

Senate Document SD 98-22
Supersedes SD 92-7
Supersedes SD 94-13
(Approved, 4/12/1999)
(Amended, 10/16/2000)
(Amended, 10/28/2002)
(Amended, 9/8/2003)

(Superseded by SD 15-6)

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne

Educational Policy Committee

MEMORANDUM

To: Fort Wayne Senate
From: Educational Policy Committee, Linda Wright-Bower, Chair
Subject: The Plan for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement
Date: March 17, 1999
Disposition: To the Presiding Officer for implementation

Whereas, the Assessment Council has approved the attached update to the IPFW Assessment Plan; and

Whereas, the Educational Policy Council has also approved the document;

Be it Resolved, that the attached document supersede SD 92-7 and SD 94-13.

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THE PLAN FOR THE ASSESSMENT
OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne

March, 1999

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The Plan for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement

I. INTRODUCTION

The plan for assessing and documenting student academic achievement that follows is the result of enabling legislation adopted by the Fort Wayne Senate (SD 92-7), November 9, 1992, upon recommendation of the Educational Policy Committee. The legislation provided for the establishment of a Steering Committee for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement (SCASAA) with representation from each of the schools/divisions of IPFW, Student Academic Counseling Services (now Academic Counseling and Career Services), and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; provided guidelines to the committee for developing an institution-wide plan consistent with the mission of Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne and accreditation Criterion III of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; and, in addition, provided for submission of the plan, including administration of the plan, to the Senate for approval.

This implementation of the plan for assessment of student academic achievement was further defined in SD 94-13, which was adopted 12-12-94 and amended 2-10-97. The policy included a plan for assessing the general education program, administering assessment programs for degree and certificate programs, and forming an Assessment Council as a successor to SCASAA.

The assessment plan described in this document reflects experience with implementation of assessment measures, procedures adopted by the Assessment Council, an update to the plan for assessment of the General Education program, and other changes. As a result, it provides a consolidated description of current policies and procedures, and it will also serve as a baseline for the continued improvement of the assessment plan.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

Assessment plans are designed to evaluate whether the goals of the general education program, and of the respective certificate and degree programs, are being achieved. The goals of the general education program, and of each certificate and degree program, have been approved separately. Review of mission and goals is periodically undertaken by schools, divisions, and departments, culminating in Senate approval of any revisions. Conclusions about the achievement of program goals, obtained through assessment of student academic achievement, are expected to lead to improvement of academic programs and greater success in achieving program goals.

III. THE IPFW ASSESSMENT PLAN

The IPFW assessment plan focuses on two primary areas: assessment of student academic achievement in general education and assessment of student academic achievement in the majors.

A. General Education

The general-education portion of the plan provides for documenting achievement in each part of the general education program, i.e. the foundation skills, the knowledge domains, creative and artistic expression, and inquiry and analysis.

1. General Education Assessment Principles

- a. Measures of student academic achievement in General Education will be selected and implemented according to generally recognized best practices in general-education assessment.
- b. The assessment plan will be designed to measure program goals, not the goals of individual courses.
- c. To ensure a reasonable degree of consistency across departments and schools, all courses to be included in the General Education program will be approved by the General Education Subcommittee based on the criteria approved by the IPFW Senate in SD 99-25. To ensure continuity, the GES will periodically conduct a review of approved courses.
- d. The General Education Assessment Plan and its administration will be consistent with the General Standards for Assessment Plans outlined in III.B.1. below, and with the principles of assessment enumerated in Appendix B.

2. Responsibility for Assessment

Development, administration, and interpretation of all assessment measures will be the responsibility of the General Education Subcommittee.

3. Annual Reports

The General Education Subcommittee will prepare an annual report for the Assessment Council and the Educational Policy Committee. The report will describe the assessment measures and summarize findings about student academic achievement in the General Education program. The report will also describe

conclusions and actions based on these findings about achievement of the goals of the General Education program.

