

## Academic Outcomes Assessment A Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition	Example
<b>Assessment</b>	The systematic collection, examination, and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data about student learning and the use of that information to document and improve student learning.	
<b>Benchmark</b>	A number or description of student or institutional performance that serves as a standard of comparison for evaluation and for judging quality.	The goal is to achieve the benchmark of having 70% of developmental students successfully transition into college-level work.
<b>Competency</b>	Level at which student performance is acceptable.	“Successfully completes” means passing the course with a grade of C or above.
<b>Criterion-referenced tests</b>	Tests that evaluate what a student can do and what he/she knows, based on specific course objectives. Students are not compared to one another.	Sally is able to graph a linear equation in Standard Form using intercepts; 76% of the class can graph lines.
<b>Direct evidence</b>	Students show their mastery of learning objectives through demonstration of knowledge or skills.	Licensure/certification scores and pass rates, capstone experiences, pre/post test scores.
<b>Direct measure</b>	Use performance or product created by the student, results of which can be compared to expected outcomes.	Exam questions which align to specific course objectives. • See table below.
<b>Evaluation</b>	The use of assessment information to make an informed judgment about student achievement, strengths and weaknesses of teaching strategies, appropriate changes in curriculum and/or pedagogy.	Evaluation follows assessment in the process. It can also be used to judge the quality or worth of a project, program or other entity.
<b>Formative Assessment</b>	A type of assessment that provides information concerning teaching and learning. These are often informal and ongoing.	Classroom assessment techniques (CATS).
<b>Indirect evidence</b>	Perception or comparison data that allows one to make inferences about learning, but does not demonstrate mastery.	Course grades, placement data, graduate/professional school acceptance rates.
<b>Indirect measure</b>	Use of information that does not directly link learning to expected outcomes.	Graduation rates, survey results, grade distributions. • See table below.
<b>Institutional effectiveness</b>	The measure of what an institution actually achieves, measured for the purpose of continual improvement.	

<b>Norm-referenced tests</b>	Tests designed to highlight achievement differences between students or between groups of students.	Tests scored by percentiles. A student scoring in the 98 <sup>th</sup> percentile performed better than 98% of those taking the test, but the score does not indicate how many questions were answered correctly.
<b>Objective</b>	A specific skill or task learned by a student at the completion of an activity or course.	The student will demonstrate the ability to factor trinomials.
<b>Outcome</b>	The level of mastery expected at the completion of an activity or course.	At least 70% of students will correctly answer questions X and Y on the departmental final exam.
<b>Qualitative assessment tool</b>	An assessment that conveys an idea or that implies a characteristic, without actual numerical data.	Surveys, interviews, anecdotal evidence.
<b>Quantitative assessment tool</b>	An assessment that provides numerical data which can be analyzed statistically.	A multiple-choice final exam, a standardized licensure exam.
<b>Reliability</b>	The extent to which an experiment or test yields the same result on repeated trials.	The College Algebra final exam is a reliable instrument since the average score was between 62% and 65% for three consecutive semesters.
<b>Rubric</b>	A set of scoring guidelines that can be used to evaluate students' work.	All developmental English faculty use the same scoring rubric to grade essays.
<b>Summative Assessment</b>	A type of assessment that provides information concerning students' knowledge base at the end of a unit or course.	A final exam, a certification exam.
<b>Validity</b>	The degree to which an instrument accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept for which it was developed.	Is the instrument valid as to its relevance, accuracy, and utility?

<p><b>Direct Measures of Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardized tests</li> <li>• Locally developed tests</li> <li>• Portfolios</li> <li>• Simulations</li> <li>• Performance appraisal</li> <li>• External examiner</li> <li>• Oral exams</li> <li>• Behavioral examinations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Indirect Measures of Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written surveys and questionnaires</li> <li>• Entrance interviews</li> <li>• Exit interviews</li> <li>• Archival records</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> </ul>
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