

Frequently Asked Questions

Why Should We Assess Student Learning Outcomes?

- Improve student learning
- Make effective resource allocation decisions
- Facilitate student feedback counseling and advising
- Demonstrate performance to:
 - Employers, parents, prospective students
 - Administrators, Board of Trustees
 - External funding sources, stakeholders
- Focus on institutional effectiveness and improvement
- Institutional accreditation
- Accountability purposes

What should I do with the results of assessments?

- Analyze student learning for mastery
 - What did students learn or not learn?
 - Why did some students demonstrate mastery and not others?
- Determine whether course goals and objectives have been met
- Share the results with students
- Discuss with colleagues for instructional strategies
- Use results to improve teaching

Do I have to use a rubric?

- There are multiple ways to assess students
- A rubric provides a customized scoring guide for particular criteria
- Using multiple measures of assessing helps to make good decisions about teaching and learning
- Rubrics help your students understand your expectations
- Rubrics make scoring more accurate are unbiased and consistent

What are good assessment practices?

- Start with clear statements.
- Make assignments and test questions clear.
- Make sure that your assignments and test questions clearly relate to your learning goals.
- Score student work fairly and consistently.
- Use assessment results appropriately.

How does assessment impact student learning outcomes?

- Provides sufficient convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional, program, course and class learning outcomes.
- Provides evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents, improves teaching, and learning.
- Assessments are part of the overall institutional plan.

Aren't grades enough to determine student mastery and learning outcomes?

- No, grades in one course or section may be assigned on a different basis from grades in another.
- Grades reflect many variables: discussion, homework, cooperation, attendance, participation, subjectivity, et cetera.
- Course completion and the assignment of passing grades does not reflect mastery.
- According to Paul Dressel grades are, “An inadequate report of an inaccurate judgment by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite material.”