

# Academic Program Planning Handbook

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<http://www.prattsenate.org/assessment/>

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# How to Use this Handbook

## 1 **UNDERSTANDING “WHY”**

If you're new to assessment, **Chapter 1** provides an overview of “assessment” and an introduction to its uses. The introductory phase of assessment involves building a base of understanding about the benefits and tools of program assessment and what you want your department to gain from assessment. It is during this phase that you identify why you want to assess. This chapter also helps build a rationale for the importance of engaging in assessment.

## 2 **CLARIFYING THE PROGRAM MISSION**

If you already understand what assessment is and know why you want to assess, **Chapter 2** can help you develop a clear mission statement for your program, the essential first step in developing an assessment plan. It offers suggestions on how you may go about clarifying your mission and provides sample mission statements for your assistance.

## 3 **DEFINING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Chapter 3** can help you begin to articulate goals and outcomes objectives for your program. This chapter provides a way to develop those goals and objectives in the context of your department's mission as you use assessment to improve your program and student learning.

## 4 **DESIGNING THE PLAN**

If you have defined your goals and objectives, **Chapter 4** will help you design your assessment plan. During this phase, you will address the “how” of program assessment by focusing on ways to put together an effective assessment program for your department. You will identify existing assessments within your department and decide which to use, expand, or revise.

### 3 IDENTIFYING ASSESSMENT METHODS

If you know that you want to assess and have a good idea of the focus of your assessment program, Chapter 5 will help you identify strategies and methods to collect assessment data. This chapter describes tools for assessing student learning, outlines assessment strategies and offers guidelines for selecting assessment tools. Here, you can begin to choose specific methods for evaluating student learning in your program.

### 4 UNDERSTANDING AND USING YOUR RESULTS

If you're ready to demonstrate what you've learned from your assessment data, Chapter 6 can help you put it together. The final goal of any project is a tangible product that serves as an example of your accomplishments and guides departmental revisions and improvements. Your assessment report represents this product. Whether formal or informal, widely-distributed or limited to department access, this report will demonstrate what you have learned from your assessment efforts and how it informs program improvement.

# 1. Getting Started: What is Program Assessment?

The purpose of this chapter is to help you think about assessment in terms of how it can benefit you and other members of your department or program. Assessment is about improvement, and program assessment can help you focus on improving student learning in your classes and in the major.

## **WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?**

The word “assessment” has taken on a variety. The term can refer to the process faculty members use to grade student course assignments; to standardized testing imposed on institutions to respond to increased pressure for external accountability; or efforts designed to collect information on the success of a program, course, or curriculum. These varied uses have, unfortunately, moved us away from a focus on the central role that assessment should play in educational institutions – the gathering of information to improve educational programs and student learning.

For the purposes of this handbook,

*Assessment is a component of the academic planning process; it aims at improving programs and increasing student learning through the systematic collection and analysis of data providing information on whether the goals faculty members set for their students are being achieved.*

Defined in this manner, assessment asks us to think about the following questions:

*What should students be learning and in what ways should they be growing?*

*What are students actually learning and in what ways are they actually growing?*

*What should we be doing to facilitate student learning and growth?*

### WHY ASSESS?...TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

The fact is, faculty assess all the time in their classes and in their programs. You are constantly considering what worked well and what didn't, and using those observations and impressions to make changes in your curriculum. What formal assessment (like the type discussed in this handbook) does is make those informal activities more systematic and more public.

Assessment can bring about improvement through a variety of ways. When faculty members are directly involved in the development, implementation, and analysis of assessment activities, a number of specific benefits can result.

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF ASSESSMENT:

<i>Because Assessment can provide information about the knowledge and skills students have as they enter a course</i>	<i>Faculty Members Can</i> design instruction to target the knowledge and skill levels students should have upon finishing a course and better determine the levels of thinking or reasoning appropriate for the course.
<i>Because Assessment can provide reliable data on student learning and information from student evaluations</i>	<i>Faculty Members Can</i> rely less on the comments that appear on student evaluations as indicators of success in teaching.
<i>Because Assessment can make available richer data about the effects of the curriculum or teaching methods</i>	<i>Faculty Members Can</i> engage in more productive conversations about the status of student achievement and make better decisions about how it might be improved.
<i>Because Assessment can yield more reliable data about instruction</i>	<i>Faculty Members Can</i> make reliable decisions about innovations or experimental projects in instruction and share successes more easily.
<i>Because Assessment can provide evidence that faculty members make a difference in student learning</i>	<i>Faculty Members Can</i> enjoy greater satisfaction in their work as educators.
<i>Because Assessment can offer a larger view of student needs and accomplishments</i>	<i>Faculty Members Can</i> identify directions for future instructional development.
<i>Because Assessment rests largely in the hands of the faculty</i>	<i>Faculty Members Can</i> become the primary decision-makers in regard to setting learning goals, identifying processes for assessing them, determining whether they have been reached, and recommending future directions.

## WHAT IS PROGRAM ASSESSMENT?

Program assessment focuses on examining student learning and experience and determining whether students have acquired the knowledge and competencies that faculty members define for the program. When developing and implementing assessment strategies, academic programs should have at least one of three purposes in mind: to improve, to inform, and/or to prove. The assessment process should provide information that can be used to determine whether or not what you want your students to achieve at the end of your program are actually realized and how the programs can be improved. An assessment process should also be designed to inform departmental faculty and other decision-makers about relevant issues that can affect the program and student learning.

Program assessment focuses on student learning and experience to determine whether students have the skills, knowledge, and competencies relevant to their program of study.

Effective program assessment helps you answer these questions:

1. *What are we trying to do?*
2. *How well are we doing it?*
3. *How (using the answers to # 1 and # 2) can we improve?*

## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

**Misconception 1: The results of assessment will be used to evaluate faculty performance.** Nothing could be further from the truth. Faculty awareness, participation, and ownership are essential for successful program assessment, but assessment results will never be used to evaluate or judge individual faculty performance. The results of assessment are used to *improve programs*.

**Misconception 2: We want nothing to do with program assessment. The administration might use the results to eliminate some of programs.** There are two types of evaluation processes: summative and formative. The purpose of summative program evaluation is to judge the quality and worth of a program; this is done through the academic review process. On the other hand, the purpose of formative program evaluation is to provide feedback to help improve and modify a program. Program assessment is intended as a formative evaluation and *not* a summative evaluation. The results of program assessment will not be used to eliminate programs.

**Misconception 3: Assessment is a waste of time and does not benefit the students.** The primary purpose of assessment is to identify the important objectives and learning outcomes of your program for the purpose of improving student learning. Anything that enhances and improves the learning, knowledge and growth of your students cannot be considered a waste of time.

**Misconception 4: Our program is working well, our students are learning; we don't need to bother with assessment.** Even if you feel that the quality of your program is good, assessment is an effective way of documenting your and your students' accomplishments. Given that it has to be done in part to fulfill Middle States requirements, done sensitively, assessment is a useful tool in academic planning.

*(Adapted from University of Central Florida: UCF Academic Program Assessment Handbook February 2004)*

### **EFFECTIVE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT IS GENERALLY**

- **Faculty-designed and implemented**, not imposed from the top down.
- **Pragmatic.** Assessment data are used to improve the campus environment, not simply collected and filed away.
- **Systematic.** It is an orderly and open method of acquiring assessment information over time.
- **Built around the department mission statement.** It is an integral part of the department or program.
- **Ongoing and cumulative.** Over time, assessment efforts build a body of evidence to improve programs.
- **Multi-faceted.** Assessment information is collected on multiple dimensions, using multiple methods and sources.

### **WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO EFFECTIVE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT?**

Ultimately, you will tailor your program assessment approach to respond to departmental goals and timelines, taking into account internal expectations, external requirements, or both. In general, however, your department will want to complete the following steps to develop an effective program assessment plan:

- Agree on your mission
- Create program goals (optional) and identify outcomes objectives
- Evaluate and select measures
- Identify appropriate assessment methods
- Develop a plan for collecting data
- Prioritize goals
- Set timeline, milestones
- Implement assessment plan
- Use data to improve processes
- Communicate results

*Based on OAPA Handbook PROGRAM-Based Review and Assessment • UMass Amherst*

## 2. Clarifying the Mission Statement

Successful academic program planning begins with a clear sense of what the program is designed to accomplish. Assessment is undertaken to determine how close you are to fulfilling your mission and to point to changes that will lead to greater success. The chapter offers suggestions on how you may go about clarifying your mission and provides sample mission statements for your assistance.

### **DEFINING THE PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission statement is the starting point for an assessment program, because in order to think about the outcomes the program aims to achieve, one needs to understand the purpose which these outcomes serve. Without a mission statement, faculty members may have different ideas as to the purpose of the program and, therefore, be unable to reach consensus as to what the outcomes of the program should be. Also, students may have different ideas about the aims of the program than the faculty and expect a type of education that the program is not designed to deliver. A clear mission, shared by faculty, and administrators, and students is likely to enhance the quality of the program by providing focus and direction; it also provides the standard against which achievements are measured.

The program mission is a broad statement of what the program is, what it does, and for whom it does it. It reflects the values and philosophy of the program, a vision of what the program is supposed to do. It establishes the broad directions and aspirations of the program and provides a clear statement of purpose. It might include a brief history of the program, the type of students to be served, the academic environment and primary focus of the curriculum, faculty roles, the contributions to and connections with the community, and a stated commitment to diversity and nondiscrimination. The mission statement guides decision-making about the curriculum and provides a framework for setting goals for graduates of the program. A program mission statement should be consistent with the mission statements of the school and of the Institute and with standards of accrediting agencies.

### **A well-defined program mission statement usually**

- is directly related to and supports the mission and vision of the Institute and the mission of the school; (Pratt Mission and Vision statements and school statements can be found in.....; Individual School Mission Statements as they appear in Pratt Bulletins, 2004: [http://pratt.edu/~senate/mission\\_schools.pdf](http://pratt.edu/~senate/mission_schools.pdf))
- provides a clear description of the primary purpose(s) of the program;
- reflects the philosophy and values of the program, is distinctive for that particular program and establishes broad directions and aspirations of the program.
- includes language regarding the learning environment: faculty roles; how the teaching and other activities of the program are used to enhance student learning;
- describes in general terms what the ideal graduate of the program knows and is able to do and refers to how the program contributes to the education and future careers of its students;
- describe the contributions to and connections with the community;
- is developed with extensive participation from faculty and reflects widespread intra-departmental agreement;
- is brief and concise;
- is clearly written in terms that can be understood by students, faculty, and persons outside the discipline;
- addresses the standards of accrediting agencies;
- is aspirational, but not unrealistic; it takes into consideration current realities.

## GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING/UPDATING MISSION STATEMENTS

### General Guidelines

- Each program should have one mission statement, reflective of the missions of Pratt Institute and of its schools. Departments offering programs at both the graduate and undergraduate level should have separate mission statements for the undergraduate and graduate programs. Programs within one level (associate, bachelors, or graduate) level with multiple majors/concentrations can have a more comprehensive mission statement relating all subprograms to a unified purpose.
- **Faculty Role, Participation:** In conjunction with guiding principles published by the Academic Senate, Pratt Institute asks faculty to participate in the process. The Institute believes that faculty, as the critical interface between students and the school, are uniquely situated to set goals and assess the effectiveness of their delivery. Through this effort, the Institute hopes to establish learning objectives for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs and to develop departmental plans for evaluating the extent to which students are achieving those objectives.

All faculty members who help to deliver a program should help shape the mission statement. The goal of this process is not simply to write a mission statement but also to develop consensus with programs as to their purposes. A well-crafted statement is clear and informative; where further validated by consensus, it can become a focal document in the program. It will assist everyone and harmonize their departmental efforts.

