

Academic Achievement	Student performance on course, program or general education outcomes. Measured by various assessment methods pertaining to the stated outcomes.
Accreditation	The designation that an institution earns indicating that it functions appropriately with respect to its resources, programs and services. The accrediting association, often comprised of peers, is recognized as the external monitor. Maintaining fully accredited status ensures that the university remains in compliance with federal expectations and continues to receive federal funding.
Alignment	Usually refers to the relationship of scope, sequence, continuity and balance in curriculum. Also refers to the relationship between the course description, student learning outcomes and course objectives. Curriculum mapping is an example of the alignment process because it shows the specific course activities tied to the expected program results for the students.
Assessment:	Is an ongoing process aligned with the mission of the college, aimed at understanding and improving student learning. The purpose of assessment is to gather data on student achievement, analyze the data, and use the data to report and improve student learning.
Assessment for Accountability	Assessment of some unit (such as a course, program or entire institution) to satisfy stakeholders external to the unit itself. Results are often compared across units. Always summative. Example: to retain state approval, the achievement of a certain percent pass rate or better on the NCLEX exam for nursing students.
Assessment for Improvement	Assessment that feeds directly, and often immediately, back into revising the course, program or institution to improve student-learning results. Can be formative or summative.
Assessment Method	Refers to the opportunities instructors provide for students to learn and then demonstrate the knowledge and skills specified in the outcomes. Evidence may be provided by exams, student presentations, individual or group projects, portfolio development, juried evaluation, writing samples, pre-post-testing, laboratory practical, journals, outcomes on standardized tests (i.e. national or state licensure, certifications, and/or professional exams), or panel evaluation of capstone projects.
Assessment Plan	A document that outlines and describes student assessment activities that includes identifying learning outcome(s), assessment tool(s), next assessment term and year, assessment cycle, population(s) to be assessed, “number” of students to be assessed, scoring method(s) and identifying who will score and analyze the data.
Assessment of Programs	Uses the program as the level of analysis. Can be quantitative or qualitative, formative or summative, standards-based or value added and used for improvement or for accountability. Ideally, program outcomes would serve as a basis for the assessment. Example: One of the learning outcomes for the CTPA Police Academy is the success rate for graduates

	passing the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) exam.
Attendance	Attendance is not an appropriate assessment tool. Student participation might be used but is often difficult to quantify.
Authentic Assessment	Measures students' performance and/or learning in a real-life context rather than a testing situation. Authentic assessment tools allow students to demonstrate or share their learning with others, e.g., multi-media presentation that is evaluated to determine if the desired learning has been achieved.
Backward Design	A series of steps defining a process for thinking through what the curriculum should be and then creating and implementing it with a mechanism for continuous refinement and revision.
Benchmark	A description of the expected level of student performance on a specific learning outcome. Also referred to as "standard of success" or "performance indicator".
Best Practices	A procedure that has been shown by research and/or experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption.
Bloom's Taxonomy	<p>A classification of levels of thinking or learning that range from a basic level of thinking to a more sophisticated level of thinking (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating). Bloom identified three domains of learning: cognitive, or knowledge; affective, or attitude; and psychomotor, or skills. The cognitive domain involves levels of learning and intellectual outcomes. Within this domain are categories that are arranged in order of increasing complexity from the foundational level of thinking to the highest level of creating new ideas. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering: Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory. • Understanding: Construct meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written and graphic communication. • Applying: Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation. • Analyzing: Break material into constituent parts and determine how parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose. • Evaluating: Make judgments based on criteria and standards. • Creating: Put elements together to form a coherent whole; reorganize into a new pattern or structure. <p>http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/effective-teaching-practices/revise-blooms-taxonomy</p>
Capstone Courses/Projects	Students' mastery of the entire body of knowledge required for graduation in a program is assessed in a final required course. Possible methods of assessment are virtually unlimited (tests of achievement, papers, demonstrations, focus groups, etc.) Assessment is comparable between sections and from year to year.

