

Achieving ABHE Assessment Standards

2023 ABHE Annual Meeting
2/17/2023

Overview

1. Assessment “big picture”
2. Fulfilling Standard 2 Core and Essential Elements
3. Assessment throughout the Standards
4. Policy on Outcomes
5. Evidence for Effective Assessment Processes
6. Bonus: Common Pitfalls in Assessment

Assessment “Big Picture”

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Assessment “Big Picture”

- Assessment uses tools to measure something* in light of an established standard or goal
- Two broad categories
 - Student Learning
 - Institutional Effectiveness

**Student learning, retention & completion, customer service, help ticket response time, interoffice communication, satisfaction with food services, etc.*

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Assessment Cycle

Revise the program or implementation to improve results

Revise

Implement

Deliver the program, teach the course, operate the office...

Evaluate assessment results against targets or benchmarks

Evaluate

Assess

Measure the effectiveness of implementation

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Exploring Assessment in More Depth

The screenshot displays the ABHE website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for '2022 Standards Review', 'Knowledge Center', 'Partners', 'Job Board', 'Contact', and 'Member Login'. Below this is a secondary menu with links for 'About', 'Accreditation', 'Membership', 'Member Director', 'Leadership Development', 'Annual Meeting', 'Resources', and 'GIVE'. The 'Leadership Development' link is circled in red. On the left side, there is a green box with the text 'Leadership Development' in a script font, followed by 'GROWING LEADERS FOR GLOBAL GOSPEL IMPACT'. To the right of this box is a list of sub-links: 'Leadership Development', 'Conferences', 'Shared Courses', 'Executive Leadership Training', 'Honor Society', and 'Partners'. The 'Conferences' link is also circled in red. Below the navigation is a banner for '2 TIMOTHY 2:15'. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'Our Mission' with the text 'Advancing Biblical Higher Education For Kingdom Impact' and two buttons: 'LEARN MORE ABOUT US' and 'DOWNLOAD VIEWBOOK'.

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Exploring Assessment in More Depth

Institutional Assessment Conference – COMPLETED OCT 17-18, 2022

- [View Conference & Registration Details](#)
- **Sponsored By: WEAVE**

An essential discipline of every mature institution is an effective system of assessment. This is not a one-time project on the institutional check list. It's an ongoing process that tracks learning outcomes and demonstrates institutional effectiveness; in short, it is how an institution knows how well they're delivering on their educational promise. An effective assessment system is the secret sauce of continuous quality improvement that informs budgeting and strategic planning. It's simply indispensable for institutional excellence. Learn from distinguished leaders across higher education how you can build effective assessment into the warp and weave of your institution. Help your institution effectively assess what's important and lead your institution toward excellence.

Academic Leaders Conference – COMPLETED OCT 20-21, 2022

Standard 2 Core and EEs

Caveat

Comprehensive Review of Standards

A comprehensive review of ABHE Standards for Accreditation is completed every ten years, and the 2022-2023 review is well underway! We had listening sessions on the current Standards at the February 2022 annual meeting and followed up with a Commission survey in April and three virtual listening sessions in May. We asked for nominations for Standards Review taskforces and were SO ENCOURAGED with the response. Sixty-nine individuals on seven taskforces are already at work reviewing the current Standards and making recommendations for improvement. We are planning three discussion forums on specific Standards at the February 2023 Annual Meeting, facilitated by members of the Standards Review Steering Committee. Please plan to attend one or more of these forums in February!

Standard 2 Core Breakout

The institution demonstrates that it

- is accomplishing and can continue to accomplish its mission,
- fulfill goals and objectives,
- and improve institutional effectiveness

through an ongoing system of assessment and planning.

Objective vs Outcome

Objective



Outcome



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Essential Element 1

- A written, comprehensive assessment plan
- that describes what data (qualitative and/or quantitative) the institution gathers*
- to demonstrate fulfillment of institutional goals
- and student learning objectives
- and how and when data are gathered in an ongoing and structured way.

**See Policy on Outcomes for more info*

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Nichols Structure and HCU Amplifications

1. Mission/relevant institutional goal *
2. Objective *
3. Means of assessment (e.g., instrument) *
4. Criteria for success (e.g., benchmark or target)
5. Results (outcome) *
6. Analysis of results (e.g., could include disaggregation)
7. Use of results/planned changes *
8. Persons responsible
9. Due date
10. Budget impact

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Essential Element 2

- Clearly defined and measurable student learning outcomes
- that support mission fulfillment
- accompanied by metrics or other means that effectively assess whether or not the institution is achieving its stated objectives.

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Essential Element 3

- Student learning outcomes
- appropriate to the higher education credential to be awarded (certificate, associate, baccalaureate, master's, and/or doctoral study).

Essential Element 4

- Use of multiple means
- to validate student learning outcomes.

