



30.017: University Policy on Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Academic Affairs
Responsible Office: Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs
Related Policy:
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Policy Statement

Norfolk State University has the responsibility (a) to assess student learning outcomes to determine the quality of its curriculum and educational process in equipping students with the capability to become productive citizens; (b) to assess the quality of the learning environment to ensure improved retention and graduation rates; and (c) to assess support services that enhance student learning and satisfaction in order to increase organizational efficiency and improve performance across all areas. The purpose of assessment at Norfolk State University (NSU) is to create an environment that fosters student learning, development and success. This is accomplished through an ongoing process of improvements in academic programs, educational support services, and administrative units.

This policy establishes a comprehensive university-wide program of institutional effectiveness and assessment at Norfolk State University. The University Assessment Advisory Committee (UAAC) and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment (IEA) are responsible for generating the guidelines for initiation, review, approval and publication of policies, practices and management of data related to such a program.

Purpose

The primary purpose of assessment is to provide information that informs planning and decision-making and the improvement of programs and services. Second, the assessment process serves to meet accreditation, state accountability and other external requirements. Third, assessment expands the foundation of knowledge underlying effective learning, teaching, and service. In this way, effective assessment practice creates an institutional culture of evidence – an environment characterized by an ability and willingness of academic programs and ESA units to use information, collected through the assessment process, to improve the quality of the university experience.

Procedures

Given these purposes, the University Assessment Advisory Committee and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment (IEA) have developed a three-pronged comprehensive institutional effectiveness process.

I. Unit Assessment

- A. Unit assessment at NSU is a University-wide unit¹-based process to determine unit effectiveness, i.e. to determine how well and in what ways units are meeting their individual and university-wide goals and how the units can improve their performance.

¹ Unit is used in a generic sense. This policy applies to academic programs (e.g., Ph.D. in Social Work), educational support units (e.g., Library, ACCESS), and administrative units (e.g., Police Department, Dining Services)

- B. Assessment of a unit is the responsibility of the faculty (academic programs) and staff (non-academic programs).
- C. To ensure faculty and staff involvement, each academic program and ESA unit will have a Program Assessment Facilitator.
- D. The Program Assessment Facilitator in cooperation with faculty and staff shall have primary responsibility for the development, implementation, and ongoing use of assessment activities for continuous quality enhancement.
- E. Assessment activities at the School/Division level will be coordinated by the School/Division Assessment Coordinators.
 - i. The School/Division Assessment Coordinators will be appointed by the respective Vice Presidents and Deans.
 - ii. The Vice Presidents, Deans and Department Heads /Directors will ensure that appropriate assessment of unit effectiveness is occurring in all of the university's programs and ESA units.
- F. In implementing unit assessment, all academic programs and ESA units submit in writing on an annual basis assessment plans and assessment reports.

Assessment Plans and Assessment Reports demonstrate the units' ability to collect reasonable information regarding the units' effectiveness from appropriate constituencies and to use that information for continuous unit improvement.
- G. The raw data of assessment activities remain with the unit.

II. Core Competencies Assessment

- A. Oversight of the state-mandated assessment of the Core Competencies is the responsibility of the Office of Academic Affairs through the University Assessment Advisory Committee and multidisciplinary Core Competency Task Groups.
- B. Core Competency Task Groups are comprised of
 - i. One representative of each of the five schools
 - ii. At least three content specialists
 - iii. Competency Assessment Specialist
 - iv. Members will be appointed by the respective deans.
 - v. Task Groups will have a rotating membership with staggered appointments to allow for continuity.
 - vi. Members of the Task Groups will serve three-year terms, with one-third of those members rotating off the committee each year.
 - vii. All members of the Task Groups are eligible for reappointment.
 - viii. There is no limit on the number of reappointments.
 - ix. The committee will be chaired by one of the faculty representative(s) elected annually by the Task Group members.
 - x. Task Groups meet at least two times per semester to coordinate assessment efforts and develop strategies and tactics to improve faculty instruction and student performance on core competency assessment.
- C. Students' competencies in writing², technology and information literacy³, quantitative reasoning⁴, scientific reasoning⁵, critical thinking⁶, and oral communication⁷ are assessed every semester.
- D. Task Groups develop proposals for core competency assessment.
- E. The Proposals will:
 - i. Develop definitions for each competency and goals of competency assessment
 - ii. Identify who will be assessed
 - iii. Develop a timeline

² Effective Fall 2002

³ Effective Fall 2001

⁴ Effective Fall 2002

⁵ Effective Fall 2002

⁶ Effective Fall 2004

⁷ Effective Fall 2005

- iv. Design or identify assessment methods and instruments.
- F. After the proposals are approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), Task Groups will
 - i. Conduct assessment
 - ii. Summarize assessment data
 - iii. Develop plans to use assessment results to improve student performance on core competencies.
- G. Although assessment of the Core Competencies is state-mandated, the Core Competency Task Groups develop an assessment process that is appropriate for NSU students and faculty as well as consistent with NSU's mission to equip students with the capability to become productive citizens.
- H. Throughout the year, IEA facilitates assessment workshops and individual consultations to the Task Groups to provide necessary training and education in the core competency assessment.

III. University Assessment

- A. University assessment includes assessment of:
 - i. Student progress through the institution
 - ii. Student satisfaction with the university experience
 - iii. The quality and efficacy of units and services
 - iv. The institutional environment and climate.
- B. The Graduating Student Exit Survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), the College Student Inventory (CSI), the Alumni Survey, and Customer Service Surveys are examples of University Assessment.
- C. Such university-wide assessment activities are the joint responsibilities of several offices, depending on what is being assessed.
- D. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment coordinates analysis of survey data, facilitates the distribution of the results, and provides necessary training and education in the utilization of assessment information for continuous quality enhancement.