

Vincennes University Assessment Glossary*

1. **Analysis:** A summary of assessment information that is used to inform analysis and judgment about program effectiveness or needed program improvements.
2. **Assessment:** The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning, academic achievement, and institutional effectiveness. (Palomba & Banta, 1999) Types of assessment include university, general, liberal, program, course and classroom.
3. **Assessment Methods:**
 - **Direct assessment:** Requires students to produce work so that reviewers can assess how well students meet expectations. (<http://assessment.tamu.edu/asmt/methods.htm>)
 - **Indirect assessment:** Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning experiences and inform the reviewers of their perceptions of their learning experience (Palomba & Banta, 1999) (<http://assessment.tamu.edu/asmt/methods.htm>)
 - **Formative assessments:** On-going assessments, reviews, and observations in a classroom. Teachers use formative assessment to improve instructional methods and student feedback throughout the teaching and learning process. For example, if a teacher observes that some students do not grasp a concept, she or he can design a review activity or use a different instructional strategy. Likewise, students can monitor their progress with periodic quizzes and performance tasks. The results of formative assessments are used to modify and validate instruction. (<http://fcit.usf.edu/assessment/basic/basic.html>)
 - **Summative assessments:** Typically used to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs and services at the end of an academic year or at a pre-determined time. The goal of summative assessments is to make a judgment of student competency after an instructional phase is complete. Summative evaluations are used to determine if students have mastered specific competencies and to identify instructional areas that need additional attention. (<http://fcit.usf.edu/assessment/basic/basic.html>)
4. **Levels of Assessment**
 - **Class assessment** - assessing student learning and teaching effectiveness within the course or time period of one class period. This type of assessment seeks to determine if and how students achieved the desired learning for this class period.
 - **Course assessment** - assessing overall student learning and teaching effectiveness over the course or time period from the beginning of a course to the end of the course. Course assessment is composed of class assessment. This type of assessment seeks to determine if and how well students achieved the course learning outcomes.
 - **Program assessment** - assessing the role and impact of multiple courses. Program level assessment should reflect the course assessment, which in turn, should reflect the class assessment. This type of assessment seeks to determine if and how well students achieved the program level outcomes.
5. **Assessment budget:** The dedication of financial resources and assets for promoting continuous quality improvement.
6. **Assessment-driven improvement:** Assessment that feeds directly, and often immediately, back into revising the course, program or institution to improve student learning results. Can be formative or summative in nature. *Beyond Confusion: An Assessment Glossary*, AAC&U Peer Review Winter/Spring 2002, <http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-sp02/pr-sp02reality.cfm>

7. **Assessment-driven program review:** A process that incorporates the results of program assessment and focuses effort and resources on specific curricular and co-curricular program improvements. *See also: Assessment Project*
8. **Assessment project:** An opportunity, typically collaborative, for improving learning and enhancing institutional effectiveness.
9. **Assessment resources:** Includes personnel, time, professional development and funding dedicated to continuous quality improvement.
10. **Assessment unit:** General term for any group of employees who are doing assessment and includes academic departments and programs, learning units, and college services; the individual faculty member is also an assessment unit.
11. **Benchmarking:** A benchmark is a standard by which processes and practices can be measured or judged. The process of benchmarking involves comparing one's own practices and standards with those of peers at local, state and national levels.
12. **Collaboration:** A shared effort to determine a common understanding of outcomes and to develop a purposeful structure to achieve and assess those outcomes.
13. **Continuous Improvement:** An on-going process to identify and implement incremental changes to improve the level of student learning.
14. **Curriculum Mapping:** The process of evaluating and aligning curriculum in relation to intended outcomes to ensure that students are receiving appropriate instruction.
15. **ePortfolio:** A digital collection of artifacts developed over time to improve learning and meet accountability demands.
16. **Integrative learning:** Connecting skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences; applying theory to practice in various settings; utilizing diverse and even contradictory points of view; and, understanding issues and positions contextually. (AAC&U, March 2004)
17. **Measurement Instruments:** The tools used for assessment. The tools can be categorized as either direct (such as tests, projects, papers, or performances) or indirect (surveys or student or alumni graduation rates, placement rates, or employer surveys) measures, quantitative (structured assessments that allow looking at recurring patterns and themes, such as student reflective writing or open-ended survey questions), embedded (assessments that are built into the course as required course work), local (developed by faculty or staff employed at the institution) or published (developed by professional organizations outside the institution), objective (assessments that yield only one correct answer and require no special expertise to score, such as multiple choice or true/false questions) or subjective (assessments that can yield multiple answers, directly evaluate more complex skills, and require special expertise to score, such as essay exams questions or papers that might be scored with a rubric).
18. **Outcomes:** Statements of expectation written in measurable terms that express what a student will know, do or value at the end of a learning experience. Outcomes typically include, university, general, liberal, program, course and classroom.
19. **Program Effectiveness:** Measures that assess the efficacy of the program to meet the needs of the consumer. Consumers may be the students, employers, government entities, alumni, or other communities of interest. Those measures may include but are not limited to graduation rates, program completion rates, retention rates, job placement rates, graduate satisfaction, employer satisfaction, student learning outcomes, and licensure/certification exam pass rates.
20. **Professional Development:** Activities that improve teaching, improve learning, and builds community.

21. **Results:** A summary of assessment information that is used to inform analysis and judgment about program effectiveness or needed program improvements.
22. **Rubric:** A document that describes levels of quality for each criterion of a paper, project etc.
23. **Success Standard:** A baseline or goal identifying the number or percentage of students who will achieve or surpass a minimum performance level.
24. **Systemic assessment process:** An inclusive assessment process that affects the entire Vincennes University system, makes expectations explicit and public, influences decisions, and shapes resources.

***This is a dynamic and evolving document and is subject to change.**