

Oklahoma State University
Executive Summary: 2011-2012 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), the Computer Adaptive Placement and Support System (COMPASS) test published by ACT, and, in the area of mathematics, the Assessment of Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS).

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 deficiencies through this process are required to complete remedial courses within the first 24 hours of college credit.

Students with ACT subscores in Reading, English, Mathematics, and Science Reasoning of 19 or above (or SAT equivalent where available) are not required to complete remedial or developmental coursework in those subject areas. 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 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 in English, reading, or science. Students may take the ALEKS exam to clear remedial course requirements in mathematics. The COMPASS and ALEKS 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.



In 2011-2012, a total of 4,516 admitted and enrolled students with fewer than 24 credit hours were assessed using the entry-level assessment process. After all entry-level assessment was completed, 413 students (9.0% of the total new enrolled) were required to take at least one remedial course. Of the 4,516 new students in 2011-2012, 43 (1.0%) were required to enroll in remedial English classes, 260 (5.8%) in remedial math classes, 134 (3.0%) in remedial science classes, and 78 (1.7%) in remedial reading classes.

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) was administered in August of 2011 to incoming freshmen. 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 are available on the OSU Survey Results website (<http://tinyurl.com/osusurveys>). The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered in the spring of 2012. Results from the NSSE will be discussed in more detail later in this summary.

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 2011-2012 OSU also participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement.

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 2011-2012 458 samples of student work were collected and evaluated by a panel of faculty members using the critical thinking 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 458 artifacts, 21 were assigned a score of 1 (4.6%), 115 were assigned a score of 2 (25.1%), 199 were assigned a score of 3 (43.4%), 104 were assigned a score of 4 (22.7%), and 19 were assigned a score of 5 (4.1%). The average score across all samples was 2.97. This score is statistically similar to the scores in most of the other years when critical thinking was assessed (except 2007 which was significantly lower). Seniors had significantly higher scores than freshmen ($p = 0.002$,



$d = 0.484$) for a percentile gain of 18. In other words, the average senior scored higher than 68 percent of freshmen. 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 table below summarizes results on items from the NSSE that relate to general education. A full report from the NSSE will be available in early 2013 on the University Assessment and Testing website (<http://uat.okstate.edu>).

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	OSU's Result for First Year Students	OSU's Result for Senior Students
Acquiring a broad general education	Similar	Higher
Writing clearly and effectively	Similar	Similar
Thinking critically and analytically	Similar	Similar
Analyzing quantitative problems	Similar	Higher
Working effectively with others	Similar	Higher
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	Similar	Similar
Solving complex real-world problems	Similar	Similar
Contributing to the welfare of your community	Similar	Similar

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. A second improvement initiative was led by the registrar's office to clarify the institutional general education requirements. Specifically, the institution clarified a requirement for lower-division general education courses. This requirement was not uniformly applied across degree sheets. After discussion and consideration by multiple administrative committees, this institutional requirement was removed. Third, the General Education Task Force, formed in 2011, continues its work to provide recommendations on improving the general education program. The Task Force has examined data from general education assessment to inform its discussions.



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 to departments 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 246 assessment methods implemented for program outcomes assessment (presented in the tables on the preceding pages). The most commonly reported assessment methods were:

- Panel review of student work (54 reports, 22% of the total)
- Exams (course, licensure, standardized, etc.) (48 reports, 20% of the total)
- Portfolio (34 reports, 14% of the total)
- Capstone or major course project (30 reports, 12% of the total)
- Exit interview, exit exam, or exit survey (21 reports, 9% of the total)
- Alumni survey (16 reports, 7% of the total)

Other methods used included internship or practicum evaluation, comprehensive exams, transcript analysis, focus groups, and external reviews.

Graduate degree programs reported 242 assessment methods implemented for program outcomes assessment (presented in the tables later in this document). The most commonly reported assessment methods were:

- Dissertation, thesis, or creative component (including proposal or final product) (55 reports, 23% of the total)
- Major course project (30 reports, 12% of the total)
- Oral presentations (27 reports, 11% of the total)
- Dissertation, thesis, or creative component defense presentation (26 reports, 11% of the total)
- Comprehensive or qualifying exam (24 reports, 10% of the total)
- Exams (course, licensure, certification, standardized, or preliminary) (17 reports, 7% of the total)

Other methods used included alumni survey, panel review of student work, research productivity, exit interview, exam, or survey, portfolio, internship or practicum evaluation, performance assessment, international experience, or demographic review.



Undergraduate degree programs reported 242 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 (46 uses, 20% of the total)
- Modify course content (34 uses, 14% of the total)
- Modify curriculum (23 uses, 10% of the total)
- Discuss possible program improvements (21 uses, 9% of the total)
- Curriculum mapping (11 uses, 5% of the total)

Other uses included developing learning tools, proposing and developing a new course, improving feedback to students, faculty development, changes to recruitment procedures, change the program's name and degree options, develop supports for transfer students, and change instructor assignments.

Graduate degree programs reported 195 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 (35 uses, 18% of the total)
- Modify course content (19 uses, 10% of the total)
- Discuss possible program improvements (12 uses, 6% of the total)
- Improve communication with students and enhance feedback (9 uses, 5% of the total)
- Track students' progress for accreditation needs (8 uses, 4% of the total)
- Revise recruitment process (7 uses, 4% of the total)
- Modify curriculum (5 uses, 3% of the total).

Other uses included encourage use of the Writing Center, monitor recent curriculum change, change instructor assignments, develop new course, modify advising, modify thesis, creative component, or comprehensive exam requirements, create new student organization, target faculty hire, and improve job placement supports.

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, 2012).



The 2012 Survey of Alumni of Undergraduate Programs (<http://tinyurl.com/osusurveys>) targeted individuals who graduated from an undergraduate degree program in 2006 and 2010. Alumni are contacted through email (when a current email address is available), and over the phone. A total of 2,409 alumni completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 32.3%. After removing alumni who were considered unreachable due to invalid contact information, the response rate to the survey was 54.5%. The full report is available here:

<https://uat.okstate.edu/images/alumni/2012%20saup%20final.pdf>

Key findings from the 2012 Survey of Alumni of Undergraduate Programs:

- 71% of respondents resided in Oklahoma. This is a substantial increase from the 63.5% who reported living in Oklahoma in the 2010 Survey of Alumni of Undergraduate Programs. An interactive map with respondents' residence locations is available [here](#).
- 84.9% of respondents were employed and only 4% of respondents were currently seeking employment. This is similar to the results from the 2010 and 2008 Surveys of Alumni of Undergraduate programs that found 5% and 4% of respondents seeking employment. In March of 2012 the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the state of Oklahoma was 5.4%. Additional information regarding the unemployment rate and the salary by educational attainment is available from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).
- The most frequently reported annual salary range for alumni who graduated both one and five years ago and were employed full time was \$25,000 to \$35,000 (18.8% reported this income range). 52.2% of respondents who were employed full time reported salaries of \$45,000 or greater. 28.7% of respondents who were employed full time reported salaries of \$35,000 or less and 16% reported salaries of \$65,000 or greater. In comparison, the average annual full time wage in Oklahoma in May of 2011 was \$38,190 ([Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)).
- 91% of respondents whose employment was slightly, moderately, or highly related to their undergraduate degree program reported being very well or adequately prepared for their position.
- 92% of respondents who pursued additional education reported that their undergraduate degree from OSU had prepared them very well or adequately for their graduate/professional degree program.
- 90% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall educational experience at Oklahoma State University. 89% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of instruction at Oklahoma State University.

Each 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 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.



The 2012 Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey was sent to all current graduate students through email. A total of 1,454 graduate students completed the survey for a response rate of 42.8%. The full report is available here:

<https://uat.okstate.edu/images/gss/institutional%20report%20gsss%202012.pdf>

Key findings include:

- 85% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience as graduate students at Oklahoma State University.
- 88% of respondents indicated courses were taught well and 78% reported good communication with faculty members.
- Nearly 60% of respondents indicated their time to degree was progressing as expected, while 28% indicated the time to degree was taking longer than originally expected. Of those whose time to degree was more than their expectations, 62% indicated that this was in part due to difficulties encountered in completing a thesis or dissertation.
- Nearly 31% of respondents indicated that they incurred no debt for their graduate education, whereas 29% indicated a debt of more than \$15,000. About 36% of students who had 30 or more cumulative graduate credit hours reported a debt of more than \$15,000.
- Nearly 76% of respondents indicated that Oklahoma State University is supportive of students from a diverse background.

Although there were no program-specific questions included in this survey, reports were prepared for each degree program. These reports are available on the University Assessment and Testing website: <http://tinyurl.com/osureports>.

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 2011-2012 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.

