

Oklahoma State University Assessment Report 1999 - 2000

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Executive Summary

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 assess student's readiness for college-level coursework at OSU: scores from ACT subject tests, results from a predictive statistical model called Entry Level Placement Analysis (ELPA), and scores from COMPASS placement tests. ELPA is a multiple regression model that uses high school grades, high school class rank and size, and ACT scores to predict student grades in entry-level courses. The predictions are based on the success of past OSU freshmen with similar academic records. All new students are assessed using ACT subject area and composite scores (or SAT equivalent) and results of ELPA. Students scoring below the designated ACT cutscores (19 in each subject area) and with predicted grades from ELPA of less than "C" in a particular subject area are required to take remedial coursework. Students may waive a remedial course requirement by passing a COMPASS (Computer Adaptive Placement and Support System) test. All students undergo entry-level assessment prior to enrollment.

In 1999-2000, entry-level assessment was conducted for all admitted and enrolled new freshmen and new transfer students with fewer than 24 credit hours (n=3,264). After all entry-level assessment was completed in 1999-2000, 520 enrolled new students (15.9% of the total number enrolled) were required to take at least one remedial course.

Minor changes were made to ELPA in 1999-2000. The regression equations used in the ELPA statistical model to predict success in entry-level courses were revised to reflect current student data, and the format of the Student Assessment Reports was modified to provide advisors with clear and pertinent entry-level assessment information for each student.

Additional entry-level assessment studies conducted in 1999-2000 included the *CIRP Freshman Survey* and the *College Student Inventory*.

Mid-Level Assessment

Assessment of General Education competencies was conducted at the program-level in 1999-2000. At the same time, a faculty-lead Task Group on General Education Assessment developed a plan for assessing OSU's General Education Program holistically. Both assessment approaches are described.

Approximately 2,180 OSU students participated in programmatic mid-level assessment in 1999-2000. College of Human Environmental Sciences sophomores and juniors were assessed using the *California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI)* and *California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)*; these assessments were aimed at evaluating mid-level critical thinking skills.

College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology students were assessed at mid-level using grades from general education and 1000- and 2000-level courses in the major as criteria for admission to each degree program; this assessment is aimed at evaluating mid-level competencies of general education learning goals. College of Education / Teacher Education students were assessed at mid-level using grades in liberal arts courses or achievement on the *Pre-Professional Skills Test*. Critical thinking and writing skills were assessed at mid-level for all History Department students in the required HIST 3973. The Zoology Department concluded a mid-level assessment project in 2000 aimed at evaluating the educational impact of changes in the introductory biology curriculum on students entering mid-level zoology courses. The assessments consisted of the *Biology Attitude Scale* (Russell and Hollander, 1975) and a 10-Question *Content Knowledge Survey* and was aimed at evaluating student general education competencies in the natural sciences. Also, freshmen and sophomores in the School of Journalism & Broadcasting were given standardized language pre-tests at the beginning of the semester and post-tests at the end of the semester aimed at evaluating student mid-level communication skills.

To accomplish a more holistic assessment of OSU's General Education Program, a Task Group on General Education Assessment developed assessable learner goals for OSU's General Education Program and developed two methods for assessing general education. The first method is the development and use of a General Education Course Database that will allow for holistic review of the General Education Program by identifying the extent to which general education learning goals are covered in the course offerings and by identifying the extent to which students are exposed to coursework aimed at particular general education learning goals. The database will also give an overview of classroom-based assessments of general education learner goals. The second method is the development of an institutional portfolio that will allow faculty to review student work and evaluate students' attainment of general education learner goals. If the Assessment Council and General Education Advisory Council approve the proposed methods, pilot tests for these methods will begin in spring 2001.

Program Outcomes Assessment

Every degree program at OSU, including undergraduate and graduate degrees, is required to have a program outcomes assessment plan and to submit annual reports describing assessment activity. The plans and reports are prepared according to the organizational level that best suits the faculty members from particular programs; annual program outcomes assessment reports, therefore, may be submitted by colleges, schools, departments, or by individual degree programs depending on the organizational level that faculty from these programs have elected.

Academic units use a variety of methods to assess student-learning outcomes. The most commonly used assessment methods for undergraduate programs reported in 1999-2000 were:

- Capstone courses
- Course-embedded assessments
- Exams - comprehensive exit
- Exams - national / state
- Exit interviews
- Faculty evaluations of student work
- Graduate employment tracking
- Internships
- Portfolios
- Professional jurors or evaluators
- Senior projects
- Student competitions - intercollegiate
- Surveys - alumni
- Surveys - employers / recruiters
- Surveys - graduating seniors
- Tracking enrollment data
- Tracking student academic performance
- Tracking degree completion rates

Graduate programs reported the following assessments *in addition to* the methods described above:

- Qualifying exams
- Theses, dissertations, creative component projects
- Comprehensive exams
- Tracking research activity, publications, professional presentations, professional activity

The most commonly reported use of assessment results was presenting the assessment findings to faculty members and discussing the implications of the data in terms of identifying program strengths and potential areas for improvement. All academic units find the results of outcomes assessment, particularly surveys of current students and alumni, useful in enhancing recruitment, increasing retention, and updating their curricula. Out of 57 academic units (i.e., colleges, schools, departments, or programs) reporting on program outcomes assessment, 50 reported using their assessment results to make *specific changes* to their academic program in 1999-2000. Reported uses of assessment results changes ranged from small changes in course content to major curriculum changes involving adding and deleting courses, major changes to course content, changing course sequences, or changing course requirements. This year about half of academic units reported curriculum changes that involved increased use of computer and information technology, increased use of multimedia in the classroom, or increased opportunities for students to gain 'real world' experience in their disciplines via internships or interactions with professionals in the field. Some academic units also reported acting on assessment results by implementing changes in student advising, orientation programs, academic support programs, computer facilities, and lab facilities.

