

# CAS Self-Assessment Guide

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ASSESSMENT SERVICES  
2017

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Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2017). *CAS self-assessment guide for Assessment Services*. Fort Collins, CO: Author.

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## ASSESSMENT SERVICES

### CAS Contextual Statement

Assessment was an important element in higher education well before the founding of higher education in the United States; juried reviews were used to demonstrate student learning at the University of Bologna as early as 1063 CE (Bresciani, Moore Gardner, & Hickmott, 2009). The need for assessment and program evaluation in American higher education remains a pressing need today.

Early proponents of outcomes assessment included William Rainey Harper, President of the University of Chicago. In 1889, he called on colleges and universities to adopt a program of research with the college student as the subject “in order that the student may receive the assistance so essential to his [sic] highest success, another step in the onward evolution will take place. This step will be the scientific study of the student” (as cited in Rentz, 1996, p. 28). Responding to Harper’s vision, the *Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937) challenged the field of student services to employ “studies designed to improve these functions and services” (p. 42). Identified in this document were four specific kinds of studies: student out-of-class life and its connection to the educational mission, faculty and student out-of-class relationships, financial aid to students, and after-college studies to ascertain the effects of college on careers and personal adjustment.

The 1949 revision of the *Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council of Education, 1949) stated that the “principal responsibility of personnel workers lies in the area of progressive program development . . . this means that each worker must devote a large part of time to the formulation of new plans and to the continuous evaluation and improvement of current programs (p. 34). This document also stressed the importance of personnel workers being “thoroughly trained in research methods as a part of their professional preparation” (p. 35). Ultimately, the standard for student affairs programs, according to the 1949 document, is in “the difference it makes in the development of individual students” (p. 34).

The guiding documents of the field of student affairs have continued the call for assessment of program effectiveness as it relates to student learning and development. *The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs* (American College Personnel Association (ACPA), 1994) charged student affairs staff to “participate in efforts to assess student learning . . . and periodically audit institutional environments to reinforce those factors that enhance, and eliminate those that inhibit student involvement in educationally-purposeful activities” (p. 6). *The Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* (Blimling & Whitt, 1999) asserted the need to use systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance. Specifically, “student affairs educators who are skilled in using assessment methods acquire high-quality information; effective application of this information to practice results in programs and change strategies . . . [that] improve student achievement” (p. 3). In *Learning Reconsidered* (Keeling, 2004), the language of assessment and student learning was more comprehensive. “Student Affairs must lead broad, collaborative institutional efforts to assess overall student learning and to track, document, and evaluate the role of diverse learning experiences . . . assessment should be a way of life—part of the institutional culture” (p. 26). Noted in *Assessment Reconsidered: Institutional Effectiveness for Student Success* (Keeling, Wall, Underhile, & Dungy, 2008), the companion to *Learning Reconsidered*, assessment is a collaborative exercise influenced by external forces but “more importantly emerges from the desire of faculty members, student affairs professionals, parents, students, and institutional administrators to know, and improve, the quality and effectiveness of higher education” (p. 1).

Historical and foundational documents in the field give clear evidence that the role of assessment and program evaluation in higher education and student affairs is important in the education of the “whole” student. However,

the extent to which these practices have been strongly embedded into the work of higher education and student affairs educators is certainly in question (Henning & Roberts, 2016).

#### Rationale and Function in Modern Day Higher Education

For today's higher education marketplace, the call for assessment seems greater than ever before. The rationale for assessment is both internally and externally driven (Bingham, Bureau, & Garrison Duncan, 2015; Henning & Roberts, 2016; Palomba & Banta, 1999; Youzey-Elsener, Bentrin, & Henning, 2015). First, programs should be improvement focused - trying to examine what aspects of their programs, resources, and services reach the most students and achieve desired goals and outcomes. This internally focused reason is grounded in a philosophy of using evidence to improve the delivery of services to the most students possible. A shift in thinking about assessment from externally driven to internally needed has been prevalent over the last decade: higher education service providers, many of whom are based in the field of student affairs and have functional area standards within CAS, have increased their focus on student learning as a primary reason for, not just a nice byproduct of its work (Barber & Bureau, 2012; Henning & Roberts, 2016).

Externally, there are calls for accountability coming from multiple constituents (ranging from parents to regional accrediting bodies); the ability to document and evaluate the impact of our programs and services is a critical responsibility. Such calls also beg the question of "are institutions using their fiscal and human resources in ways that best serve their students and society" (Palomba & Banta, 1999; Suskie, 2014; Youzey-Elsener, Bentrin, & Henning, 2015). Providing evidence to these individuals is one way to document contributions of higher education and rectify incorrect assumptions about any negative return on investment received from college.

Given the evolution of the field, the function of assessment within higher education must be considered. Much of the fear of assessment is driven by confusion across terms assessment, research, evaluation, and program review. One may look at the distinctions as follows: Assessment is the formal and informal process of gathering and using evidence or data to determine how a program/service/event/activity is functioning and how it may be enhanced to achieve predetermined goals (Bresciani, 2006; Suskie, 2014; Youzey-Elsner, Bentrin, & Henning, 2016). Assessment may also be research, but not necessarily. Research may have the focus of generalizing across contexts while assessment is generally conducted to generate internal improvements to some or multiple functions in one setting. Evaluation is the use of the data against standards to identify how well a program is functioning. Program review is the use of standards to identify program goals and assessment; research and evaluation processes can provide evidence of the extent to which these objectives are achieved (Bingham, Bureau, & Garrison Duncan, 2015; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996).

Bresciani (2006) explained:

... in assessment faculty and staff articulate what the program intends to accomplish in regard to its services, research, student learning, and faculty/staff development programs. The faculty and/or professionals then purposefully plan the program so that the intended results (e.g., outcomes) can be achieved; implement methods to systematically—over time—identify whether end results have been achieved; and, finally, use the results to plan improvements or make recommendations for policy considerations, recruitment, retention, resource allocation, or new resource requests. (p. 14).

Campuses today should have a comprehensive assessment plan that includes consideration of learning outcomes, student needs and inputs, campus environments, student motivation, student use and satisfaction, and cost effectiveness (Schuh & Associates, 2009; Youzey-Elsner, Bentrin, & Henning, 2016). These plans may be distinctive to one department and they may be shared across multiple units that have responsibilities to support assessment

activities. Regardless of structure, as assessment has become more necessary to incorporate data-driven decision making into the work of higher education professionals, it is evident that collaborations must be developed and managed effectively to conduct assessment and use information for continuous improvement benefitting the institution.

As a result of good assessment, higher education educators can achieve many goals including: reinforcing or emphasizing unit missions; improving a program's quality or performance; comparing a program's quality or value to the program's previously defined principles; informing planning, decision-making, and policy discussions at the local, state, regional, and national levels; evaluating programs and personnel; assisting in the request for additional funds from the college or university and external community; assisting in the reallocation of resources; assisting in meeting accreditation requirements; identifying models of best practices and national benchmarks; celebrating successes while reflecting on the attitudes and approaches taken in improving learning and development; and creating a culture of continuous improvement—a culture of accountability, learning, and improvement (Culp & Dungy, 2012; Henning & Roberts, 2016).

Assessment programs that achieve the best results have common factors driving their work. Based on a review of the literature, as well as experience in enacting assessment services, Bingham, Bureau, and Garrison Duncan (2017) identified ten “tenets” that frame successful assessment culture:

1. Understand the rationale behind assessment practices
2. Commit to student learning as a primary focus
3. Lay the foundation for a sustainable assessment culture
4. Develop strategies to engage staff in commitment to assessment
5. Implement accountability and support mechanisms to encourage assessment
6. Anchor the change in culture to ensure ongoing assessment focus
7. Create and refine assessments plans for annual review and ongoing focus
8. Connect assessment plans to institutional and divisional priorities
9. Determine the best methods to answer the questions driving assessment
10. Disseminate data derived from assessment to tell your story to stakeholders

Assessment methods should be driven by the focus of the assessment at hand and the scope of how the data will be used to inform stakeholders of the functional area's “story” (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Assessment can employ qualitative and quantitative data collection methods such as interviews, focus groups, observations, rubrics, portfolios, surveys, and questionnaires. Some assessment processes may use a combination of these methods. The evolution of technology has eased the collection and management of assessment data as well as the analysis and interpretation of evidence (Wise, 2015).

#### Applying the CAS Assessment Services Standards

CAS Standards can be a useful tool in implementing assessment practices. There are a number of commonly applied steps in any assessment. What is commonly referred to as the assessment cycle typically includes six steps depending on how one might combine processes. This cycle has framed the revision of the CAS General Standards and the AS functional area standards. First, the program goals and outcomes should be determined. Second, the program tactics to achieve these goals and outcomes should be planned. The next step is to identify the methods that will help practitioners understand if the program's goals and outcomes are answered. The fourth step is to analyze the evidence from assessment activities to identify trends and themes. The fifth step is to interpret that evidence in a way that focuses on what strengths and areas of improvement could be identified for the program. The final step is to use those interpretations to make changes and enhance the future delivery of the program (Bresciani, 2006; Yousey-Elsener, Bentrim, & Henning, 2015).

Using the CAS Standards for Assessment Services, one must take into account if the assessment function in question is centralized (one or multiple staff members) versus decentralized (spread across the institution). Assessment Services (AS) as a functional area is sometimes organized as a single unit, while at other institutions it is a collective of institutional or departmental assessment bodies (Bingham, Bureau, & Garrison Duncan, 2015; Henning & Roberts, 2016). In any case, collaboration and consultation is imperative between and within the AS and various individuals and departments as well as with institutional leadership. The CAS Standards can influence efforts to strengthen collaborations as well as establish stand-alone departments.

The standards articulated by CAS offer principles for assessment that are valuable for those working in or directing an assessment office as well as for those conducting assessments as a part of their position responsibilities in another functional area. It is vital for anyone conducting assessment to use support provided by those with expertise in the area. Training can be provided by individuals in order to strengthen the overall competencies of persons conducting assessment work while not having a background in or high level of expertise in these practices (Adams-Gaston & Kennedy Phillips, 2015). For a discussion of specific skills necessary to work in assessment services in addition to those discussed in the attached CAS standards, the ACPA and NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) should be reviewed.

Many professional associations (e.g., NACADA, NASPA, ACPA, SAAL) now provide their members with assessment tools and trainings, as do numerous for-profit companies. Groups that exist to support assessment practice include ACPA Commission for Assessment and Evaluation, NASPA Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Knowledge Community, Student Affairs Assessment Leaders (SAAL), the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE), the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), and the Association for Higher Education Effectiveness (AHEE). Each organization provides web resources, hosts listservs, sponsors annual conferences/meetings, and provides research on the form, function, and utility of assessment initiatives.

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# INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

## CAS Self-Assessment Guide

The *Self-Assessment Guides* (SAG) translate functional area CAS standards and guidelines into tools for conducting self-study. Educators can use this SAG to gain informed perspectives on the strengths and deficiencies of their programs and services as well as to plan for improvements. Grounded in the reflective, self-regulation approach to quality assurance in higher education endorsed by CAS, this SAG provides institutional, divisional, departmental, and unit leaders with a tool to assess programs and services using currently accepted standards of practice.

The *Introduction* outlines the self-assessment process, describes how to complete a programmatic self-study, and is organized into three sections:

- I. Self-Assessment Guide Organization and Process
- II. Rating Examples
- III. Formulating an Action Plan, Preparing a Report, and Closing the Loop

The introduction is followed by the *Self-Assessment Worksheet*, which presents the CAS standards for the functional area and incorporates a series of criterion measures for rating purposes.

### I. Self-Assessment Guide and Process

CAS developed and has incorporated a number of common criteria that have relevance for each and every functional area, no matter what its primary focus. These common criteria are referred to as “General Standards,” which form the core of all functional area standards. CAS standards and guidelines are organized into 12 components, and the SAG workbook corresponds with the same sections:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Part 1. Mission                     | Part 7. Diversity, Equity, and Access   |
| Part 2. Program                     | Part 8. Internal and External Relations |
| Part 3. Organization and Leadership | Part 9. Financial Resources             |
| Part 4. Human Resources             | Part 10. Technology                     |
| Part 5. Ethics                      | Part 11. Facilities and Equipment       |
| Part 6. Law, Policy, and Governance | Part 12. Assessment                     |

For each set of standards and guidelines, CAS provides a Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) that includes a recommended comprehensive self-study process for program evaluation. Seven basic steps to using a SAG are suggested for implementing a functional area self-study. The following self-study process is recommended.