- Procedures for developing mission statements will vary; some departments may hold faculty meetings, others may want to communicate electronically. The Academic Senate has developed an electronic tool for facilitating faculty participation in the development of a departmental assessment plans.
- Completed mission statements should be submitted to the Student Learning Committee. The committee, with assistance from the offices of the Provost and Institutional Research and Assessment will review for alignment with the Institute's mission and strategic planning directions and may ask for adjustments.
- The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will be happy to answer any questions or work with you in ways that are helpful. She can be reached at extension 4256 or by email at [mzikopou@pratt.edu](mailto:mzikopou@pratt.edu). As members of the Committee on Learning develop expertise in assessment, questions can be directed to the Committee.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS IN DEVELOPING A PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

- **What is our purpose?** Briefly, state the primary purpose of the academic program - the primary reason(s) why you perform your major activities (e.g. teaching, research, and service). This might include, for example, educating students to prepare them for particular jobs and/or to prepare them for graduate school. Explain why you do what you do.
- **Whom do we serve?** Indicate who the stakeholders are. Include the primary groups of individuals to whom you are providing your program and those who will benefit from the program and its graduates (e.g., students, faculty, staff, parents, employers, etc.) The following may be considered:
  - What types of students are ideal for our program? What kinds of students do we want to attract?
  - Where do we see our educational charges within society? (Not clear what this means)
  - What would we consider ideal graduates of our program? What will they know and be able to do and what dispositions and values do we want them to have, if any?
  - What is our view about employability of our students?
- **How do we serve?** What is the content of the educational experience: Indicate the primary activities of the program. Highlight the most important offerings, and emphases of your program. You may want to consider the following:
  - What is the balance between theory and practice?
  - The focus of our curriculum: Is our focused on the visual and creative arts (only relevant to Art & Design; is it too general to be of assistance?)
  - What is our view on curricular balance, including diversified and specialized/ generalized educational offerings?
  - What should be the role of the liberal arts and sciences, with respect to our program?
  - Do ethics, principles and standards of behavior have a role in the curriculum?

- **What are our values and guiding philosophy?**
  - How do we view the creative/artistic and critical thinking processes?
  - What is our view about the use of technology?
- **How does our program fit into the collegial, disciplinary, professional, and regional context?**
  - Where is our program in relation to the latest developments in the field?
  - Do we want our program to fill a particular niche within the discipline?
  - How do we compare with other programs in the New York area?
  - What collaborations with NYC and national art world, industry, professional organizations, etc. do we see as important components of our program?
  - Should our program engender general cultural awareness or a world view?
- **What makes our program unique in its context?**
  - How do we compare with similar programs in other schools? What differentiates us from them?
- **What future plans do we envision?**

## **SAMPLE FORMAT OF A MISSION STATEMENT**

The following is a general format that can be used when developing a mission statement:

**“The mission of (name of your program) is to (your primary purpose) by providing (your primary functions or activities) to (your stakeholders).” (Additional clarifying statements)**

Note that the order in which the statements are made may vary from this format, but the content should be easily identified.

## EXAMPLES OF PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENTS

**Poor:** *The mission of Hypothetical Art is to provide a broad art education.*

The statement is very vague and does not distinguish this particular program from other engineering programs. It lacks information about the primary functions of the program and does not identify the stakeholders. Additionally, there is no indication that the program's mission is aligned with the school and Institute missions.

**Better:** *The mission of Hypothetical art is to educate students coming from diverse backgrounds in the principles of Hypothetical Art that will prepare them for both current and future professional challenges in Hypothetical Art.*

This statement is better because it identifies the stakeholders as well as a primary function of the program. However, it still is not a distinctive statement.

**Best:** *The mission of Hypothetical Art bachelor's degree program is to educate (through courses and an internship) students coming from diverse backgrounds in the fundamental skills, knowledge, and practice of Hypothetical Art in order to (1) prepare them for Hypothetical Art careers and (2) prepare them for continuing for an advanced degrees in Hypothetical Art or related disciplines. The program will promote a commitment to continued creativity and technical expertise among its graduates and foster a spirit of innovation. It will also promote an environment that is inclusive and diverse.*

This is a very effective mission statement. The mission of the program is very clearly defined.

*Actual examples of mission statements of arts programs and schools can be found in Appendix 2-A.*

## 2a. Examples of Program Mission Statements

### **SKIDMORE COLLEGE**

#### **Mission and Goals Statements for the Studio Art Major:**

The studio art program offers a rich and diverse range of investigations across the disciplines of art making and art history. Integrating extensive liberal arts offerings with a broad studio experience, majors choose to balance exploration with focus in a particular area as preparation for graduate school or future work in an art-related field. Critical thinking, imaginative problem solving, and self-reflective evaluation are key components in the development of the theoretical and technical aspects of art making. Through art courses students gain competency in visual language, an increasingly important skill in contemporary culture. Visual and verbal analytical and organizational skills learned in the studio apply to thoughtful practice in many arenas of our complex world.

### **CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT LOS ANGELES**

#### **Department of Art**

The mission of the Department of Art is to serve the needs of an urban and diverse university community by providing courses in a liberal arts foundation and in undergraduate and graduate programs in art that are designed to prepare students for careers in various professional fields or for further study in visual art and as lifelong producers or consumers of art.

**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY****Tisch School of the Arts**

The mission of the undergraduate film and television department is to educate our students in the art, craft, and technology of film, television video, animation and sound production. Our program offers intensive hands-on production experience coupled with a broad exposure to the liberal arts. We nurture individual talent and skills, and encourage students to become creative, and thoughtful practitioners in the world of media.

**BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY****Department of Visual Arts**

The mission of the Department is to promote excellence in the creation, appreciation, and education of the visual arts. The Department offers a distinctive blending of the intellectual, the aesthetic, the ethical, and the spiritual through study of the various visual arts disciplines that is in keeping with the mission and aims of Brigham Young University and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Department affirms the importance of art in life and society and acknowledges its role in facilitating understanding of the human experience. The Department believes that the visual arts can be an exploration of ideas, a dialogue with cultures and traditions both past and present, and can involve the expression, communication and reception of spiritual values.

The Department of Visual Arts, through its unique orientation to creative and scholarly contributions, is dedicated to the belief that “The Glory of God is Intelligence.”

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO****Art Department**

The Art Major (B.A.) Program in the College of Arts and Sciences in the University of Hawaii at Hilo was inaugurated in January 1986. The B.A. Program in Art is based upon the creative, experimental, and developmental aspects of art. The program provides students with an understanding of the history of art, the role of art as an expression of our cultural heritage, and of the practice of art in the studio environment with an emphasis on drawing, printmaking, and painting. The program offers opportunities for students, the university, and the community to experience attitudes and forms of visual art in regional, national, and international contexts.

## **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA**

### **College of Visual and Performing Arts**

The college mission is to provide a broad and thorough education dedicated to: (1) developing professional excellence in those who are interested in a career in the arts; (2) fostering a high level of aesthetic understanding in those preparing to teach; and (3) enriching the life and overall cultural environment of the community.

(This statement is periodically reviewed and modified in keeping with the on-going search for excellence by the college and the university.)

## **HOWARD UNIVERSITY**

The Department of Art at Howard University is committed to defining and shaping an evolving, creative language system of visual art, multimedia and interactive design. This visual language system, its grammar and syntax, calls for a synergy of image, text, sound and movement. Through effective visual information design, the Art Department's strengths lie in the faculty's ability to interpret and communicate the quality and quantity of thought across disciplines and to the general public. We view the College of Arts and Sciences as a microcosm of the African American and global community, defined by its intellectual and core values exposed in leadership, research, critical analysis and service.

The challenge for The Department of Art is to create a program of study that is anchored in traditional art media and flexible enough to keep pace with the tempo of change and embrace new media and technologies. In addition, our students' experiences in the General Education curriculum, backed by the University Core values will position them as visual design research leaders, able to serve their local and global communities.

## **CARTHAGE COLLEGE, WI**

### **Art/Graphic Design Department**

The art program serves three purposes: (1) To acquaint students with fundamental concepts of design, materials and tools of the fine arts and crafts; (2) to allow students to develop skills in controlling media and to work creatively according to their individual abilities; (3) to give students a general background in artistic traditions that will inform them of the creative products of this and other ages.

The program serves four types of students: (1) non-majors wishing to expand their knowledge through contact with art media and art theory in studio and/or lecture; (2) art majors wishing to prepare for graduate study in studio areas and/or for careers as professional artists; (3) art majors wishing to prepare for graduate study in art history; (4) major in graphic design.

## **COLLEGE OF ARTS AND MEDIA DESIGN**

### **Graphic Design Program**

The Graphic Design Program is a pre-professional career preparation program that helps students excel in:

- Developing unique, innovative, and effective solutions to design problems.
- Clearly communicating concepts and solutions.
- Understanding philosophies, theories, and terminology of design.
- Rendering, executing, and producing design.
- Presenting concepts and solutions orally and in writing.
- Developing high standards of professional practice.

## **KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **Department of Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design**

The Department of Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design's mission is to offer instructional, research, and extension programs of the highest quality for undergraduate and graduate students in apparel, textiles, interior design and housing which:

- Teach through innovative pedagogy and experiential learning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and ethical practice skills, as well as the technical knowledge required for advancement in their chosen professions.
- Create new knowledge, products, and processes to advance the human condition relative to apparel, other textile products, interior design and housing.
- Facilitate broad public access to knowledge, and build strong bridges with business and industry in apparel, textiles, interior design, and housing.
- Instill a life-long commitment to learning and public service.

## **FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **Department of Art**

The Master of Fine Arts is considered to be a terminal academic degree for studio artists. The curriculum offers the student the discipline, training and artistic understanding required for life as a practicing artist. It is designed to develop the student's capabilities for creative thinking and a sense of open inquiry, together with a thorough awareness of the multiplicity of new and traditional principles. Such capabilities may further enable an artist to make a valuable contribution as a teacher or arts administrator, should those vocations be future goals. Graduate students are chosen on the basis of artistic accomplishment and potential, evidence of conscientious work habits and sense of commitment.

**MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY AT FLINT**

**Art Department Assessment Plan, May 2001**  
**Bachelor of Science in Art Education**

The Art Department seeks to offer a curriculum emphasizing analytical processes and competency in art techniques such that the art student becomes, to some extent, a viewer, creator, communicator, theorist, and historian. This curriculum prepares students with knowledge necessary for activity as creators of art, and as artists in related fields, such as art education, exhibition coordinating/curating and criticism.

**LINFIELD COLLEGE**

**Art Department**

The faculty members of the Department of Art seek to provide technical, historical, and philosophical instruction in the visual arts. Linfield students may elect to major in studio art, or to minor in studio art or art history. In addition, art history courses and lower-division studio courses will introduce various aspects of the visual arts to students seeking to fulfill the requirements of the Linfield Curriculum. We are committed to instilling visual and conceptual literacy, and to providing the technical and intellectual skills necessary as a foundation for a wide variety of careers in the fine and applied arts. A major goal of the faculty, as practicing artists and scholars, is to impart an understanding of the life-long vitality of artistic development and practice.



## 2b. Checklist for Reviewing a Mission Statement

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Prepared: \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this checklist is to help you determine if the mission statement is effective and clearly defines the mission of the department/program.

- Is your mission statement brief and memorable?
- Is it distinctive?
- Does it clearly state the purpose of the program?
- Does it indicate the primary functions or activities of the program?
- Does it indicate who the stakeholders are? Does it include language about expected competencies of graduates?
- Does it clearly support the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the Institute and the mission of the school?
- Does it address standards of accrediting agencies?
- Is it realistic and achievable considering existing realities?



# 2c. Pratt Institute Mission & Draft Vision Statements

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Pratt Institute is to educate artists and creative professionals to be responsible contributors to society. Pratt seeks to instill in all graduates aesthetic judgment, professional knowledge, collaborative skills and technical expertise. With a firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences, a Pratt education blends theory with creative application in preparing graduates to become leaders in their professions. Pratt enrolls a diverse group of highly talented and dedicated students, challenging them to achieve their full potential.

