

**Oklahoma State University**  
**Executive Summary: 2010-2011 Assessment Activity**

**Entry-Level Assessment**

The purpose of entry-level assessment is to assist academic advisors in making placement decisions that will give students the best possible chance of academic success. Three methods are used to assess students' readiness for college level coursework: the ACT (consisting of four subtests in English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science Reasoning), the Entry-Level Placement Analysis (ELPA, developed by OSU), and the Computer Adaptive Placement and Support System (COMPASS) test published by ACT.

All enrolled new students (new freshmen and transfer students with fewer than 24 credit hours) receive a Student Assessment Report that summarizes:

- The student's academic summary (ACT scores, high school GPA, high school class rank)
- The student's ELPA results
- The curricular and performance deficiencies that require remediation, and
- The recommendations and requirements for course placement based on OSU's guidelines as approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Reports are produced by the Office of Institutional Research and Information Management and are distributed to students by the New Student Orientation Office. Reports are also included in each student's file and are available to advisors. The assessment process is implemented immediately prior to the spring and fall enrollment periods. Students identified with skill deficiencies through this process are required to complete remedial courses within the first 24 hours of college credit.

ACT subscores in Reading, English, Mathematics, and Science Reasoning of 19 or above (or SAT equivalent where available) automatically qualify students for college-level coursework (1000-level) in that subject area. The ACT subscore in Reading is also used to indicate readiness for introductory college courses that require extensive reading (Sociology, Political Science, Psychology, History, Economics, and Philosophy). The ELPA model is based on the success of past OSU freshmen with similar academic records and is updated regularly. ELPA produces a predicted grade index for each student that represents the grade the student is predicted to obtain in selected entry-level courses. Students identified as having curricular deficiencies from ACT score and the ELPA in a particular subject area may choose to take the ACT COMPASS placement test to qualify for college-level courses. The COMPASS tests are provided free of charge to students at the OSU Testing Center and can also be completed at NOC-Stillwater, NOC-Tonkawa, NOC-Enid, OSU-OKC, and OSU-Tulsa. COMPASS tests are available in Mathematics, Reading and English. Qualification for 1000-level science courses is obtained through receipt of passing scores on both the Reading and Mathematics subject tests.

In 2010-2011, a total of 3,961 enrolled students with fewer than 24 credit hours were assessed using the entry-level assessment process. There were 316 (8.0% of the total number enrolled)



students who were identified as having performance deficiencies and were required to take at least one remedial course – 46 (1.2%) in English, 217 (5.5%) in math, 116 (2.9%) in Science, and 44 (1.1%) in Reading.

One additional study of entry-level students was performed in 2010-2011: The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE). The BCSSE asks new students questions about their high school experiences and college plans and can be paired with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that is administered to freshmen and seniors during the spring semester. Detailed results from the BCSSE will be posted on the OSU Survey Results website (<http://tinyurl.com/osusurveys>) when they are available.

## **General Education Assessment**

Information about OSU's general education learner goals is available on the OSU website (<http://academicaffairs.okstate.edu/current-students/64-general-education-overview>). Three approaches are used every year to evaluate the general education program: Institutional Portfolios, Review of General Education Course Database, and college-, department-, and program-level approaches. In 2010-2011 OSU also participated in the ETS Proficiency Profile.

Institutional portfolios provide direct evidence of student achievement of the overall goals of general education. Institutional portfolios have been developed in five areas that represent the overall goals of the general education program: written communication, critical thinking, math problem solving, science problem solving, and diversity. Since 2001 OSU has collected samples of student work that represent student achievement of the general education goals from courses across campus. These student work samples are then assessed by a panel of faculty members using rubrics. The results from this process provide direct evidence of student achievement of the general education goals. To make the best use of limited resources institutional portfolios are not collected in every area every year. A new rotational schedule was designed by the Committee for the Assessment of General Education (CAGE) in 2011 to allow for a larger number of samples of student work to be assessed in a single year. In 2010-2011 544 samples of student work were collected and evaluated by a panel of faculty members using the written communication rubric that was developed and approved by OSU faculty members. The rubric is scored on a range of 1-5 where 1 is low and 5 is high. Of the 544 artifacts, 12 (2.2%) were assigned a score of 1, 117 (21.5%) were assigned a score of 2, 241 (44.3%) were assigned a score of 3, 144 (26.5%) were assigned a score of 4, and 30 (5.5%) were assigned a score of 5. The average score of 3.12 is the highest average score in this area to date. However, changes in the sampling strategy may have impacted the overall average score. The full report will be posted on the OSU General Education Assessment website when it is available (<http://tinyurl.com/osugened>).

The General Education Advisory Council (GEAC) periodically evaluates every general education course to ensure alignment with the goals of the general education program. As part of this certification process instructors identify which general education goals are associated with the course, describe the course activities that provide students the opportunity to achieve the goals, and explain how student achievement of the goals is assessed within the course. Each course with a general education designation is reviewed every three years.



Many colleges, departments, and programs include elements from the general education goals in their own assessment efforts. These assessment activities are included in the program outcomes assessment section.

The ETS Proficiency Profile was administered to 161 freshmen and 137 seniors. The test measured critical thinking and writing. Additional information about the test is available on the ETS website (<http://www.ets.org/proficiencyprofile/about/vsa/>).

Based on the average ACT score for freshman examinees, critical thinking and writing scores were “at expected.” Based on the average ACT score for senior examinees, critical thinking and writing scores were “above expected.”

The estimated learning gains between the freshman and senior year were “above expected.” Additional information about the test results is available on the University Assessment and Testing website (<http://tinyurl.com/osuets>).

In response to these findings, the institution has decided to continue to fund the *Provost’s Faculty Development Initiative: Focus on General Education* in 2011-2012. In addition, a task force has been formed to study the general education program and make recommendations for improving the general education program.

All results will be shared broadly with faculty members and relevant councils and committees at OSU and publicly on the OSU general education assessment website (<http://tinyurl.com/osugened>). Additional discussions about how to respond to results and take steps to improve will be held during the sharing of results.

### **Program Outcomes Assessment**

All OSU degree programs are required to have an outcomes assessment plan and to provide an annual report on assessment activity. Detailed reports for each program can be obtained from the program outcomes assessment website: <http://tinyurl.com/osureports>

OSU awards more than \$100,000 in assessment funds (see <http://tinyurl.com/osureport>) each year for academic program outcomes assessment. Program outcomes assessment is also a critical component of each program’s 5-year Academic Program Review.

Undergraduate degree programs reported 229 assessment methods implemented for program outcomes assessment. The most commonly reported assessment methods were:

- Panel review of student work (63 reports, 28% of the total)
- Exams (course, licensure, standardized, etc.) (56 reports, 24% of the total)
- Performance assessment (23 reports, 10% of the total)
- Alumni or exit survey (18 reports, 8% of the total)
- Capstone or major course project (18 reports, 8% of the total)



- Internship or practicum evaluation (17 reports, 7% of the total)
- Other methods used included portfolios, exit or advising interviews, transcript analysis or analysis of other data, and employer survey.

Graduate degree programs reported 266 assessment methods implemented for program outcomes assessment. The most commonly reported assessment methods were:

- Dissertation or thesis (including proposal and defense) (66 reports, 25% of the total)
- Oral presentations (62 reports, 23% of the total)
- Alumni survey (36 reports, 14% of the total)
- Comprehensive or qualifying exam (22 reports, 8% of the total)
- Panel review of projects (14 reports, 5% of the total)

Other methods used included creative components, course projects, faculty review of student performance, portfolios, performance assessment, course exams, and practicum evaluations.

Undergraduate degree programs reported 193 uses of program outcomes assessment data (each use may represent more than one assessment method and some methods resulted in more than one use).

