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Glossary of Terms

Assessment: any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness.4

Types of Assessment:
- Learning Outcomes Assessment: measuring the impact our services, programs and facilities have on students' learning, development, and student success
- Tracking: monitoring who uses our programs, services and facilities (e.g. raw numbers, frequency, age, class standing, gender, race, and residence)
- Needs Assessment: identifying needs of our students (e.g. student perceived, research supported).
- Satisfaction Assessment: measuring the level of student satisfaction with our programs, services, and facilities
- Student Cultures and Campus Environments Assessment: assessing the collective perception of campus and student experience (e.g. campus climate, academic environment, residential quality of life)
- Comparable Institution Assessment (Benchmarking): identifying how the quality of our programs, services and facilities compare with peer institutions' best practices
- National Standards Assessment: using nationally accepted standards to assess our programs and services (e.g. national assessment inventory– EBI, CAS standard self-assessment, departmental review by consulting group)
- Cost Effectiveness Assessment: determining whether the programs, services and facilities we offer to students are

Evaluation: any effort to use assessment evidence to improve institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness.4
- Formative evaluations: are those used to improve organizational or institutional effectiveness and may also be used to help solve problems and to enhance decision making directed toward improvement (focuses on feedback)
- Summative evaluations: are used to determine if a particular organizational activity or function should be continued, enhanced, curtailed, or eliminated. In other words, summative evaluations are conducted for purposes of accountability and strategic planning (makes decisions on quality, worth).

Assessment of Student Learning: the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning.5

Student Learning: a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development, processes that have often been considered separate, and even independent of each other. Learning, then, does not mean exclusively or primarily academic instruction, the acquisition of disciplinary content or classroom learning – though the rich definition of learning certainly incorporates and includes all of those things.3
- Direct Methods - any process employed to gather data that requires students to display their knowledge, behavior, or thought processes1
- Indirect Methods - any process employed to gather data that asks students to reflect upon their knowledge, behaviors, or thought processes1
Learning Outcomes: examine cognitive skills that students develop through department interactions; measurable, transferable skill development. These are statements that indicate what students (participants) will know, think, or be able to do as a result of an event, activity, or program.

Program Outcomes: examine what a program or process is to do, achieve, or accomplish for its own improvement and/or in support of institutional or divisional goals; generally numbers, needs, or satisfaction driven.

CAS (The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education): a consortium of professional associations concerned with the development and promulgation of professional standards and guidelines for student support programs and services in institutions of higher learning.2

CAS Standards and Guidelines: published criteria and related statements designed to provide college and university support service providers with established measures against which to evaluate programs and services. A standard uses the auxiliary verbs “must” and “shall,” while a guideline uses the verbs “should” and “may.” Standards are essentials and printed in bold, guidelines are not.2

Self-study (or program review): an internal process by which institutions and programs evaluate their quality and effectiveness in reference to established criteria such as the CAS standards. This process, often used for institutional and specialty accreditation purposes, results in a formal report presenting the findings of the internal evaluation implemented by institutional employees. For accreditation purposes, this report is then validated by a visiting, external committee of peers from comparable institutions or programs.2

Self-Assessment Guide (SAG): an operational version of the CAS Standards and Guidelines designed to provide users with an assessment tool that can be used for self-study or self-assessment purposes. A SAG is available for each functional area for which a CAS standard exists.2

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Comprehensive program reviews serve many purposes. Ideally, they allow the Division to improve programs and services, to identify strengths as well as growth opportunities, and to evaluate whether or not the needs of the student population are being met. In addition, program reviews provide a tool for long-term planning, and budgetary priorities and monitor whether or not the department is supporting the mission and goals of the University and the Student Affairs Division.

The Division of Student Affairs at UNCG has adopted the CAS standards as the framework upon which our internal program review processes are based. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) develops and promulgates standards that enhance the quality of a student’s total learning experience in higher education. CAS is a consortium of associations in higher education whose representatives achieve consensus on the nature and application of standards that guide the work of practitioners. CAS derives its authority from the prestige and traditional influence of its member associations and from the consensus of those members in establishing requirements for high-quality practice.
Principles for Executing a Program Review Process

Fundamental to the success of each program review is the use of a core set of principles. These principles influence the design and execution of the program review process, specifically the external review.

- Principle 1: The primary reason for conducting external reviews is to ensure the continuation of high quality programs and services.

- Principle 2: The process of reviewing programs and services is as important for attaining program quality and effectiveness as is the report or conclusions derived from the reviews.

- Principle 3: All Student Affairs units contribute to the work of the Division and therefore, in the course of a four or five-year cycle, will undergo the program review process.

- Principle 4: Sensitive information will not be shared or reported publicly. It is important to maintain a safe climate for inquiry as we conduct our reviews, particularly our external review process. Participants (i.e., staff, faculty, and students) need to experience trust and confidentiality throughout the review process.

- Principle 5: Broad faculty, staff, and student participation in the reviews is essential in order to gain important insights and ideas for improvement as well as general recognition and understanding of unit strengths (See Program Review Guidelines for information regarding the size and composition of the internal review team).
Oversight and Coordination of the External Review Process

The Office of Student Affairs Assessment assumes the responsibility of overseeing and supporting the implementation for the program review cycle each year. Responsibilities for executing external reviews will be the responsibility of the unit under review. All the costs associated with conducting unit reviews will be absorbed by each respective unit.

Office of Student Affairs Assessment

The particular activities for which the Office of Student Affairs Assessment (or Assessment Council) is responsible are:

- Establishing and maintaining the overall program review cycle;
- Reviewing self-study guides and program review products for completeness of information;
- Ongoing consultation with members of the unit staff (along with Assessment Council liaisons) and external review panel participants to ensure that: the process stays on schedule; that issues/questions arising during unit reviews are addressed; and that all steps in the review process take place;
- Assisting each unit in creating an implementation plan, or a strategy for implementing recommendations resulting from the program review process through the self-study executive summary and progress report.

Unit Responsibilities

- Contributing to the formation of the external review panels; more specifically, the Self-Study Team Coordinator is expected to make nominations to their direct supervisor by providing contact information for each potential panelist and a rationale for their participation in the review (the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs will provide final approval of panel composition);
- Compiling appropriate materials for use by the external review panel by the date specified on the Timeline of Events document;
- Providing electronic or hard copies of the various unit review reports for distribution to review panel members;
- Assisting with the gathering of any additional data or information requested by the external review panel;
- Extending invitations and coordinating meetings for the reviewers’ on-campus meetings within-unit staff and students;
- Managing individual unit external review calendar or timeline;
- Arranging meetings and meeting room space for all external review sessions;
- Developing and overseeing unit external review budgets;
- Participating in unit external review meetings, as necessary.

Reviewer Responsibilities

The particular activities for which the invited reviewer is responsible include:

- Reviewing materials provided by the unit under review;
- Coordinating as necessary with other reviewers regarding, for example, materials needed, on-campus inquiry strategies, and the external review report;
- Affirming the "University of North Carolina Greensboro Contract for Performance or Professional Services" (see Appendix A);
- Providing an external review report no later than 4 weeks following the on-campus visit.
The external review panel, as experts in the field, will be encouraged to evaluate the department in its national as well as university context, and provide insight and feedback on issues and trends particular to the operations being reviewed. The external reviewers will receive and study the organizational and supporting documents (i.e. self-assessment guide (SAG) and applicable works forms A-C) in advance of their campus visit. The campus visit should span a one to two day period to allow sufficient time for the reviewers to meet with members of the unit staff, Division administrators, faculty, students, and others; to visit facilities; and to meet as a review team to discuss points that will be included in their analysis.

A detailed agenda for the visit should be established well in advance of the site visit to allow for adequate time to schedule meetings, prepare materials, and reserve rooms.
External Review Report Format

A specific format has not been established for the external review report given that the format may vary by the program review process of each department and their affiliated national organization.

There are, however, expectations regarding what this external review report should include:

- A summary of the campus visit and external review process,
- A description of what the department or program does exceptionally well,
- A description of what the department or program does satisfactory, and
- A description of what the department or program needs improvement upon (areas for improvement should be listed in order of priority and thoroughly explained, and recommendations to address these key areas should also be provided).
Frequently Asked Questions

If your question does not appear below, please contact Office of Student Affairs Assessment at 336.334.5099.

1. Why do we invite people external to the University to review our units?

   As a Division, we place a premium on innovation, and as a philosophy, we are eager to hear from our colleagues around the country. We believe that we benefit tremendously by getting “outside” perspectives and collecting evaluations from our peers.

2. What sorts of instructions are given to the external reviewers?

   See the Reviewer Responsibility section. We value transparency in the external review process. Reviewers are given materials from the internal review process and any additional documentation upon request.

3. How are the reviewers chosen?

   The Self-Study Team Coordinator (i.e. Director) works with unit leadership to identify persons having necessary expertise. We are concerned with having balance on the review team, both in terms of race, gender, and sexual orientation, but also of focus, approach, and perspective. After the reviewer nominations are approved by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, the Director should contact nominees directly and secure the composition of the reviewing team. Typically, these teams will consist of 2-4 professionals.
Appendix A (Unattached)

The University of North Carolina Greensboro Contract for Performance or Professional Services contract should be reviewed and signed by all reviewers prior to the start of the external review process. Copies of these documents must also be supplied to the Office of Student Affairs Assessment.

This document will be provided to each department electronically via email.