Program Assessment: Understanding and Using Results

Identify program goals

Specify intended outcomes

The Program Assessment Process

Measure whether students are meeting those outcomes

Improve your program based on results

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Understanding and Using Data

- Collecting data is an important step in program assessment, but is only useful if programs understand and then use the data for program improvement.
- Some fundamental steps to using data include:
  - Evaluating the data
  - Summarizing the data
  - Identifying steps to take to maintain or improve students’ learning
  - Carrying out those steps
Before making decisions based on your data, it’s a good idea to evaluate the information you’ve gathered. Some useful questions include:

- Did the assessment provide the data you hoped?
- Was the scoring system useful and accurate?
- How well does the data represent the range of students in our program?
Once you’re confident the data provides appropriate information, it’s time to understand your data. Some useful questions faculty and staff might discuss include:

- How many students met your program’s expectations?
- In what way(s) did students (not) meet them?
- What successes or concerns arose from the data?
- What are the common themes in the data?
If students **met** your expectations, your next step might be as simple as:

* Continuing to assess the outcome the following year
* Raising the bar so that more students have to meet the same expectations the next year
* Adding another assessment to measure the same outcome to get a more balanced picture
* Revising a grading rubric to get better data and improve feedback to students
If students did not meet your expectations or if results were unclear, some possible next steps might be:

* Revising how a particular concept or skill is addressed
* Increasing the number of courses or services that incorporate a particular concept or skill
* Redesigning the assessment used
* Modifying what is required vs. elective
* Collaborating with academic advisors
Local Resources for Program Assessment

* Cathy Barrette, WSU Director of Assessment  
  c.barrette@wayne.edu  
  (313)577-1615  
  4129 F/AB

* WSU Assessment website (temporary url)  
  http://undergrad.wayne.edu/assessment.php

* OTL staff, workshops and website:  
  http://otl.wayne.edu/
* Additional presentations explain how to:
  * Write mission statements
  * Write learning outcomes and curriculum maps
  * Choose assessments
  * Use Compliance Assist to record your work

* Each part has examples and pitfalls to avoid as well!