Essential Element 5

- Ongoing
- assessment of operations and services
- to evaluate the extent to which these functions are effective in
 - supporting mission fulfillment
 - and improving institutional effectiveness.

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Essential Element 6

- Meaningful analysis of assessment data and
- use of results by appropriate constituencies
- in a clearly documented, ongoing planning process
- for the purpose of improvement in
 - teaching, learning, and
 - institutional effectiveness.

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Essential Element 7

- A written, comprehensive institutional improvement plan
- based on assessment results and
- aligned with realistic resource projections.

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Essential Element 8

- The ongoing provision of reliable information to the public
- regarding institutional performance and student achievement, including
 - graduation rates and
 - employment rates for graduates of professional programs.
- Such outcomes data must be available via the institution's website through an easily identified link on the homepage.

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Assessment throughout the Standards

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The “Big Picture”

- A comprehensive assessment program can provide evidence for compliance throughout the standards
- Some suggested instruments/items
- Resources to help set targets or identify benchmarks
- Routinize
 - Embed items, develop reporting cycles, maintain KPIs/dashboards
 - Integrate data use into operations

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Standard 1: Mission

Evidence related to statement development and use

1. Constituent survey data (disaggregated by role) on support for/alignment with institutional mission
2. Personnel survey data on mission commitment and support
3. Personnel survey (or interview/focus group) data on specific ways the mission governs decision-making

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Standard 3: Integrity

Evidence that culture “works,” policies are followed, information is accessible; comparisons

1. Personnel survey data regarding respect, climate, etc. (could set targets)
2. External survey like [Best Christian Workplaces](#) (paid; includes Bible-college norms) or [Top Workplaces](#) (minimal data for free; considering Bible-college norms)
3. Items from Ruffalo Noel-Levitz [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) (norms; can get Bible-college norms)

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Standard 3: Integrity

4. [“Secret shopper”](#) results regarding enrollment clarity on policies (transfer, etc.) — see an [Inside Higher Ed article](#) on secret shopping (could set targets)
5. Simple [Website usability](#) data regarding users’ ability to find key required info (set targets)

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Standard 4: Governance

Evidence for board effectiveness, perception of board; comparisons

1. Association of Governing Boards’ [2018 survey results](#) (benchmarks)
2. Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability’s 2014 nonprofit governance survey (free download, must [register](#); includes questions, comparative results and discussion)
 - Also includes a board member self-assessment (pp. 60-61 — benchmarks)
3. AGB’s numerous [resources on presidential assessment](#)

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Standard 4: Governance

4. Timothy Group's [Board Profile Table](#) (could set targets)*
5. [ABHE Board of Directors Meeting Evaluation Form](#) (could set targets)*
6. [Alliance for Board Effectiveness's Board Self-Assessment](#) (could set targets)*
7. [BoardSource's 2017 National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices](#) (benchmarks)*
8. Data from personnel survey regarding board effectiveness (e.g., agreement scale for, "Our board provides effective governance"; could set targets)

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Standard 5: Administration

Evidence for appropriate structure, effective functioning; comparisons

1. Comparative data by enrollment quartile in ABHE statistical abstract ([2016](#) is most recent) (benchmarks)
2. [IPEDS data](#) for comparative staffing data (benchmarks)
3. Data from personnel survey regarding administrator effectiveness, communication (could set targets)
4. Best Christian Workplace/Top Workplace results (benchmarks; could set targets)

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Standard 6: Resources

Evidence for adequate structure, effective performance, stakeholder satisfaction; comparisons

1. [IPEDS data](#) (including custom Data Feedback Reports) for comparative numbers (for benchmarks)
2. ABHE/ABACC [compensation survey data](#) (2017 is most recent data) (benchmarks)
3. Department of Education [Financial Responsibility Composite Score](#) and its components (could set targets)
4. *Inside Higher Ed* CFO survey results ([2022 results](#), [2021 results](#), [2020 results](#)) (benchmarks, good practices)

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Standard 6: Resources

5. ABHE comparative financial data (by enrollment quartile) in statistical reports ([2016 report](#) is most recent)
6. ABACC members can participate in [various studies](#) and access a data warehouse (financial ratio, endowment, physical plant, etc.) (benchmarks)
7. Personnel and student satisfaction survey data (could set targets)
8. *spaces4learning* magazine [research reports](#) (benchmarks)
9. EDUCAUSE reports on [research](#) in higher-ed technology (benchmarks)

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Standard 7: Enrollment

Evidence of effectiveness, alignment, stakeholder satisfaction; comparisons

1. History table/graph of recruitment and retention targets vs actuals
2. Data on graduate indebtedness ([College Navigator](#), [Project on Student Debt](#), [LendEDU](#))
3. Incoming student survey (or application/essay) data showing mission alignment
4. Student satisfaction data ([Ruffalo Noel-Levitz SSI](#) has relevant items and benchmarks)

