

## Selecting Program Assessment Methods

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This document has been developed in order to briefly communicate the goals and considerations for selecting methods for effectively assessing academic programs. This information was taken from the **UNM Academic Program Assessment Manual** which is available on the UNM Assessment website. Please refer to that document for more information on any of the information presented here.

### Considerations for Selecting Assessment Methods

(UNM Academic Program Assessment Manual, Section 4, p. 45-61)

- ✓ **Match the assessment method to the goal or intended outcome – THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION**  
Develop your program goals in intended outcome statement before selecting assessment methods. Successful and useful assessment can be achieved ONLY if the method is aligned with the outcome you are trying to assess. The method must satisfy the objective of the assessment questions.
- ✓ **Availability of data**  
Consider assessment methods for which data might already exist. If new data needs to be collected, determine if the data are difficult or easy to obtain.
- ✓ **Simplicity of data**  
Complex measures are not as helpful as measures that provide data that are easily interpreted and are not ambiguous.
- ✓ **Motivation**  
Assessment methods should be selected with a focus on encouraging student participation. Course-embedded assessment methods are optimal.
- ✓ **Deepen Analysis with Specific Questions**  
Strive to identify subcomponents of a method for deeper analysis. Include questions on a survey or exam that measure components of an outcome (e.g., quality of advising in a program assessed by survey, or components of a project from a grading rubric). The analysis should provide evidence about student achievement, support services, or teaching practices that would provide opportunities for improvement.
- ✓ **Capstone Courses/Seminal Projects**  
Large projects embedded in courses can be an excellent method for directly assessing student learning. These methods promote faculty student interactions and allow the student to demonstrate higher levels of learning.
- ✓ **Reuse data**  
When possible, use methods already used for accreditation criteria such as nationwide exam results.

### Closing the loop

- ✓ **Feedback**  
Encourage faculty involvement and feedback by discussing assessment methods and results with them.

## Types of Assessment Methods

Direct assessment methods of learning specifically measure the competence of students in the program.

Indirect assessment methods differ in that they are concerned with students' experiences, opinions, or perceptions, rather than their knowledge and skills. Indirect assessment methods usually involve the administration of a survey instrument.

*At UNM, all academic programs are required to utilize multiple program level direct assessment methods and at least one indirect assessment method.*

### Choosing an Assessment Method Type

More detailed descriptions of specific assessment methods can be found in the UNM Academic Program Assessment Manual, Section 4.

What do you want to know?		Type of Assessment Method	
		Direct	Indirect
Cognitive Skills	What does the student know?	x	
	What does the student report (perceive) they know?		x
Performance Skills: (Competency skills, Technology skills, and Critical thinking skills)	What can the student do?	x	
	What does the student report (perceive) that they can do?		x
Affective skills	What does the student think or care about?	x	
	What does the student report (perceive) as important?		x

#### Common direct assessment methods

- Capstone course assignments or projects
- Course-embedded questions
- Portfolios
- Research papers
- Performance appraisal of in-class exercises
- Standardized examinations and tests

#### Common indirect assessment methods

- Exit interviews/surveys
- Alumni surveys
- Employer surveys
- Advising surveys
- Satisfaction surveys
- Structured interviews
- Student logs
- Advisory committees

## **Hypothetical Examples of Assessment Methods:**

SL01: Students completing the Emergency Medical Services Program will be comparable to graduates of other similar national programs.

Assessment Method: Students will equal or exceed the national average on the EMT licensing tests.

Why: A good assessment method to compare the achievements of your graduates to the national average is to use a national instrument.

SL02: Students completing the XX Engineering Program will be able to demonstrate competence in conducting research.

Assessment Method: 90% of all graduates will successfully complete the Senior Design Project achieving >75% of points for each section of the grading rubric.

Why: The Senior Design Project requires students to complete a research project. The data from the grading rubric allow analysis of individual components of the program such as background research, communication of information, developing a hypothesis, testing a hypothesis, etc. Areas of weakness may be identified and targeted for improvement.

SL03: Students completing the XX Technical Program will be able to communicate technical information.

Assessment Method: 90% of all graduates will successfully complete a Technical Writing Assignment with grades of 75% or higher on each section of the grading rubric.

WHY: The Technical Writing Assignment directly assesses the ability of the student to communicate technical information. Evaluation for individual sections of the grading rubric will allow the identification of areas of weakness in the program that may be targeted for improvement.

SL04: Students completing the Studio Art AA Program will design and create artworks using diverse media.

Assessment Method: A panel of faculty members acts as evaluators of student art portfolio from a capstone course or courses using a rubric that focuses on the diversity of media involved and the quality of each piece.

WHY: Many faculty are engaged in planning and designing the evaluative rubrics. These rubrics can be used in conjunction with other assessment methods.

SL05: Students will demonstrate that they have developed the ability to work as an entry level CAD operator in engineering firms.

Assessment Method: Employer/supervisor survey of satisfaction levels with the abilities and skills of student performance in their internship experience (Indirect).

WHY: The survey provides detailed information on student performance in specific skills related to the continuously evolving job market.