Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee General Tips

Means of Assessment

Assessment is most accurate when the following components are explicitly identified. Including them in your description adds to clarity and readability by the Assessment Committee. See Rubrics Fall 2011 Workshop notes for explanations (posted in NMU AQIP website)

- Type of evidence (direct or indirect);
- Sampling (all, random, select sample)
- Timing / placement (where in students' academic career)
- Delivery method (add on activity, embedded within a course; procedure)
- Assessors (individual, team, all faculty, external)
- Tool and rubric (measure and standards scale)

Survey tips

Surveys are one way of collecting data. If you choose to use one, here’s what should be included in your unit’s plan and/or report when describing the survey.

1. Survey purpose (furthered knowledge, satisfaction, baseline measure, etc.)
2. Survey recipients (who is being selected to get the survey and how were they selected, e.g. random sample, all participants, etc.)
3. Survey method (how is it distributed)
4. Survey expectations (desirable targets answers for certain questions)
5. Sample size (number of recipients)
6. Response rate (number and percent of recipients responding)
7. Data summary (ex. % answer distribution)
8. Interpretation (what does the data mean)
9. Usage (describe any specific changes you plan to make based upon the interpreted data – this should be more than a generic, “appropriate changes will be made.”)

Peer comparison

Using externally normed data is helpful in peer comparison. AQIP has repeatedly told us that when national norms or averages are available, we should be using them as peer comparisons. If this applies to your dept or program, include the name of the organization, the statistic and the NMU value compared to the national or regional values.

Data reports

For future reference, if there is a summary or committee report related to objective than can be submitted as a separate appendix, please do so. It can be kept on file by the NMU AQIP office to help in document preparation.

Data Interpretation and Usage

Even though detailed evaluation might be ongoing, some level of interpretation should be provided here. Will this serve as a baseline or does it add to a long set of data; if the later, what is the trend? Is the collection process acceptable and to be continued? Were the results surprising or as you expected? What levels and types of changes are needed and what resources are needed to address them? When reporting results each year, providing trend data (especially if you have external comparative data) for past 5 years (if possible) would be helpful so it can be used by the AQIP Systems Portfolio to document procedures.

Acronyms

Some acronyms are more well known to the university community than others. Please spell out the full text on the first use of any acronym for those on the committee and external readers.