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Standard 7: Enrollment

5. Ruffalo Noel-Levitz provides [reports](#) on engagement, recruitment, retention and completion (benchmarks)
6. [College Results Online](#) provides retention/completion rates, comparative data (benchmarks). See also...
 - a. National Student Clearinghouse [persistence and retention data](#)
 - b. ACT [2018 retention/completion data](#)
 - c. NCES [retention/completion rates](#)

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Standard 8: Student Services

Evidence of stakeholder use, value, satisfaction; comparisons

1. Student satisfaction data ([Ruffalo Noel-Levitz SSI](#)) — consider disaggregation by group as appropriate
2. Benchmark a list of services offered against institutions at the same level (associates, bachelors, etc.)
3. Compare data (e.g., satisfaction data) disaggregated by modality (in person, online, hybrid) (benchmarks)
4. NACADA's [links to advising assessment tools](#)
5. Graduate and alumni survey satisfaction items (could set targets)

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Standard 9: Faculty

Evidence of alignment, engagement, satisfaction; comparisons

1. Employee satisfaction survey items (could set targets)
2. Statistics on tenure of service at institution and in higher education (consider disaggregating satisfaction data by tenure of service; could set targets)
3. Faculty engagement in ministry statistics (could set targets)
4. [Top Workplaces/Best Christian Workplaces](#) programs (benchmarks, targets)

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Standard 9: Faculty

5. Percentages of faculty... (could set targets for all of these)
 - a. with terminal degree
 - b. with professional ministry experience
 - c. currently engaged in ministry
 - d. engaged in professional development
6. Faculty survey data on academic freedom, governance involvement (could set targets)

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Standard 10: Library/Learning Resources

Evidence for adequacy, appropriateness, stakeholder satisfaction, effectiveness; comparisons

1. ABHE's [2016 statistical report](#) includes benchmarks for library staffing, spending, service and collections
2. The Association of College and Research Libraries has [Standards for Libraries in Higher Education](#) and a [Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education](#) (good-practice lists)
3. Indiana State has a [LibGuide for library assessment](#) that includes [links to sample library assessment plans](#)

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Standard 10: Library/Learning Resources

4. [Project SAILS](#) is a well-known standardized assessment for information literacy; AAC&U's VALUE rubrics include [one for information literacy](#) (could set targets; Project SAILS provides benchmark data)
5. Student, employee and graduate surveys can include library-related items
 - a. [MIT's Library Survey](#) is available under a Creative Commons license
 - b. GBSC has used a standalone [Library Survey](#)

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Standard 11: Academic Programs

Evidence for appropriateness, alignment, satisfaction, effectiveness; comparisons harder to get

1. Comparison study of curriculum at similar institutions looking at...
 - a. General Studies requirements
 - b. Bible/theology requirements
 - c. Major program requirements
 - d. Even specific syllabi
2. Embedded assessments/assignments related to Biblical worldview ([GBSC example rubric](#); could set targets)

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Standard 11: Academic Programs

3. Student and faculty surveys can include items related to culture (critical thinking, spiritual formation, etc. — could set targets)
4. Percentage of students earning ministry-formation credit (set targets, track over time)
5. Student/graduate survey data regarding ministry-formation program and graduate ministry involvement (could set targets)

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Policy on Outcomes

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Background

- Found in COA Manual (pp. 58-61)
- Relatively new — November 2020
- Embedded in team visits — team report includes completed rubric from the policy

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Key Issues

- Mission fulfillment via objectives
- SLOs
 - For each program
 - Appropriate for Biblical higher ed
 - Appropriate for credential level

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Key Issues

- Measurement
 - Measurable objectives
 - Variety of appropriate measurements allowable
 - Accurate representation of population
 - DEI work may require appropriate disaggregation
 - Standards — targets/benchmarks
 - Multiple measures, preference for direct

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Key Issues

- Public transparency/accountability
 - Easy access via website
 - Clear, meaningful communication
 - Numbers, not just %s
 - Clear timeframe (eg, years included)
- Rubric

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Effective Assessment

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Effective Assessment Plans

- Clear goals*/objectives
- Multiple measures (valid and reliable)
- Calendar
- Timely analysis and distribution/communication
- Actionable results

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Effective Assessment Processes

- Doable (realistic)
- Sustainable
- Actually implemented
- Productive — improvements, not just changes
- Assessment of the assessment plan

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Common Pitfalls

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Common Pitfalls in Assessment

1. Unclear/inconsistent objectives
2. Unclear alignment between mission and objectives
3. Unclear alignment between measures and objective
4. Inappropriate measures
5. Insufficient data
6. Lack of clear standards for success
7. Single-measure outcomes
8. No use of data for planning or operations
9. Unclear history of effective planning
10. Plans not connected with budget
11. Minimal institutional effectiveness assessment
12. Trying to do too much

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Discussion

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