## **VISION STATEMENT (2005 – 2010)**

Pratt Institute is an educational, intellectual, and artistic community of outstanding reputation. It supports accomplishments and builds collaborative relationships among students, faculty, administrators, and alumni. Its learning environment is sustained by published policies, transparent procedures and clear communication. Pratt's programs are responsive to new concepts and technologies, fostering creative and critical thinking for leadership in professions and society.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (2005 – 2010)**

- **Community**  
*Objective:* To strengthen Pratt as an educational, intellectual, and artistic community
- **Reputation**  
*Objective:* To sustain and enhance internal and external reputation
- **Collaborative Relationships**  
*Objective:* To foster and develop collaborative relationships among individuals and constituencies

- **Organizational Effectiveness**  
*Objective:* To improve organizational effectiveness
- **Programs**  
*Objective:* To ensure educational vitality and quality
- **Leadership**  
*Objective:* To provide an environment for leadership that encourages innovation, problem-solving, and consensus building.

# 3.

## Defining Goals & Outcomes

Having developed a mission statement, the next step in the assessment process is the definition of what you expect students to achieve as a result of your program. A clear statement about program outcomes with regard to student learning, development, and achievement serves as the foundation for the entire assessment effort – shaping the kinds of questions you will ask, the assessment methods you will employ, and determining how useful your assessment results are for making programmatic changes. Begin with defining what you want students who complete your program to know, understand, and be able to do when they graduate. When you have identified your program’s goals and outcomes objectives, you can begin to evaluate how well these goals and objectives are being met.

### **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, LEARNING OUTCOMES—WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?**

The distinction between “goals,” “objectives,” and “learning outcomes” is not always sharply defined. **Goals** typically refer to overarching statements about the aims and purposes of the academic departments or programs. They state in broad terms what the program wants to accomplish or become over the next several years. Program goals focus on general outcomes for graduates (what you want students to learn) as well as discipline-specific outcomes relevant to the department or program itself. **Outcomes objectives** are statements about observable, measurable evidence of what students should be able to think, know, value, or achieve after they have completed a given educational program. **Student learning outcomes** are specific types of outcomes objectives.

To develop your program assessment plans, you need to specify outcomes objectives: what your students should be able to do or know or believe or achieve that would demonstrate what they have learned. In order to develop them, concentrate on determining what the outcomes should be and what evidence will demonstrate them. However, since some very important program aims may not be easily measurable, you may want to specify overarching, long-term goals first.

You have the option of presenting outcomes objectives in either of two formats in your assessment plans:

- A. You can articulate broad goals, each of which can be followed by two or more specific outcomes objectives: e.g.,

Goal 1: Students will be able to communicate effectively.

Outcomes objectives:

- 1.1) Students will be able to write an essay clearly, using proper grammar, syntax, and punctuation.
- 1.2) Students will be able to give an effective oral presentation.

Goal 2:

Outcomes objectives:

- 2.1)
- 2.2)
- etc.

- B. Alternatively, you can present a list of specific outcomes objectives:

- 1) Students will be able to write an essay clearly, using proper grammar, syntax, and punctuation.
- 2) Students will be able to give an effective oral presentation.
- etc.

## GETTING STARTED

The process for writing goals and outcomes objectives should start with the vision statement for the program. Think about what that program would look like and how it should operate (refer to your mission) to reach that vision. This may include improving student learning, maximizing employment rates, and minimizing time to degree. Generate a list of potential “goals” and then prioritize them. Write these more formally as goal statements.

Outlined below are some activities that can help you articulate and shape goal and learning outcomes statements.

- Review the mission statement for the program.
- Collect and review instructional materials. Use any of the following:
  - syllabi and course outlines
  - course assignments and tests
  - textbooks (especially the tables of contents, introductions, and summaries)

- Collect and review documents that describe your department and its programs:
  - brochures and catalogue descriptions
  - accreditation reports
  - curriculum committee reports
  - program reviews
- Review examples of goals of similar programs in other schools.
- Use the 25 percent problem to refine or reduce a set of goal statements. Imagine that you want to reduce program or course material by 25 percent. What goals would you keep and which would you discard?
- Administer a goals inventory or conduct an interview study. Involve a variety of groups (or “stakeholders”) when possible.
- Review professional (NASAD, NAAB, RATE, etc.) and regional (MSCHE) accreditation standards
- Describe an “ideal” student at various phases in your program, focusing on the abilities, knowledge, values and attitudes that you feel that this student has either acquired or have been supported as a result of your program. Then ask:
  - Knowledge: What does the student know?
  - Performance / skills: What can the student do?
  - Beliefs and values: What does the student care about?
- Review professional (NASAD, NAAB, RATE, etc.) and regional (MSCHE) accreditation standards
- List the skills and achievements expected of graduates of the program (e.g. employment, continuation to higher levels of education, life-long education plans).
- Describe the program alumni in terms of their achievements such as career accomplishments, lifestyles, and community involvement.

### **DEVELOPING PROGRAM GOALS (OPTIONAL)**

#### **Guidelines for Writing Effective Program Goals**

Program goals should:

- reflect the strengths, unique characteristics, and values of the program;
- focus on the goals that are most significant and appropriate for your program;
- be realistic and attainable; are limited in number -- no more than five;
- address student learning, as well as other student outcomes, such as satisfaction with experiences at Pratt, retention and graduation, and alumni/ae accomplish-

- ments.
- clearly support the mission of the department or program, so that, if all goals are accomplished the vision of the program will be realized;
- support the missions and goals of the school and of the Institute;
- be developed with extensive participation by faculty and are validated by departmental colleagues;
- be written clearly, using action verbs and in a form that is appropriate for your program;
- describe outcomes or results rather than learning processes;
- be clear to people outside the discipline;
- Each learning goal should describe knowledge, a skill, and/or an attitude, value, or disposition that you want your students to be able to demonstrate AFTER they complete your program.

### **GENERAL FORMAT OF A GOAL STATEMENT**

The general format of a goal statement can be as follows:

“to (action verb) (object) (modifiers)”

### **EXAMPLES OF PROGRAM GOALS**

#### **Poor:**

**To teach students design principles.**

This is an inadequate goal statement since the focus is on the teaching rather than on the expected behavior of graduates of the program.

#### **Better:**

**To adequately prepare students.**

This is better than the first example. Although this statement does not specifically explain the expectations of graduates, the focus is on student learning and not the teaching activity.

#### **Best:**

**To adequately prepare students for graduate school.**

**To have students graduate from the program with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in Hypothetical field.**

**To prepare students to be contributing citizens.**

**Students will obtain mastery of higher-order objectives (i.e. problem solving skills) in the discipline.**

**Students will develop skills useful to functioning as a professional in their field of study.**

**Students should develop a critical understanding of a significant portion of**

**the field of critical studies.**

**Students will develop an understanding of important concepts and methods in the library sciences.**

These are good examples of program goal statements that include a brief description of the expected actions of students of the program.

## **DEVELOPING OUTCOMES OBJECTIVES (REQUIRED FOR ASSESSMENT PLANS)**

### **Guidelines for formulating outcomes objectives**

- Outcomes objectives should state the key aims of the program. They should include knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and achievements (education and career accomplishments, lifestyles, citizenship activities, aesthetic and intellectual involvements) expected of students in the program. Peter Ewell’s classification of learning objectives, found in Appendix.....) can be used as an aid to deciding what types of objectives to choose.
- Outcomes objectives should be derived from the goal statements (if goals have been defined) and clearly aligned with the program mission, which in turn, should be aligned with the school and Institute mission statements and the institute-wide strategic goals.
- Outcomes objectives should focus on what students are expected to know at the end of the program as a result of what they are exposed to, not what the faculty teach or what the program offers.
  - Example of a statement focusing on learning process:  
**Introduces computer graphics applications.**  
 NOTE: The wording of this statement focuses attention on the teaching activity (which in this case is to introduce students to computer graphics applications) and not on the intended outcome of the instruction. This is *not* a student learning outcome.
  - Example of a statement focusing on learning result or outcome:  
**Demonstrates proficiency in XXX computer graphics applications.**
- Outcomes objectives should:
  - use action verbs such as “comprehend,” “describe,” “construct,” “analyze,” “apply,” and “evaluate” which specify observable behavior (Appendix xxxx presents lists of verbs that can be used for various dimensions and levels of learning). E.g.:

**Too general:**

**Our objective is to enhance students' intellectual skills.**

**More specific:**

**Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to solve complex design problems in one or more areas of emphasis.**

- be measurable and specify one or more appropriate methods for measurement;
- be attainable given the resources of the department/program.

## EXAMPLES OF LEARNING OUTCOME STATEMENTS

### Example 1:

**Poor:**

**Students completing the undergraduate program in Hypothetical Design will have knowledge of Design principles.**

This is a weak statement because it does not specify which design concepts graduates of the program should know. Also, it does not define what is meant by “have knowledge.” Are they supposed to be able to simply define the principles, or be able to apply the principles, etc.

**Better:**

**Graduates will be competent in the principles of hypothetical design, formulating requirements and constraints, following an open-ended decision process involving tradeoffs, and completing a design addressing a field-related need.**

This statement is better because it lists the specific areas in hypothetical design that a student must be competent in. However, it is still vague, as the level of competency is not stated. Are they expected to understand these concepts or apply them, etc.

**Best:**

**Graduates will be able to apply and demonstrate the principles of hypothetical design, formulating requirements and constraints, following an open-ended decision process involving tradeoffs, completing a design addressing a field-related need.**

This is a much better learning outcome statement for two reasons. First, the specific requirements are listed and second, the level of competency is also stated. A student must be able to apply and to demonstrate the listed design principles.

**Example 2:****Poor:**

**MFA students of Art History will be successful in their research.**

This statement is very vague and provides no indication of what “successful” means. It does not specify what type or quality of research skills is expected from the student.

**Better:**

**MFA students of Art History will be successful in conducting high-quality research.**

Although the quality of research expected from the doctoral students is identified, there is no indication of specific research capabilities that a student should possess. Therefore, even though it provides more detail than the previous statement, it is still lacking.

**Best:**

**MFA graduates of Art History are able to conduct high-quality, as evidenced by their demonstrated results on the masters thesis.**

What is expected of a masters student in this program are clearly defined and stated making this an effective learning outcome statement. The quality of research expected as well as the specific research requirements are articulated in the outcome statement.



# 3a. “A Classification of Outcomes Dimensions”

*(Source: Peter Ewell, The Self-Regarding Institution: Information for Excellence, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, Boulder, CO, 1984)*

In constructing learning objectives for students, it is helpful to think of the variety of dimensions in which growth or change in students might be desired. The following classification system is helpful in thinking through these various dimensions. It should be considered as a menu; departments may choose to formulate objectives relative to as many or few of these dimensions as they think important.

**Knowledge Outcomes** - the purely cognitive aspect of educational outcomes

*General knowledge (breadth of knowledge)* - familiarity with and analysis and comprehension of facts and principles inherent in broad areas of study.

It may include:

- recall and comprehension of facts in a broad area of study
- recall and comprehension of theories and terminology in a broad area of study
- recall and comprehension of investigative principles and methods in a broad area of study
- recall and comprehension of the history and development of a broad area of study
- ability to relate/integrate approaches and concepts drawn from more than one broad area of study

*Knowledge of specific fields (depth of knowledge)* - requires mastery of the accepted body of facts, theories, language, and techniques of a particular field of study.

It may include:

- recall and comprehension of facts in a particular discipline or specialized field

- recall and comprehension of theories and terminology in a particular discipline or specialized field
- recall and comprehension of investigative principles and methods in a particular discipline or specialized field
- recall and comprehension of the history and development of a particular discipline or specialized field
- ability to effectively manipulate appropriate concepts, theories, and investigative methods to create new knowledge in a particular discipline or specialized field

**Skills Outcomes** - the relative abilities of students to perform explicit tasks

*General competence (social functioning) skills* -- encompass the abilities to use knowledge, organize information, define problems, and discover and implement solutions to problems.

