

ENMU-Roswell's Glossary of Assessment-related Terminology

The purpose of this glossary is to provide ENMU-Roswell employees with a common language to discuss student learning. While assessment-language differences exist among individual discipline-specific accrediting agencies, these variations are generally minimal. At the close of this document, language differences among ENMU-Roswell accredited programs are specifically identified.

Accountability: The demand by a community (public officials, employers, and taxpayers) for college officials to prove that money invested in education has led to better outcomes in student lives.

Achievement Test: A standardized test designed to measure the amount of knowledge and/or the level of skills a person has acquired. Such testing evaluates the test-taker's learning in comparison with a standard or norm.

Alternative Assessment: An assessment that describes alternatives to traditional, standardized, norm- or criterion-referenced traditional paper and pencil testing. Portfolios, performances, student-led demonstrations or discussions, and instructor observation of students are also alternative forms of assessment.

Analytic Scoring: The evaluation of student work across multiple areas of performance rather than from an overall impression (see: holistic scoring). In analytic scoring, individual scores for each area are scored and reported.

Anchor: A sample of student work that exemplifies a specific level of performance. An anchor would be used to score student work, usually comparing the student performance to the anchor.

Anecdotal Evidence: Evidence provided by individual examples observed or stories heard. Typically, this evidence is not viewed as scientifically reliable but may suggest new hypotheses.

Assessment: One or more processes that identify, collect, and prepare data to evaluate the attainment of student outcomes. Effective assessment uses relevant direct, indirect, quantitative, and qualitative measures as appropriate to the outcome being measured. Appropriate sampling methods may be used as part of an assessment process (*Source: Higher Learning Commission [HLC] definition from Assessment Basics Workshop 2018*).

Assessment Activities (methods): Mechanisms by which achievement of an outcome is determined. Examples include surveys, interviews, standardized tests, portfolios, juried performances, research data from outside sources, and peer review.

Assessment for accountability: The summative assessment of colleges, programs, and departments to satisfy external stakeholders.

Assessment for Improvement: Assessment feeding directly, and often immediately, back into revision of the course, program, service, or institution to improve student learning, programs, or services. Assessment for improvement can be formative and/or summative.

Authentic Assessment: The asking of students to demonstrate the behavior the learning is intended to produce. Rather than choosing from a set of responses, students are asked to accomplish a task, produce a project, or solve problems.

Benchmark: A description of a specific level of expected performance. Benchmarks for student learning are often represented by samples of student work.

Capstone Experience: Holistic activities designed to assess students' knowledge, skills, and problem-solving abilities using concepts learned throughout the program.

Classroom Embedded Assessment: Activities used by an individual instructor to determine if students are meeting the outcomes in a single class meeting or a small number of consecutive class meetings. The instructor evaluates the results to decide if changes are needed to help improve student learning.

Course Embedded Assessment: Activities selected by faculty members to determine if students are meeting the learning outcomes for that given course. The results of the assessments should be used to decide if changes in the course are needed to help improve student learning.

Criteria: Measures or characteristics used to determine or verify student knowledge, attitudes, and performance.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment: Assessment comparing an individual's performance to a specific learning outcome or performance standard and not to the performance of other students.

Cohort: A group of individuals whose progress is tracked by examining identified measurements at specified points in time.

Competencies: Knowledge, skills, or behavior that a student can demonstrate or perform.

Competency Test: A test used to determine if a student has met established minimum standards of skills and knowledge.

Course-embedded Assessment: Assessment methods that are integrated into the teaching-learning process as part of the coursework.

Curriculum and Instructional Council: A body with the purpose of promoting quality and excellence in the design and implementation of ENMU-Roswell's curriculum. The Curriculum Council must review and make recommendations to the Vice President of Academic Affairs regarding the following matters:

- proposals for new courses and programs;
- modification, deletion, or reinstitution of courses or programs;
- changes in general education requirements.

The Curriculum Council may also consider changes in policy related to the implementation of curricula and other matters related to instruction.

Curriculum Mapping: The process for documenting the link between course learning outcomes and program goals and outcomes.

Curriculum-embedded or Course-embedded Assessment: Assessment that occurs simultaneously with learning and as a natural part of the teaching-learning process. These assessments would include activities such as projects, portfolios, and assignments. The assessments occur in the classroom setting, where tasks or tests are developed from the curriculum or instructional materials.

