3 Step Assessment Process*

Step One: Outcomes

**Defining Question:** What do we want our students to be able to know or do when they complete our program of study?

1. Identify the courses where our students learn the outcome.
2. Identify the courses where our students practice the outcome.
3. Align the course learning outcomes with our Institutional learning outcomes.
4. Identify existing assignments and tests that address the outcome (direct measure).

5. Choose a benchmark or standard (Quantitative: points, percentage, score, Likert scale; Qualitative: narrative) for the achievement of the outcome for each level of performance (Introductory, Developing, and Competent). **Establish your benchmark based on expected work or academic standards of achievement in your industry or discipline.**

6. Use a set of criteria or questions (your rubric) to evaluate student work.

7. Ask students what they thought they learned (indirect measure) using one of the following: student surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups asking three questions:
   a. How well did you achieve each of the following learning outcomes [use a scale such as “extremely well, very well, adequately, not very well, not at all”]
   b. What aspects of your education in this program (an Institutional Outcome is considered a program) helped you with your learning, and why were they successful?
   c. What might the program do differently that would help you learn more effectively, and how would these actions help? (Walvoord, 2015 Mini Conference material, p. 3).
Step Two: Information (Evidence)

Defining Question: What did you find out? How well are students achieving the outcome?

1. Identify a sample of student work to reach a reasonable conclusion about how well students are achieving the outcome. Make sure your sample reflect all your students.

   “You are not trying to achieve the perfect research design. You are trying to gather enough data to provide a reasonable basis for action. You are looking for something to work on” (Walvoord, 2010, p.4).

2. Evaluate your students’ work using your rubric or a list of criteria or a common rubric. Identify student strengths and weaknesses (Walvoord, 2010, p.22).

3. Compare your results to your performance benchmark.

4. Look for common themes or difficulties that are mentioned most often (Walvoord, 2010, p. 23).

5. Organize the results for discussion with your team. Focus on the information you need for wise action.
Step Three: Action

Defining Question: How can we use the information to improve student learning?

1. Using the information collected, aggregated and organized in Step Two, the team will “interpret, prioritize and decide upon a sustainable, reasonable course of action to improve student learning” (Walvoord, 2010, p. 69).

2. For this further analysis and prioritizing, consider:
   a. What is most important?
   b. Which areas show the greatest problems with learning?

3. Propose “action(s) that seem likely to enhance student learning and that are feasible given the department’s resources” (Walvoord, 2010, p.70).

4. Add your recommendations for improving student learning to your annual report.

5. Identify who will be responsible for implementing the action(s) and the implementation timing and suggested post implementation timing for data collection to determine the effectiveness of your action(s). Enter this information on your annual report.

Re-Assessment

1. Follow-up on how well your actions are achieving the intended result over time. Tobias, 1992 as cited in Walvoord, 2010, p. 70 reports that the successful preparation of undergraduates takes consistent, steady attention and action.

2. After your action(s) have been in place for at least one semester and you have collected data related to its effectiveness, describe what worked, what did not work, and what you will change based on the results. Enter this information on your annual report.