**OUtcomes Based AssessMent hANDBOOK**

**FOR sTUDENT lEARNING**

**Section 1:**

**Accountability & Guidelines for Assessment Processes in Higher Education**

**Columbus State Community College**

**2015-16**

*Columbus State Community College is committed to ongoing outcomes assessment for continuous improvement of student learning and teaching strategies.*

[**www.cscc.edu/asssessment**](http://www.cscc.edu/asssessment)

5/4/2015 ANM

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**Self-Assessment Tool:**

**Assuring Quality Assessment of Student Learning**

Below is list of the section titles for each set of criteria for good practices, to see the criteria go to http://www.chea.org/alliance\_publications/assuring%20quality-pdf%20version.pdf

1. Demonstrate a commitment to Assessment & accountability
2. Articulate institution wide learning outcomes\*
3. Articulate Academic-Program Level Student Learning Outcomes
4. Articulate Co-Curricular Program Level Student Outcomes
5. Document Assessment Practices in a Formal Plan
6. Gather Evidence of Student learning Outcomes
7. Use Evidence to improve student learning outcomes
8. Reporting on the processes and results of the student learning outcomes assessment is directed at the appropriate audiences and designed to meet their needs

\*must be accessible to internal and external stakeholders

Source: An Institutional Self-Assessment Tool for Excellent Practice in Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, (2012) New Leadership for Student Learning and accountability. Washington, D.C.

New Leadership Alliance

Guidelines for Assessment

And Accountability in Higher

Education (2012)

Introduction:

Are Our Students Learning?

This fundamental question should drive the work of colleges and universities that are preparing students for success — in careers, as citizens — in our increasingly complex world. The Committing to Quality guidelines are a tool to help higher education institutions answer this question and take responsibility for assessing and improving student learning. Committing to quality means setting clear goals for student achievement, regularly measuring performance against those goals, reporting evidence of success, and continuously working to improve results. We urge all those in college and university communities — presidents and chancellors, faculty members, academic and student affairs administrators — to share and discuss these principles and, ultimately, to put them into practice.

Downloaded from http://www.chea.org/alliance\_publications/committing%20to%20quality-3rd%20edition.pdf on 2/11/14

Set Ambitious Goals

1

Does Your Institution Set Ambitious Goals?

Colleges and universities and their major programs can use the following guidelines to determine the degree to which they are setting ambitious goals:

* The institution’s statements of learning outcomes clearly articulate what students should be able to do, achieve, demonstrate, or know upon the completion of each undergraduate degree.
* The outcomes reflect appropriate higher education goals and are stated in a way that allows levels of achievement to be assessed against an externally informed or benchmarked level of achievement or assessed and compared with those of similar institutions.
* Institutional practices, such as program review, are in place to ensure that curricular and cocurricular goals are aligned with intended learning outcomes.
* The institution and its major academic and cocurricular programs can identify places in the curriculum or cocurriculum where students encounter or are expected or required to achieve the stated outcomes.
* Learning outcome statements are presented in prominent locations and in ways that are easily understood by interested audiences.

Gather Evidence of Student Learning

2

Is your institution gathering evidence of student learning?

Colleges and universities and their major programs can use the following guidelines to determine how effectively they are gathering evidence of student learning:

* Policies and procedures are in place that describe when, how, and how frequently learning outcomes will be assessed.
* Assessment processes are ongoing, sustainable, and integrated into the work of faculty, administrators, and staff.
* Evidence includes results that can be assessed against an externally informed or benchmarked level of achievement or compared with those of other institutions and programs.
* Evidence also includes assessments of levels of engagement in academically challenging work and active learning practices.
* Results can be used to examine differences in performance among significant subgroups of students, such as minority group, first-generation, and non-traditional-age students.

New Leadership Alliance Guidelines for Assessment and Accountability in Higher Education (2012)

3

Use Evidence to Improve Student Learning

Is your institution using evidence to improve student learning?

Colleges and universities and their major programs can use the following guidelines to determine how effectively they are using evidence to improve student learning:

* + Well-articulated policies and procedures are in place for using evidence to improve student learning at appropriate levels of the institution.
  + Evidence is used to make recommendations for improvement of academic and cocurricular programs.
  + There is an established process for discussing and analyzing these recommendations and moving from recommendation to action. Where feasible and appropriate, key recommendations for improvement are implemented.
  + The impact of evidence-based changes in programs and practices is continuously reviewed and evaluated.

Report Evidence and results

4

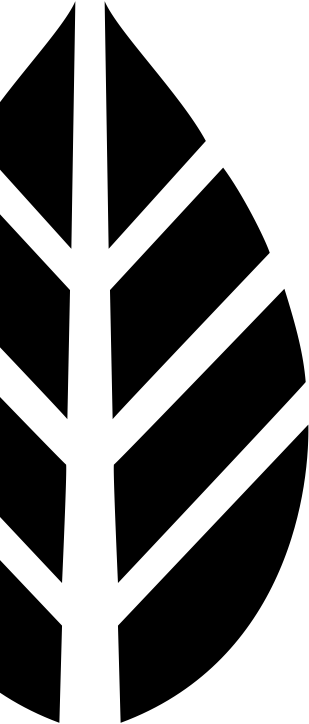
Is your institution reporting evidence and results?

Colleges and universities and their major programs can use the following guidelines to determine how effectively they are reporting evidence and results:

* Regular procedures are in place for sharing evidence of student learning with internal and external constituencies.
* Internal reporting includes regularly scheduled meetings, publications, and other mechanisms that are accessible to all relevant constituencies (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators, students, the governing body).
* Reporting to external constituencies via the institutional website includes evidence of learning as well as additional descriptive information and indicators of institutional performance (e.g., retention rates, time to degree).
* Reporting on student learning outcomes is both accessible to and appropriate for the relevant audience.
* The results of evidence-based changes in programs and practices are reported to appropriate internal and external constituents.