Student Satisfaction Assessment

Three major surveys were conducted in 1999-2000 to assess student and alumni satisfaction: (1) the 2000 Survey of Alumni of Baccalaureate Programs, (2) the 2000 Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey, and (3) the College Student Survey.

The *2000 Survey of Alumni of Baccalaureate Programs* was conducted to evaluate career tracks, continued education, and general satisfaction of recent OSU alumni, and to assess achievement of program outcomes as perceived by alumni. A total of 1,584 telephone interviews were completed with OSU baccalaureate program alumni who graduated in 1998-1999, resulting in a 54% response rate. Ninety-seven percent of alumni reported that they were satisfied with their overall educational experience at OSU, and 95% reported that they were satisfied with the quality of instruction in their major. Approximately 94% of alumni were employed or in graduate school. Of those who were employed, 93% reported that their OSU education had prepared them well or very well for their current position. Among types of employers reported, 40% of alumni reported working for large corporations, 29% reported working for small businesses, 12% reported working for educational institutions, 9% reported working for government, 5% worked for non-profits, and 4% were self-employed.

The *2000 Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey* was conducted to gauge student perceptions of graduate programs and services and to identify areas where improvements may be needed. The survey was locally developed and web-based; a total of 1,025 graduate students completed the online survey. The survey included 76 questions that covered topics ranging from relationships with faculty and advisors to student health insurance issues. Sixty-seven percent of graduate students reported that they were very satisfied/satisfied with their overall educational experience at

OSU, and an additional 22% stated that they were somewhat satisfied. Graduate students indicated very high satisfaction with advisors, faculty, and quality of instruction.

The *College Student Survey* was administered to OSU seniors as a follow-up to the CIRP freshman survey. The survey included 22 questions related to student satisfaction with campus programs and services. A total of 295 OSU seniors completed the survey. Seniors indicated highest satisfaction with their interactions with other students, overall college experience, courses in their major, and class sizes. Lowest satisfaction scores were given to career counseling, student housing, tutorial help, and computer training / assistance.

Results of these three surveys are shared with academic leaders and student service leaders across campus, and results are integrated into decisions regarding program development and student services.

Graduate Student Assessment

Graduate student assessment is considered a part of the Program Outcomes Assessment conducted in each academic unit. Graduate student assessment methods, numbers of students assessed, results of assessments, and changes that occurred or are planned as a result of graduate program outcomes assessment are described and summarized in the section on Program Outcomes Assessment. The Graduate College and Office of University Assessment also conducted a survey of Graduate Student Satisfaction in 2000. Results of this assessment of graduate student satisfaction are described in the section on Student and Alumni Satisfaction Assessment.

What's New in Assessment at OSU in 1999-2000:

- *The Assessment Council Policy Statement on Program Outcomes Assessment.* The Assessment Council adopted a revised policy statement on program outcomes assessment in spring 2000. The policy statement re-asserts the purpose of assessment and provides academic units with specific expectations for outcomes assessment (see Appendix A).
- *The Task Group on the Assessment of General Education.* A task group of seven faculty members was formed in spring 2000 to continue the development of a plan for General Education assessment at OSU. Their work is described in the section on mid-level assessment.
- *The 2000 OSU Alumni Survey.* This survey provided data on the career tracks, continued education, and general satisfaction of recent OSU graduates. It also provided responses to program-specific questions for the purpose of program outcomes assessment. A total of 1,584 telephone interviews were completed from a target population of 2,910 alumni of baccalaureate programs from 1998 and 1999, resulting in a response rate of 54%.
- *The 2000 Online Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey.* This university-wide survey of OSU-Stillwater graduate students was the first web-based, locally developed survey administered campus-wide at OSU. A total of 1,025 graduate students completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 29%. A telephone follow-up survey was also conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of using web-based surveys for OSU students.
- *The Oklahoma State University Assessment Website.* The Office of University Assessment developed a website to distribute assessment information to OSU faculty and to showcase OSU's assessment accomplishments. The website contains 205 linked pages with information about assessment at OSU, tools for faculty assessment coordinators, and links to internet resources for developing and improving assessment programs ([www.okstate.edu / assess](http://www.okstate.edu/assess)).
- *Assessment Workshops.* In an effort to provide faculty with information that may assist in developing effective assessments in their academic programs, the Assessment Council and Office of University Assessment invite guest speakers to present information on assessment topics. In 1999-2000, two assessment workshops were sponsored: a workshop on developing electronic portfolios (given by Dennis Pack from Winona State University) and a workshop on using classroom grades for program-level assessment (given by Virginia Anderson from Towson University).