Assessment Brief

Important Date
October 17-Degree Program Assessment Plan Deadline

Office of Assessment
The forms needed to complete assessment plan

Wrenette Tedder
Director of Assessment
Womack 102
Box 7580
870.230.5270
tedderw@hsu.edu

Office of Assessment

Welcome to the first issue of *Assessment Brief*, a newsletter of the Office of Assessment. As you know, our mission is to provide support for continuous program and unit improvement for all areas by offering various activities including training and education workshops on assessment and what is expected in the preparation for instructional and program accreditation. The assessment program will insure that the university is fostering the maximum growth and development needed by students. The program will allow for the Office of Assessment to gather data on students' ability to think logically and critically, speak and write effectively, level of mastery of a field of study and other attributes needed to gauge the success of the university and its programs and/or departments.

The Office of Assessment will work closely with administrators, faculty, staff, and students to provide assessment and process improvement support to academic and administrative units. The assessment program will allow improvement in all academic and department units to position Henderson State University as a top university for student learning, not only in Arkansas, but also in the country.

In this newsletter, we will highlight the degree program assessment forms that are to be completed and returned to the Office of Assessment by October 17 and information on completing steps 1, 2, and 3. The forms may be electronically sent by completing the web form or by saving the word template and emailing it to tedderw@hsu.edu. Please save the word template the name of the department and/or program submitting the plan, along with the form name (Form A, Form B, or Form C). Click the following link to go to the assessment forms, http://www.hsu.edu/dept/irs/assessment_forms.htm.

HELPFUL HINT for Form B: If your department and/or program plans on using different parts of the university mission statement for each Intended Outcome you may submit three to five versions of Form B, so each outcome will be associated back to that part of the mission statement.

The newsletter will be used to provide information to all faculty and staff on the progress of the assessment cycle, general information on assessment, and any other topics based on requests. If you have suggestions on topics to be discussed in the *Assessment Brief*, email tedderw@hsu.edu.

****

Step 1
Expand on Statement of Institutional Purpose

1. Select key phrases from Henderson State University's Mission Statement or university goals to link to your program's purpose.
2. Developing a mission statement for your program
   a. State the primary purpose of your program or unit—the primary reason(s) why you perform your major activities or operations
   b. Indicate your stakeholders—include the primary groups of individuals to whom you are providing the program or service and/or those who will benefit
   c. Include your programs function, operations, outcomes, and offerings
   d. Align your mission to the university mission statement
   e. Then ask yourself if your statement distinguishes the program from other units? Your assessment plan should not be applicable to another program or unit.

****

Step 2
Intended Outcomes

Each assessment plan should include three outcomes.

1. Your outcomes should always relate to the mission statement. Make sure outcomes are:
   a. Specific
   b. Measurable
   c. Attainable, but aggressive
   d. Results-oriented
   e. Time-bound

Answer the following questions:
-What type of things are you striving for?
-What types of directions do you want to move in?
-What would you like to accomplish over the next year and why? Indicate a specified time period in which you plan to achieve the outcome.
-What would the "perfect" unit or program look like in terms of outcomes?

2. Focus on outcomes that are very important to you program.
3. Outcomes should be accurate and reliable.
4. Data gathered from the outcome should be meaningful.

****

Step 3
Measures

Include at least three measures for each objective, unless you are using a national normed measure or standardized test and then the one will usually be sufficient.

1. Provide a listing of instruments used as measurements.
2. Make sure the measure is feasible and appropriate.
3. The measure should inform you on how well you are achieving your outcomes.
4. Assessment instruments are submitted with your plan.
5. Include a timeframe in which you are going to collect your data.

****

Methods of Assessment

Quantitative Data	Advantages
Examples: "Closed Ended" questions Checklists Rating Scale (Likert) Multiple-choice questions True/False questions Analysis (statistical): Averages Percents Statistical Comparison	Enhances consistency of response across respondents Easier and faster to tabulate More popular with respondents
	Disadvantages
	May limit responses Takes more time to construct Requires more questions to cover the research topic Casual inferences can not be drawn Other factors may influence results
Qualitative Data	**Advantages**
Examples: "Open-Ended" questions Essays Portfolios Interviews Focus Groups Analysis (inductive): Codes Rubrics Constant Comparison	Allows more freedom of response Easier to construct Permits follow-up by interviewer
	Disadvantages
	Responses tend to be inconsistent in length and content across respondents Both questions and responses subject to misinterpretation Harder to tabulate and synthesize

Adapted from:
Fraenkel, J.R. and Wallen, N.E. (1996). How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Types:
1. Norm Referenced – how does your program measure against another university's same program?
2. Criterion Referenced – how much we accomplish our intended outcome

****

Measurement Instruments
Methods

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
SURVEY: MAIL	- Can survey many people - Not time consuming - Relatively inexpensive - Everyone gets the same instrument - Objective Interpretation	- Difficult to get much detail - Difficult to get correct addresses - Problems with interpreting questions - Problem getting surveys completed and returned
SURVEY: GROUP-ADMINISTERED	- Can survey many people - Not time consuming - Relatively inexpensive - Everyone gets the same instrument - Objective interpretation	- Problems with interpreting questions - Difficult to get much detail
SURVEY: TELEPHONE	- Able to ask for more detail - Everyone gets same instrument	- Difficult reaching people - Lack of anonymity
INTERVIEW	- Researcher knows how people are interpreting questions - Able to ask for more detail	- Time consuming - Subjective interpretation - Can be expensive - Can be difficult to analyze
FOCUS GROUP	- Researcher knows how people are interpreting questions - Able to ask for more detail - Able to interview multiple people at one time, cost effective - Responses from one person provide stimulus for other people	- Group setting may inhibit some people - Sometimes hard to coordinate multiple schedules - Responses from one person provide stimulus for other people

OBSERVATION	➤ Objective interpretation ➤ Low burden for people providing data	➤ Time consuming ➤ Some items are not observable ➤ Can be expensive ➤ Participant behavior may be affected by observer presence
RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS	➤ Objective interpretation ➤ Low burden for people providing data ➤ Relatively inexpensive	➤ May not correspond to what researcher wants ➤ May be incomplete or require additional interpretation ➤ May need special permission to use
PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT	➤ Can focus on process and/or product ➤ Prompts may be oral or written ➤ Authentic to the discipline ➤ Directions must be clear ➤ Scoring based on criteria or rubric	➤ Scores interpreted in terms of quality may be subjective ➤ May be difficult to pre-determine scoring criteria
WRITING ASSESSMENT	➤ Subset of performance assessments ➤ Scoring based on one or more traits or dimensions of quality ➤ Students must know what they are to do, clear performance criteria and scoring rules	➤ Scores interpreted in terms of quality and may be subjective ➤ Scores may be based on judgment ➤ Expectations may not be clear
PORTFOLIOS	➤ Collection of a board range of work ➤ Students may be asked to select a best price ➤ Individual pieces can be scored based on objective, public criteria	➤ Scores interpreted in terms of quality and may be subjective ➤ Score may be based on judgment

Useful Links

North Carolina State University
http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/resource.htm

Texas State University
http://www.swt.edu/effective/PlAssessLinks1.htm

American Association For Higher Education
http://www.aahe.org/assessment/web.htm

University of Central Florida
http://oeas.ucf.edu/

Oklahoma State University
http://www.okstate.edu/assess/