**Frequently Used Assessment Terms**

**Alignment** - The intended connection between a course or program and a set of standards

**Assessment** - Assessment is the process of regularly gathering and analyzing information (data) in order to facilitate improvement.

**Assessment plan**: A document that outlines the student learning outcomes (for academic programs) or unit outcomes (for support units), the direct and indirect assessment methods used to demonstrate the attainment of each outcome, the timeframe for collecting and reviewing the data, and the individual(s) responsible for the collection/review of data.

**Baseline (data)** - The basic information collected before a program begins or at the beginning of a program and later used to provide a comparison for assessing program impact/outcome.

**Benchmark** - A standard by which something can be measured or judged

“Closing the Loop” - The demonstration of the use of assessment results for program change and improvement

**Content or Content Area** - The subject matter of a discipline such as English, Nursing, or Psychology

**Criteria** - The types of evidence that successfully identify achievement of the outcome(s)

**Criteria for Success** - The benchmark(s) that the program sets for the outcome(s) and against which the outcomes’ performance is judged. Criteria are most often stated in terms of percentages, percentiles, averages, or other quantitative measures

**Culture of Assessment** - An environment in which continuous improvement through assessment is expected and valued

**Curriculum Map** - A matrix showing where each goal and/or learning outcome is covered in each program course.

**Direct (Assessment) Methods** - Direct methods assess the knowledge and skills students have learned by having them actually demonstrate their learning by writing, doing calculations, problem solving…

**Embedded Assessment** - Embedded assessment refers to techniques that can be utilized within the context of a classroom to assess students’ learning, as individuals and in groups. Embedded assessments utilize existing student (course) work as both a grading instrument as well as data for assessing learning outcomes
**External reviewer** - An expert in the field, outside of the program and often from a similar program at another institution, that conducts, evaluates, and/or supplements the program assessment. Information can be obtained from external reviewers using many methods including surveys, interviews, campus visits, etc.

**Formative Assessment** - Assessment that is conducted during a performance/course/program with the purpose of providing feedback that can be used to modify, shape, and improve a performance/course/program.

**Goals** - Broad, long-term statements about the general aims, purposes, or direction of a program that clarifies the mission.

**Honorarium** - A payment given to a professional person for services for which fees are not legally or traditionally required.

**Indirect (Assessment) Methods** - Indirect methods gather opinions from students about their learning and experiences.

**Measures or methods** - The strategies, techniques, tools, and instruments for collecting information to determine the extent to which students demonstrate desired learning outcomes.

**Outcomes** - The products and behaviors produced by students after instruction/study and are what is to be assessed.

**Program Assessment** - The process of systematically and regularly gathering and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data in order to facilitate the continuous improvement programs, to guide resource allocation, and to assist administration in making decisions about programs.

**Reliability** - The measure of consistency for an assessment instrument. The instrument should yield similar results over time with similar populations in similar circumstances.

**Rubric** - Rubrics outline, often using grid formats, identified criteria for successfully completing an assignment, project, etc. and establish levels for meeting the criteria. Rubrics can be used to assess/score everything from essays to performances.

**Sampling** - A way to obtain information about a large group by examining a smaller, randomly selected group members. Correct sampling assures that the results will be representative of the group as a whole.

**Scale** - A classification tool or counting system designed to indicate and measure the degree to which an event or behavior has occurred.

**Score** - A rating of performance based on a scale or classification.

**Scoring Guide** - See definition for Rubric.
**Stakeholder** - Anyone who has a vested interest in the outcome of the program/project.

**Standards** - The determined levels of performance/accomplishment that students are expected to meet or exceed.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)** - Student learning outcomes are specific statements about the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are expected in graduates from the program.

**Summative Assessment** - Summative assessment gathers information at the conclusion or a course, program, or learning experience in order to improve learning and/or meet accountability demands.

**Validity** - The test measures the desired performance and appropriate inferences can be drawn from the results. The assessment accurately reflects the learning it was designed to measure.