

Academic Outcome Assessment Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

NASC statements and Standards (2003 Accreditation Handbook) dealing with academic outcomes assessment:

Institutional Self-Study:

...The aim of the self-study is to **understand, evaluate, and improve**,--not merely to defend what already exists...(is) **an on-going process**... (p. 15).

Standard Two: Educational Program and Its Effectiveness

Standard 2.A. - General Requirements

The institution offers collegiate level programs that culminate in **identified student competencies** and lead to degrees or certificates in recognized fields of study. The achievement and maintenance of **high quality programs** is the primary responsibility of an accredited institution; hence **the evaluation of educational programs and their continuous improvement is an ongoing responsibility**. As conditions and needs change, the institution continually redefines for itself the elements that result in educational programs of high quality.

Standard 2.A.3. Degree and certificate programs demonstrate a coherent design; are characterized by appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, synthesis of learning, and the **assessment of learning outcomes**; and require the use of library and other information sources.

Standard 2.A.4. The institution uses degree designators consistent with program content. In each field of study...**degree objectives are clearly defined**: the content to be covered, the intellectual skills, the creative capabilities, and the methods of inquiry to be acquired; and, if applicable, the specific career-preparation competencies to be mastered.

Standard 2.B. - Educational Program Planning and Assessment

Educational program planning is based on **regular and continuous assessment of programs** in light of the needs of the disciplines, the fields or occupations for which programs prepare students, and other constituencies of the institution.

Standard 2.B.1. The institution's processes for assessing its educational programs are clearly **defined, encompass all of its offerings**, are conducted on a **regular** basis, and are **integrated into the overall planning and evaluation plan**. These processes are consistent with the institution's assessment plan as required by Policy 2.2 - Educational Assessment...While key constituents are involved in the process, the **faculty** have a central role in planning and evaluating the educational programs.

Standard 2.B.2. The institution **identifies and publishes the expected learning outcomes** for each of its degree and certificate programs. **Through regular and systematic assessment, it demonstrates that students who complete their programs, no matter where or how they are offered, have achieved these outcomes.**

Standard 2.B.3. The institution **provides evidence** that its **assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching and learning.**

Standard 2.C. - Undergraduate Program

...The instructional program, as a whole, is based on a clear rationale with the component parts designed to reflect that rationale...Baccalaureate and academic or transfer associate degree programs include a substantial core of general education instruction with identifiable outcomes and require competence in (a) written and oral communication, (b) quantitative reasoning, (c) critical analysis and logical thinking, and (d) literacy in the discourse or technology appropriate to the program of study.

Standard 2.D. - Graduate Program

A graduate program is a set of advanced academic experiences beyond the baccalaureate level...

2.D.1. The level and nature of graduate-degree programs are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.

2.D.2. Programs of study at the graduate level are guided by well-defined and appropriate **education objectives** and differ from undergraduate programs in requiring **greater depth of study and increased demands** on student intellectual or creative capacities.

2.D.3. When offering the doctoral degree, the institution ensures that the level of expectations, curricula, and resources made available are significantly greater than those provided for master's and baccalaureate level programs.

Standard 2.G. - Continuing Education and Special Learning Activities

Off-campus and other special programs providing academic credit

Continuing Education and special learning activities...offered for credit are consistent with the educational mission and goals of the institution. Such activities...**maintain the same academic standards** as regularly offered program courses...

2.G.1. The institution provides evidence that all off-campus, continuing education (credit and non-credit), and other special programs are compatible with the institution's mission and goals, and are designed, approved, administered, and periodically evaluated under established institutional procedures.

Standard 2.H. - Non-Credit Programs and Courses

2.H.1. ...**Faculty** are involved in planning and evaluating non-credit programs.

2.H.2. The institution maintains **records for audit purposes** which describe the **nature, level, and quality** of service provided through non-credit instruction.

(Emphases added.)