Measures

Measures are opportunities for programs to collect information about how well students are demonstrating or performing the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

Well-written measures will yield information that is relevant, meaningful, and actionable to the program. There should be at least two measures for every SLO and the measures should incorporate the majority of students in the program. At least one of the measures should be a direct measure of student learning. This ensures the validity of the data. In addition, a measure should provide the same type of information at the same level of quality regardless of year or person(s) collecting it. This ensures the reliability of the data and increases the trustworthiness of the information within the program.

**Direct Measures:** A direct measure of student learning are those that assess actual samples of student work. These are regularly employed to measure learning in the classroom. They provide evidence of student learning that is tangible, visible, and measureable. Direct measures are assessed by faculty, professionals in the field, or experts regarding what a student learned and how well they learned it. Here are some examples of direct measures:

- Essays,
- Performances,
- Presentations,
- Course projects, capstone projects,
- Final papers, research papers,
- Exams, final exams,
- Scores on standardized tests, scores on regional, national, or certification exams,
- Ratings or evaluations forms from field or clinical supervisors,
- Comprehensive or oral examinations, etc.

**Indirect Measures:** An indirect measure of student learning provides a less concrete view of student learning. Indirect measures can help to substantiate instances of student learning. These measures often assess opinions or thoughts about students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences, and perceptions. Here are some examples of indirect measures:

- Graduation or completion rates,
- Advisory board feedback,
- Course grades,
- Interviews,
- Focus groups,
- Self-assessments,
- Surveys (student, department, student evaluation of instruction, alumni, employer, faculty),
- Employment or placement rates of graduating students into appropriate career positions,
- Number or rate of students involved in faculty research, collaborative publications and/or presentations, service learning, or extension of learning in the larger community, etc.
Creating an Effective Academic Assessment Plan

Measures should answer the following questions:

1. Where or when are students demonstrating their skills or abilities?
2. How many students will be evaluated?
3. How are students demonstrating their skills or abilities (project, presentation, portfolio, paper, final exam)?
4. How are these demonstrations of SLOs evaluated (rubric, faculty panel, answer key)?
5. What scale, criteria or standard is used for evaluating student demonstrations of SLOs?

Meets Standard Criteria:

Measures directly assess intended SLO (validity); results are consistent across administrations (reliable); results will yield meaningful information for improvement(s); there is at least 1 direct measure for each SLO; multiple types of measures are present.

Format:

(1. Where or when students demonstrate SLO), (2. How many students will be evaluated), must (3. Demonstration of SLO). Student [demonstration of SLO] is evaluated by (4. Evaluation process), on a scale of (5. Criteria or standard).

Example 1: Undergraduate

In [1] DANC 389W, [2] all graduating seniors must successfully [3] compose and present a historical research project on the topic of their choosing. Student projects are evaluated by [4] a rubric, with one rubric area directly evaluating the student’s ability to articulate in written form the social, historical, and cultural dimensions of the topic. Rubric sections are scored on a scale of [5] 1-4, with 4 for Exemplary, 3 for Good, 2 for Acceptable, and 1 for Unacceptable.

Example 2: Graduate

[2] [Implied all] Thesis students must satisfy their committee that the [3] thesis meets professional standards of writing. The theses must be [5] rigorous pieces of writing that are produced in a directed process of writing and revising under the supervision of the thesis director. They must meet standards for professional writing, and [4] are reviewed by the thesis committee [1] before and after the oral defense [4] and are reviewed by the college editor before final acceptance. Members review [5] for content, form, and conformity to the professional standards of the field of history.
Example 3: Certificate


For more information, please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

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