B. Degree and Certificate Programs

Assessment plans for degree and certificate programs describe the means used to assess and document student academic achievement in each of the academic majors at IPFW. Further, the plans describe the processes used to reach conclusions about whether the goals for the program are being achieved. The purpose of assessment is program improvement, with the focus on the goals of the program, rather than the achievement of the student in completing the requirements of the program.

1. General Standards for Assessment Plans

- a. Departments and divisions will develop a plan for each certificate, associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree/major/concentration that has unique goals. Departments are encouraged to develop flexible plans which will provide them with useful data.
- b. Measures of student academic achievement will be selected and applied to promote confidence in the evidence they yield. To that end, every assessment plan will systematically utilize multiple measures of student learning, taken at multiple points in time during an academic program, measuring multiple constituencies.
- c. Measures of student academic achievement may include both direct and indirect measures. Examples of measures in each category are shown in Appendix C.
- d. The description of each measure will include a description of how the assessment measure will be conducted, the scope (all students/graduates, a random sample, etc.), the frequency (every term, annually, every two years, etc.) and who is responsible for conducting it, assembling the data, and reaching conclusions.
- e. Measures may be based on courses which are already being taught or on other requirements, such as portfolios, which have already been incorporated into requirements for the degree or certificate program.
- f. Each assessment plan will describe the process that will be used to reach conclusions from assessment data about whether program goals are being achieved.
- g. Each assessment plan will identify the process for making changes in the program, based on conclusions from assessment data, which are expected to improve student achievement of the goals.

- h. Each assessment plan will be structured to address all of the goals of the program.
 - i. Each assessment plan will include a process for reviewing the success of the plan in identifying needs for program improvement and the frequency of review of the plan.
 - j. Assessment plans and updates to these plans must be approved by the school/division and then by the Assessment Council.
2. Responsibility for Assessment of the Majors

Development, validation, and interpretation of the assessment plans, administration of the measures, and analysis of the results of measuring student academic achievement will be the responsibility of the unit (usually a department) that offers the program.

IV. ANNUAL REPORTS

The annual reports, prepared by the department/division/program and by the school, summarize the efforts to assess student academic achievement and to respond to the findings.

A. Department/division/program reports

- 1. The report should describe the assessment activities completed during the previous year and described in the assessment plan for each program sponsored by the unit.
- 2. For each program, the report should describe findings from the assessment activities as appropriate.
- 3. For each program, the report should describe conclusions about the achievement of program goals based on the findings as appropriate.
- 4. For each program, the report should describe actions that will be taken to improve the program based on these conclusions as appropriate.
- 5. The report should be completed by the deadline established by the school/division or, in the case of programs that do not report through a school, the deadline established by the Assessment Council.

B. The school report

- 1. Each school/division then reviews the departmental reports, monitors departmental completion of the plans for assessment, evaluates departmental analysis of results,

guides the process of changing the program so that goals will be achieved, and considers whether changes in the assessment plan are needed in order to provide better evidence of achievement. The recommendations from the school-level review are forwarded to the respective departments/programs.

2. Each school and division develops a report on its review and incorporates its own comments and recommendations. With the concurrence of the dean or director, the school/division report is forwarded to the Assessment Council by January 15 of each year.

V. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN

A. Purpose

The administration of the plan for assessment of student academic achievement includes monitoring compliance with the provisions of the IPFW assessment plan, reviewing the translation of assessment data into improved academic achievement in general education and in the academic majors, and proposing revisions in the campus, General Education, and program assessment plans as experience and changing academic goals warrant.

B. Responsibility

1. Responsibility for establishment of a plan for the assessment of student academic achievement belongs to the Fort Wayne Senate.
2. Responsibility for the administration of the campus plan for the assessment of student academic achievement belongs to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and is assigned by the Vice Chancellor to a Director of Assessment who shall be advised by an Assessment Council.
3. Responsibility for the school assessment plan belongs to the dean, through the governance processes of the school.
4. Responsibility for the department/division/program assessment plan belongs to the chair/director, through the governance processes of the department/division.