It may include:

- verbal skills, including reading, reading comprehension, writing, and oral communication
- quantitative skills, including mathematics, statistics, and computing
- leadership/organizational/human-relations skills
- analytical skills, including skills of problem definition, problem solving, and critical thinking
- invention/innovation/creative-thinking skills
- aesthetic-appreciation/creative-expression skills
- physical/motor skills

*Professional/occupational skills* -- consist of the particular, specialized skills needed for effective performance in an identified profession or occupation

**Attitude/Value Outcomes** - the affective impacts of higher education

*Personal goals and aspirations* -- are defined in terms of levels, patterns, and directions of personal interests, desires, drives, and ambitions.

It may include:

- general goals and aspirations (lifestyle, social mobility, family goals, personal goals)
- occupational and career goals
- educational goals
- motivation and drive levels for each of the above

*General attitudes, values, and satisfactions* -- in terms of their content, extent, and internal consistency.

It may include:

- beliefs (including religious beliefs), belief systems, value commitments, and philosophies of life
- mores, customs, and standards of conduct
- patterns of feelings and emotions, including particular satisfactions and dissatisfactions with individuals, groups, institutions, and social situations

*Attitudes toward self* -- development of identity.

It may include:

- perception of self, general self-concept, self-discovery
- self-reliance, self-confidence, including adventurousness and initiative, autonomy, and independence
- satisfaction with self, psychological well-being
- personality/personal coping characteristics, including flexibility and adaptability, dogmatism/authoritarianism, tolerance and persistence, and so forth

*Attitudes toward others* -- related to and part of individual identity.

It may include:

- specific perceptions of other individuals/groups in a society
- tolerance for cultural and intellectual diversity, including a willingness to accept different points of view
- general human understanding, including empathy, sensitivity, and cooperation

**Relationships with Society and with Particular Constituencies** - an often longer-term measure of the effects of higher education on students

*Relationships with educational institutions*

- individual educational development goals
- patterns of enrollment, placement, and participation
- patterns of retention, attrition, and program completion
- patterns of program/institutional change or transfer
- levels of achievement in subsequent educational experiences
- quality of student effort
- assessed relevance and contribution of past education to subsequent educational experiences

*Relationships with employers*

- individual employment/career choice goals, including change, stability, and intensity of goals
- first job obtained after education, including the relevance of this job to the

- education received
- long-term employment history
- income/earnings history
- promotion and job performance
- job satisfaction

*Relationships with professions/professional associations*

- individual professional development goals, including change, stability, and intensity of goals
- patterns of professional certification/recognition/award
- patterns of subsequent professional development activities
- assessed contributions of past education to professional success
- professional satisfaction

*Relationships with family/community/society*

- family roles, relationships, and child-rearing practices
- patterns of social affiliation, group membership, and participation
- patterns of voluntary contribution, including contributions of time, money, or other support
- patterns of citizenship activities/political participation

# 3b.

## Bloom's Taxonomy of Six Cognitive Levels

### **LEVEL 1: KNOWLEDGE**

A starting point that includes both the acquisition of information and the ability to recall information when needed.

- A. Classifying
- B. Distinguishing opinion from fact
- C. Giving definitions and examples
- D. Outlining and summarizing

### **LEVEL 2: COMPREHENSION**

The basic level of understanding. It involves the ability to know what is being communicated in order to make use of the information.

- A. Making comparisons
- B. Identifying structure
- C. Ordering steps in a process
- D. Reading charts and graphs
- E. Recognizing meaning
- F. Identifying main ideas
- G. Identifying relationships

### **LEVEL 3: APPLICATION**

The ability to use a learned skill in a new situation.

- A. Estimating
- B. Anticipating probabilities
- C. Making inferences
- D. Applying math

**LEVEL 4: ANALYSIS**

The ability to break down information into its integral parts and to identify the relationship of each part of the total organization.

- A. Judging completeness
- B. Recognizing relevance & irrelevance
- C. Identifying story elements
- D. Judging sentence sequence
- E. Recognizing fallacies

**LEVEL 5: SYNTHESIS**

The ability to combine existing elements in order to create something original.

- A. Communicating ideas
- B. Planning projects
- C. Forming hypotheses
- D. Drawing conclusions

**LEVEL 6: EVALUATION**

The ability to make a judgment about the value of something by using a standard.

- A. Making generalizations
- B. Developing criteria
- C. Judging accuracy
- D. Making decisions
- E. Identifying values
- F. Identifying the mood of a story

### VERBS THAT YOU MIGHT USE TO SPECIFY DIFFERENT SORTS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>For Knowledge</b>				
arrange	order	define	recognize	duplicate
label	recall	list	repeat	memorize
name	state	relate	reproduce	**

<b>For Comprehension</b>				
classify	locate	describe	recognize	discuss
report	explain	restate	express	review
identify	select	indicate	translate	**

<b>For Application</b>				
apply	operate	choose	practice	demonstrate
schedule	dramatize	sketch	employ	solve
illustrate	use	interpret	write	**

<b>For Analysis</b>				
analyze	differentiate	appraise	discriminate	calculate
distinguish	categories	examine	compare	experiment
contrast	question	criticize	test	**

<b>For Synthesis</b>				
arrange	formulate	assemble	manage	collect
organize	compose	plan	construct	prepare
create	propose	design	write	**

<b>For Evaluation</b>				
appraise	judge	argue	predict	assess
rate	attach	score	choose	select
compare	support	estimate	evaluate	**



# 3c. Sample Goals & Outcomes Objectives Statements

## **ART AND DESIGN**

### **SKIDMORE COLLEGE**

#### **Studio Arts Major Goals Statement**

**Knowledge:** The student who successfully completes the studio art major at Skidmore College will understand and experience the practice of art and will understand the role of art as a force in human knowledge. The student will know:

1. The visual language of art and design.
2. Fundamental studio practice; techniques, procedures, and theory shared across studio disciplines.
3. Major achievements in the history of art, Western and non-Western.
4. Varied approaches to the role of art in human experience.

**Skills and Reasoning Processes:** The student who successfully completes the studio art major at Skidmore College will understand the integration of technical proficiency and critical thinking. The student will be able to competently:

1. Manipulate art, craft, and design media, utilizing traditional and contemporary technologies.
2. Organize, analyze, and interpret visual phenomena using problem solving skills.
3. Communicate clearly about art in oral and written form.
4. Evaluate one's own artmaking and that of one's peers through critical reasoning about the use of materials, formal elements, and content.
5. Create a body of work which joins ideas and process-oriented learning.

**Application:** The studio art major who graduates from Skidmore College will have acquired knowledge, skills and reasoning abilities which will enable him/her to apply this experience in a variety of ways. The student will be able to:

1. Synthesize knowledge from many fields into studio practice.
2. Engage in substantive self-directed artistic activity.
3. Direct these learned abilities to thoughtful practice in any arena.
4. Contribute to the cultural, intellectual, and educational life of the community.

*[http://www.skidmore.edu/administration/assessment/H\\_sample\\_learning\\_outcomes\\_studio\\_arts.htm](http://www.skidmore.edu/administration/assessment/H_sample_learning_outcomes_studio_arts.htm)*

### **NEW YORK UNIVERSITY Tisch School of the Arts**

The mission of the undergraduate film and television department is to educate our students in the art, craft, and technology of film, television video, animation and sound production. Our program offers intensive hands-on production experience coupled with a broad exposure to the liberal arts. We nurture individual talent and skills, and encourage students to become creative, and thoughtful practitioners in the world of media.

#### **Goals and Objectives:**

1. To develop individual talent and skills within a collaborative working environment.
2. To provide the highest standard of education and training with professionally active faculty and a broad spectrum of visiting professionals.
3. To provide an integrated liberal arts education program.
4. To encourage artistic, social and cultural diversity.
5. To develop an international perspective through student exchange and study abroad programs.
6. To support a strong internship program offering a wide range of options for pre-professional experience.
7. To provide venues for the presentation and promotion of student work and to advise and assist students regarding national and international festivals and opportunities.
8. To provide access to the vibrant and creative community of Tisch School of the Arts and the unparalleled cultural diversity of New York City.

*[http://filmtv.tisch.nyu.edu/object/UGFTV\\_mission.html](http://filmtv.tisch.nyu.edu/object/UGFTV_mission.html)*

## **CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY LOS ANGELES**

### **The Department of Art**

The mission of the Department of Art is to serve the needs of an urban and diverse university community by providing courses in a liberal arts foundation and in undergraduate and graduate programs in art that are designed to prepare students for careers in various professional fields or for further study in visual art and as lifelong producers or consumers of art.

#### **Goals and Objectives:**

The Department of Art is committed to academic excellence in both undergraduate and graduate programs and to strong liberal arts and professional preparation. The following goals support our mission.

The Department of Art will:

- **Goal 1** Foster habits of disciplined inquiry and critical thinking and the capacity to use effectively the rapidly expanding base of information in the visual arts
- **Goal 2** Provide programs that prepare students to succeed in advanced study and to enhance their careers
- **Goal 3** Encourage and support scholarship, research, and creative endeavors in the University community
- **Goal 4** Provide preparation that enhances lifelong learning
- **Goal 5** Provide a program that develops greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity in a global society
- **Goal 6** Foster close interaction between faculty and students while preparing students in the mastery of a body of knowledge about visual art
- **Goal 7** Present the heritage and values of art in combination with new technologies to enhance and enrich the learning process, thus providing innovative, as well as traditional, educational experiences
- **Goal 8** Provide curricular and cocurricular experiences—such as gallery exhibitions, special lectures and workshops—and student organizations that contribute to personal enrichment

*<http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/art/mission.htm>*

## **UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA**

### **Department of Interior Design**

The Department of Interior Design promotes, develops, and advances the interior design discipline through excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Primary goals for the Department of Interior Design are the following:

- Promote and develop the discipline through producing graduates whose professional, creative, and research activities contribute to the theory, knowledge, and practice of interior design.
- Develop the discipline by preparing both graduate and undergraduate students to be prominent interior design professionals who are competent, knowledgeable and leaders in the field.
- Advance the discipline through performing scholarly activity and producing knowledge aimed at protecting the health, safety, and welfare of people and the environment worldwide.
- Promote the discipline through providing service to the profession, the State of Florida, and the national and international community.

*<http://web.dcp.ufl.edu/interior/departmentprofile/mission.php>*

## **LINFIELD COLLEGE**

### **Department of Art**

#### **Mission Statement**

The faculty members of the Department of Art seek to provide technical, historical, and philosophical instruction in the visual arts. Linfield students may elect to major in studio art, or to minor in studio art or art history. In addition, art history courses and lower-division studio courses will introduce various aspects of the visual arts to students seeking to fulfill the requirements of the Linfield Curriculum. We are committed to instilling visual and conceptual literacy, and to providing the technical and intellectual skills necessary as a foundation for a wide variety of careers in the fine and applied arts. A major goal of the faculty, as practicing artists and scholars, is to impart an understanding of the life-long vitality of artistic development and practice.

#### **Goals for the Major/Minor**

Students who successfully complete a major or a minor in studio art will:

- Have a working understanding of the fundamentals of two- and three-dimensional design and basic drawing and the related nomenclature common throughout the field, along with the basic technical skills necessary to carry out projects in these areas;
- Be competent in at least one medium beyond basic design and drawing;

- Be able to present the conceptual basis of their work in both oral and written form, and to critique the work of others;
- Be familiar with major trends in the development of Western art, and with various methodological approaches to the study of art history;
- Be able to research topics in art and art history, using both print and electronic resources.

In addition to the above, students who successfully complete a major in studio art will:

- Be familiar with the significant developments and key figures of 20th-century art;
- Demonstrate an advanced level of competence in at least one medium beyond basic design or drawing, or acquire competence in a second medium;
- Produce a coherent, cohesive body of work and an artist's statement, presented in an appropriately professional manner;
- Have a sufficient understanding of the discipline to allow them to prepare for graduate studies or entry-level professional opportunities.