New Leadership Alliance Guidelines for Assessment and Accountability in Higher Education (2012

**Fundamental Questions for Conversations on Student Learning**



The Higher Learning Commission

**STUDENT LEARNING, ASSESSMENT, AND ACCREDITATION**

Among the public’s many expectations of higher education, the most basic is that students will learn, and in particular that they will learn what they need to know to attain personal success and fulfill their public responsibilities in a global and diverse society. Student learning is central to all higher education organizations; therefore, these organizations define educational quality--one of their core purposes--by how well they achieve their declared mission relative to student learning. A focus on achieved student learning is critical not only to a higher education organization’s ability to promote and improve curricular and co-curricular learning experiences and to provide evidence of the quality of educational experiences and programs, but also to fulfill the most basic public expectations and needs of higher education.

In October 1989, the Commission first posited that assessment of student learning is an essential component of every organization’s effort to evaluate overall organizational effectiveness. In February 2003, The Higher Learning Commission adopted a newly revised position statement on assessment of student learning (see Section 3.4-2 of the *Handbook of Accreditation, Third Edition*) to reaffirm and strengthen this position. Through the Criteria for Accreditation and multiple Core Components, the Commission makes clear the centrality of student learning to effective higher education organizations and extends and deepens its commitment to and expectations for assessment. Indeed, the Commission asserts that assessment is more than a response to demands for accountability, more than a means for curricular improvement. Effective assessment is best understood as a strategy for understanding, confirming, and improving student learning.

**Fundamental Questions for Conversations on Student Learning**

Six fundamental questions serve as prompts for conversations about student learning and the role of assessment in affirming and improving that learning:

1. **How are your stated student learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs, degrees, and students?**
2. **What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning outcomes?**
3. **In what ways do you analyze and use evidence of student learning?**
4. **How do you ensure shared responsibility for student learning and for assessment of student learning?**
5. **How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts to assess and improve student learning?**
6. **In what ways do you inform the public and other stakeholders about what students are learning---and how well?**

In using these questions, an organization should ground its conversations in its distinct mission, context, commitments, goals and intended outcomes for student learning. In addition to informing ongoing improvement in student learning, these conversations will assist organizations and peer reviewers in discerning evidence for the Criteria and Core Components.

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The fundamental questions and the conversations they prompt are intended to support a strategy of inquiry into student learning. Further, the questions are intended to support this strategy of inquiry, built on principles of good practice, as a participative and iterative process that:

* Provides information regarding student learning,
* Engages stakeholders in analyzing and using information on student learning to confirm and improve teaching and learning,
* Produces evidence that confirms achievement of intended student learning outcomes, and
* Guides broader educational and organizational improvement.

In other words, organizations assess student learning in meaningful, useful, and workable ways to evaluate how they are achieving their commitments and to act on the results in ways that advance student learning and improve educational quality. Effective assessment of student learning is a matter of commitment, not a matter of compliance.

**Evaluating the Organization’s Efforts to Assess and Improve Student Learning**

The centrality of student learning and the fundamental nature of assessment as a strategy for understanding and improving that learning are embedded directly into the Criteria and Core Components. Thus, peer reviewers seeking evidence for the Criteria and Core Components will discern evidence of the commitment to student learning and the meaningful use of assessment to confirm and improve student learning. Neither the Criteria nor Core Components prescribe specific methods for assessing and improving student learning. It is inevitable and desirable that diverse organizations exhibit a wide variety of approaches and embed assessment of student learning in a variety of institutional forms and processes. Thus, the Commission and its peer reviewers will not approach the review with expectations for specific ways in which assessment efforts are structured and implemented, but rather with a focus on student learning and the use of assessment to confirm and improve that learning within the context and mission of the organization.

To remain focused on student learning and assessment as a strategy for confirming and improving that learning, peer reviewers may use the fundamental questions as prompts to engage faculty, staff, students, and administrators in conversations about the organization’s (a) commitment to improving student learning and educational quality; (b) sustained effort to collect, analyze, and use data and information on student learning; (c) evidence that students have achieved the learning intended; (d) shared responsibility for student learning and assessment of student learning; and (e) successes and challenges in improving student learning and educational quality through assessment. These conversations will assist peer reviewers in understanding the organization’s commitment to student learning and approaches to assessment of that learning within the organization’s context and mission. Further, the conversation will assist in discerning areas for consultation and in identifying and validating evidence related to the Criteria and Core Components. Peer reviewers will base their accreditation-related judgments and recommendations on this evidence as it relates to the Criteria and Core Components.

Finally, the Commission realizes that assessment of student learning is an ongoing, dynamic process that requires substantial time; that is often marked by fits and starts; and that takes long-term commitment and leadership. It is reasonable for organizations to use different approaches and timetables in implementing their assessment of student learning efforts. Nevertheless, the Commission expects that each organization can demonstrate a sustained effort to implement assessment processes that are workable, reasonable, meaningful, and useful in confirming and improving student learning and in assuring and advancing broader educational and organizational quality.

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**Guidelines from the Higher Learning Commission (2014)**

**Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

**Core Components**

3.A. The institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution’s program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution’s mission.

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3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in **assessment** of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution’s offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution’s mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students’ educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Source: Higher Learning Commission. (2015). Policy title: criteria for accreditation. *Higher Learning Commission.* Retrieved from http://policy.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-for-accreditation.html?highlight=WyJhc3Nlc3NtZW50Il0=

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