Cutoff Score: Minimum score used to determine the performance level needed to pass a competency test.

Dimensions: Desired knowledge, attitudes, or skills to be measured in an assessment as represented in a scoring rubric.

Direct assessment of learning: Assessment activities that gather evidence of student knowledge and skills based upon student performance, rather than upon perception.

Educational Objectives: Objectives that describe the knowledge, skills, abilities, or attitudes students are expected to acquire as a result of completing the academic program. Objectives are sometimes treated as synonymous with outcomes.

Educational Outcome: An observable act that can be measured, usually a culminating activity or product. Outcomes are often synonymous with objectives. NMHED uses the term “outcomes” rather than “objectives.”

Evaluation: One or more processes for interpreting the data and evidence accumulated through assessment processes. Evaluation determines the extent to which student outcomes are being attained. Evaluation results in decisions and actions regarding program improvement (*Source: Higher Learning Commission [HLC] definition from Assessment Basics Workshop 2018*).

External assessment: The use of criteria (i.e., rubric) or an instrument developed by a source external to ENMU-Roswell; such an assessment is usually summative, quantitative, and standardized.

Formative Assessment: Specific assessments identifying what individuals know or are able to do and not do when given a learning task. This measurement has a specific focus on student learning assessment within a course.

Holistic Scoring: Evaluation of student work in which the score is based on an overall scoring of student performance rather than on a scoring of individual components.

Indirect Measure of Learning Outcomes: Assessment of learning that gathers reflections about the learning or secondary evidence of the learning’s existence. In the case of indirect measures, a recorder (usually a student or instructor) reports the perception of how well a given learning outcome has been achieved.

Institutional Assessment: Processes identified by members of an institution to determine the ability of the institution to meet its Mission and Strategic Goals.

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs): Outcomes including the knowledge, skills and competencies embedded within every aspect of the college to enhance each student’s transferable learning skills. The

ILOs represent the broad categories of competence that enable students to be successful in further education and careers, as citizens, and in their personal lives.

Item Analysis: The analysis of test items to determine the proportions of students selecting each answer. This process is used to evaluate student strengths and weaknesses and may indicate problems with the test's validity and possible bias.

Locally Developed Assessment: Activities and instruments that are developed by an institution's faculty based on their teaching approaches, students, and course learning outcomes.

Norm: A distribution of scores obtained from a norm group. The norm is the median of scores or performance of the students in that group, where half of the scores will fall above the norm and half below the norm.

Norm Group: A group of individuals selected randomly by an assessment developer to be used in determining a range of scores and establishing percentiles of performance for the assessment.

Norm-Referenced Assessment: An assessment where student performance or performances are compared to a norm group.

Objective Test: A test for which the scoring procedure is completely specified and not subjective, enabling agreement about the correct answer among different scorers.

Performance-Based Assessment: Direct observation and rating of an individual's performance of an educational objective. The assessment may be conducted over a period of time and usually includes the use of a rubric or scoring guide to provide for objectivity. A test of the ability to apply knowledge in a real-life setting is an example of performance-based assessment.

Performance Indicators: Specific, measurable statements identifying student performance(s) required to meet the outcome; confirmable through evidence (*Source: Higher Learning Commission [HLC] definition from Assessment Basics Workshop 2018*).

Portfolio: A collection of work, usually drawn from students' classroom work. Portfolios or presentations can be designed to assess student progress, effort, and/or achievement, and to encourage students to reflect on their learning.

Portfolio Assessment: Reviewers assess student work on meeting outcomes by use of a portfolio and established criteria of performance. Each item in the portfolio may be individually scored, or a holistic scoring process may be used to present an overall impression of the student's collected work.

Primary Trait Rubric: A scoring rubric constructed to assess a specific trait, skill, behavior, or format.

Program Assessment: Processes identified by faculty and staff members of an academic or non-academic program to measure identified outcomes as a result of participation in the program or service. The results of the assessments should be used to decide if changes are needed to improve the program or service.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): Description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students should have acquired by the time of a completion of an academic program.

