

Suggested Approaches for Evaluating Program Review on Educational Effectiveness Review Visits

WASC has placed a great deal of emphasis on program review as a key element of institutional quality assurance and improvement and a vehicle for assessing achievement of institutional and program learning outcomes. Beginning fall 2009, all institutions are required to include in their EER reports an analysis of the effectiveness of their program review process. As stated in the *Handbook of Accreditation*:

Institutions are expected to analyze the effectiveness of the program review process, including its emphasis on the achievement of the program's learning outcomes. The process should be sufficiently embedded for the institution and the team to sample current program review reports (self-studies and external review reports) in order to assess the impact of the program review process and its alignment with the institution's quality improvement efforts and academic planning and budgeting. (Also see CFRs 2.7 and 4.4.)

The following approach has been developed to assist teams in evaluating program review by providing a common and systematic method, which should be adapted by the team as needed to maximize its value and effectiveness during the visit.

The approach suggests a systematic way to:

- 1) review a sample of recent program reviews. The number of program reviews may vary according to the size of the institution and number of programs it has. For example, in a small institution with two programs, the team may examine both reviews. In a large institution with many programs, the team may select three to five recent programs in a variety of areas.
- 2) evaluate the effectiveness of the program review process under the relevant CFRs (2.7, 4.4), using applicable WASC rubrics for guidance on good practice.
- 3) study one or two program reviews in depth, including meeting with faculty and appropriate administrators from the program(s) to learn more about how program review worked, what was learned, and how follow up was undertaken.
- 4) learn how program review results were incorporated into planning and the institution's quality assurance system.

The team, working with Commission staff, should discuss ways to implement this process along with the themes that institution has studied in its EER review.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES

Prior to the visit

1: On team **pre-visit conference call**:

- Identify a sample of programs for review by the team. Using the ***Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators***, identify programs that have recently undergone program reviews. The number of program reviews will vary by institutional size and number of programs offered and recently reviewed. In smaller institutions, one or two may be adequate; in larger institutions, a sampling of three to five is suggested.
 - In selecting the program reviews, consider the size and importance of the programs within the institution. Avoid selecting only programs that have specialized/programmatic accreditation. Choose disciplines from different schools or colleges if the institution is large enough to have this kind of structure.
- Select one or two programs for an in-depth analysis by the team. A meeting with faculty will be held for each program reviewed in depth (described below).
- Assign at least two team members to the program review work, with one team member assigned primary responsibility for writing about the findings from the process described below, and one with secondary responsibility.
- Decide on the method to be used in the meeting with faculty and relevant administrators. A fishbowl exercise^o, described in the footnote, is one approach.

2: **Following the pre-visit team conference call**:

- The Assistant Chair arranges logistics with the ALO.
 - Request that program review documents for each selected program be provided in advance of the visit, or in the team room if they are too voluminous to send in advance. These materials would typically include the program's self-review, appendices with supporting documents, external evaluators' reports, and follow-up agreements and memoranda.
 - Ask that relevant assessment plans be included with the program review(s), if they are not integrated into the program reviews or included in the institutional report or data portfolio.

^o An effective method of evaluating faculty work in assessment is through a fishbowl exercise in which faculty members are asked to discuss the results of the program review and/or program-level assessment results among themselves while the team observes. Another effective way to learn about assessment practices and findings through the fishbowl is to ask the faculty to assess some samples of actual student work using a faculty-developed rubric. The team usually follows this exercise with questions about what they observed and prepared lines of inquiry created from the rubrics and Expectations for Two Reviews.

- Ask the ALO to schedule a meeting with program faculty and leadership of the selected program(s). Provide information to the ALO about any special technique to be used at this meeting, such as a fishbowl, so that the faculty can prepare. Depending on the size of the program or department, a broad representative sample might be selected.
- Assigned team members prepare questions/lines of inquiry for the faculty and program leadership and plan for use of special techniques such as a fishbowl.

On the visit

3. Early on the **first day of the visit**, the assigned team members examine the program reviews for the programs identified in advance of the visit, using the following process. Where program reviews are provided in advance, the team members can spend this time conferring on their findings.

- Identify the program learning outcomes for the program. Consider the quality of the outcomes using the ***Rubric for Assessing the Quality of PLOs***.
- Read the program review. Assess how well assessment is covered in the program review using the ***Rubric for Assessing the Integration of Student Learning Assessment into Program Review***.
- Examine the assessment plan:
 - Have standards of performance been established by the faculty?
 - Does the assessment process include:
 - multiple methods of assessment?
 - direct and indirect assessment?
 - summative and formative assessment, e.g., focusing on a piece of culminating student work?
 - Are the assessments done at regular intervals?
 - Who does the assessment and how? Are collaboratively developed tools or rubrics used?
 - Who keeps the data collected? How are data analyzed and utilized?
 - What mechanisms are in place to ensure/support use of findings for improvement?
 - What incentives are available to faculty who carry out assessment?

(CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.3, 4.3-4.8)

- If the assessment plan includes the use of CAPSTONES or PORTFOLIOS, use the relevant rubrics to evaluate good practice: ***Rubric for Assessing the Use of Portfolios for Assessing Program Learning Outcomes*** and ***Rubric for Assessing the Use of Capstones for Assessing Program Learning Outcomes***
- If other methods of conducting program-level assessment are utilized, what are they? What kinds of data about student achievement do they produce? Are the data used in meaningful ways?

(CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3, 4.4)

- Examine the findings of program-level assessment of student learning that are reported and discussed in the program review and ascertain:
 - What do the latest findings show? Are students achieving at expected levels?
 - What is done with the results?
 - What is being done to address any gaps in student achievement?

(CFRs 2.6, 4.3, 4.7)

- Determine what was done with the program review.
 - What did the faculty do to address findings?
 - Was the program review provided to the top academic leadership? What was done at that level?
 - Were the results of the program review linked to planning and budgeting? What evidence is there that changes or improvements were made as a result of the program review?

(CFRs 2.7, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

4: On the **first or second day of the visit**, the assigned team members hold a meeting with program faculty and administrators of the selected program. Team members should consider questions such as those listed above and on page two of WASC's ***Expectations for Two Reviews***.

5: On the **second or third day of the visit**, the assigned team members share observations and findings with the team, and use the evidence from this process to help the team determine where the institution falls on the ***Educational Effectiveness Framework***. The ***Framework*** is filled out and submitted as part of the team's confidential recommendation.

6: By the **last day of the visit**, the assigned team members complete their sections of the draft EER report, including a section that contains their assessment of the program review process, and submit them to the Assistant Chair for inclusion in the team report.

5/09

Data Exhibit 7—Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

Why is WASC Interested in Data of This Kind? For an institution to be committed to educational effectiveness, it must have in place a *system* for collecting and using evidence in a variety of ways to improve student learning. The indicators asked for in this exhibit reflect how an institution can approach quality assurance and improvement of student learning systematically. This exhibit is required for the Institutional Proposal; it should be updated at the time of the Capacity and Preparatory Review and again for the Educational Effectiveness Review. The exhibit should be viewed as a developmental document: the institution can indicate what activities it already engages in and what remains to be done; successive updates will then show the institution's progress.

WASC expects institutions to have educational objectives for degree programs and the institution as a whole (CFR 1.1, 1.2, and 2.4). To ensure that educational objectives are met, learning outcomes are to be reflected in academic programs and policies (CFR 2.3); outcomes should also be published and widely shared, e.g., across programs, with students, and among other stakeholders (CFR 2.4). The faculty is expected to take collective responsibility for reviewing and demonstrating the attainment of those outcomes (CFR 2.4). Ongoing collection of data and other evidence, regular analysis, and use of findings all help to assure that that students are learning at an appropriate level for the degree or certificate awarded (CFR 2.2 and 2.6), and that programs are engaged in continuous improvement (CFR 2.7, 4.4). The indicators listed in this exhibit collectively demonstrate an institution's commitment to quality assurance and improvement of educational results over time (CFR 4.1 and 4.5).

Issues and Challenges. Not all institutions have yet established learning outcomes and approaches to assessment of learning for all degree programs. This exhibit may be used to assist an institution in determining the extent to which such systems are in place, and what additional components or processes it may need to develop in the course of the WASC review. It is critical for an institution to be explicit about its expectations and to assure that every degree program has or will have in place a quality assurance system for assessing, tracking and improving the learning of its graduates. Some measures and indicators are embedded in the curriculum and may be difficult to list individually in a exhibit format. As a result, institutions may wish to supplement this data exhibit with a narrative. Institutions should contact their WASC staff liaison if they have questions; they should also alert staff to any major departure from the format of this data exhibit. The evaluation team may sample from the institution's list of indicators to understand how comprehensively and successfully the institution addresses the quality of its learning infrastructure.

Description. This data exhibit requests brief narrative information for each degree program, for general education, and for the institution as a whole: 1) whether formal learning outcomes have been developed (may be answered yes/no); 2) where the learning outcomes for the degree are listed (include course syllabi, catalogs, and other publications as applicable); 3) approaches used to assess student learning (e.g., capstone courses; comprehensive assessment examinations; student, alumni, and employer surveys; portfolio review; licensure examination; etc.); 4) processes and persons involved in analyzing/interpreting findings; 5) use made of findings for improvement of curriculum, pedagogy, or other aspects of the educational experience; and 6) date of the last program review for the program (presumably this program review will have produced a report that the team may review).

A sample format designed to address this requirement follows.

Sample Format 7.1

Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

CATEGORY	(1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed?	(2) Where are these learning outcomes published? (Please specify)	(3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)	(4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?	(5) How are the findings used?	(6) Date of last program review for this degree program
At the institutional level:						
For general education if an undergraduate institution:						
List each degree program:						
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						



PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Comprehensive List	The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly detailed, inappropriate, disorganized. It may include only discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to real-world problems).	The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored. Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs may be unclear.	The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs. graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered.	The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.
Assessable Outcomes	Outcome statements do not identify what students can do to demonstrate learning. Statements such as "Students understand scientific method" do not specify how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.	Most of the outcomes indicate how students can demonstrate their learning.	Each outcome describes how students can demonstrate learning, e.g., "Graduates can write reports in APA style" or "Graduates can make original contributions to biological knowledge."	Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria statements, such as rubrics, and have identified examples of student performance at varying levels for each outcome.
Alignment	There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the curriculum that students experience.	Students appear to be given reasonable opportunities to develop the outcomes in the required curriculum.	The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design may be summarized in a curriculum map.	Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services, and co-curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum map indicates increasing levels of proficiency.
Assessment Planning	There is no formal plan for assessing each outcome.	The program relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year.	The program has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. The plan may explicitly include analysis and implementation of improvements.	The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the overall outcomes of the program. Communication of outcomes to students, e.g. in syllabi or catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.	Students have some knowledge of program outcomes. Communication is occasional and informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of program outcomes. They may use them to guide their own learning. Outcomes are included in most syllabi and are readily available in the catalog, on the web page, and elsewhere.	Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcomes and levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents.