Students who successfully complete a minor in art history will:

- Be able to describe and analyze works of art and architecture, using appropriate technical vocabulary;
- Be familiar with major trends in the development of Western art, and with various methodological approaches to the study of art history;
- Be able to research topics in art and art history, using both print and electronic resources.
- Be able to demonstrate a more detailed understanding of the artistic developments and major monuments of at least two historical periods of art history (e.g., Renaissance, modern, etc.) and at least one specialized topic (e.g. Islamic art, women artists, etc.).

[http://www.linfield.edu/academic\\_affairs/pdf/assess.pdf](http://www.linfield.edu/academic_affairs/pdf/assess.pdf)

## UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO

### Mission Statement

The Art Major (B.A.) Program in the College of Arts and Sciences in the University of Hawaii at Hilo was inaugurated in January 1986.

The B.A. Program in Art is based upon the creative, experimental, and developmental aspects of art. The program provides students with an understanding of the history of art, the role of art as an expression of our cultural heritage, and of the practice of art in the studio environment with an the university, and the community to experience attitudes and forms of visual art in regional, national, and international contexts.

The program provides four main emphases for majors and for non-majors:

- **Art as a profession or career.** In this category, students are prepared for graduate study (M.A. and M.F.A.) following graduation from the program at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. The program supports the scholarship and practice of visual arts. The Art Program implements an educational philosophy based upon an integration of three primary factors. These are 1) the comprehension of aesthetic theory and art history and 2) learned applications of materials and techniques in 3) the development of archetypally unique and creative individual work in arts. The body of work accomplished during the period of study in the program functions as a portfolio for each student.

The understanding of aesthetic theory, a cognizance of contemporary movements, perspectives of the history of art, and a working relationship of the varied aspects of art forms form a foundation for the program. These relationships in the practice of studio art provide a foundation for each student in the visual arts.

The emphases for studio majors in the program are drawing, printmaking, and painting. Students can pursue study in design, video, photography, ceramics, and three-dimensional forms through individually organized curricula using available resources.

- **Art for purposes of a vocation.** Students are prepared in the program to function as professionals in the graphic design, illustration, applied arts, and teaching. The study of studio media, methods, and applications, art history, and art theory form the basis for an understanding of the creative process and addresses imagination, aesthetic concepts, creative applications, and the ability to consider with equal awareness, minute details and larger perspectives.
- **The study of Art as an avocation.** For some students the study of art is used to further individual avocational interests. The program provides a sound fundamental basis from which these interests may be developed. The program promotes the concept of “lifelong learning” in the university environment.
- **Art as a basis for a liberal arts education.** The study of the visual arts is an important component of a liberal arts education. The study of art helps to develop abilities for skillful creative applications, the growth of imagination, and an insight into human cultural relationships.

### **Program Goals**

The Art Department provides an environment supporting scholarship and practice in the visual arts. Students develop a perspective of the history of art in Eastern and Western contexts, an understanding of art movements in the contemporary mainstream, comprehension of aesthetic theory, and an understanding of the practice of art forms.

Listed individually the goals of the program support students in the following areas:

1. The development of working relationships with materials, techniques, procedures, and training in creative exploration of individual expression and ideas.
2. The development of creative thinking and critical analysis in the area of the visual arts. Critical thinking skills and the ability to express this process are significant aspects of studio practice.
3. The understanding of the history of world cultures and an appreciation for developments in the contemporary mainstream. Comprehension of the role of art as an expression of cultural heritage.
4. The experience and exposure to mainstream visual arts through national and international exhibitions to establish a broader base of comprehension for contemporary movements in art.
5. Preparation for graduate studies in studio art. The program areas in the Art Department which can support graduate school candidates are painting, printmaking, and drawing.
6. The development of a foundation for professional occupations in the areas of graphic design, illustration, and teaching.
7. The development of organizational and planning skills and experiences required in the profession of art.
8. Providing a cornerstone for liberal arts education in the University environment.

<http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~art/>

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**  
**School of Art and Design**  
**College of Fine and Applied Arts**

**Section ii: learning objectives (knowledge, skills and attitudes)**

**Outcome 1 a)** B.F.A. and Master's students will be prepared for careers as professional teachers, graphic and industrial designers, museum professionals, and practicing artists. **b)** Ed.D. and Ph.D. students will be prepared for careers as teachers, museum professionals, and researchers in specialized fields.

**Outcome 2** All students will be prepared to critically respond to a broad range of art and design studies and also to write in formats appropriate to their levels and majors. Samples of artwork and papers from studio and design majors, and papers from Art History and Art Education, will be collected and evaluated.

[http://www.oir.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/art\\_design.html](http://www.oir.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/art_design.html)

**SUNY FREDONIA****Department or Program: Art****Goals**

1. To acquire the historical background and perspective for contemporary expression through courses in basic art history
2. To acquire an effective knowledge of visual vocabulary through successful completion of the foundation curriculum
3. To acquire safe technical skills in the field
4. To successfully complete a selected area of concentration
5. Develop analytic thinking and writing skills
6. Achieve effective preparation of artwork for public presentation

*<http://www.fredonia.edu/campusassessment/WebDocs/C/C1.htm>*

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SACRAMENTO****Department of Visual Art****Goals:**

Majors and related majors are to gain an understanding of introductory level issues pertaining to visual art. Issues to be covered include:

1. A broad spectrum of the history of art including its role in western and non-western society. Students should gain a working knowledge of vocabulary used to describe movements and periods. An ability to discuss art works and to place them in a chronology is expected.
2. Drawing is considered a universal element in working toward a career in the arts. Students are expected to: be able to discern and/or discuss: value, proportion, mass, texture, perspective, and organization of form within traditional rectangular formats.
3. Organizational elements of two and three dimensional art work are to be confidently and accurately discussed by students entering upper division course work.
4. Personal strengths and weaknesses should not interfere with an ability to communicate verbally (or in writing) about works of art.
5. From foundation level course in art history students should be able to place major monuments of art within cultures and within periods.
6. In establishing skills necessary to move forward in the major, students are expected to focus on good working habits and self discipline. Risk taking, and invention of idiosyncratic approaches to art making is not expected of introductory level students.
7. Critical thinking: Students are expected to participate in and respect the process of critiquing works of art.

*<http://www.csus.edu/acaf/ART.htm>*

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Department: History and Art History/CAS**

**Program: Art (History), B.A.**

1. Competency in visual analysis and its vocabulary, with different artistic media and with basic methodological concepts (e.g. style, iconography, social history, archaeology).
2. Familiarity with many major periods, styles, and monuments of Western art and some exposure to non-Western art.
3. Research skills: competency in electronic database searching and the preparation of bibliographies; ability to obtain research material on and off-site.
4. Familiarity with the art produced in a particular context (geographic area or time period), as well as with the approaches appropriate to that context.
5. Familiarity with museums, the local resources, and the issues regarding collection and display of objects.
6. Competency in the completion of a major research paper and in an oral presentation followed by discussion.

### UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS

#### Student Learning Objectives/Expected Outcomes

<p><b>Learning Objective 1.</b> <i>To understand some of the historical traditions in the visual arts and be able to meaningfully relate works of art within those traditions.</i></p>	<p><b>Expected Outcome 1.</b> <i>To develop a visual memory capable of identifying and knowing works of art, acquiring a knowledge of basic historic data, learn and appropriately use terminology of the field, and comprehend historic continuities.</i></p>
<p><b>Learning Objective 2.</b> <i>To acquire and use methods of analysis and interpretation of works of art.</i></p>	<p><b>Expected Outcome 2.</b> <i>To demonstrate the ability to use methods of analysis and interpretation through clearly written essays and research papers and in verbal discussion.</i></p>
<p><b>Learning Objective 3.</b> <i>To learn how to evaluate works of art.</i></p>	<p><b>Expected Outcome 3.</b> <i>To develop a critical approach to levels of performance in the visual arts based upon a broad basis of comparison and substantiated by articulate standards of judgment.</i></p>

## **UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER**

### **Fine Arts**

#### **Degrees - BA, BFA, MA, MFA**

The Department of Fine Arts offers the bachelor of arts in art history and in studio art, and the bachelor of fine arts in studio arts.

The undergraduate degree in art history emphasizes knowledge and awareness of:

- the major artistic monuments of the world in a historical context;
- varied methodologies used to study art historically; and
- artistic media and techniques.

In addition, students completing the degree in art history are expected to acquire the ability and skills to:

- relate individual monuments to their historical and cultural context by identifying technique, style, and subject matter;
- interpret historical and critical information about works of art, artists, and related issues; and
- organize and communicate concepts and data pertaining to the history of art effectively in written and oral form.

The undergraduate degree in studio art emphasizes knowledge and awareness of:

- the significance of the major monuments in art history, with an emphasis on contemporary art;
- at least one discipline of studio art;
- related critical issues in studio practice; and
- a wide range of stylistic approaches.

In addition, students completing a degree in studio art are expected to acquire the ability and skills to:

- analyze their own works of art in terms of form and content;
- interpret the work of others;
- execute ideas in one or more artistic media;
- demonstrate artistic ability and technical proficiency in one chosen medium; and
- communicate in verbal and written form the particular conceptual and perceptual attitudes and stances of their own artistic production.

## **CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, BAKERSFIELD**

### **Studio Art Program**

#### **Goals:**

Students graduating in Studio Art will be able to function creatively and effectively in the studio setting.

**Student Outcome #1.** Graduating students will demonstrate the ability to “read” the non-verbal language of art and design, and to express their “reading” in clear written and verbal forms.

**Student Outcome #2.** Graduating students will demonstrate familiarity with and basic competence in a number of art or design media, as well as the safety issues pertaining to those media.

**Student Outcome #3.** Graduating students will have a basic specialization in a selected art medium or related media which form their primary means of artistic expression.

**Student Outcome #4.** Graduating students will possess the ability to express personal responses to visual phenomena, both intellectually and intuitively.

**Student Outcome #5.** Graduating students will possess a familiarity with the major achievements in the history of art, including the works and intentions of leading artists from diverse cultures in the past and the present.

**Student Outcome #6.** Graduating students will possess the ability to understand and evaluate contemporary thinking about the visual arts.

**Student Outcome #7.** Graduating students will possess the ability to make valid assessments of qualitative expression in the visual arts.

#### **Art History Goals:**

Students graduating in Art History will be able to research, understand and discuss meaningfully the nature and achievements of art in other times and other cultures.

**Outcome #1.** Graduating students will possess the ability to “read” the non-verbal language of art and design, and to express their reading in clear written and verbal forms.

**Outcome #2.** Graduating students will possess a basic familiarity with art and design media.

**Outcome #3.** Graduating students will possess familiarity with the major achievements in the history of art, including the works and intentions of leading artists from diverse cultures in the past and the present.

**Outcome #4.** Graduating students will possess a deeper understanding of one or more periods in the history of art.

**Outcome #5.** Graduating students will possess the necessary research tools and information to work effectively at the beginning levels of professional art history.

**Outcome #6.** Graduating students will possess the ability to make valid assessments of qualitative expression in the visual arts.

[http://www.csub.edu/assessmentcenter/mgos/academic/hss/art\\_mgos.htm](http://www.csub.edu/assessmentcenter/mgos/academic/hss/art_mgos.htm)

## **LIBERAL ARTS**

### **GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Department: English/CAS**

**Program: English, B.A.**

NOTE: In recent semesters, somewhere between 30% and 50% of the total enrollments in the courses numbered between English 309 and English 499 have been non-majors.

### **Student Learning Goals**

1. Students will learn to attend critically to what they see and read, to think critically about the information and values that shape their lives.
2. Students will understand and use the critical methods by which texts are received and interpreted; students will understand and learn to use varied theoretical approaches to literary interpretation.
3. Students will develop an appreciation of literature as an aesthetic endeavor and as an expression of the human search for meaning.
4. Students will become aware of a variety of cultural materials, both texts from the past and newer texts, texts that have been made canonical and those too long overlooked.
5. Students will recognize historical continuity and historical change, as revealed in the texts themselves as men and women have created them, and by the ways these texts have been construed by critics and other readers.
6. Students will become aware of the great diversity of literary and other productions that constitute the many cultures of the contemporary world.

