

## Assessment Terminology

To get started, some terminology needs defining:

Assessment: The systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. (Marchese, 1987; Palomba & Banta, 1999)

Institutional effectiveness: Assessment to determine the extent to which a college or university is achieving its mission.

Program-level Assessment: Assessment to determine the extent to which students in an academic program can demonstrate the learning outcomes for the program.

Program Goals: Statement that describe what the program as a whole will achieve.

Institutional Learning Outcomes: The knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students should be able to demonstrate upon graduating from an institution.

Student Learning Outcomes: The knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students should be able to demonstrate upon graduating from a program.

Direct Evidence: A tangible, visible, self-explanatory evidence of exactly what student have and have not learned.

Indirect Evidence: Evidence that deduces student achievement of learning outcomes through the students' reported perception of their own learning.

Quantitative Assessment: Methods that rely on numerical scores or rating.

Qualitative Assessment: Methods that rely on descriptions rather than numbers.

Formative Assessment: The assessment of student achievement at different stages of a student's academic career.

Summative Assessment: The assessment of student achievement at the end point of their education.

Embedded Assessment (Course): A method in which evidence of student learning outcomes for the program is obtained from assignments in particular courses in the curriculum.

Add-on Assessment: Assessment strategies beyond course requirements.

Traditional Assessment: Assessment strategies often completed in a controlled, timed examination setting and are usually designed only to collect assessment.

Supportive Evidence: Information gathered for the purpose of program evaluation, quality of the curriculum, and/or administrative purposes. These related measures may be used in conjunction with evidence gathered through direct and indirect measures to provide additional information about learning when viewed within the larger picture.

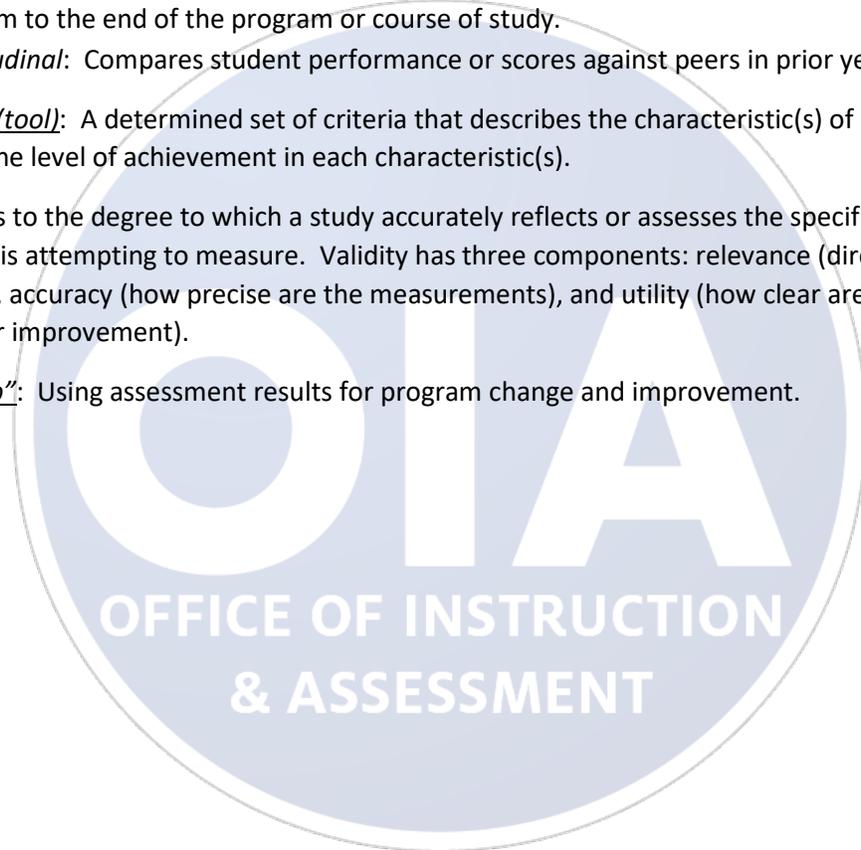
**Performance Indicator:** The standard by which student performance is evaluated. Criteria for assigning a score or the dimensions of proficiency in performance used to describe a student’s response to a task or judging the results of student learning.

- *Benchmarking:* Compares student performance or score against their peers either established by use of its own program or from other institutions.
- *Standards-based:* Compares student performance or score against an established standard.
- *Best-Practice:* Compares your results against the best of your peers.
- *Value-added:* Compares results against student scores when they started or entered the program to the end of the program or course of study.
- *Longitudinal:* Compares student performance or scores against peers in prior years.

**Scoring Rubric (tool):** A determined set of criteria that describes the characteristic(s) of a learning outcome and the level of achievement in each characteristic(s).

**Validity:** Refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure. Validity has three components: relevance (direct measurement), accuracy (how precise are the measurements), and utility (how clear are the implications for improvement).

**“Close the Loop”:** Using assessment results for program change and improvement.



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