How Visiting Team Members Can Use the Learning Outcomes Rubric

Conclusions should be based on a review of learning outcomes and assessment plans. Although you can make some preliminary judgments about alignment based on examining the curriculum or a curriculum map, you will have to interview key departmental representatives, such as department chairs, faculty, and students, to fully evaluate the alignment of the learning environment with the outcomes.

The rubric has five major dimensions:

1. **Comprehensive List.** The set of program learning outcomes should be a short but comprehensive list of the most important knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program, including relevant institution-wide outcomes such as those dealing with communication skills, critical thinking, or information literacy. Faculty generally should expect higher levels of sophistication for graduate programs than for undergraduate programs, and they should consider national disciplinary standards when developing and refining their outcomes, if available. There is no strict rule concerning the optimum number of outcomes, but quality is more important than quantity. Faculty should not confuse learning processes (e.g., completing an internship) with learning outcomes (what is learned in the internship, such as application of theory to real-world practice). Questions. Is the list reasonable, appropriate and well-organized? Are relevant institution-wide outcomes, such as information literacy, included? Are distinctions between undergraduate and graduate outcomes clear? Have national disciplinary standards been considered when developing and refining the outcomes? Are explicit criteria – as defined in a rubric, for example – available for each outcome?
2. **Assessable Outcomes.** Outcome statements should specify what students can do to demonstrate their learning. For example, an outcome might state that “Graduates of our program can collaborate effectively to reach a common goal” or that “Graduates of our program can design research studies to test theories and examine issues relevant to our discipline.” These outcomes are assessable because faculty can observe the quality of collaboration in teams, and they can review the quality of student-created research designs. Criteria for assessing student products or behaviors usually are specified in rubrics, and the department should develop examples of varying levels of student performance (i.e., work that does not meet expectations, meets expectations, and exceeds expectations) to illustrate levels. Questions. Do the outcomes clarify how students can demonstrate learning? Have the faculty agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing each outcome? Do they have examples of work representing different levels of mastery for each outcome?
3. **Alignment.** Students cannot be held responsible for mastering learning outcomes unless they have participated in a program that systematically supports their development. The curriculum should be explicitly designed to provide opportunities for students to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design often is summarized in a curriculum map—a matrix that shows the relationship between courses in the required curriculum and the program’s learning outcomes. Pedagogy and grading should be aligned with outcomes to foster and encourage student growth and to provide students helpful feedback on their development. Since learning occurs within and outside the classroom, relevant student services (e.g., advising and tutoring centers) and co-curriculum (e.g., student clubs and campus events) should be designed to support the outcomes. Questions. Is the curriculum explicitly aligned with the program outcomes? Do faculty select effective pedagogy and use grading to promote learning? Are student support services and the co-curriculum explicitly aligned to promote student development of the learning outcomes?
4. **Assessment Planning.** Faculty should develop explicit plans for assessing each outcome. Programs need not assess every outcome every year, but faculty should have a plan to cycle through the outcomes over a reasonable period of time, such as the period for program review cycles. Questions. Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time? Is the plan sustainable, in terms of human, fiscal, and other resources? Are assessment plans revised, as needed?
5. **The Student Experience.** At a minimum, students should be aware of the learning outcomes of the program(s) in which they are enrolled; ideally, they should be included as partners in defining and applying the outcomes and the criteria for levels of sophistication. Thus it is essential to communicate learning outcomes to students consistently and meaningfully. Questions: Are the outcomes communicated to students? Do students understand what the outcomes mean and how they can further their own learning? Do students use the outcomes and criteria to self-assess? Do they participate in reviews of outcomes, criteria, curriculum design, or related activities?



PROGRAM REVIEW

Rubric for Assessing the Integration of Student Learning Assessment into Program Reviews

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Required Elements of the Self-Study	Program faculty may be required to provide a list of program-level student learning outcomes.	Faculty are required to provide the program's student learning outcomes and summarize annual assessment findings.	Faculty are required to provide the program's student learning outcomes, annual assessment studies, findings, and resulting changes. They may be required to submit a plan for the next cycle of assessment studies.	Faculty are required to evaluate the program's student learning outcomes, annual assessment findings, bench-marking results, subsequent changes, and evidence concerning the impact of these changes. They present a plan for the next cycle of assessment studies.
Process of Review	Internal and external reviewers do not address evidence concerning the quality of student learning in the program other than grades.	Internal and external reviewers address indirect and possibly direct evidence of student learning in the program; they do so at the descriptive level, rather than providing an evaluation.	Internal and external reviewers analyze direct and indirect evidence of student learning in the program and offer evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement. They have sufficient expertise to evaluate program efforts; departments use the feedback to improve their work.	Well-qualified internal and external reviewers evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact. They give evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement. The department uses the feedback to improve student learning.
Planning and Budgeting	The campus has not integrated program reviews into planning and budgeting processes.	The campus has attempted to integrate program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, but with limited success.	The campus generally integrates program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, but not through a formal process.	The campus systematically integrates program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, e.g., through negotiating formal action plans with mutually agreed-upon commitments.
Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts	No individual or committee on campus provides feedback to departments on the quality of their outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, impact, etc.	An individual or committee occasionally provides feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, etc.	A well-qualified individual or committee provides annual feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, etc. Departments use the feedback to improve their work.	A well-qualified individual or committee provides annual feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, benchmarking results, and assessment impact. Departments effectively use the feedback to improve student learning. Follow-up activities enjoy institutional support
The Student Experience	Students are unaware of and uninvolved in program review.	Program review may include focus groups or conversations with students to follow up on results of surveys	The internal and external reviewers examine samples of student work, e.g., sample papers, portfolios and capstone projects. Students may be invited to discuss what they learned and how they learned it.	Students are respected partners in the program review process. They may offer poster sessions on their work, demonstrate how they apply rubrics to self-assess, and/or provide their own evaluative feedback.