7. Students will understand the commonalities and the differences that resonate between and among the literary products of elite, folk, mass, and popular cultures.
8. Students will become skilled writers of analytical papers pertinent to the above goals and of documents pertinent to their concentrations.
9. Students will become sophisticated users of relevant new information technologies, and critical readers of digitally-mediated texts.
10. In addition, each concentration within the major has its own particular student learning goals.

*<http://assessment.gmu.edu/ProgramGoals/CAS/eng-BA/IGoals.shtml>*

## **UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS**

### **English Department**

#### **Instructional Goals and Learning Objectives:**

##### **I. The Undergraduate Program**

##### **A. General goals of the undergraduate program:**

The undergraduate majors in English and Rhetoric aim to develop students'

1. familiarity with literatures written in English and with the outlines of British and American literary tradition;
2. understanding of texts in their cultural and historical contexts;
3. appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of literature and literary production;
4. awareness of critical and interpretive methods;
5. critical reading, thinking, and communication skills.

##### **B. Desired Learning Outcomes:**

1. Declarative Knowledge: The English and Rhetoric majors aim to increase students' familiarity with:
  - a. literary terms, forms, and genres;
  - b. representative authors and cultural characteristics of major literary historical periods;
  - c. critical and interpretive methods;
  - d. principles of composition and bibliographic reference.
2. Intellectual Skills and Abilities: The English and Rhetoric majors aim to improve students' ability

- a. to comprehend texts from a variety of historical periods and cultures and to relate them to each other formally, thematically, culturally, or historically;
  - b. to understand the process by which literature is produced in response to and in reaction against prior literary texts and cultural settings;
  - c. to construct critical and interpretive arguments;
  - d. to reflect self-consciously on the cultural, psychological, and aesthetic bases of literary response;
  - e. to write clear, coherent, and persuasive essays;
  - f. to locate, evaluate, and use responsibly a variety of research materials from both the print and electronic media;
  - g. to create original poetry, prose fiction, or drama;
  - h. to adapt expository writing to different audiences and purposes.
3. Attitudes: The English and Rhetoric majors aim to increase students'
- a. appreciation for the aesthetic pleasures of literature and good writing;
  - b. openness to a variety of cultural or ethnic perspectives;
  - c. awareness of and reflection on personal values and openness to the possibility of self-transformation through reading and creating literature;
  - d. commitment to intellectual honesty and integrity in the use of sources;
  - e. confidence in critical thinking and analytic skills.

# 4. Designing the Assessment Plan

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER...

Clarifying the content and focus of an assessment plan is an essential step in developing your own. By understanding what is included in an assessment plan and looking at what you already have in place, you can begin to focus on how to put together an effective assessment program for your department. In addition, you can decide what to add to existing assessments and become aware of the challenges to assessment design. The sample assessment plans at the end of the chapter illustrate one way you might approach this task.

## WHAT DOES AN ASSESSMENT PLAN INCLUDE?

The end result of your assessment design will be an effective and workable assessment plan. It can be a formal document to distribute both inside and outside the department, or an informal schedule for department use only, depending on the purpose of the assessment activity.

In designing your plan, consider and include the following:

<i>Learning Goals and Objectives</i>	What will the student in the major know, value and be able to do upon graduation?
<i>Assessment Measures</i>	By what measure(s) will you know that students are meeting departmental learning objectives?
<i>Assessment Methods</i>	From whom, and at what points, will you gather data?  How will the information be collected?  When will you conduct the assessment? Who will be responsible for each component? What is the overall timeline for the assessment plan?

<i>Status, Outcomes and Results</i>	What did you find out? How do the data support these findings?
<i>Decisions, Plans and Recommendations</i>	Based on your findings, what do you plan to do now?

### **What is already in place?**

An effective departmental assessment plan uses available information and resources to the greatest degree possible. Before designing additional assessment components it's important to inventory what assessment-related information/processes are already in place that you can draw upon.

### **Inventory of Current Assessment Practices**

Instructors and departments are already assessing student learning through a variety of methods including grades, competency exams, capstone courses, etc., though you may not call them “assessment.” Before designing a department assessment program, it is important to identify what assessment information you are already collecting and match these data sources to the learning goals and objectives you outlined in Chapter 3.

An assessment matrix is a particularly useful way of linking goals and objectives to assessment tools, program requirements or course curricula. The example on the following page shows a set of departmental objectives down the first column of the matrix and, along the first row, different sets of information currently available at the department level. In this matrix, the link between objectives and data sources is identified in two ways – *direct* measures of the objectives (D) and *indirect* measures (I).

### **What should you add?**

Once you have identified assessment processes that are currently in place, you can pinpoint central questions that are not being answered by your currently available data sources. For example, does your department currently collect direct measures of the learning objectives? (Unfortunately, for many departments, the information that best reflects learning objectives is kept at the course level – department level analyses/synthesis of student learning is rarely done.) Also, pay attention to points in the student experience where information collection is most easily accomplished. For example, courses required for the major (those courses that all students in the major take) are ideal opportunities to collect systematic information from students. Embedding assessment activities into the curriculum for these courses and making them “count” toward the student’s final grade will facilitate successful data gathering.

### What can you assess?

A key part of deciding on what assessment methods to use is knowing what you want to assess. In general, you will look at assessing student learning, student attitudes and perceptions, and/or department processes. The following offers examples for each category.

<i>Student Learning</i>	Knowledge of the discipline (What do students know?) Skills (What can students do?) Values (What do students care about?)
<i>Student Attitudes and Perceptions about:</i>	Advising Curriculum Campus climate Campus facilities Mentoring Co-curricular activities Course scheduling Teaching Student services Preparation for work or graduate school
<i>Departmental Processes. Are students served efficiently and effectively when they need services such as:</i>	Advising Library assistance Computer assistance New student orientations Counseling Ombudsman services Financial Aid Transcripts Graduation checks Tutoring Health care

### WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO ASSESSMENT DESIGN?

As departments work to identify and design assessment methods to measure goal and objective attainment in the program, a variety of challenges and complications will emerge:

#### **Acknowledge differences between units.**

Even programs within the same department may have different goals specific to that program. Assessment measures that work well in one unit may not be as successful in another. The key is to design or identify assessment techniques that are specific to the goal that you are assessing.

**Allow time for mistakes and for ongoing faculty input and discussion.**

Pilot projects are excellent ways to try out new techniques to see how well they assess the goal or outcome you are trying to measure. Encourage and set time aside for faculty meetings to discuss assessment techniques and methods so that faculty both invest in the process and see how assessment is connected to the learning that goes on in their classrooms.

**Tie the assessment methodology and instruments to the purpose of the assessment.**

Differences among units and the need to experiment are only two challenges you may face. You will also want to avoid the common error of designing or identifying an assessment technique, then fitting a purpose or goal to it.

*Based on Handbook Program-Based Review and Assessment—Umass: Amherst*

**WHAT DOES AN ASSESSMENT PLAN LOOK LIKE?**

When you have identified the outcomes you will assess, have decided on the methods you will use to collect the data, and have tried to anticipate the results you might see, it is important to link these components together to most effectively articulate and carry out your assessment plan. The Assessment Plan template in Appendix 4-A may be used as a guideline for developing your program assessment plan. Remember that for program improvement purposes, all data do not have to be collected every year, since there will probably not be much change from year to year unless you have made substantial changes in your curriculum.

# 4a. Pratt Institute Outcomes Assessment Plan Template

*(This template is for illustration purposes only. A protected electronic form will be distributed from the offices of the Provost and Institutional Research and Assessment)*

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEPARTMENT (IF APPLICABLE):** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROGRAM CHAIR OR DIRECTOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE THE PLAN IS COMPLETED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

The following table is intended to serve as an aid in the development of a program assessment plan. The plan must include a clear statement of mission and goals, specific measurable objectives, and means for assessing whether each of the objectives has been achieved. Use the electronic version of this template to fill in your program's data in the right columns.

*In developing your assessment plan, please refer to the guidelines in the Student Outcomes Assessment Plan document or the more detailed guidelines in the Outcomes Assessment Handbook.*

1. **Mission Statement:** State the program's mission statement.
2. **Relationship to Institute Mission:** Indicate how the program's mission is supporting the mission of the Institute by listing related Institute Mission or Vision Sentences, or related Institute strategic goals.

3. **Key Learning Outcomes Objectives (Column A):** List the key student outcomes objectives of your program. Each objective should describe knowledge, a skill, and/or an attitude, value, or disposition that you want your students to be able to demonstrate **after** they complete your program. Use observable “action words”; rather than say students can “understand” a concept, for example, say that they can “explain” or “summarize” it.
4. **Assessment Measures (Column B):** For **each** key learning goal, describe how you plan to assess how well your students have achieved it. List the measures that you will use and specify a standard of success. One or more methods may be used for each learning outcome. When possible, direct assessments of student work should be used for assessment, but indirect methods may help flesh out the overall assessment. Direct methods include portfolios, work in capstone courses, embedded work such as research papers and examination answers, and student creative products such as art, dance, designs, and writing.
5. **Data Collection and Analysis (Columns C):** Briefly describe when assessment data will be collected, analyzed and reported and by whom. Methods might include evaluations using rubrics or written summaries or statistical analyses.
6. **Assessment Timeline (Columns D):** For **each** key objective, (1) how often do you plan to compile, analyze, and report the results (e.g., every semester, every other year)? Some assessments should occur every year, but not everything needs to be assessed every year. Develop a cycle of assessment that might be one to three years long. Allow additional assessments to be developed as additional questions arise about student learning.

Program Mission Statement:

Related Institute Mission or Vision Sentences, or Related Institute Strategic Goals:

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<p><b>Outcomes Objectives:</b> What should students be able to DO AFTER completing the program?</p>	<p><b>Measures &amp; Criteria of Success:</b> How will student learning be assessed?</p>	<p><b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis:</b> How will assessment data be collected, analyzed, and reported? By whom?</p>	<p><b>Timeline:</b> How often will assessment data be collected, analyzed, and reported</p>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			



# 5.

## Identifying Measures & Methods

Once you have developed a list of the most important outcomes objectives for your program, you need to identify what measures you will use to show if the desired results are being accomplished and determine acceptable level of success. You must also make decisions about how and when you will collect the data, and what processes you will use to make changes suggested by the findings. This chapter helps you identify the strategies and methods you will use to collect assessment data as part of your department's assessment program. It describes tools for assessing student learning, outlines assessment strategies and offers guidelines for selecting assessment methods.

### ASSESSMENT MEASURES OR TOOLS

**Types of measures to consider:** To obtain valid information on whether students have achieved the expected learning outcomes, appropriate assessment tools must be used. Methods of assessment will vary depending on the learning outcomes to be measured. **Direct** and **indirect** measures can be used to collect either **quantitative** or **qualitative** evidence of student learning.

**Direct measures of assessment** involve examination of student products that demonstrate knowledge and skills resulting from learning experiences in the program. Direct measures are the most valuable form of assessment, and may include: capstone experience, portfolio assessment, standardized tests, certification and licensure exams, essay exams blind scored by multiple scorers, juried reviews of student performances and projects, and external evaluation of student performance in internships.

**Indirect measures of assessment** rely on perceptions of students, faculty, or others to infer student abilities, knowledge, and values rather than examining actual student products. Indirect measures are usually considered supporting data, and are not adequate in themselves for appropriate student assessment. They may include: surveys, exit interviews, focus groups, external reviewers, retention and transfer rates, length of time to degree, SAT and ACT scores, graduation rates, and placement and acceptance data.