The most common use of program outcomes assessment data for undergraduate degree programs was to monitor and ensure student achievement of the learning outcome. Other common uses for undergraduate degree programs included:

- Modify the assessment process (41 uses, 21% of the total)
- Modify course content (24 uses, 12% of the total)
- Discuss possible program improvements (23 uses, 12% of the total)
- Modify curriculum (18 uses, 9% of the total)
- Monitor recent curricular changes (9 uses, 5% of the total)

Other uses included recommended participation in study abroad experiences, curriculum mapping, changes to advising, targeted hiring, student communication, development of new courses, and modification of admissions requirements.

Graduate degree programs reported 169 uses of program assessment data (each use may represent more than one assessment method and some methods resulted in more than one use).

The most common use of program outcomes assessment data for graduate degree programs was to monitor and ensure student achievement of the learning outcome. Other common uses for graduate degree programs included:

- Modify the assessment process (33 uses, 20% of the total)
- Modify course content (14 uses, 8% of the total)
- Discuss possible program improvements (14 uses, 8% of the total)
- Monitor recent curricular change (9 uses, 5% of the total)
- Modify curriculum (4 uses, 2% of the total)
- Develop new course (4 uses, 2% of the total)



Other uses included changes to advising, develop curriculum map, enhance communication with students, modify course offerings, increase financial support for travel and teaching assistants, request to fill faculty position, and tutoring.

The large number of uses of program outcomes assessment demonstrates that it is an integral and essential element of OSU's commitment to improving student learning.

## **Student Satisfaction**

Surveys of alumni are conducted every year – surveys of alumni from undergraduate programs are conducted in even numbered years and surveys of alumni from graduate programs are conducted in odd numbered years. Current graduate students' satisfaction is surveyed in even numbered years (last completed in spring, 2010).

The 2011 Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs (<http://tinyurl.com/osusurveys>) targeted individuals who graduated from a graduate degree program in 2005 and 2009. Alumni are contacted through email (when a current email address is available), and over the phone. A total of 978 alumni completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 45.1%. When adjusted for alumni for whom a telephone number could not be located and alumni who could not be reached through email, the response rate to the survey was 58.9%. Key findings from the 2011 Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs:

- 92% of doctoral degree respondents and 89% of master's degree respondents were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their overall educational experience at OSU.
- 89% of respondents were employed and only 4% were currently seeking employment (7% were not employed and not seeking employment).
- 90% of employed alumni reported that their OSU education had prepared them very well or adequately for their current position.
- 27% of alumni who were employed full-time reported salaries greater than \$75,000. The most frequently reported salary range was \$35,000 - \$44,999 (17%).
- 57% of respondents were currently living in Oklahoma (17% in Stillwater, 40% in other Oklahoma communities). Texas was the second most common state of residence (12% of respondents).

Each graduate program was asked to submit a set of questions in addition to those described above. The program-specific questions covered many topics, depending on the interest area of each program, including advising, student learning outcomes, teaching skills, time-to-degree, satisfaction with specific courses or program components, strengths and weaknesses of the program, suggested curricular changes, and other satisfaction topics. Results of the program-specific questions were summarized and shared with programs. It is not possible to summarize the results of the program-specific questions here because the questions were different for each program.

## **Graduate Student Assessment**



The primary method for assessing graduate students' achievement of learning outcomes is program outcomes assessment and is described in that section of this executive summary. Full details on each program's analysis of student learning and findings are available online: <http://tinyurl.com/osureports>.

## Summary

OSU is highly committed to improving student learning through entry-level assessment, general education assessment, program outcomes assessment, and student satisfaction assessment. Assessment activity in 2010-2011 resulted in numerous improvements to courses, programs, departments, and colleges and supported OSU's vision for advancing the quality of life in Oklahoma by fulfilling the instructional, research, and outreach obligations of a first-class, land-grant educational system.

