

Stony Brook University

Academic Program Assessment Policy

Introduction

Academic degree and certificate programs at Stony Brook University engage in cyclical assessment¹ processes to ensure that our students' education is of the highest quality.

Policy

All degree and certificate programs are expected to develop and implement plans to regularly assess educational effectiveness. Plans will be developed by the faculty in each program and must include:

1. Articulation of the knowledge, skills and abilities that students should achieve by completing the program²
2. Strategies to measure all programmatic learning objectives³⁻⁴
3. Creation of student performance assessment criteria⁵
4. A statement of findings and results⁶
5. Use of results to make necessary changes or improvements when benchmarks are not met.⁷

Programs will submit an annual report to the Office of Educational Effectiveness (OEE) detailing their assessment activities to demonstrate their progress toward completing a full assessment cycle⁸ every five years. Assessment reports will be shared with the Assessment Council and programs' respective Chairs and/or Dean(s).

Program faculty hold the primary responsibility for determining how best to assess student learning and educational effectiveness, and should develop assessment plans consistent with the standards in their field(s) of study. Administrative support will be provided to help programs and faculty apply best practices in assessment, develop comprehensive assessment plans, measure student learning effectively, and interpret results, as appropriate.

The results from the assessment of student learning may not be used for the evaluation of individual faculty or administrators in appointment, promotion or tenure processes. Results will be used to inform continuous improvement or sustainment of excellence of the educational experience. Data from the assessment process may be used to inform changes to the program and/or educational experience, such as resource allocation and management.

Stony Brook University will engage in cyclical assessment of: (I) general education, (II) programs without specialized accreditation, and (III) streamlined requirements for programs with specialized accreditation.

I. Assessment of General Education

Assessment of student learning in general education will be conducted by faculty in the department(s) delivering Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC) courses⁹ using a staggered

assessment schedule.

II. Assessment of Programs without Specialized Accreditation

Programs without specialized accreditation will follow the assessment procedures in accordance with the assessment policy, including but not limited to completion of annual reports.

III. Assessment of Programs with Specialized Accreditation

Programs with specialized accreditation will use annual assessment findings, programmatic updates, and/or other existing sources of evidence pertaining to student learning in accordance with the assessment policy.

[The SBU Assessment Procedure document](#) provides detailed guidance to carry out the requirements of the Assessment Policy.

Glossary of Terms:

¹ *Assessment*: The collection and use of empirical data on student learning to refine programs and improve student learning (Allen, 2003).

² *Learning Objectives*: A measurable statement describing the knowledge, skills and abilities that students should achieve as a result of completing a degree or certificate program.

³ *Assessment Tools*: Techniques and strategies used to measure the effectiveness of student learning, such as rubrics, portfolios, surveys, quizzes, classroom polls, and other direct and indirect assessment methods.

⁴ *Curriculum Mapping*: The process of linking and aligning program learning objectives to specific course(s), point(s) the curricular sequence, and assessment method(s)/assignment(s).

⁵ *Benchmarks*: Qualitative or quantitative performance evaluation criteria designed to indicate the level at which program learning objectives are met or not met (by students?), often guided by a rubric.

⁶ *Outcomes Data*: Empirical data or evidence indicating actual student performance results compared to the intended program learning objectives and benchmarks.

⁷ *Closing the Loop*: The plans, actions, resources or other changes implemented in order to enhance educational effectiveness.

⁸ *Assessment Cycle*: The ongoing process of evaluating all program learning objectives within a specified timeframe, which repeats in a sustainable, cyclical manner.

⁹ *SBC Courses*: the Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC) is the local term for general education at Stony Brook University, and refers to courses affiliated with general education learning objectives (Example: ARTS, GLO, HUM, etc.).

References:

Allen, M. J. (2003). *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education*. Jossey-Bass.

Relevant Standards, Codes, Rules, Regulations, Statutes and Policies:

[Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Standard III - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience and Standard V - Educational Effectiveness Assessment](#)

[SUNY Assessment Policy](#)

[SUNY Assessment Procedures](#)

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