

Assessment Options

(Methods of Collecting Evidence)

- Conduct focus group interviews with students at different levels of the major to obtain student feedback on advising, courses, and curriculum.
- Most schools require the filing of forms in the Office of the Registrar prior to graduation. Attach a short survey to those forms to capture feedback from students about to graduate. If you have a one-year-out alumni survey, make certain the items on the graduating student survey and the one-year-out alumni survey do not overlap since there will be many things in common with these students.
- Collect and review portfolios of students' work from several courses taken throughout the major.
- Conduct pre- and post-testing of student knowledge in a capstone course.
- Develop a checklist and rating scale for requisite skills and have three faculty complete the checklist for senior capstone, design course projects, theses, dissertations, etc.
- Develop a checklist and rating scale for requisite skills and have three faculty evaluate theses and dissertations using the checklist and rating system. Nearly all theses and dissertations end up receiving a grade of "A". However, looking across the theses and dissertations for specific skills, may identify areas which, although acceptable, may consistently be below expectations.
- Evaluate videotapes of students' skills, such as student teaching or making a class presentation.
- Invite outside examiners from business, industry, and the professions to provide feedback on students' presentations or projects.
- Survey alumni.
 - a. Ask questions which relate to program objectives
 - b. Ask questions in such a way that the responses can be tracked back to program or curricular improvement
 - c. Administer the survey to a few students with similar characteristics to the alumni to see how long it takes and to determine if their interpretation of what the question asks is the same as yours
 - d. Consider the relationship between the length of time since graduation and the types of questions to be asked (i.e., career related questions will provide very different information one year after graduation than five years after)
- Survey employer of alumni.
 - a. Consider whether you want general information (our graduates) or specific information (this graduate)
 - b. Consider the possibility (likelihood) of low response rate
 - c. Make the survey short and pertinent
 - d. Consider the possibility of focus groups with employers
- Analyze performance on licensure and qualifying examinations for professional or graduate school.
 - a. Try and get detailed information about performance in areas of the examination
 - b. Remember the percent passing is an accountability number—it does not relate to program improvement. Bragging about a high percentage passing does nothing to improve the program. Program improvement comes by focusing on the failures, rather than the successes, and determining why they failed and what can be done about it.
- Assign a research/creative project to be evaluated by several faculty.
- Administer ACAT, CLEP, MFAT, or other comprehensive proficiency exams to test factual knowledge in the major.
- Administer nationally normed, general education exam (College BASE, ACT COMP, CAAP, etc.).

- Develop and administer a general education exam specific to your general education curriculum.
- Conduct telephone surveys of students who left the major.
- Evaluate student performance in internships, practica, student teaching, etc. from the student's perspective, the faculty member's perspective, and the supervisor's perspective.
- Use "real-world" assignments such as case studies, in-basket exercises, recitals, and exhibits to evaluate whether students can integrate knowledge and skills developed throughout their progress in the major.
- Evaluate students' written and oral communication skills in presenting their senior projects.
- Design one or two final exam questions to capture cumulative learning in the major and provide an in-depth assessment.
- Conduct exit interviews with graduating seniors-either individually or in focus groups-or ask for written evaluations of how well the major met their personal goals.
- Compare student writing samples from courses at different levels to assess student progress in writing.
- Assign students to cooperative working groups and evaluate the group project as well as group interaction and productivity.
- Maintain copies of course assignment samples from students.
- When scoring writing samples, develop a scoring rubric and look for inter-rater reliability. Often the most meaningful outcome from this exercise is a common understanding among faculty for what constitutes good or poor writing. In early work at a research II university, it was found that the grade a student received was often more a product of the instructor's grading scheme than the student's writing. This was determined by having various instructors (of the same writing course) grade a writing sample with all identifying information removed. The scores given to the sample varied greatly although each was grading the same writing sample.
- Remember—It is acceptable to use samples!