

Program Assessment

What is assessment?

Assessment is an on-going process of establishing clear and measurable learning objectives, ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those objectives, gathering pertinent data that measures student learning, and using that data to make improvements to learning process.

What is a program?

A program implies any structured educational activity with specific objectives and outcomes (Mesa CC). Programs include those that prepare students for licensure and industry examinations, specific careers, transfer programs, remedial programs, and programs for selected students (ie. Honors, Perkins).

What is program assessment?

Program assessment “helps determine whether students can integrate learning from individual courses into a coherent whole. It is interested in the cumulative effects of the education process” (Palomba and Banta). Whereas classroom assessment focuses on gauging learning for individual students, program assessment gauges the learning of a group of students. The outcomes information in program assessment is used to improve courses, programs, and services.

Who should be involved in program assessment?

Numerous constituencies **must** be involved in viable program assessment. These include but are not limited to appropriate administrators, department chairs, discipline faculty, external review boards, employers, and students.

What are essential components of program assessment?

- Clear, Measurable and Meaningful Objectives
- Indirect Assessment Measures:
 - Transcript Analysis
 - Placement into Careers
 - Transfer Admission Rates
 - Course Outline Analysis for Learning Outcomes
 - Test Blueprints
 - Number of student hours spent in community services, collaborative learning activities, active learning, pertinent extra-curricular activities
- Direct Assessment Measures:
 - Pass rates on licensure/certification exams
 - Portfolios of student work
 - Rubric scores for course assessment
 - Entry/Exit tests
 - Student Reflections on what they have learned over the course of the program
 - Student Satisfaction Surveys
 - Capstone Courses/Culminating Projects

Writing Program Objectives

(CCAC Definitions: Approved by College Council December 2005)

Course Outcomes are learning outcomes that are observable, measurable and assessable statements of the end products of student learning including knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes.

Program Objectives are detailed aspects of the program that are accomplished by the successful completion of the course outcomes.

College Goals are clearly articulated statements of what the Community College of Allegheny County expects its students to learn.

1. In order to write assessable program objectives, first answer the following:

- What does the ideal student completing your program know?
- What can she do?
- What does he care about?

2. Review all the following materials and sort information into one of three categories: **Content, Skills, Values**: documents that describe your program (brochures, catalog, handbook, accreditation reports, National Association goals), all master syllabi for program courses, specific instructional materials.

3. Brainstorm:

- What is to be learned? Content, Skills, Values
- What level of learning is expected? Criteria/Standards for Achievement
- What is the context in which learning takes place? Application/Environment

4. Answer the following:

- What will the graduate who has met all of the requirements be able to know and do?
- What should students know and do at certain points of the program?
- What skills, capabilities, and qualities should students gain from the program?

5. How is the program related to General Education Goals? (See attached list and cite specific goals* pending Governance approval)

6. Review your answers to 3, 4, and 5 and draft a set of program objectives. Use Bloom's Taxonomy handout (attached) in order to begin your objective statements. Use the information below as a template and examples.

Complete the following statement: *All graduates of the program should be able to* (follow with an appropriate, measurable verb).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Remember to consider the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy:

Highest	Evaluation
	Synthesis
	Analysis
	Application
	Comprehension
Lowest	Memory/Knowledge

Examples of objectives for a Paralegal Program:

- Analyze procedural issues which arise in litigation, real estate organizations, probate, criminal and family areas of law
- Conduct legal research in both traditional and digital environments

7. Revise your objectives by asking the following: How will we measure this goal? If you can't answer the question, then revise the goal for wording or delete the goal in its entirety.

[Year] Program Assessment Plan for
[Program Name]

List objective to be assessed this year:

List the two measures for assessing the objective:

1. Direct:
2. Indirect:

Statement about method

How will you assess achievement of this objective?

2006 Program Assessment Plan for Foreign Language

List objective to be assessed this year:

Students will exhibit fluency in a foreign language.

List the two measures for assessing the objective:

1. Direct: Scores on a faculty designed rubric
2. Indirect: Course grades

Statement about method

How will you assess achievement of this objective?

Faculty will evaluate an oral presentation at the end of an intermediate-level course.

Assessment Results for _____ **Program** _____ **Date**

List Specific Objective that was measured:

Assessment Criteria used to measure if objective was achieved:

Results of assessment study:

Problems encountered:

Actions taken for improvement of learning:

