

**Oklahoma State University**  
**Executive Summary: 2012-2013 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 2012-2013, a total of 4,563 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, 357 students (7.8% of the total new enrolled) were required to take at least one remedial course. Of the 4,563 new students in 2012-2013, 52 (1.1%) were required to enroll in remedial English classes, 212 (4.6%) in remedial math classes, 126 (2.8%) in remedial science classes, and 73 (1.6%) in remedial reading classes.

## 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 2012-2013 227 samples of student work were collected and evaluated by a panel of faculty members using the Scientific Reasoning 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 227 artifacts, 10 were assigned a score of 1 (4.4%), 64 were assigned a score of 2 (28.2%), 113 were assigned a score of 3 (113), 33 were assigned a score of 4 (14.5%), and 7 were assigned a score of 5 (3.1%). The average score was 2.84. This score is statistically similar to most of the other years in which science reasoning was assessed (with the exception of 2005, which was statistically significantly lower). The full report will be posted on the OSU General Education Assessment website when it is available (<http://tinyurl.com/osugened>).

Also in the summer of 2013, 221 samples of student work were assessed by faculty reviewers using the Diversity rubrics developed and approved by OSU faculty members. The Diversity rubric has five required characteristics (conceptual understanding; values diversity; knowledge of historical content; sources of understanding, value, and knowledge), as well as an overall score. The rubric is scored in the same 1-5 format as the Scientific Reasoning rubric. Of the 221 artifacts, 45 were assigned a score of 1 (20.4%), 81 were assigned a score of 2 (36.7%), 73 were assigned a score of 3 (33), 21 were assigned a score of 4 (9.5%), and 1 were assigned a score of 5



(0.5%). The average score was 2.33. This score is statistically similar to most of the other years in which diversity was assessed (with the exception of 2008, which was statistically significantly higher).

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.

In response to these findings, the institution has decided to continue to fund the *Provost's Faculty Development Initiative: Focus on General Education* in 2012-2013. 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 221 assessment methods implemented for program outcomes assessment (presented in the tables in the full report). The most commonly reported assessment methods were:

- Exams (course, licensure, standardized, etc.) (62 reports, 28% of the total)



- Evaluation of student work using rubrics (i.e., written communication, critical thinking, science reasoning, program-specific) (40 reports, 18% of the total)
- Capstone or major course project (37 reports, 17% of the total)
- Internship/practicum evaluations (14 reports, 6% of the total)
- Exit interview, exit exam, or exit survey (12 reports, 5% of the total)

Other methods used include alumni surveys, conference performance, transcript analysis, course GPA, analysis of student portfolios, and external reviews.

Graduate degree programs reported 292 assessment methods implemented for program outcomes assessment (presented in the tables in the full report). The most commonly reported assessment methods were:

- Evaluation of student work using rubrics (i.e., written communication, critical thinking, science reasoning, program-specific) (74 reports, 25% of the total)
- Dissertation, thesis, or creative component (including proposal or final product) (47 reports, 16% of the total)
- Comprehensive or qualifying exam (25 reports, 9% of the total)
- Oral presentations (21 reports, 7% of the total)
- Exams (course, licensure, certification, standardized, or preliminary) (14 reports, 5% of the total)
- Dissertation, thesis, or creative component defense presentation (13 reports, 4% of the total)

Other methods used included alumni surveys, course projects, panel reviews of student work, research and conference publications, exit interviews, portfolios, internship or practicum evaluations, performance assessment, international experience, or satisfactory progress according to department guidelines.

Undergraduate degree programs reported 122 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 (20 uses, 16% of the total)
- Modify course content (20 uses, 16% of the total)
- Modify curriculum (19 uses, 15% of the total)
- Modify courses to address skill deficiencies (13 uses, 11% of the total)

Other uses include improving feedback to students, developing new assessment rubrics as well as sharing those rubrics with students, continual faculty development, changes to recruitment procedures, encourage students to use the Writing Center, and continual monitoring of changes made in recent years. Some faculty are also beginning to utilize social media as a tool to increase student interaction.



Graduate degree programs reported 123 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:

- Changes in assessment methodology (14 uses, 12% of the total)
- Modify the curriculum (9 uses, 7% of the total)
- Modify the assessment plan (8 uses, 7% of the total)
- Additional writing classes or use of the Writing Center (6 uses, 5% of the total)
- Hiring new faculty (9 uses, 7% of the total)
- Additional instruction to students in key areas (7 uses, 6% of the total)
- Efforts to increase funding opportunities (7 uses, 6% of the total).

Other uses included encourage use of the Writing Center, revise an assessment tool, provide more opportunities for student presentations, 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 2013 Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs (<http://tinyurl.com/osusurveys>) targeted individuals who graduated from an undergraduate degree program in 2007 and 2011. Alumni are contacted through email (when a current email address is available), and over the phone. A total of 887 alumni completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 37%. After removing alumni who were considered unreachable due to invalid contact information, the response rate to the survey was 53%. The full report is available here:

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

Key findings from the 2013 Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs:

- Over 98% of doctoral alumni and 92% of masters alumni respondents were employed and only 3% of respondents were currently seeking employment. This a decided increase from the 2010 Surveys of Alumni of Graduate programs which found 89% of graduate alumni were employed, about 4% were seeking employment, and 7% were not seeking employment. In March of 2013 the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the state of Oklahoma was 5%. 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 \$75,000 to \$100,000 (19% reported this income range). Nearly 13% of respondents who were employed full time reported salaries above \$100,000. 13% of respondents who were employed full time reported a salary range of \$45,000 to \$55,000.

Each program was invited 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. 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 2012-2013 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.