How Visiting Team Members Can Use the Program Review Rubric

Conclusions should be based on a review of program-review documents and discussion with relevant campus representatives, such as department chairs, deans, and program review committees.

The rubric has five major dimensions:

1. **Self-Study Requirements.** The campus should have explicit requirements for the program's self-study, including an analysis of the program's learning outcomes and a review of the annual assessment studies conducted since the last program review. Faculty preparing the self-study should reflect on the accumulating results and their impact; and they should plan for the next cycle of assessment studies. As much as possible, programs should benchmark findings against similar programs on other campuses. Questions: Does the campus require self-studies that include an analysis of the program's learning outcomes, assessment studies, assessment results, benchmarking results, and assessment impact, including the impact of changes made in response to earlier studies? Does the campus require an updated assessment plan for the subsequent years before the next program review?
2. **Self-Study Review.** Internal reviewers (on-campus individuals, such as deans and program review committee members) and external reviewers (off-campus individuals, usually disciplinary experts) should evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact; and they should provide evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement. Questions: Who reviews the self-studies? Do they have the training or expertise to provide effective feedback? Do they routinely evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact? Do they provide suggestions for improvement? Do departments effectively use this feedback to improve student learning?
3. **Planning and Budgeting.** Program reviews should not be *pro forma* exercises; they should be tied to planning and budgeting processes, with expectations that increased support will lead to increased effectiveness, such as improving student learning and retention rates. Questions. Does the campus systematically integrate program reviews into planning and budgeting processes? Are expectations established for the impact of planned changes?
4. **Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts.** Campuses moving into the culture of evidence often find considerable variation in the quality of assessment efforts across programs, and waiting for years to provide feedback to improve the assessment process is unlikely to lead to effective campus practices. While program reviews encourage departments to reflect on multi-year assessment results, some programs are likely to require more immediate feedback, usually based on a required, annual assessment report. This feedback might be provided by an Assessment Director or Committee, relevant Dean or Associate Dean, or others; and whoever has this responsibility should have the expertise to provide quality feedback. Questions: Does someone have the responsibility for providing annual feedback on the assessment process? Does this person or team have the expertise to provide effective feedback? Does this person or team routinely provide feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, benchmarking results, and assessment impact? Do departments effectively use this feedback to improve student learning?
5. **The Student Experience.** Students have a unique perspective on a given program of study: they know better than anyone what it means to go through it as a student. Program review should take advantage of that perspective and build it into the review. Questions: Are students aware of the purpose and value of program review? Are they involved in preparations and the self-study? Do they have an opportunity to interact with internal or external reviewers, demonstrate and interpret their learning, and provide evaluative feedback?



PORTFOLIOS

Rubric for Assessing the Use of Portfolios for Assessing Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Clarification of Students' Task	Instructions to students for portfolio development provide insufficient detail for them to know what faculty expect. Instructions may not identify outcomes to be addressed in the portfolio.	Students receive some written instructions for their portfolios, but they still have problems determining what is required of them and/or why they are compiling a portfolio.	Students receive written instructions that describe faculty expectations in detail and include the purpose of the portfolio, types of evidence to include, role of the reflective essay (if required), and format of the finished product.	Students in the program understand the portfolio requirement and the rationale for it, and they view the portfolio as helping them develop self-assessment skills. Faculty may monitor the developing portfolio to provide formative feedback and/or advise individual students.
Valid Results	It is not clear that valid evidence for each relevant outcome is collected <u>and/or</u> individual reviewers use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work.	Appropriate evidence is collected for each outcome, and faculty have discussed relevant criteria for assessing each outcome.	Appropriate evidence is collected for each outcome; faculty use explicit criteria, such as agreed-upon rubrics, to assess student attainment of each outcome. Rubrics are usually shared with students.	Assessment criteria, e.g., in the form of rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined over time; they are shared with students, and student may have helped develop them. Feedback from external reviewers has led to refinements in the assessment process. The department also uses external benchmarking data.
Reliable Results	Those who review student work are not calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and there are no checks for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way <u>or</u> faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated; faculty routinely find that assessment data have high inter-rater reliability.
Results Are Used	Results for each outcome are collected, but they are not discussed among the faculty.	Results for each outcome are collected and discussed by the faculty, but results have not been used to improve the program.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by faculty, and used to improve the program.	Faculty routinely discuss results, plan needed changes, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others, such as librarians or Student Affairs professionals, to improve student learning. Students may also participate in discussions and/or receive feedback, either individual or in the aggregate. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.
If e-Portfolios Are Used	There is no technical support for students or faculty to learn the software or to deal with problems.	There is informal or minimal formal support for students and faculty.	Formal technical support is readily available and proactively assists in learning the software and solving problems.	Support is readily available, proactive, and effective. Tech support personnel may also participate in refining the overall portfolio process.

How Visiting Team Members Can Use the Portfolio Rubric

Portfolios can serve many purposes besides assessment; in fact, these other purposes are actually much more common. Portfolios may be compiled so students can share their work with family and friends. They may be designed to build students' confidence by showing development over time or by displaying best work. They may be used for advising and career counseling, or so students can show their work during a job interview. The first thing a team needs to do is determine that the portfolios are used for *assessment*, and not for another purpose.

Conclusions about the quality of the assessment process should be based on discussion with relevant department members (e.g., chair, assessment coordinator, faculty, students) and a review of the program's written portfolio assignment. Two common types of portfolios are:

- Showcase portfolios—collections of each student's best work
- Developmental portfolios—collections of work from early, middle, and late stages in the student's academic career that demonstrate growth

Faculty generally require students to include a reflective essay that describes how the evidence in the portfolio demonstrates their achievement of program learning outcomes. Sometimes faculty monitor developing portfolios to provide formative feedback and/or advising to students, and sometimes they collect portfolios only as students near graduation. Portfolio assignments should clarify the purpose of the portfolio, what kinds of evidence should be included, and the format (e.g., paper vs. e-portfolios); and students should view the portfolio as contributing to their personal development.

The rubric has five major dimensions and a fifth dimension limited to e-portfolios:

1. **Clarification of Students' Task.** Most students have never created a portfolio, and they need explicit guidance. Questions. Does the portfolio assignment provide sufficient detail so students understand the purpose, the types of evidence to include, the learning outcomes to address, the role of the reflective essay (if any), and the required format? Do students view the portfolio as contributing to their ability to self-assess? Do faculty use the developing portfolios to assist individual students?
2. **Valid Results.** Sometimes portfolios lack valid evidence for assessing particular outcomes. For example, portfolios may not allow faculty to assess how well students can deliver oral presentations. Judgments about that evidence need to be based on well-established, agreed-upon criteria that specify (usually in rubrics) how to identify work that meets or exceeds expectations. Questions: Do the portfolios systematically include valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Are faculty using well-established, agreed-upon criteria, such as rubrics, to assess the evidence for each outcome? Have faculty pilot tested and refined their process? Are criteria shared with students? Are they collaborating with colleagues at other institutions to secure benchmarking (comparison) data?
3. **Reliable Results.** Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about a student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated. Sometimes a discrepancy index is used. How often do the two raters give identical ratings, ratings one point apart, ratings two points apart, etc.? Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to pre-selected examples of student work that vary in quality, then reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product would receive the same score, regardless of rater. Questions: Are reviewers calibrated? Are checks for inter-rater reliability made? Is there evidence of high inter-rater reliability?
4. **Results Are Used.** Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning, so assessment findings should have an impact. Faculty should reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet their standards, faculty should determine what changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty support. Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other campus professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?
5. **If e-Portfolios Are Used.** Faculty and students alike require support, especially when a new software program is introduced. Lack of support can lead to frustration and failure of the process. Support personnel may also have useful insights into how the portfolio assessment process can be refined. Questions: What is the quality and extent of technical support? Of inclusion in review and refinement of the portfolio process? What is the overall level of faculty and student satisfaction with the technology and support services?

CAPSTONES

Rubric for Assessing the Use of Capstone Experiences for Assessing Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Relevant Outcomes and Lines of Evidence Identified	It is not clear which program outcomes will be assessed in the capstone course.	The relevant outcomes are identified, e.g., ability to integrate knowledge to solve complex problems; however, concrete plans for collecting evidence for each outcome have not been developed.	Relevant outcomes are identified. Concrete plans for collecting evidence for each outcome are agreed upon and used routinely by faculty who staff the capstone course.	Relevant evidence is collected; faculty have agreed on explicit criteria statements, e.g., rubrics, and have identified examples of student performance at varying levels of mastery for each relevant outcome.
Valid Results	It is not clear that potentially valid evidence for each relevant outcome is collected <u>and/or</u> individual faculty use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work or performances.	Faculty have reached general agreement on the types of evidence to be collected for each outcome; they have discussed relevant criteria for assessing each outcome but these are not yet fully defined.	Faculty have agreed on concrete plans for collecting relevant evidence for each outcome. Explicit criteria, e.g., rubrics, have been developed to assess the level of student attainment of each outcome.	Assessment criteria, such as rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined over time; they usually are shared with students. Feedback from external reviewers has led to refinements in the assessment process, and the department uses external benchmarking data.
Reliable Results	Those who review student work are not calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way; there are no checks for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way <u>or</u> faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, <u>and</u> faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated, and faculty routinely find assessment data have high inter-rater reliability.
Results Are Used	Results for each outcome may or may not be collected. They are not discussed among faculty.	Results for each outcome are collected and may be discussed by the faculty, but results have not been used to improve the program.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by faculty, analyzed, and used to improve the program.	Faculty routinely discuss results, plan needed changes, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others, such as librarians or Student Affairs professionals, to improve results. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the purpose of the capstone or outcomes to be assessed. It is just another course or requirement.	Students have some knowledge of the purpose and outcomes of the capstone. Communication is occasional, informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of purpose and outcomes of the capstone and embrace it as a learning opportunity. Information is readily available in advising guides, etc.	Students are well-acquainted with purpose and outcomes of the capstone and embrace it. They may participate in refining the experience, outcomes, and rubrics. Information is readily available.

How Visiting Team Members Can Use the Capstone Rubric

Conclusions should be based on discussion with relevant department members (e.g., chair, assessment coordinator, faculty). A variety of capstone experiences can be used to collect assessment data, such as:

- courses, such as senior seminars, in which advanced students are required to consider the discipline broadly and integrate what they have learned in the curriculum
- specialized, advanced courses
- advanced-level projects conducted under the guidance of a faculty member or committee, such as research projects, theses, or dissertations
- advanced-level internships or practica, e.g., at the end of an MBA program

Assessment data for a variety of outcomes can be collected in such courses, particularly outcomes related to integrating and applying the discipline, information literacy, critical thinking, and research and communication skills.

The rubric has five major dimensions:

1. **Relevant Outcomes and Evidence Identified.** It is likely that not all program learning outcomes can be assessed within a single capstone course or experience. Questions: Have faculty explicitly determined which program outcomes will be assessed in the capstone? Have they agreed on concrete plans for collecting evidence relevant to each targeted outcome? Have they agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing the evidence? Have they identified examples of student performance for each outcome at varying performance levels (e.g., below expectations, meeting, exceeding expectations for graduation)?
2. **Valid Results.** A valid assessment of a particular outcome leads to accurate conclusions concerning students' achievement of that outcome. Sometimes faculty collect evidence that does not have the potential to provide valid conclusions. For example, a multiple-choice test will not provide evidence of students' ability to deliver effective oral presentations. Assessment requires the collection of valid evidence and judgments about that evidence that are based on well-established, agreed-upon criteria that specify how to identify low, medium, or high-quality work. Questions: Are faculty collecting valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Are they using well-established, agreed-upon criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing the evidence for each outcome? Have faculty pilot tested and refined their process based on experience and feedback from external reviewers? Are they sharing the criteria with their students? Are they using benchmarking (comparison) data?
3. **Reliable Results.** Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about individual student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated. Sometimes a discrepancy index is used. How often do the two raters give identical ratings, ratings one point apart, ratings two points apart, etc.? Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if the discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to pre-selected examples of student work that vary in quality, then reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product receives the same score, regardless of rater. Questions: Are reviewers calibrated? Are checks for inter-rater reliability made? Is there evidence of high inter-rater reliability?
4. **Results Are Used.** Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning, so assessment findings should have an impact. Faculty should reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet faculty standards, faculty should determine which changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty support. Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other campus professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?

The Student Experience. Students should understand the purposes different educational experiences serve in promoting their learning and development and know how to take advantage of them; ideally they should also participate in shaping those experiences. Thus it is essential to communicate to students consistently and include them meaningfully. Questions: Are purposes and outcomes communicated to students? Do they understand how capstones support learning? Do they participate in reviews of the capstone experience, its outcomes, criteria, or related activities?

Expectations for Two Reviews: Clarifying the Focus

The WASC Standards for Accreditation apply to both the Capacity and Preparatory and the Educational Effectiveness Reviews. At the same time, there are important distinctions in focus for each review, as highlighted in the first table. The second table focuses more specifically on expectations for student learning at the time of each review.

NOTE: This table is intended to be illustrative of the differences between the two reviews and does not cover all aspects of each Standard.

	Capacity and Preparatory Review	Educational Effectiveness Review
Primary Focus of Each Review:	<p>Capacity: Institutional purposes, integrity, stability, resources, structures, processes, and policies including capacity to assess student learning</p> <p>Preparatory: Focus on issues in preparation for a successful Educational Effectiveness Review</p>	<p>Student Learning: Evidence of educational achievement</p> <p>Institutional Learning: Evidence and actions for improving performance; results of review processes</p>
<p>Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purpose and Ensuring Educational Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear sense of institutional purpose • Integrity and good business policies and practices • Institutional and program objectives • Public accountability and transparency • Diversity plans and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of, or tangible progress toward meeting, institutional goals • Multiple indicators of effectiveness • Evidence of integrity • Analysis of data on diversity; use of analysis for assessment and improvement
<p>Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions</p>	<p>Infrastructure to support learning*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated learning outcomes • Defined levels of achievement • Program review process • Support for faculty scholarship • Support for academic and co-curricular learning 	<p>Educational results*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed program reviews • Assessment results at the course, program and institutional levels • Results of assessment of student services and support • Use of these results to plan for and make improvements
<p>Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Assure Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate resources including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ faculty and staff √ policies and practices re: faculty and staff √ financial sustainability √ library and information technology • Sound organizational structures and decision-making processes • Qualified and adequate administration, board and faculty governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate alignment, commitment, and use of resources to support learning • Evidence-based decision making • Effective governance and decision making
<p>Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning processes that involve constituents and are aligned with goals • Adequate institutional research • Quality improvement systems designed in alignment with mission • Wide use of evidence in planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of leadership at all levels in learning processes • Quality improvement system results • Evidence of a learning organization

* Please see page 2 for a more detailed statement of expectations about assessment of student learning for the two reviews.

Expectations about Student Learning

Institutions and teams should see evidence of the following, related to student learning, at the time of the designated review. Each cell below includes references to the related Criteria for Review (CFR).

Note: Not all foci in the CPR have a direct parallel in the EER.

Capacity and Preparatory Review	Educational Effectiveness Review
Are student learning outcomes set and published at the program and course levels? (1.2, 2.3)	Are students learning what they are expected to learn? At expected levels? Are these results good enough? (2.6)
Have expectations for levels of student achievement been determined and published? (2.4)	How does the institution respond if assessment shows that not all students are achieving at expected levels? (4.1, 4.6)
Are student learning outcomes expressed in course syllabi? (2.4)	
Are student learning outcomes for programs mapped to courses (such as through curriculum maps)? (2.3)	
Have assessment plans been developed and implemented?*(4.1)	Is assessment being implemented as planned? Is it effective? How does the institution know? (4.1)
Is the program review process developed and systematically deployed? Does it include both assessment of student learning and evaluation of student success indicators? (2.7, 4.4)	Is program review conducted as planned? What has each program learned from the reviews? Are patterns evident when reviews are compared? Are reviews linked to the resource allocation process, to provide for needed improvements? (4.4, 4.6)
Are co-curricular programs regularly reviewed with reference to stated outcomes? (2.11, 4.6)	What are the findings from co-curricular assessment? To what extent do co-curricular programs support learning? How does the institution respond to gaps in alignment of curricular and co-curricular efforts? (4.6)
Does institutional research support assessment of student learning and student success? (2.10, 4.5)	What do data on retention/completion show overall, and for various student groups? How do results compare with peer or aspirant institutions? What is being done to address gaps that are discovered? (4.5)
Do faculty have resources and support to assess and improve student learning and success? (2.4, 4.6, 4.7)	How do the faculty demonstrate responsibility for assessment and improvement of learning? (4.6, 4.7)

*Assessment plans should be:

- Developed by faculty, who are engaged in their design and responsible for their implementation
- Include multiple tools for assessing student work
- Include both formative and summative strategies
- Use multiple assessment measures, beyond GPA
- Incorporate and weigh both direct and indirect measures

**The Educational Effectiveness Framework:
Capacity and Effectiveness as They Relate to Student and Institutional Learning**

Key Descriptive Terms → ↓ ELEMENT & DEFINITION	INITIAL	EMERGING	DEVELOPED	HIGHLY DEVELOPED
Learning				
A. Student learning outcomes established; communicated in syllabi and publications; cited and used by faculty, student affairs, advisors, others (CFRs 2.2, 2.4):	For only a few programs and units; only vaguely (if at all) for GE; not communicated in syllabi, or publications such as catalogues, view books, guides to the major; only a few faculty know and use for designing curriculum, assignments, or assessment	For many programs and units, most aspects of GE; beginning to be communicated in basic documents; beginning to be used by some faculty for design of curriculum, assignments, assessments	For all units (academic & co-curricular), and for all aspects of GE; cited often but not in all appropriate places; most faculty cite; used in most programs for design of curriculum, assignments, and assessment	For all units (academic and co-curricular), and for all aspects of GE; cited widely by faculty and advisors; used routinely by faculty, student affairs, other staff in design of curricula, assignments, co-curriculum, and assessment
B. Expectations are established for how <i>well</i> (i.e., proficiency or level) students achieve outcomes (CFRs 2.1, 2.4, 2.5):	Expectations for student learning have not been set beyond course completion and GPA; level of learning expected relative to outcomes unclear	Expectations for level of learning explicit in a few programs; heavy reliance on course completion and GPA	Expectations for student learning explicit in most programs	Expectations for student learning are explicit in all programs, widely known and embraced by faculty, staff, and students
C. Assessment plans are in place; curricular and co-curricular outcomes are systematically assessed, improvements documented (CFRs 2.4, 2.7):	No comprehensive assessment plans. Outcomes assessed occasionally using surveys and self reports, seldom using direct assessment; rarely lead to revision of curriculum, pedagogy, co-curriculum, or other aspects of educational experience	Some planning in place. Outcomes assessed occasionally, principally using surveys; beginning to move toward some direct assessment; occasionally leads to improvements in educational experience; improvements sporadically documented, e.g., in units' annual reports.	Plans mostly in place. Assessment occurs periodically, using direct methods supplemented by indirect methods and descriptive data; educational experience is frequently improved based on evidence and findings; improvements are routinely documented, e.g., in units' annual reports	Assessment plans throughout institution. Assessment occurs on regular schedule using multiple methods; strong reliance on direct methods, performance-based; educational experience systematically reviewed and improved based on evidence and findings; documentation widespread and easy to locate.
D. Desired kind and level of learning is achieved (CFR 2.6):	Possible that learning is not up to expectations, and/or expectations set by institution are too low for degree(s) offered by the institution	Most students appear to achieve at levels set by the institution; faculty and other educators beginning to discuss expectations and assessment findings	Nearly all students achieve at or above levels set by institution; assessment findings discussed periodically by most faculty and other campus educators	All students achieve at or above levels set by institution; findings are discussed regularly and acted upon by all or nearly all faculty and other campus educators
Teaching/Learning Environment				
A. Curricula, pedagogy, co-curriculum, other aspects of educational experience are aligned with outcomes (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 4.6):	Conceived exclusively or largely in terms of inputs (e.g. library holdings, lab space), curricular requirements (e.g., for majors, GE) and availability of co-curricular programs; not visibly aligned with outcomes or expectations for level of student achievement; evidence of alignment processes lacking	Educational experience beginning to be aligned with learning outcomes and expectations for student achievement; evidence of alignment efforts available in some academic and co-curricular programs	Educational experience generally aligned with learning outcomes, expectations for student achievement; alignment becoming intentional, systematic, supported by tools (e.g. curriculum maps) and processes. Evidence of alignment efforts generally available	Educational experience fully aligned with learning outcomes, expectations; alignment is systematic, supported by tools and processes as well as broader institutional infrastructure. Evidence of alignment efforts readily available
B. Curricular and co-curricular processes (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.11, 2.13) are:	Rarely informed by good learning practices as defined by the wider higher education community; few curricular or co-curricular activities reviewed, mostly without reference to outcomes or evidence of student learning	Informed in some instances by good learning practices; curricula and co-curricular activities occasionally reviewed and improved but with little reference to outcomes or assessment findings	Informed in many cases by good learning practices; reviewed and improved by relevant faculty and other campus educators; often based on outcomes and assessment findings	Regularly informed by good learning practices; improvements consistently result from scholarly reflection on outcomes and assessment findings by relevant faculty and other campus educators

**The Educational Effectiveness Framework:
Capacity and Effectiveness as They Relate to Student and Institutional Learning**

<p>C. Professional development, rewards (CFRs 2.8, 2.9):</p>	<p>Little or no support for faculty, other campus educators to develop expertise in assessment of student learning, related practices; work to assess, improve student learning plays no positive role in reward system, may be viewed as a negative</p>	<p>Some support for faculty, other educators on campus to develop expertise in assessment of student learning, related practices; modest, implicit positive role in reward system</p>	<p>Some support for faculty, other campus educators to develop expertise in assessment of student learning, related practices; explicit, positive role in reward structure</p>	<p>Significant support for faculty, other campus educators to develop expertise in assessment of student learning, related practices; explicit, prominent role in reward structure</p>
<p>Organizational Learning A. Indicators of educational effectiveness are (CFRs 1.2, 4.3, 4.4):</p>	<p>Notable by their absence or considered only sporadically in decision-making</p>	<p>Found in some areas; dissemination of performance results just beginning; no reference to comparative data</p>	<p>Multiple, with data collected regularly, disseminated, collectively analyzed; some comparative data used. Some indicators used to inform planning, budgeting, other decision making on occasional basis</p>	<p>Multiple, with data collected regularly, disseminated widely, collectively analyzed; comparative data used, as appropriate, in all programs. Indicators consistently used to inform planning, budgeting, other decision making at all levels of the institution</p>
<p>B. Formal program review (CFRs 2.7, 4.4) is:</p>	<p>Rare, if it occurs at all, with little or no useful data generated. Assessment findings on student learning not available and/or not used</p>	<p>Occasional, in some departments or units; heavy reliance on traditional inputs as indicators of quality; findings occasionally used to suggest improvements in educational effectiveness; weak linkage to institution-level planning, budgeting</p>	<p>Frequent, affecting most academic and co-curricular units, with growing inclusion of findings about student learning; unit uses findings to collectively reflect on, improve effectiveness; some linkage to institution-level planning, budgeting</p>	<p>Systematic and institution-wide, with learning assessment findings a major component; units use findings to improve student learning, program effectiveness, and supporting processes; close linkage to institution-level planning, budgeting</p>
<p>C. Performance data, evidence, and analyses (CFRs 4.3, 4.5, 4.6) are:</p>	<p>Not collected, disseminated, disaggregated, or accessible for wide use. Not evident in decision-making processes; do not appear to be used for improvement in any programs</p>	<p>Limited collection, dissemination, disaggregation, or access. Campus at beginning stages of use for decisions to improve educational effectiveness at program, unit, and/or institutional level</p>	<p>Systematic collection and dissemination, wide access; sometimes disaggregated; usually considered by decision-making bodies at all levels, but documentation and/or linkage to educational effectiveness may be weak</p>	<p>Systematic collection and dissemination, and access, purposeful disaggregation; consistently used by decision-making bodies for program improvement at all levels, with processes fully documented</p>
<p>D. Culture of inquiry and evidence (CFRs 4.5, 4.6, 4.7):</p>	<p>Faculty, other educators, staff, institutional leaders, governing board not visibly committed to a culture of inquiry and evidence except in isolated cases; not knowledgeable about learner-centeredness, assessment, etc.</p>	<p>Campus knowledge is minimal; support – at top levels and/or grass roots – for development of a culture of inquiry and evidence is sporadic and uneven</p>	<p>Campus knowledge and support for a culture of inquiry and evidence fairly consistent across administration, faculty, professional staff but may not be uniformly deep</p>	<p>Consistent, knowledgeable, deep commitment to creating and sustaining a culture of inquiry and evidence in all appropriate functions at all levels</p>
<p>E. Communication and transparency (CFR 1.2, 1.7):</p>	<p>Little or no data, findings, analyses from assessment of student learning available within the institution or to external audiences</p>	<p>Some data, findings, analyses from assessment of student learning available but may be incomplete, difficult to access or understand for internal or external audiences</p>	<p>Data, findings, analyses from assessment of student learning generally available, easily accessible; chosen for relevance to multiple audiences</p>	<p>Data, findings, analyses from learning assessment are widely available and skillfully framed to be understandable, useful to multiple audiences</p>
<p>Overall: The institution can best be described as:</p>	<p>Committed to isolated aspects of educational effectiveness; if other areas are not addressed, continuing reaffirmation of accreditation is threatened</p>	<p>Committed to educational effectiveness in some areas; significant number of areas require attention, improvement</p>	<p>Mostly well-established commitment to educational effectiveness; a few areas require attention, improvement</p>	<p>Fully committed to and going beyond WASC recommendations; operates at an exemplary level in addressing its Core Commitments to capacity as it relates to learning and to educational effectiveness</p>