

# University of Pittsburgh

## Summary of Assessment Process

The assessment process is a cycle comprised of several essential components outlined below.

### **Articulate Program Mission**

The program mission is centered on outcomes that are of value to the department/program. Goals articulated in a program mission should be consistent with the goals of the school, campus, and University.

### **Develop Learning Outcomes**

Programs agree upon student learning outcomes (typically 3-5) that are consistent with the student learning outcomes set by the Institution. Learning outcomes should be clear, concise, and specific to the discipline.

### **Determine Standards**

Standards are determined by the program faculty in order to provide a benchmark for student achievement in a specific program. Faculty consider questions such as, what does it mean for a student to demonstrate effective communication or critical thinking skills in the discipline? What is the standard to determine that this goal was achieved?

### **Consider Potential Opportunities to Measure**

Resources are used most effectively by taking advantage of existing evaluation measures before creating new ones. There are many opportunities to measure student achievement that are already part of the academic process.

### **Provide Direct and Indirect Assessment**

Successful assessment plans utilize both direct and indirect forms of assessment. It is important not only to measure students' perception of how much they have learned in a given program, but to also identify measurements that will show if students are actually attaining the goals the program has set for its students.

### **Evaluate Student Learning Outcomes**

Some student learning outcomes can be evaluated best through rubrics, others by a team of external reviewers, etc. The best methods for evaluation should be considered for each student learning outcome.

### **Analyze Results**

Results are analyzed using the criteria and standards set forth by the program faculty.

### **Apply Results**

Data resulting from the measurement of student learning outcomes is of little use unless the program has a strategic plan for using those results for program improvement. Individuals and/or committees responsible for using the data to implement strategies for program improvement are identified at the time the assessment plan is drafted.