VI. THE ASSESSMENT COUNCIL

A. Responsibilities

The council shall review the annual assessment reports of the General Education Subcommittee, of the schools/divisions, and of any programs that do not report through a school, and shall recommend to the Vice Chancellor whether each is acceptable. Based upon the review, the council shall also make recommendations to the Vice

Chancellor, the Educational Policy Committee, schools and divisions, or other university committees and councils, as appropriate. Recommendations to the EPC should relate to how the assessment plan should be amended and recommendations to the VCAA should relate to how IPFW should allocate resources in the short- and long-term to advance student academic achievement.

Recommendations to schools/divisions and to departments/programs that do not report through a school should address possibilities for enhancing the units' assessment activities. In addition, the council shall incorporate its findings and recommendations in an annual report through the Educational Policy Committee to the Fort Wayne Senate about the status of the assessment of student academic achievement and its effectiveness in improving student learning.

B. Composition

The Assessment Council shall consist of the Director of Assessment (who will serve as a non-voting member), the Academic Affairs staff member designated by the VCAA, the chair of the General Education Subcommittee, a representative from the Educational Policy Committee, representatives from Academic Counseling and Career Services (ACCS) and General Studies, and one each from the Schools/Divisions of Arts and Sciences; Business and Management Sciences; Education; Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science; Visual and Performing Arts; Health Sciences; and Public and Environmental Affairs. The school/division members shall be faculty with responsibility for assessment in their departments or schools, selected for renewable three-year terms by the unit's preferred procedures. The council shall elect its own chair.

VII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. North Central Association Standards for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement

1. The plan is linked to the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution for student learning and academic achievement, including learning in general education and in the major.

IPFW, a comprehensive university, is composed of eight academic schools and divisions and a division of academic counseling and career services, each with a different academic mission. Accordingly, the assessment plan is decentralized to a significant degree. Responsibility for defining academic missions, goals, and objectives and the corresponding plans for assessing student academic achievement in the majors devolves upon the schools/divisions and the departments.

Consequently, each academic unit is charged with demonstrating the link between its mission and its assessment plan. Responsibility for defining the goals and objectives of general education and the corresponding plan for assessing student academic

achievement in general education devolves upon the General Education Subcommittee.

2. The faculty have participated in the development of the institution's plan, and the plan is institution-wide in conceptualization and scope.

The IPFW plan for documenting student academic achievement is the result of enabling legislation adopted by the Fort Wayne Senate upon recommendation of the Educational Policy Committee, and the plan has been approved by the Senate. The original plan was devised by the Steering Committee for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement (SCASAA), a steering committee authorized by Senate legislation with representation from each of the schools/divisions, Student Academic Counseling Services, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Subsequent IPFW Senate legislation established an Assessment Council as the successor to SCASAA.

Plans for assessing achievement in the majors originated at the department level and were submitted via established school/division governance procedures. Plans for assessing achievement in general education originated with the General Education Subcommittee.

All plans were evaluated under guidelines developed by SCASAA and refined by the Assessment Council. The guidelines for plans for assessing student academic achievement in the major specify that each plan must include an internal means of assessment at exit, an external means of assessment at exit, and, for most programs, an interim (progress in program) means of assessment. Similar guidelines for the plan for assessing achievement in general education embody the core principles of multiple measures and continuous assessment.

3. The assessment program will lead to institutional improvement when it is implemented.

Every major plan and the general education plan provide for the collection and analysis of information yielded by multiple measures; for the revision of goals and program content, for the improvement of student learning; for regular review of the assessment plans; and for reporting and review of findings and actions through school/division channels to the Assessment Council. The Assessment Council is charged with monitoring the plan and evaluating its success.

4. The timeline for the assessment program is appropriate and realistic.

The original program was scheduled for phased implementation beginning in Spring 1994. Subsequent steps in the implementation plan allowed sufficient time for development and administration of the various parts of the plan.

