

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Method	Characteristics	Examples
<i>Direct</i>	• Measurement of mastery of learning objectives • Often involve quantitative measurements but can be qualitative • Tangible, visible, self-explanatory • A set of criteria are used to analyze and interpret a student performance. • Requires multiple measures	
Published Tests	• Check professional reviews in <i>Mental Measurements Yearbook</i>. • They enable comparison to national norms, • Consider how the test aligns with program objectives and curriculum. • Consider how much it costs, if proctors require special training, how much time is needed for testing and scoring, and how to motivate students to take the tests seriously. • Students can be motivated by providing scores to them, offering prizes to students or groups of students with the highest scores, embedding tests in capstone courses, and making a passing score a graduation requirement. • ETS Major Field Tests • ETS Proficiency Profile • ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency • CLA+	
Locally Developed Tests	• Best way to ensure that tests tap learning objectives • Faculty could create single test items or groups of items that they embed within course exams. • They could create entire tests that are administered to groups of students, such as seniors in capstone courses. • Test items include essay, multiple-choice, true-false, matching, or completion formats. • Creators of the tests should consider whether they are testing for recognition, recall, or deeper-level processing. • Score gains between entry and exit can be identified.	
Embedded Assignments and Course Activities	• These may provide authentic assessment of important learning objectives, especially if case studies, problem-based learning, or other real-world activities are involved. • They are designed to collect information on specific learning objectives, and the results are pooled across courses and instructors. • They are generally graded by course instructors, and copies of student products are collected for later assessment. • Alternatively, faculty can develop a common scheme for assessing elements of embedded assignments, do the assessment as they grade, and pool these assessment data across courses. • They can serve multiple functions. • Major assignments, such as senior projects or theses, can provide valuable assessment data if they are scored using a rubric. • Assignments that require oral presentation or group work allow faculty to assess content mastery, and they also provide opportunities to assess communication and interpersonal skills. • Examples can be found in Angelo and Cross's <i>Classroom Assessment Techniques</i>.	

Competence Interviews	• These are exams that are orally administered. • They can be used to directly assess a number of learning objectives. • They are common in foreign language programs and professional programs. • They can be structured or unstructured. • Faculty should develop clear understanding of the purpose of the interviews, how they will be conducted, and how they will be scored.	
Portfolios	• Students create compilations of their work and reflect on their achievement of learning objectives. • Two types are showcase portfolios (designed to show best work) and developmental portfolios (designed to show student progress). • Portfolio assignments can be integrated into the curriculum. • Advisers can periodically review draft portfolios with their advisees and discuss their progress. • Webfolios are becoming more popular than paper. • Faculty must decide when and how students will be told about the requirements, including what materials they need to collect or to produce for it. • Will faculty or students decide which materials will be included? • How will the portfolios be assessed to evaluate and improve the program? • Most programs require students to submit portfolios as a course or graduation requirement. • Some programs require students to meet a minimum standard of performance to graduate, while other programs grade portfolios and use that grade as all or part of a class grade. • Scoring rubrics will help faculty review materials efficiently and effectively. • Faculty may use sampling strategies to reduce the workload.	
Collective Portfolios	• Faculty can create collections of student work that are created by faculty for assessment purposes. • Faculty decide which objectives are to be examined, identify relevant student materials (e.g., course exams and assignments), decide on a sampling scheme, then collect the materials and assess them.	
<i>Indirect</i>	• Based on subjective perceptions • Provides information about support for student learning • Reports about learning rather than a direct demonstration of learning • Solicits advice from important stakeholders • Should be compared with other sources of information • Less persuasive than direct assessments	
Surveys	• Survey questions can be closed-ended or open-ended. • Faculty should create short, focused surveys that deliberately address specific issues, and each item should serve a purpose. • Target groups include entering students, current students, exiting students, alumni, employers, and faculty. • Results can be biased when the response rate is low. • Online surveys are increasingly popular. • National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) • Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)	

Interviews	• Interviews involve a conversation, or questions and answers, between interviewers and interviewees. • Questions can be closed-ended or open-ended. • Interviews can be conducted one-on-one or in small groups. • The summary should be succinct but with sufficient detail to be useful.	
Focus Groups	• They are planned discussions among small groups of participants, usually six to ten. • Group members should have a common level of experience. • Someone must provide a summary of the responses.	
Reflective Essays	• They invite students to reflect on some aspect of their university experience. • They can be used to assess writing competence as well as collect student feedback on selected issues. • They should be based on carefully crafted, open-ended questions. • They provide students opportunities to make qualitative statements about their learning and to share ideas for program improvement.	
Evidence of Learning Processes	• Faculty can analyze courses for learning processes that research has shown helps students learn effectively, such as time on task and active learning. • Examples include course syllabi, interviews with students, counts of courses whose stated learning goals include the core competency, counts of courses with learning activities that develop the core competency, and counts of courses whose final grades are based at least in part on assessments of the core competency.	