Checklist	A list of traits or skills that should be presented in student work. Checklists may include just the task or include a rating scale. Items that are either right or wrong can be checked. Items that require an evaluation of frequency or quality may use a rating scale.
Class-Level Assessment:	Class-level assessment is intended for individual faculty who wish to improve his or her teaching and student learning of a specific section. Individual faculty gather data on student achievement of course learning outcomes within their class, analyze the data, and make appropriate changes.
Closing the Loop	The last step of the assessment cycle. Information learned as a result of the assessment process is incorporated into the course or program as a means of improving student performance.
Cohort	A group of students that begin a program together.
Common Exam or Final	Common final exams, or question subsets, test the level of student achievement of agreed upon course objectives and provide consistency across course sections.
Competency	The knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors critical to student achievement; identifies what we want the students to learn.
Course-embedded Assessment	Questions intended to assess student outcomes are incorporated into final exams, research papers, or other course assignments.
Course-Level Assessment:	This level of assessment refers to the systematic evaluation of the achievement of course learning outcomes as specified in each course's master syllabus. Faculty teaching the course will gather and aggregate data on student achievement across all or a random sample of sections of a course, analyze the data, and make appropriate changes to improve student learning.
Culture of Assessment	An institutional characteristic that shows evidence for valuing and engaging in student assessment for ongoing improvement.
Curriculum	What is taught to students; both intended and unintended information, skills and attitudes.
Direct Assessment of Learning:	Gathers evidence, based on student performance, which demonstrates the learning itself. Examples: most classroom testing for grades is direct assessment (in this instance within the confines of a course), as is the evaluation of a research paper in terms of the discriminating use of sources. The latter example could assess learning accomplished within a single course or, if part of a senior requirement, could also assess cumulative learning.
Embedded Assessment:	A means of gathering information about student learning that is built into and a natural part of the teaching-learning process. Often uses for assessment purposes classroom assignments that are evaluated to assign students a grade. Can assess individual student performance or aggregate the information to provide information about the course or program; can be formative or summative, quantitative or qualitative.

End of Course Assessment	Common final exams, or question subsets, that test the level of student achievement of agreed upon course outcomes and provide consistency across course sections.
External Graders	Experts in the discipline are brought in to do assessments of programs, courses, student work, etc. as a check on validity and reliability of internal assessment practices.
External Surveys	Surveys of external groups providing feedback for assessing institutional effectiveness. Employers, departmental advisory committees, and possibly the community in general are examples.
Formal Assessment	Structured assessment procedures with specific guidelines for administration, scoring, and interpretation of results.
Formative assessment:	The gathering of information about student learning-during the progression of a course or program and providing ongoing feedback to students. Example: reading the first lab reports of a class to assess whether some or all students in the group need a lesson on how to make them succinct and informative.
Grades	While assessment tools may be used in the grading process, assigning grades is not synonymous with assessment. Grading practices and criteria, such as including attendance or class participation, reducing grades for late assignments and variations from teacher to teacher, all make grades (particularly final grades) inappropriate for assessment.
General Education Assessment	The process by which the college assesses whether all students (sometimes graduates) have achieved the students learning outcomes associated with each general education strand.
Graduate Exit Interviews	Interviews conducted with each graduate in a specific academic department aimed at determining if the program objectives and student expectations were fulfilled.
Group Projects	While group projects are a common teaching, learning and grading strategy, they are sometimes difficult to use for assessment. Generally, assessment seeks to confirm that some percent of “all students” have achieved student learning. Unless specifically and carefully designed, group projects do not lend themselves to assuring that “all students” are assessed.
HLC Assessment Academy	The Academy for Assessment of Student Learning offers HLC member institutions a four-year sequence of events and interactions that are focused on student learning, targeted at accelerating and advancing efforts to assess and improve student learning, and designed to build institution-wide commitment to assessment of student learning. WCC joined the Assessment Academy in June, 2016 and will complete our membership in June 2020. https://www.hlcommission.org/Programs-Events/academies.html
Indirect Assessment of Learning:	These reveal characteristics associated with student learning, but only imply that learning occurred. Evidence may be provided by student perceptions of learning, completion rates, graduation rates, satisfaction surveys, essays, interviews, and/or focus groups.

Internships/Field work/Clinical Experiences	Internships, fieldwork or clinical experiences should only be used for assessment when they are required of all students. Voluntary activities result in inappropriate sampling.
Item Analysis	An analysis of student responses to exam questions used to identify questions that may need review or areas requiring improvement in order to achieve course outcomes.
Learning Outcome	Competencies stated in an observable or measurable way; identifies what the students actually learned in a measurable way. Statements representative of what learners are expected to be able to do with curriculum content following their interaction with teaching agents.
Likert Scale	A method used in questionnaires and surveys to prompt a respondent to express a view on a statement being presented, thereby signaling his or her level of agreement or disagreement with the statement presented.
LMS – Learning Management System	The online web-based interface that facilitates online classes and the web-enhanced components of hybrid (mixed mode) classes. Content is presented, forms are used for asynchronous communication and assignments and quizzes or tests are collected and completed. WCC uses Blackboard as our LMS.
Mapping (of Curriculum)	Refers to the process of equating course level outcomes to program level outcomes to ensure that course student learning outcomes are aligned with and support program level student learning outcomes.
Meaningful Assessment	Assess what you value and value what you assess. Meaningful assessment provides evidence that allows the instructor to make data-informed decisions about ways to improve teaching, learning and student success.
Mission Statement	A statement that defines the purpose of an institution.
Objectives	Objectives are the specific skills, values, and attitudes students should exhibit that reflect the broader student learning outcomes. Objectives are generally viewed as a piece of the student learning outcome that leads to the larger goal of student learning. All outcomes must have objectives (usually 3 – 5). However, all objectives do not have to relate to an outcome.
Objective Measure	Data that avoid bias from observers’ feelings, interpretations or other extraneous factors. Examples include using stopwatches or electronic timers, measuring tape for distance, etc.
Pedagogy	The art and science of how something is taught and how students learn it. Pedagogy refers to the approach to teaching and learning, the way the content is delivered and what the students learn as a result of the process.
Performance Indicators	Marker or a piece of evidence that means something has been attained. See also “standard of success” or “benchmark”
Performance-based Assessment	Actual demonstration of tasks, skills, or procedures are observed and evaluated according to pre-specified criteria.
Portfolio Assessment	A portfolio is a representative collection of a student’s work. The work is produced under conditions other than a classroom test and does not rely on a one-time observation.