5. The plan provides for appropriate administration of the assessment program.

The provisions for administration reflect the culture and traditions of governance and administration at IPFW. Responsibility for the plan is assigned to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs with delegation of responsibility to provide for decision-making at the appropriate level, maintenance of the program, and evaluation within a large and academically decentralized institution.

APPENDIX B. IPFW Principles of Assessment

The IPFW plan for the assessment of student academic achievement is based upon the principles of assessment established by the North Central Association, principles of sound research methodology, and principles of educational and administrative philosophy that are part of the traditions of the institution. The principles have guided the construction of the plan, are embedded in the administration of the plan, and will guide changes to reflect knowledge gained from assessment and changes in policies and circumstances at the institution.

The underlying principles are:

1. The plan is linked to the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution.
2. The plan is institution-wide in conceptualization and scope.
3. The plan is designed to foster institutional improvement, benefiting both students and programs through intentional linkages between program goals and efforts to improve students' achievement of those goals.
4. The plan is designed to ensure institutional improvement and to improve the assessment plan itself.
5. The data and conclusions generated through assessment are intended to improve programs rather than evaluate individual students.
6. The tasks of developing, administering, and improving the components of the assessment program are delegated to the unit best qualified to consider each component of the plan.
7. Faculty responsibility for assessment is ensured by intentional linkages between the plan and the institution's established patterns of governance and administration.
8. The assessment plan is coordinated with related ongoing institutional practices that promote learning, such as program review and accreditation.

9. The assessment plan requires multiple measures of student academic achievement in order to overcome the limitations of any single source of evidence about achievement.
10. The assessment plan is considered to be dynamic rather than fixed. Experience with assessment and the effectiveness of the plan will lead to modifications by units of their plans.

APPENDIX C. EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT MEASURES

1. Examples of Interim Measures
 - a. Review for admission to an advanced stage of the program
 - b. Achievement in courses with prerequisites, linked to program goals
 - c. Portfolio reviews
 - d. Curriculum embedded measures, linked to program goals
 - e. Mid-program examinations
2. Examples of Internal Measures at or after Graduation
 - a. Comprehensive examinations
 - b. Senior papers, design projects, or juried performances
 - c. Portfolio reviews
 - d. Capstone course measures, linked to program goals
3. Examples of External Measures at or after Graduation
 - a. Evaluations of achievement conducted by visitors
 - b. Performance on licensing, certification, and registration examinations
 - c. Performance on standardized examinations
 - d. Graduate and alumni evaluations of achievement of program goals
 - e. Employer evaluations of achievement of program goals and of preparation of graduates
 - f. Graduate and professional school acceptance rates

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APPENDIX D. CURRENT PROCEDURES USED BY THE ASSESSMENT COUNCIL TO REVIEW SCHOOL AND DIVISION ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS

The Assessment Council process for review of school and division annual assessment reports is based on a form which considers the degree to which the report includes evidence of completion of assessment measures, findings based on the measures, evidence about conclusions based on the findings, and evidence that the conclusions have led to actions to improve the program(s). The form also provides an opportunity for Council comments on the assessment activities and the department/division report of these activities. The process used by the Council may change without affecting the IPFW assessment plan and without any need for subsequent Senate action. A sample of the worksheet used for this purpose is attached for information only.

APPENDIX D., Continued
 SAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT COUNCIL WORKSHEET
 USED FOR REVIEW OF SCHOOL/DIVISION/DEPARTMENT
 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS

DEPARTMENT:

Assessment Report for:			
All measures completed?	Y	N	NA
Measures linked to program goals?	Y	N	
Findings: sufficient data in Summarized form?	Y	N	NA
Conclusions based on data?	Y	N	NA
Are assessment results being used for improvement and/or to document the current program's success?	Y	N	NA
Prior year recommendations Implemented?	Y	N	NA
Other:			
Summary statement			

COMMENTS: