ASSESSMENT
Any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness.  

RESEARCH VS. ASSESSMENT
In the 1960s and 1970s it was routine to use the term “student affairs research” to refer to both assessment and evaluation efforts. The term proved to be confusing, mainly to faculty, who had a more narrow definition of research. Although they share many processes in common, they differ in at least two major respects:

Assessment
- Guides good practice
- Has implications for a single institution
- Can accommodate limited time and resources

Research
- Guides theory and conceptual foundations
- Has broader implications for student affairs and higher education
- Requires extensive time, resources, and expertise

PERSISTENCE
Refers to the act of continuing towards an educational goal (i.e., earning a degree or staying enrolled).

EVALUATION
Any effort to use assessment evidence to improve institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness.  

Formative Evaluations
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
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).

RETENTION
A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution, expressed as a percentage. For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelors (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduates from the previous fall who are again enrolled in the current fall.

ATTRITION
Loss of students through a means other than graduation.

CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT
An environment focused on continuous improvement and where assessment is valued and regular part of business processes.

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.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME
Student centered language that documents what students will learn as part of the experience.

VALUE ADDED
The effect of programming on students. It is focused on the knowledge, skills, and ability gained through an experience over time.

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.

Direct Methods
Any process employed to gather data that requires students to display their knowledge, behavior, or thought processes.

Indirect Methods
Any process employed to gather data that asks students to reflect upon their knowledge, behaviors, or thought processes.

MULTIPLE MEASURES
The assessment technique of using more than one assessment to measure impact.

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.
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.

USE OF RESULTS
Detailed explanation of how assessment will be used to make improvements.

CO-CURRICULAR
Activities that occur outside of the formal academic curriculum.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

Objectives
Reflect important administrative initiatives or improvements a department has identified for the academic year; describe specific ways by which division goals will be accomplished.

Activities
Support an objective or a division goal; an activity is not measured; it is a task that contributes to meeting an objective.

MEASURES
Identify the evidence and methods you will use to determine whether you are achieving objectives.

FINDINGS
The quantifiable data that result when measures are completed.

ACTION PLANS
Strategy for improvement and potential tasks based on the results of findings for the following year.

THE COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (CAS)
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

For additional information about assessment in Student Affairs contact George Still, Director of Assessment at phone: 336.334.4961, email: g_still@uncg.edu or visit the Student Affairs Assessment Website: sa.uncg.edu/assessment.

# Assessment Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT/PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>INTERVIEW</strong></th>
<th><strong>PORTFOLIO</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the use of real-world tasks to measure learning/impact</td>
<td>in person form of data collection where one person asks questions of another person</td>
<td>compilation of students work sample to demonstrate growth and development</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BENCHMARKING</strong></th>
<th><strong>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</strong></th>
<th><strong>PRE/POST TEST</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>using baseline comparative data to compare performance against existing best practice data or use of aspirant institutions</td>
<td>pre-determined goals for an office that measures impact/success</td>
<td>measuring student knowledge entering an experience against their knowledge after that experience</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Norm</strong></th>
<th><strong>LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>QUALITATIVE DATA</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a criterion that is established to which data is compared</td>
<td>measuring the impact our services, programs and facilities have on students’ learning, development, and student success</td>
<td>data collection style focused on using open-ended questions</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMPARATIVE DATA</strong></th>
<th><strong>LONGITUDINAL ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>QUANTITATIVE DATA</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>data source using two or more comparable groups (race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) for data analysis; most often used with a control and experimental design assessment</td>
<td>collecting data on the same individuals over time to demonstrate long-term impacts</td>
<td>data collection style focused on likert scale/closed response questions</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>COMPETENCY</strong></th>
<th><strong>META-ANALYSIS</strong></th>
<th><strong>REFLECTIONS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>use of specific skill/ability to measure student growth or development</td>
<td>combining multiple data collections into on dataset and conducting analysis</td>
<td>practice where students record their thoughts and feelings about an experience</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th><strong>CONTENT ANALYSIS</strong></th>
<th><strong>MIXED METHODS</strong></th>
<th><strong>RUBRIC</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>using existing documentation (letters, manuals, forms, etc.) to conduct data analysis of meaning, perspective, and/or change</td>
<td>the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in research</td>
<td>scoring tool that using gradations of quality to measure quality (poor to excellent)</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>COST EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>NATIONAL STANDARDS ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>determining the longevity of a program based on the cost of administering the program against benefit to students</td>
<td>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)</td>
<td>measuring the level of student satisfaction with our programs, services, and facilities</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>FOCUS GROUPS</strong></th>
<th><strong>NEEDS ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>STUDENT CULTURES AND CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTS ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uses a small group 6–10 people to discuss a specific topic/series of questions to gather information or confirm findings from another instrument</td>
<td>identifying needs of our students (e.g. student perceived, research supported).</td>
<td>assessing the collective perception of campus and student experience (e.g. campus climate, academic environment, residential quality of life)</td>
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<th><strong>OBSERVATIONS</strong></th>
<th><strong>TRACKING</strong></th>
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<td>the process of monitoring/watching students growth and progress toward learning outcomes</td>
<td>monitoring who uses our programs, services and facilities (e.g. raw numbers, frequency, age, class standing, gender, race, and residence)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Measurement Terminology

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE**
the comparison variable or object of comparison in data analysis

**EFFECT SIZE**
the difference between mean of experimental group and control group

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**
the object that is stable or point of comparison for data analysis

**INTER-RATER RELIABILITY**
the standard where two raters review the same data and reach the same results/conclusions

**GENERALIZABILITY**
Does the results from an assessment be generalized to other participants in other situations

**MEAN**
the average computed by summing all data points and dividing by number of observations

**MEDIAN**
determining the middle case and ranking scores around that number

**RANDOM SAMPLE**
sample drawn from the population where everyone in the population has sample chance of being included

**STRATIFIED SAMPLE**
sample drawn in a way where inclusion is based on specific group memberships/demographics

**BIASED SAMPLE**
increasing the likelihood of specific members of the population to be included in the sample

**RELIABILITY**
the consistency, precision, and dependability of measurements

**VALIDITY**
determining where the assessment measures what it was designed to measure

- **Construct validity**
does construction of the assessment measurement offer valid interpretation for variances in performance

- **Content validity**
content analysis that demonstrated that the claimed content and actual content align

- **Internal validity**
does measures in an assessment that measure similar things provide similar results

**RESPONSE RATE**
the number of people who completed a survey

**SATURATION**
the point in qualitative research where a researcher determines there is no new data information to be gathered

**STANDARD DEVIATION**
the measured difference from the mean where 68% of cases call within one standard deviation

**STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE**
the degree that relationships are unlikely to occur based on sampling error