Pre-test vs. Post-test/Value Added	Progress or value added can be measured through change from pre-test to post-test. Depending on the range of test scores, pre-test and post-test standards of success should also include a benchmark or minimum score.
Program-Level Assessment	Program-level assessment is a systematic way of monitoring whether students have actually acquired the skills, knowledge, and competencies intended by their program of study. The main purpose of the program assessment process is to evaluate how well intended program-level student-learning outcomes were achieved and develop strategies for improvement
Qualitative Assessment:	Collects data that does not lend itself to quantitative methods but rather to interpretive criteria (see the first example under "standards"). Qualitative data is non-numeric information.
Quantitative Assessment:	Collects data that can be analyzed using quantitative methods (see "assessment for accountability" for an example).
Rubrics	A scoring guide describing the criteria used to score or grade a learning outcome. It is one way to provide measurable data. A set of guidelines that from how something is to be done. Rubrics are used to make qualitative judgments about performance. Used in areas which are complex, subjective and vague. The components of a rubric are: a) measurement of stated object; b) a range to rate performance; and c) performance characteristics arranged in levels indicating the degree to which a standard has been met. The rubric typically resembles a matrix or grid with specific objectives or criteria to be assessed falling on the left-hand margin and levels of achievement or performance and performance characteristics running across the top margin.
Sample	Selecting a subset of the population based on defined criteria. Samples must be representative of the student population. Different types of samples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students are assessed. Selecting the entire population is best if it is feasible. • Random Sample – uses a “tool” to identify random numbers that are used to select student assessment data. • Systematic Sample – a sample done according to a rule (for example, every 4th test). • Stratified Sample – sorts students into groups and selects a random sample from those groups (for example, one section taught DL, one section taught MM and one section taught face-to-face). Helps assure that the variable does not interfere with assessment.
Skills	Refers to procedural and psychomotor learning.
Standard of Success	A description of the expected level of student performance on a specific learning outcome. Also referred to as “benchmark”.
Standardized Testing	Off-the-shelf assessment tests available from testing companies and some professional organizations can be used to measure competencies in specific subject areas as well as general education.
Standards	Sets a level of accomplishment all students are expected to meet or exceed. Standards should imply high quality learning. They do not imply

	complete standardization in a program; a common minimum level could be achieved by multiple pathways and demonstrated in various ways. Examples: carrying on a conversation about daily activities in a foreign language using correct grammar and comprehensible pronunciation; achieving a certain score on a standardized test.
Student Artifacts	Student produced work for general education, program or course assessment.
Student Surveys (Departmental/ Discipline Level)	Students are questioned regarding quality of the educational experience and progress toward educational, career, and personal goals. Satisfaction rates, job placement rates, job advancement, transfer rates, degree achievement, comfort level in various academic areas are some outcome measures gathered.
Subjective Measures	Rely upon the observation and judgment of one or more persons. The use of a rubric may help an observation and judgment be less subjective (more objective) as it may reduce the variation of interpretations.
Summative Assessment:	The gathering of information at the conclusion of a course, program, or undergraduate career to improve learning or to meet accountability demands. When used for improvement, it impacts the next cohort of students taking the course or program. Examples: reviewing student final exams in a course to see if certain specific areas of the curriculum were understood less well than others; analyzing senior projects for the ability to integrate across disciplines.
Taxonomy	Classify learning outcomes into levels of complexity within learning domains.
Technical Certification Exams/Tests	Given by national organizations (Microsoft, Oracle, Sun, Novell, Cisco, etc.), predominantly in the technical skills areas (computers), to measure a student's base of knowledge.
Value Added	The increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or undergraduate education. Either can focus on the individual student (how much better a student can write, for example, at the end than at the beginning) or on a cohort of students (whether senior papers demonstrate more sophisticated writing skills-in the aggregate-than freshmen papers). Requires a baseline measurement for comparison.