ASSESSING GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES
Practical Strategies

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SESSION OUTCOMES

At the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- ❖ Articulate learning outcomes for graduate level programs.

- ❖ Select appropriate culminating experiences as avenues for assessing the outcomes, including rubrics to be used in determining the quality of student performance.

- ❖ Develop techniques for convincing faculty to use rubrics.

- ❖ Determine various approaches of using evidence of student performance for continuous improvement purposes.

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Context

- ❖ Established in **1890**
- ❖ Research University – **very high research activity (Carnegie classification)**
- ❖ Student population: **27,278***
- ❖ Undergraduate: **21,068***
- ❖ Graduate: **6,210***
- ❖ Gradate degree programs: **143***

***OU Norman Campus**

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OU PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PROCESS

PLAN
Define Learning Outcomes

ASSESS
Measure Learning Outcomes

ANALYZE
Analyze data and Interpret Results

IMPROVE
Adjust or Improve Learning Outcomes

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OU ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Step 1

PLAN

Articulate Learning Outcomes

Tip: *Use of Boom's Taxonomy active verbs.*

Step 1 *(cont.)*
Examples of Generic PLO's for Graduate Programs

A. **CORE KNOWLEDGE:** Graduates should demonstrate advanced knowledge in a specialized area *consistent with the focus of their graduate program.*

B. **METHODS AND ANALYSIS:** Graduates should demonstrate quantitative and qualitative research skills in the use of data gathering methods and analysis techniques used for typical analyses in conducting research *that is consistent with the focus of their graduate program.*

C. **PEDAGOGY:** Graduate should demonstrate effective instructional skills *consistent with undergraduate education in the associated major.*

D. **SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION:** Graduates should demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills *consistent with the focus of their graduate program.*

E. **INDEPENDENT RESEARCH:** Graduates should demonstrate the ability to develop independent research resulting in original contribution to knowledge *in the focused areas of their graduate program.*

OU ASSESSMENT PROCESS
Step 2

ASSESS

Identify appropriate direct measures for each learning outcome

Tip: Focus **primarily** on culminating experiences

Step 2 *(cont.)*
Mapping of PLO's to Appropriate Measures

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)	Assessment Measures and PLOs Addressed
A. Core Knowledge B. Methods and Analysis C. Pedagogy D. Scholarly Communication E. Independent Research	*Direct Measures* a) Required Courses. (A, B, C, D, E) b) Early assessment of core knowledge applicable to independent research potential. (A) c) Early assessment of skills applicable to independent research potential. (B) d) Annual Advisement Review. (A, B, C, D, E) e) Pre-candidacy projects or comprehensive examinations. (A, B, C, D, E) f) Evaluation of Teaching Assistantship. (C) g) Thesis/Thesis defense. (A, B, C, D, E) h) Annual Advisement Review. (A, B, C, D, E) i) Thesis/Thesis defense. (A, B, C, D, E) j) Dissertation/Dissertation defense. (A, B, C, D, E) *Indirect Measures* a) Mid-course Evaluations. (A, B, C, D, E) b) Exit Interviews. (A, B, C, D, E) c) Alumni Surveys. (A, B, C, D, E)

OU ASSESSMENT PROCESS
Step 3

ANALYZE

Identify direct measures for each learning outcome

Tip: *Focus on student performance in culminating experiences*

OU ASSESSMENT PROCESS
Step 4

IMPROVE

Use assessment results for continuous improvement

Tip: *Focus on **aggregate** evidence of student achievement*

REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT REPORTS
Comparison of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 Assessment Cycles

QUANTITY

Assessment Cycle (Academic Yr.)	# of Reports EXPECTED	# of Reports SUBMITTED	% of Reports SUBMITTED
2014-2015	143*	140	98%
2013-2014	143*	59	41%

***This is less than the total number of degree programs at OU due to "bundling" of some of the assessment reports.*

REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Legend

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	EE = Exceeds Expectations
MEETS EXPECTATIONS	ME = Meets Expectations
NEED REVISION	NSO = Non-specific outcome RIM = Reliance on Indirect Measures MDO = Measures disconnected from SLO's ISE = Incomplete source of evidence GAO = Use of Grades as Outcomes or Evidence SSM = Sample Size Missing
MISSING INFORMATION	MI = Missing Information

COMPARISON OF 2013-2014 AND 2014-2015 ASSESSMENT CYCLES

QUALITY

Number and Percent of Reports that "MET or "EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS"

Steps of the Assessment Process	2013-2014		2014-2015	
	# and % of Reports SUBMITTED (*N* = 59)	% of Reports SUBMITTED (*N* = 143)	# of Reports SUBMITTED (*N* = 140)	% of Reports SUBMITTED (*N* = 143)
1. Learning Outcomes	7 12%	5%	90 64%	63%
2. Assessment Measures	4 7%	3%	67 48%	47%
3. Assessment Results	4 7%	3%	56 40%	39%
4. Use of Assessment Results	7 12%	5%	70 50%	49%

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ACTIVITY

Working in groups of 3, please discuss the following questions:

a) 1-2 examples of graduate level SLO's in your institution.
b) 1-2 examples of direct measures of the SLO's in (a) above.
c) How do you document student performance in the above measures?
d) Example of concrete adjustment that has resulted directly from student performance.
e) Challenges do you face in developing graduate level assessment process in your institution?
f) Role or roles (if any) *"Graduate College"* or *"Graduate School"* play in assessment of graduate programs in your institution.

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STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Needs Assessment + **Meta-assessment**

⬇

Need for concrete guidelines.
Frequent dialogue with, Deans, Chairs/Directors, Assessment Liaisons and faculty.
Development of focused workshops/consultations.
Establishment of institution-wide assessment events to share best practices.

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MAINTAINING CONTINUITY OF THE PROCESS

❖ Promote collegiality with faculty.
❖ Establish annual internal grants for teams of faculty interested in assessment research.
❖ Reward/recognize faculty teams (program-based, department-based, etc.)
❖ Emphasize the importance of assessment process and related products:
  ➢ *Program self-assessment and effectiveness.*
    ❑ Core of curriculum evaluation required for APR process.
  ➢ State requirements *(if applicable)*.
  ➢ *Accreditation.*
    ❑ Institutional
    ❑ Discipline specific *(if applicable)*

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