



## What is Program Assessment?

Assessment is a systematic process of gathering, reviewing and using important quantitative and qualitative data and information from multiple and diverse sources about educational programs, for the purpose of improving student learning, and evaluating whether academic and learning standards are being met.

### Purposes of program assessment

The four main purposes of program assessment are:

1. **To improve** – the assessment process should provide feedback to determine how the program can be improved.
2. **To inform** – the assessment process should inform faculty and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the program.
3. **To prove** – the assessment process should encapsulate and demonstrate to students, faculty, staff and outsiders what the program is accomplishing.
4. **To support** – the assessment process should provide support for campus decision-making activities such as program review and strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities.

### Effective program assessment helps you answer three questions:

1. What are you trying to do?
2. How well are you doing it?
3. How (using the answers to 1. and 2.) can you improve?

## **Component of Programme Assessment:**

### **Effective program assessment is generally**

- ***Systematic.*** It is an orderly and open method of acquiring assessment information over time.
- ***Built around the department mission statement.*** It is an integral part of the department or program.
- ***Ongoing and cumulative.*** Over time, assessment efforts build a body of evidence to improve programs.
- ***Multi-faceted.*** Assessment information is collected on multiple dimensions, using multiple methods and sources.
- ***Pragmatic.*** Assessment is used to improve the campus environment, not simply collected and filed away.
- ***Faculty-designed and implemented,*** not imposed from the top down.

*(Adapted from California State University, Chico, Assessment Plan (1998) and the Ball State University)*

## **Most Common Misconceptions about Programme Assessment**

**Misconception 1:** The results of assessment will be used to evaluate faculty performance.

**Misconception 2:** Our program is working well, our students are learning; we don't need to bother with assessment.

**Misconception 3:** We will assign a single faculty member to conduct the assessment. Too many opinions would only delay and hinder the process.

**Misconception 4:** The administration might use the results to eliminate some of the department's programs.

**Misconception 5:** Assessment is a waste of time and does not benefit the students.

**Misconception 6:** We will come up with an assessment plan for this year and use it every year thereafter.

**Misconception 7:** Program assessment sounds like a good idea, but it is time-consuming and complex.