Assessment

We end the planning process as we began it: focusing on standards and guidelines set by national professional organizations and accrediting bodies. These groups provide guidelines to help answer the questions:

- How do students demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes?
- How do I evaluate the effectiveness of my course and my teaching?

Assessing Student Learning

Good Practices For Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs

These Good Practices have been developed by eight regional accrediting commissions in response to the emergence of technologically mediated instruction offered at a distance as an important component of higher education. Among the values which the regional commissions foster among their affiliated colleges and universities is that institutions undertake the assessment and improvement of their quality, giving particular emphasis to student learning. The standards to which member institutions are held regarding assessment include the following:

- As a component of the institution's overall assessment activities, documented assessment of student achievement is conducted in each course and at the completion of the program, by comparing student performance to the intended learning outcomes. Questions to consider:
  1. How is student performance evaluated?
  2. How does evaluated student performance compare to intended learning outcomes?
- When examinations are employed (paper, online, demonstrations of competency, etc.), they take place in circumstances that include firm student identification. The institution otherwise seeks to assure the integrity of student work. Questions to consider:
  1. If proctoring is used, what are the procedures for selecting proctors, establishing student identity, assuring security of test instruments, administering the examinations, and assuring secure and prompt evaluation?
  2. If other methods are used to identify those who take the examination, how is identification firmly established? How are the conditions of the examination (security, time limits, etc.) controlled?
  3. Does the institution have in place effective policies and procedures to assure the integrity of student work?
- Overall program effectiveness is determined by such measures as:
  1. The extent to which student learning matches intended outcomes, including for degree programs both the goals of general education and the objectives of the major.
  2. Student satisfaction, as measured by regular surveys.
  3. Measures of the extent to which library and learning resources are used appropriately by the program's students.
  4. Measures of student competence in fundamental skills such as communication, comprehension, and analysis.
  5. Faculty satisfaction, as measured by regular surveys and by formal and informal peer review processes.

Optional: You may read the entire document, Good Practices For Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs.