

## Rubric for Evaluating Academic Unit Assessment Plans

### *Guiding Principles*

In 2003, the Student Assessment Committee proposed, and the Faculty Assembly adopted, the following principles to guide the development and implementation of student learning assessment in academic departments or programs. The guiding principles are the values the assessment plan seeks to utilize to determine the effectiveness of unit planning and evaluation methodology in living out the University's commitment to continuous improvement through the following good practice standards.

1. Departmental student learning outcomes are linked to and flow from the University's mission and values.
2. Continually improving the quality of student learning is the goal.
3. The University places greater emphasis on direct, rather than indirect, measures of student learning. Student satisfaction surveys and end of course evaluations are indirect measures of student learning.
4. Measures from a variety of perspectives increase assessment validity.
5. Particular importance is attached to indicators of student learning that persist over time.
6. The University looks for patterns of evidence rather than putting a great deal of emphasis on one year's data.
7. Summative and formative assessments are both valued.
8. Quantitative and qualitative data are both considered important indicators of student learning.
9. The purpose of program assessment is to help faculty make curricular decisions based on evidence of actual student learning.

Many assessment measures and methods are gross and imprecise, so that a quality improvement plan employs multiple measures at multiple points in time to improve the reliability (i.e., consistency across time or measures) and validity (i.e., degree to which the measures actually relates to construct under evaluation) of the assessment tool. Because measurement science is not precise, and because assessment is as much art as science, multiple strategies should be employed to strengthen the unit's grasp of its impact on students and their positive, long-term growth.

Evaluation Category	Inadequate (1)	Marginally Adequate (2)	Meets Expectations - Demonstrates Good Practice Standards (3)	Exemplary - Exceeds Expectations (4) - Rater must provide documentation that the plan achieves Best Practice Standards.
<b>Clarity of student learning outcomes and linkage to University mission, vision, values and goals</b>	The plan lacks clarity of expression of what learning students must demonstrate. A direct linkage to University's mission, vision, values and goals was not established.	The plan presents generic goals, but these are not necessarily adapted to MVNU's distinctive learning commitments and values. The outcomes are lack detail.	Student learning outcome statements are clearly articulated and derived systematically from those of the University's strategic plan. The plan is specific to the operating context of the unit and the University.	

<b>Commitment to continuous improvement in student learning</b>	The unit assessment plan does not refer to or identify a commitment to continuous improvement.	A commitment to continuous improvement is weakly implied, but lacks systematic action steps to enact the commitment.	The unit clearly demonstrates its commitment to be a learning community and focuses on strengthening the collective student performance.	
<b>Use of direct measures of student learning</b>	The unit's plan presents no assessment measures or relies exclusively on anecdotes, measures of perception and satisfaction and presents, such as measure of learning and performance.	The preponderance of the student learning outcomes identified in the unit's catalog copy has at least one direct measure of student learning.	Each student learning outcome identified in the unit's catalog copy clearly has a quality, direct measure of student learning for each program (e.g., major, certificate, concentration, endorsement, or minor).	
<b>Use of multiple assessment methodologies</b>	The plan does not present multiple assessment methodologies.	The unit employs several measures for assessing student learning outcomes, but they may be "measures of convenience" and not systematically linked to identified unit student learning outcomes.	The unit has employed multiple assessment measures (i.e., direct and indirect) for each identified student learning outcome. Measures are aligned well with the desired outcomes.	
<b>Long-term measures of student learning</b>	The long-term impact or change on students is not determined.	Measures of student learning are present, but seem to follow closely in time to the learning activities designed to promote the learning.	The plan clearly provides for long-term measures of learning, identifies deep learning, and shows growth in students over time (e.g., utilizes a pretest-posttest research paradigm).	
<b>Patterns of evidence</b>	The assessment plan fails to specify how patterns of evidence are obtained, evaluated, and communicated.	The plan presents evidence of student learning, but focuses on students rather on long-term unit performance. Application to the program as a collective unit is not made.	The plan presents the unit's performance trends over time beyond the focus on individuals. Evidence is aggregated over cohorts and time with focus on the unit's collective performance	

<b>Presence of formative and summative evaluations</b>	The plan does not identify formative or summative evaluations, nor does the plan indicate how the evaluations are communicated to students.	The plan identifies some formative or summative evaluations, but it is not clear how the evaluations are communicated to students.	The plan clearly demonstrates how formative assessments (non-graded opportunities for learning) are communicated to students and how summative, end of program evaluations are communicated to students. The plan includes both collective, cohort performance and information to individuals on their own performance.	
<b>Use of quantitative and qualitative evidence</b>	The plan does not articulate how it uses quantitative or qualitative evidence.	The plan identifies relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence, but these may not be systematically linked to stated student learning outcomes.	The plan identifies relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence that is systematically linked to stated student learning outcomes.	
<b>Improvement decisions based on systematic evidence</b>	Improvement decisions are not based upon systematic evidence. Improvement decisions appear to be arbitrary and reactionary.	The unit generally demonstrates that its decisions are based upon systematic evidence (evidence-based decision making), but that the planned actions for improvement may not be derived from the evidence.	The unit clearly demonstrates that its decisions are based upon systematic and quality evidence (evidence-based decision making), and that planned actions for improvement derive from the evidence.	
<b>Evidence of plan implementation</b>	There is little or no evidence the unit's plan is implemented in unit action steps or activities.	The evidence of the plan's implementation is generic and can be interpreted as unintentional.	The unit presents clear and compelling evidence that it faithfully enacts and implements its assessment and improvement plan.	
<b>Total Plan Score (10 to 40)</b>				

(version, 10/07/2010, RLT)