

Characteristics of Effective Outcomes Assessment

Planning

- Involves stakeholders from the outset to incorporate their needs and interests and to solicit later support.
- Begins when the need is recognized and allows sufficient time for development.
- Has a plan with clear purposes that are related to goals people value.
- Bases assessment approaches on clear, explicitly stated program objectives.

Implementation

- Has knowledgeable, effective leadership.
- Involves recognition that assessment is essential to learning, and therefore is everyone's responsibility.
- Includes faculty and staff development.
- Places responsibility for assessment at the unit level.
- Uses multiple measures, thereby maximizing reliability and validity.
- Assesses processes as well as outcomes.
- Is undertaken in an environment that is receptive, supportive, and enabling.
- Incorporates continuous communication with constituents concerning activities and findings.

Improving and Sustaining

- Produces credible evidence of learning and organizational effectiveness.
- Ensures that assessment data are used continuously to improve programs and services.
- Provides a vehicle for demonstrating accountability to stakeholders within and outside the institution.
- Makes outcomes assessment ongoing, not episodic.
- Incorporates on-going evaluation and improvement of the assessment process itself.

Source: Banta, T.W. and Associates, *Building a Scholarship of Assessment*.
San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002, pp. 262-263