



Director of Academic Assessment

MSU Co-Curricular Assessment Terminology*

Assessment: Assessment is the systematic collection and analysis of information (Data) for improvement purposes.

Assessment Tool: Instrument used to measure the characteristic or outcome of interest. It is the tool used to implement part of a larger assessment plan. Example: assessment tools for learning include classroom assessment techniques (minute paper, muddiest point, etc.), capstone projects, examinations, portfolio entries, or student performances.

Benchmark/Target: A point of reference for measurement; a standard of achievement against which to evaluate or judge one's own performance. A program can use its own past performance data as a baseline benchmark against which to compare future data/performance. Additionally, data from another (comparable, exemplary) program can be used as a target benchmark.

Direct Measure: Gathers evidence, based on student performance, which demonstrates the learning itself. Can be value-added, related to standards, qualitative or quantitative, embedded or not, and can use local or external criteria. Examples include class tests, research papers, student performances, etc.

Indirect Measure: Gathers reflection about the learning or secondary evidence of its existence. Example: surveys of student perceptions about learning, e.g. Satisfaction survey.

Measure: To collect quantitative and/or qualitative data to be analyzed. Qualitative data are data that do not lend themselves to quantitative methods but rather to interpretive criteria, for example, interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal evidence.

Co-Curricular Category: The phrase "co-curricular category" most often and routinely refers to an activity or set of activities offered by the university that are meant to compliment curricular learning.

Co-Curricular Student Learning Goal: A general statement of what a student should know and/or be able to do upon graduation.

Co-Curricular Student Learning Outcome: A specific statement, connected to a co-curricular goal, of what a student should know and/or be able to do as a result of what is learned in or through a specific activity or set of activities.

Co-Curricular Student Learning Objective: A deliberate task or activity prompted by a specific outcome designed to broaden and/or mature student's leadership, wellness, self-awareness, and/or career and professional development.

*Document is adapted from several sources, including Clark College, Stephen F. Austin State University, James Madison University, and AAC&U.