

Fall 2009 Academic Assessment Rubric Scoring Pilot Summary

Background:

During the summer of 2009, the assessment staff developed a rubric for evaluating academic assessment plans and processes. Primarily, we wanted to see if we could summarize where we are in academic assessment as an institution, and identify areas for Leanne Charlesworth to focus her faculty development efforts this year.

Based on an original model from Concordia College, the rubric (attached) contains four program status categories and four assessment dimensions:

Status Categories	Assessment Dimensions
Undeveloped	Learning Outcomes
Developing	Evidence and Criteria
Established	Findings
Exemplary	Recommendations/Actions/Follow-up

This pilot focused on the development of the rubric, ease of use, and consistency of scoring. Thirty-six programs were reviewed by three IR & A staff. The reviewers scored the assessment plans that had been submitted to date using the rubric. Many findings had not been updated at the time of the review (however, a few departments have now submitted work for 2008-2009).

Pilot Summary:

- Most reviewed programs fall into the “developing” status category: including 73% of CAS reviewed programs; 71% of HHS reviewed programs; and 43% of SOM reviewed programs. SoE programs were equally split between undeveloped and established.
- Twenty-two percent of all reviewed programs were rated as established.
- Fewer than ten reviewed programs were rated as undeveloped.
- Consistent program rating (across reviewers) is possible but will call for specific rubric training focused on reliability.

Pilot Observations:

- Many direct measures and few indirect measures are in use – this is a strong approach to assessment.
- Many departments are using the capstone experience to capture information on several learning outcomes, simplifying the data collection process.
- There are examples of departments having identical learning outcomes for both undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Eighty-eight percent of the programs had scores in multiple status categories. Programs with scores in three categories generally have well stated student learning outcomes but

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few findings and little evidence that findings from their assessment activities are being used to improve student learning.

- Limited innovations based on assessment findings were noted.

Recommendations:

- Program faculty should write specific, measurable, useful and meaningful student learning outcomes in terms of what students will know or do.
- Listing specific courses where information is to be collected is important, but it should be accompanied by a long range cycle or timeline for sustained data collection, analysis, and review.
- Programs should use clear performance criteria tied to specific assignments, exam questions, or other data sources, and restrict the use of course grades or GPAs which contain criteria other than student learning performance on specific learning outcomes.
- Documenting sources of evidence and findings with assignments, syllabi and rubrics clarifies the relationship between the outcome, the evidence and the significance of the findings.
- Documentation of faculty involvement (e.g., minutes from departmental meetings, or noting individuals with responsibilities for implementing recommendations) illustrates the level of faculty involvement in the assessment process. An alternative would be a program course map documenting where the outcomes are being addressed within specific courses in the curriculum.

Future Rubric Reviews

Based on the findings of the rubric pilot, language in the assessment instructions and on the Planning and Findings Forms have been edited to be consistent with the language in the rubric. The updated documents will be posted on the IR&A website (<http://www.naz.edu/dept/research/academic.cfm>) by September 11. All submissions should be submitted on these forms, using the revised instructions.

October 1, each year, is the due date for all assessment reporting. Findings from the previous academic year can be submitted anytime after May 1, but no later than October 1. Assessment plans for the current academic year are due on October 1.

All assessment reporting will be entered into TracDat as it is received. A copy of the TracDat assessment report will be returned to the faculty reporter for review and verification once the data are entered. Annual review of academic assessment plans and findings using the newly developed rubric will take place after October 1, with results available by November 30.

Information regarding this assessment reporting cycle, as well as the rubric and its intended use as an assessment plan/process improvement tool, should be widely disseminated to faculty by the Deans and Chairs, in addition to communications from the assessment staff.