used whenever appropriate and feasible. Because the focus of assessment is on

improving the educational process, not every student needs to be assessed by every method. The assessment process, however, should include representative samples of students in the program and be conducted on a regular, continuing basis.

- Summaries of the results of the assessments will be shared with the faculty, administration, students, and other interested constituencies.

Procedures

- Each academic program or department will develop written procedures that specify the desired educational outcomes of the program and the procedures that will be used to measure attainment of these outcomes and how the results of the assessment will be used to improve learning and instruction. Assessments should include outcomes measures specific to the program and measures of those general educational goals that are expected to be attained by all majors.
- The department or other administering unit will submit the program or department plans for assessment to the appropriate college dean for review and approval. ~~After approval by the college dean, these plans will be forwarded to the senior vice president and provost for review and approval.~~
- Each college will develop written procedures that specify the educational goals of the college and the procedures that will be used to measure attainment of these goals and how the results of the assessment will be used to improve learning and instruction.
- The college will submit the plans for assessment of the academic program to the senior vice president and provost for review and approval.
- ~~If the program is approved and funded by the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, the Office of Institutional Research will provide assistance in developing and conducting assessment programs.~~ University-wide assessment studies may be conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and other offices.
- Each unit will integrate the results of its student outcomes assessment program into its program review and strategic planning processes.
- Evaluation of the policies and procedures for outcomes assessment will take place at the time of each unit's periodically scheduled program review.
- Course-level continuous improvement plans focused on student outcomes assessment will be implemented for undergraduate courses as required by the Iowa Administrative code.
- The Faculty Senate Student Outcomes Assessment Committee will facilitate collaborations across colleges on enhancing outcomes assessment institutionally.
- Summary information on the status of program level outcomes assessments will be submitted annually to the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost and reported to the Board of Regents.

Section 10.7.2 was approved by the Faculty Senate on 5/07/1991.