Program Review: A comprehensive evaluation of an academic program for the purposes of improvement and accountability. Reviewing committees evaluate the quality of, need for, and centrality of the program to the university's missions and goals. Since student learning is a fundamental goal of any academic program, the student learning outcomes assessment plan executed by each program is a significant component of the program review process.

Qualitative assessment: The analysis of data by interpretive criteria.

Quantitative assessment: The analysis of data by quantitative methods.

Rating Scale: Qualities of a performance on an assessment that is based on descriptive words or phrases that indicate levels of achievement.

Reliability: The measure of consistency for an assessment indicating that the assessment yields similar results over time when applied to similar populations in similar circumstances. Reliability provides an indication of the consistency of scores over time and across raters and different items that measure the same thing.

Rubric: A scoring guide that defines the criteria of how an assignment or task will be assessed. A rubric typically provides an explicit description of performance characteristics corresponding to a point on a rating scale.

Sampling: Method to obtain information about characteristics of a population by examining a smaller, randomly chosen selection (the sample) of the group members. If the sampling is conducted correctly, results will be representative of the population as a whole.

Standardization: Procedures for designing, administering, and scoring an assessment in an effort to assure that all students are assessed under the same conditions and that scores are not influenced by extraneous conditions.

Standardized Test: An objective test that is given and scored in a uniform manner, often with scores being norm-referenced. Standardized tests are often accompanied by guidelines for administration and scoring in an effort to reduce influence on the results.

Standards: Statements of expectations for outcomes, which may include knowledge standards, performance standards, and benchmarks.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): Statements clearly defining the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education. Transparent student learning outcomes statements are:

- specific to institutional level and/or program level;
- clearly expressed and understandable by multiple audiences;
- prominently posted at or linked to multiple places across the website;
- updated regularly to reflect current outcomes;
- receptive to feedback or comments on the quality and utility of the information provided.

Source: <http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/TFCComponentSLOS.htm>

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: The systematic collection, examination, and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data about student learning and the use of that information to document and to improve student learning. Note: Assessment is not synonymous with evaluation. The object of analysis of assessment results is the improvement of learning, and the results should never be used for judging the performance of a faculty or staff member.

Subjective Assessment: An assessment in which the impression or opinion of the assessor contributes to the determination of the score or evaluation of performance.

Summative Assessment: A summary at the culmination of a course, unit, or program.

Validity: The extent to which an assessment measures what it is designed to measure and the extent to which the results can be used to make appropriate and accurate inferences. An assessment cannot be valid if it is not reliable.

Value added: The increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or activity. This concept can focus on either the individual student (how much better a student does something at the end than at the beginning) or a cohort of students. Value added requires pre- and post-assessment for comparison.

Additional Assessment and Learning Outcomes information can be found at:

Assessment Commons

<http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/upa/assmt/resource.htm>

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/publications.html>

CROSSWALK DEFINITION INFORMATION FOR ENMU-ROSWELL PROGRAMS ACCREDITED BY THIRD-PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Automotive Technology—Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) accreditation uses the term “performance standards” in place of “learning outcomes.” <http://www.aseeducation.org/>

Medical Assisting and other Allied Health Programs— Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) accreditation language focuses very heavily on “Outcomes Reporting” and uses the language of “learning domains” as a replacement for learning outcomes. Domains of learning can be categorized as cognitive domain (knowledge), psychomotor domain (skills) and affective domain (attitudes). This categorization is best explained by the Taxonomy of Learning Domains formulated by a group of researchers led by Benjamin Bloom in 1956. The term “threshold” is also used synonymously with standard/goal. <https://www.caahep.org/>

Nursing—ACEN accreditation uses student “end-of-program student learning outcomes” and “program outcomes” terminology that also does not significantly differ from HLC and ENMU-Roswell Assessment Terminology. <http://www.acenursing.org/>

Occupational Therapy—ACOTE Accreditation uses the terms Program Goals, Program Outcomes, and Standards in a manner that does not significantly differ from HLC and ENMU-Roswell Assessment Terminology. <https://www.aota.org/>

Respiratory Therapy—COARC Accreditation also uses the terms Program Goals, Program Outcomes, and Program Standards. These definitions do not differ from HLC and ENMU-Roswell Assessment Terminology. <https://www.coarc.com/>

*Please note that this is a living document, which can and will be updated from time to time.