**Quantitative** data are those that are represented numerically. Quantitative instruments generally test objective knowledge, but can be adapted to behavioral/attitudinal outcomes. Tools that gather quantitative data include national standardized tests, locally developed exams, licensure exams, closed-ended surveys, and institutional student data.

**Qualitative** data do not use numbers as evidence of learning. Rather, they either categorize individuals into discrete groups (e.g., “excellent,” “good,” “fair”), or are presented in prose or narrative form. Qualitative instruments are adaptable to department-specific applications and allow greater flexibility and creativity. Commonly used qualitative measures include portfolios, evaluation of art projects or shows, senior capstone course projects, focus groups, interviews, open-ended surveys and journals/diaries.

### **GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT MEASURES**

- Programs are encouraged to incorporate assessment measures they already use. Review current assessment procedures and adequacy of available data; consider formalizing procedures already being used or aggregating results across courses. Assessment measures commonly used at the course, program, and institutional level can be found in Appendix .....
- Assessment tools should provide answers to the most important questions faculty have about student learning and result in useful feedback that highlights accomplishments and identifies areas requiring attention.
- Assessment tools should be appropriate for the outcomes objectives being measured and provide reliable information about the extent to which the objectives are being met. Substance, relevance, and subsequent use of the information are more important than the specific methods used.
- A sufficient number of assessment tools should be used to adequately evaluate the objectives. To the extent possible, more than one measure should be used to evaluate each outcomes objective.
- Direct assessment measures of student work should be used, indirect methods should also be used, whenever possible, to provide additional evidence. (See Appendix.....for detailed description of various direct and indirect measures).
- Use of qualitative as well as quantitative measures is desirable. A combination of qualitative and quantitative measures can offer the most effective way to assess outcomes objectives. Measures that reflect the program’s culture should be chosen. Qualitative data are more meaningful for most Pratt programs.

- For each assessment measure, programs should state what they consider an acceptable level of success (e.g., 70% of the student portfolios receive a “good” or “excellent” rating).

### **ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TIMELINE**

After selecting appropriate measures you should make decision about the actual assessment activities. Consideration should be given to the following:

- From whom the data will be collected (e.g., entering students, current majors, non-majors taking electives in the program, exiting seniors, recent or older alumni/ae, faculty, etc.). Will data be collected from all students, or only a sample?
- How often will data be collected (e.g., each semester, annually, one-time projects, cyclically)? Some assessment should occur every year, but not all objectives need to be assessed every year. Programs should develop a cycle of assessment so that each objective is assessed within two or three years.
- Who will administer, analyze, and report the results of the assessment?
- How will results be stored?
- By what processes will the results be used to make changes in the program?



# 5a. Commonly Used Assessment Measures

LEVEL	DIRECT MEASURES	INDIRECT MEASURES
<b>Course</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course and homework assignments</li> <li>• Exams and quizzes</li> <li>• Term papers and reports</li> <li>• Observations of field work, internship, performance, service learning, or clinical experiences</li> <li>• Research projects</li> <li>• Class discussion participation</li> <li>• Case study analysis</li> <li>• Rubric (criterion-based rating scale) scores for writing, oral presentations, and projects</li> <li>• Artistic projects and performances</li> <li>• Grades that are based on explicit criteria related to clear learning goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Percent of class time spent in active learning</li> <li>• Number of student hours spent on homework</li> <li>• Number of student hours spent at intellectual or cultural activities related to the course</li> <li>• Grades that are not based on explicit criteria related to clear learning goals</li> </ul>

<b>Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardized tests of subject area or broad skills</li> <li>• Senior capstone projects, or papers</li> <li>• Theses</li> <li>• Exhibits</li> <li>• Performances</li> <li>• Pass rates or scores on licensure, certification, or subject area tests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports from student internship supervisors</li> <li>• Focus group interviews with students, faculty members, or employees</li> <li>• Registration or course enrollment information</li> <li>• Job placement</li> <li>• Employer or alumni/ae surveys</li> <li>• Departmental student perception surveys</li> <li>• Proportion of upper level courses compared to the same program at other institutions</li> <li>• Graduate school placement rates</li> </ul>
<b>Institution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance on tests of general education skills (writing, critical thinking, etc.)</li> <li>• Grades in General Education courses</li> <li>• Performance on achievement tests</li> <li>• Explicit self-reflections on what students have learned related to specific programs (e.g. asking students to name the three most important things they have learned in the program)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades in General Education courses</li> <li>• Local or national surveys of student perceptions (e.g., Noel Levitz, NSSE)</li> <li>• Transcript studies that examine patterns and trends of course selection and grading</li> <li>• Annual reports including institutional benchmarks (e.g., retention and graduation rates, GPA of graduates, etc.)</li> <li>• Alumni/ae career and satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Institutional data (e.g. admissions selectivity, placement, and retention rates)</li> <li>• Program reviews—academic and support programs</li> </ul>

# 5b. Direct & Indirect Assessment Measures

## **DIRECT ASSESSMENT MEASURES**

### **1. Capstone course**

A capstone course is a course designed to be offered in the final semester of a student's major, a course that ties together the key learning objectives that faculty expect the student to have learned during the program. The faculty member who teaches the course gives the grade for the students; the program faculty or a sub-group of the faculty review and evaluate the work for assessment purposes.

The **benefits** of a capstone course include the increased ability of students to integrate their learning; close association between the assessment tool and the program's particular learning outcomes; rapid feedback on the program; and association of a faculty member who contributes to program assessment through the professor's normal teaching load. **Disadvantages** include disciplinary differences in the appropriateness of a capstone course in the curriculum; the time required to develop and gain approval for the course; staffing requirements; slotting the course into the curricular sequence; and normal variations in course content as the course changes hands from instructor to instructor, i.e. reliability. Also, this type of assessment does not lend itself easily to comparisons of student work early and late in their academic career ("pre- and post-test" assessment

### **2. Course-embedded assessment**

Embedded assessments make use of the actual work that students produce in their courses. The assessments may simply draw from work that students do in various courses or may be designed specifically for assessment purposes and then incorporated into the courses. Embedded assessments are also referred to as "classroom-based" or "continuous" assessments. The faculty teaching the courses give grades to the students, but the work selected for assessment is evaluated with program goals in mind and not used for grading. The results of the assessments should not be used to evaluate the faculty teaching the courses.

**Benefits** include the fact that assessment is conducted as part of the normal workload of students and faculty, although additional work may be needed to incorporate program assessment into the course.

**Disadvantages** include the potential for a faculty member to feel that her or his work in a particular course is being overseen, even if it is not. Also, rubrics may need to be chosen or developed that are associated with the particular learning outcomes, increasing the preparation time.

### 3. Standardized tests

The Educational Testing Service and other companies offer standardized tests for various types of learning outcomes, such as critical thinking or mathematical problem solving. Scores on tests such as the GRE or the Massachusetts Test of Educator Licensure (MTEL) may be used as evidence of student learning. Standardized tests may be norm-referenced or criterion-referenced.

**Benefits** include the reliability and validity of an assessment instrument that is commercially developed, eliminating the arduous process of developing an instrument in-house; simplicity in administration and evaluation of test results; and the potential for cross-institutional comparisons of results. **Disadvantages** include the generic nature of standardized tests and their potential lack of fit with a particular program; a possible lack of motivation by students to take the test or do well on it; and the debatable question of whether a standardized test gives a true measure of student learning. Also, ETS and other services charge substantial fees for these tests, which is an added administrative cost or possibly a cost to the students.

### 4. Locally developed tests

Faculty in a program may decide to develop a test that is reflective of the program's mission and learning outcomes. The test is usually graded by multiple evaluators. Locally developed tests are less costly than a standardized test, but require work by the program's faculty in development and scoring.

**Benefits** include the ability to tailor a test to a specific program. **Disadvantages** include the challenge of developing a test with proven reliability and validity, the potential need to develop rubrics and train multiple test evaluators in the use of these rubrics, and the need to develop a new test periodically.

### 5. Portfolio evaluation

A portfolio is a compilation of student work that, in total, demonstrates a student's achievement of various learning outcomes. Portfolios can be created for a variety of purposes aside from program assessment, such as fostering reflection by students on their education, providing documentation for a student's job search, or certifying a

student's competency. Portfolios created over the span of a student's academic career, compared to those consisting of a student's work only at the end, provide the basis for a developmental assessment.

Portfolios may combine multiple types of evidence and are not necessarily limited to classroom work. For example, portfolios may contain research papers, presentations, videos, audio recordings, work done through employment, or journal entries discussing co-curricular activities or programs. Once the material is collected, it falls upon an individual or group to establish a system by which to evaluate the contents of the portfolio in terms of a program's learning outcomes.

A key question in portfolios arises in the collection of evidence. In teacher preparation, students themselves collect and save the material, and online systems are now available to assist in that process. But for program assessment, the department itself may have to assemble the student portfolios; in this case, issues must be considered about how the students are to be informed of the fact that their work is being assessed for programmatic reasons. Some faculty ask students to sign consent forms to copy work products and to use student work products in accreditation reports.

**Benefits** of portfolios include the ability to document student development over time, and the potential benefit to the students of seeing their own development and in collecting material that may support their career goals. Thus, program assessment becomes an integral part of the learning process. **Disadvantages** include a labor-intensive process in the evaluation of evidence in student portfolios. Also, there is an expense in storing and organizing the evidence.

## 6. Pre-test/Post-test evaluation

One of the questions that comes up in assessment is not only whether students can demonstrate the learning outcomes when they graduate, but how much of what they can demonstrate was actually gained during their time in the program. This suggests the need to assess the students' knowledge and skills at the point of entry into the program and, later, at the point of exiting the program. In pre-test/post-test assessment, student work is assessed both early and late in their academic career, from which the growth and development of the students can be deduced.

Several of the previously-described tools lend themselves to pre-test/post-test evaluation. Portfolios that collect evidence throughout a student's academic career can intrinsically be a type of pre- and post-test evaluation. Course-embedded assessment in which student work is collected from introductory and upper-level courses also provides a type of pre- and post-test evaluation, although the level of difficulty in the two courses can be expected to differ considerably. Standardized or locally developed tests can be administered at two times in a student's career to assess learning. However, if the test is exactly duplicated at the two times, then students may improve

simply by having seen it twice. On the other hand, if different tests are administered at the two times, it can be difficult to ensure that both tests are of the same nature and difficulty, so the reliability of this method becomes a question.

**Benefits** include the ability to gain insight into students' academic development.

**Disadvantages** include the increased amount of work involved in assessing student work more than once, and the difficulty of designing tests or assessment tools that are truly comparable at different times.

## 7. Scoring Rubrics

A scoring rubric is a method of classifying and categorizing student behaviors or products along a continuum. Rubrics can be used to assess writing, research reports, performances, portfolios, and problem-solving, among others. Rubrics allow faculty to evaluate or assess student work fairly efficiently. If students are taught to score their own work, they can profit from understanding the standards and criteria that faculty expect of them.

## INDIRECT METHODS

### 1. Student self-evaluation

Students have a sense of their own competence. Student self-evaluation involves the rating by students of their perception of their own achievement in particular learning outcomes. Research shows a significant, although imperfect, correlation between actual and perceived competence. What can be problematic are gender and demographic differences in the accuracy of self-efficacy. For example, certain groups of students may rate their quantitative skills at a level below that indicated by standardized tests. Also, unless the answers are anonymous, students will be likely to overrate their abilities. The same is true if students perceive they can be penalized by their answers.

**Benefits** include the inexpensive nature of the tool. A relatively simple survey can be constructed which simply asks students to rate their competence in different areas. Also, pre- and post-test assessment can be conducted to examine changes both in self-efficacy and perceived importance of a topical area. Another benefit is that all learning outcomes can be assessed simultaneously, in one test. **Disadvantages** include an imperfect relationship between self-efficacy and actual competence; student self-reporting may not always be congruent with their actual level of achievement.

### 2. Student satisfaction surveys

Given that student satisfaction with a program or course is not a learning outcome, satisfaction may or may not relate to outcomes assessment. But satisfaction may

correlate with other variables. For this reason, a common component of assessment systems is the student satisfaction survey. Such surveys may consider the extent to which students are satisfied with their interactions with faculty, with their introductory or advanced courses, or with their preparedness coming out of the program. Use of individual course evaluations for program assessment is problematic because the evaluations reflect on individual instructors – a serious pitfall to be avoided in program assessment.

**Benefits** include the relative simplicity of administering this type of survey. Standardized, commercial surveys are available that provide comparison data from other institutions. **Disadvantages** include the difficulty of designing questions appropriately, or, again, a potential hazard in linking student satisfaction and achievement of learning outcomes. Example: *Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory*.

### 3. Student attitudinal surveys

If learning outcomes include elements of appreciation or understanding of particular issues of concern, student attitudes can be measured as part of the assessment program. For example, informed appreciation for the arts may be assessed using an attitudinal survey. Another example may be students' empathy toward disadvantaged groups, which can be measured in an attitudinal survey. A further example would be attitudes toward learning or toward the profession. Both standardized tests and locally designed surveys can be used for this purpose, although the responses are very sensitive to the wording of the questions.

**Benefits** include the simplicity of administering the system. **Disadvantages** include the challenge of determining student attitudes in a reliable manner. Example: *Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) "Freshman" Survey*.

### 4. Exit interviews

Rather than assess students' attitudes, self-efficacy, or satisfaction through the use of surveys, students may be interviewed directly in individual or focus-group settings. Such interviews allow a more thorough, free-form exploration of the issues through the use of follow-up questions that depend on students' responses.

**Benefits** include the depth and richness of information that can be obtained through interviews. **Disadvantages** include the time- and labor-intensive nature of conducting such interviews and in analyzing the information obtained from interviews for comparison across multiple interviews. Also, student anonymity needs to be protected in this tool, and stray comments about individual faculty must not become part of the assessment data.

## 5. Alumni surveys

The perspective that students have on their education may change significantly after time away from school. Some learning outcomes lend themselves more naturally to questions posed some time after graduation. For example, an outcome involving preparation for professional practice can best be assessed after the student has graduated and been employed in the job market.

**Benefits** include the real-world perspective that can be obtained from alumni. **Disadvantages** include the difficulty of finding and reaching alumni, the possibly self-selective nature of those who choose to respond, and the relatively narrow scope of learning outcomes that can be assessed in this manner.

## 6. Employer surveys

It is possible that some of the students' knowledge and skills are evident to the employers who rely on these characteristics. Thus, some accrediting bodies either require or encourage programs to perform an assessment through the major employers of their students. These may range from information as basic as hiring data, to site supervisor evaluations, to detailed surveys of the characteristics that the employers perceive in program graduates. Advisory boards, anecdotal information, and placement data may be used in place of formal surveys.

**Benefits** of this tool include the real-world perspective that employers might be able to provide. **Disadvantages** include the potentially limited ability of employers to assess their employees' characteristics in terms of specific learning outcomes, or the inability of employers to assess graduates only from a particular school. Also, this tool depends on surveying employers with sufficient numbers of graduates. In large corporations, it may even be difficult to find the right person to contact for this information. In addition, former students may object to having their employers surveyed in this way.

## 7. Curriculum analysis

Historically, accrediting bodies have required institutions or programs to document the information that students are receiving and the content that the program delivers in its courses. Documentation can be obtained from the curriculum and syllabi of individual courses. With the move toward learning-outcomes assessment, programs are required to show that students actually exhibit the skills and qualities that the program wishes to develop. However, a curriculum analysis may still be relevant and is often included in accreditation documents. For example, some accrediting bodies may require the documentation of the number of hours devoted to a particular subject in the curriculum.

**Benefits** include the relatively straightforward task of analyzing the content of the

curriculum, for which only course syllabi may be needed. Disadvantages include the potential inequality between delivery of material and documentation of learning for specific outcomes.

## **8. Focus Groups**

Focus groups are a series of carefully planned discussions among homogeneous groups of 6-10 respondents who are asked a carefully constructed series of open-ended questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. The session is typically recorded and later the recording is transcribed for analysis. The data is studied for major issues and reoccurring themes along with representative comments.

## **9. Interviews**

These are conversations or direct questioning with an individual or group of people. The interviews can be conducted in person or on the telephone. The length of an interview can vary from 20 minutes to over an hour. Interviewers should be trained to follow agreed-upon procedures (protocols).

## **10. Observations**

Observations can be made of any social phenomenon, such as student presentations, students working in the library, or interactions at student help desks. Observations can be recorded as a narrative or in a highly structured format, such as a checklist, and they should be focused on specific program objectives.



# 7. Glossary of Assessment Terms

**Assessment:** The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.

**Benchmark:** A description or example of performance that serves as a standard of comparison for evaluation or judging quality.

**Capstone Assessment:** Assessment of outcomes structured into learning experiences occurring at the end of a program. The experiences involve demonstration of a comprehensive range of program outcomes through some type of product or performance. The outcomes may be those of the major and of the general education program or of the major only. *(Palomba & Banta, 1999)*

**Collective Portfolios:** Faculty assemble samples of student work from various classes and use the “collective” to assess specific program learning outcomes. Portfolios can be assessed by using scoring rubrics; expectations should be clarified before portfolios are examined.

**Course-embedded assessment:** A method in which evidence of student learning outcomes for the program is obtained from assignments in particular courses in the curriculum.

**Course-level assessment:** Assessment to determine the extent to which a specific course is achieving its learning goals. (For comparison, see Program assessment and Institutional assessment.)

**Course mapping:** A matrix showing the coverage of each program learning outcome in each course. It may also indicate the level of emphasis of each outcome in each course.

**Criteria/Standards :** Performance descriptors that indicate how well students will meet expectations of what they should be able to think, know or do. They are descriptive benchmarks against which performance is judged. These criteria or standards may be described in varying gradients of success as in rubrics or in grades. Often they are stated in terms of percentages, percentiles, or other quantitative measures (*Nichols, 2000*).

**Curriculum-embedded or Learning-embedded Assessment:** Assessment that occurs simultaneously with learning such as projects, portfolios and exhibitions. Occurs in the classroom setting, and, if properly designed, students should not be able to tell whether they are being taught or assessed. Tasks or tests are developed from the curriculum or instructional materials.

**Direct measures:** Methods of assessment to gauge student achievement of learning outcomes by directly examining their work. Examples include tests, essays, classroom assignments, project presentations, portfolio evaluations, senior thesis, and certification exams (For comparison, see Indirect assessment.)

**Exit Interviews:** Students leaving the university, generally graduating students are interviewed or surveyed to obtain feedback. Data obtained can address strengths and weaknesses of an institution or program and or to assess relevant concepts, theories or skills.

**Focus Groups:** are a series of carefully planned discussions among homogeneous groups of 6-10 respondents who are asked a carefully constructed series of open-ended questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. The session is typically recorded and later the recording is transcribed for analysis. The data is studied for major issues and reoccurring themes along with representative comments.

**Formative assessment:** The assessment of student achievement at different stages of a course or at different stages of a student's academic career. The focus of formative assessment is on the documentation of student development over time. It can also be used to engage students in a process of reflection on their education. (For comparison, see Summative assessment.)

**Goals:** Description of intended results of learning stated in global, general terms, e.g. clear communication, problem solving.

**Holistic Method:** Assigning a single score based on an overall assessment of performance rather than by scoring or analyzing dimensions individually. The product is considered to be more than the sum of its parts and so the quality of a final product or performance is evaluated rather than the process or dimension of performance. A holistic scoring rubric might combine a number of elements on a single scale. Focused holistic scoring may be used to evaluate a limited portion of a learner's performance.

**Indirect assessment:** Methods of assessment that deduce student achievement of learning outcomes through students' reported perception of their own learning, rather than through examination of actual work. Examples include student satisfaction surveys, exit interviews, focus group interviews, job placement, alumni/ae surveys, and graduate school placement rates (For comparison, see Direct assessment.)

**Indirect Assessment Methods:** Assessment methods that involve perceptions of learning rather than actual demonstrations of outcome achievement (e.g. alumni surveys, employer surveys, exit interviews).

**Institutional assessment:** Assessment to determine the extent to which a college or university is achieving its mission. (For comparison, see Course-level assessment and Program assessment.)

**Learning Outcomes:** They are what students are able to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skills, and values upon completion of their program. They are observable behaviors or actions on the part of students that demonstrate that the intended learning objective has occurred. They are desired ends or objectives to be observed in graduates of the program and are distinguishable from inputs or processes.

**Objectives:** Synonymous with **outcomes**. Statements that describe measurable expectations of what students should be able to think, know or do when they've completed a given educational program. Each statement should describe one expectation; should not bundle several into one statement. The statements must be clear and easily understood by all faculty in the area/department.

**Outcomes:** Statements that describe qualitative or quantitative measurable expectations of what students should be able to think, know or do when they've completed a given educational program. Synonymous with **learning objectives**. Each statement should describe one expectation; should not bundle several into one statement. The statements must be clear and easily understood by all faculty in the area/department. (*Nichols, 2000*)

**Performance Assessment:** The process of using student activities or products, as opposed to tests or surveys, to evaluate students' knowledge, skills, and development. Methods include: essays, oral presentations, exhibitions, performances, and demonstrations. Examples include: reflective journals (daily/weekly); capstone experiences; demonstrations of student work (e.g. acting in a theatrical production, playing an instrument, observing a student teaching a lesson); products of student work (e.g. Art students produce paintings/drawings, Journalism students write newspaper articles, Geography students create maps, Computer Science students generate computer programs, etc.).

**Portfolio Assessment:** A type of direct measure in which students' assignments are carefully reviewed for evidence of desired learning outcomes. The portfolios contain work selected over a period of time, with materials added as the student progresses through the course/program. In addition, the portfolios usually include students' reflective learning/outcome analysis statements. Portfolios may be assessed in a variety of ways. Each piece may be individually scored, or the portfolio might be assessed merely for the presence of required pieces, or a holistic scoring process might be used and an evaluation made on the basis of an overall impression of the student's collected work. It is common that assessors work together to establish consensus of standards or to ensure greater reliability in evaluation of student work. Established criteria are often used by reviewers and students involved in the process of evaluating progress and achievement of objectives.

**Program:** A program of study leading to a degree. Undergraduate and graduate programs of a department are considered separate programs. If a department offers different concentrations or majors but awards the same degree for them, the department, rather than the concentrations or majors is defined as the program

**Program assessment:** Assessment to determine the extent to which students in a departmental program can demonstrate the learning outcomes for the program. (For comparison, see Course-level assessment and Institutional assessment.)

**Quantitative Methods of Assessment:** Methods that rely on numerical scores or ratings. Examples: Surveys, Inventories, Institutional/departmental data, departmental/course-level exams (locally constructed, standardized, etc.).

**Qualitative Methods of Assessment:** Methods that rely on descriptions rather than numbers. Examples: Ethnographic field studies, logs, journals, participant observation, and open-ended questions on interviews and surveys.

**Scoring Rubric:** In general a rubric is a scoring guide used in subjective assessments. It is used to holistically score any product or performance such as art presentations, a set of criteria specifying the characteristics of a learning outcome and the levels of achievement in each characteristic. A detailed scoring rubric that delineates criteria used to discriminate among levels is developed and used for scoring. Generally two raters are used to review each product and a third rater is employed to resolve discrepancies.

**Standardized Achievement and Self-Report Tests:** Select standardized tests that are aligned to your specific program learning outcomes. Score, compile, and analyze data. Develop local norms to track achievement across time and use national norms to see how your students compare to those on other campuses.

**Summative assessment:** The assessment of student achievement at the end point of their education or at the end of a course. The focus of summative assessment is on the documentation of student achievement by the end of a course or program. It does not reveal the pathway of development to achieve that endpoint. (For comparison, see Formative assessment.)

*<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/assess/terminology.htm>*

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