<p style="text-align: center;">1. Plan the Process</p> <p>Map out steps for process, develop timeline, build buy-in with all stakeholders, and explicitly identify desired outcomes of the self-study</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5. Develop an Action Plan</p> <p>Identify discrepancies, corrective action, and recommended steps (e.g., identify strengths, weaknesses, recommendations, benchmarks for achievement, resources, timeframe, and responsible individuals)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2. Assemble and Educate the Self-Assessment Team</p> <p>Determine who should be on the team and how to educate the team about the self-study process</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6. Prepare a Report</p> <p>Identify audience for report(s); describe the self-study process, evidence gathering, rating process, and evaluations; summarize strengths and weaknesses; describe the action plan; and draft an executive summary</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3. Identify, Collect, and Review Evidence</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7. Close the Loop</p>



Define what constitutes evidence; then gather, collect, manage, and review evidence	Put action plans into practice; work to navigate politics and secure resources; identify barriers to overcome; and build buy-in to the program review results
<p>4. Conduct and Interpret Ratings Using Evaluative Evidence</p> <p>Clarify team’s rating criteria; employ a process for rating [small group, individual, staff]; negotiate rating differences; and manage group ratings</p>	

The first four steps in conducting self-assessment will lead you through planning your process, preparing your team, gathering evidence, and assigning ratings to the criterion measures.

- A. Plan the self-study process
- B. Assemble and educate self-study team(s)
- C. Identify, collect, and review documentary evidence
- D. Conduct ratings using evaluative evidence

*Step A: Plan the Self-Study Process*

Prior to beginning a program review, division and functional area leaders need to determine the area (or areas) to be evaluated and the reasons for the project. This may be dictated by institutional program review cycles or planning for accreditation processes, or it may result from internal divisional goals and needs. Explicitly identifying desired outcomes and key audiences for a self-study will help leaders facilitate a process that makes the most sense for the project.

Critical first phases of a program review include mapping out the planned steps for a program review and developing timelines. Leaders will also want to build buy-in with stakeholders of the functional area. In the initial planning stage of the self-study process it is desirable to involve the full functional area staff, including support staff members, knowledgeable students, and faculty members when feasible. This approach provides opportunity for shared ownership in the evaluation.

*Step B: Assemble and Educate the Self-Assessment Review Team*

The second step is to identify an individual to coordinate the self-assessment process. CAS recommends that the coordinator be someone other than the leader of the unit under review; this facilitates honest critique by the review team and enhances credibility of the final report. Once a leader is designated, members of the institutional community [e.g., professional staff members, faculty members, students] need to be identified and invited to participate. Whether a sole functional area or a full division is to be reviewed, the self-study team will be strengthened by the inclusion of members from outside the area(s) undergoing review.

In preparing the team for the self-study, it is imperative to train the team on the CAS standards, as well as self-assessment concepts and principles. CAS standards and guidelines are formulated by representatives of 43 higher education professional associations concerned with student learning and development. The CAS standards represent essential practices; the CAS guidelines, on the other hand, are suggestions for practice and serve to elaborate and amplify standards through the use of suggestions, descriptions, and examples. Guidelines can often be employed to enhance program practice. Following a long-standing CAS precedent, the functional area standards and guidelines—presented as an appendix to the self-assessment instrument—are formatted so that standards (i.e., essentials of quality practice) are printed in bold type. Guidelines, which complement the standards, are printed in light-face type. Standards use the auxiliary verbs “must” and “shall” while guidelines use “should” and “may.”

In this self-assessment instrument, the CAS standards have been translated into criterion measures and grouped into subcategories for rating purposes. The criterion measures are not designed to focus on discrete ideas; rather, the measures are designed to capture the major ideas and elements reflected in the standards. For each of the 12 component parts, team members will rate clusters of criterion measures. If the assessment team decides to incorporate one or more of the guidelines into the review process, each guideline can be similarly translated into a measurable statement to facilitate rating.

As a group, the review team should examine the standards carefully and read through the entire self-assessment guide before beginning to assign ratings. It may be desirable for the team, in collaboration with the full staff, to discuss the meaning of each standard. Through this method, differing interpretations can be examined and agreement generally reached about how the standard will be interpreted for purposes of the self-assessment.

### *Step C: Identify, Collect, and Review Documentary Evidence*

Collecting and documenting evidence of program effectiveness is an important step in the assessment process. No self-assessment is complete without relevant data and related documentation being used. It is good practice for programs to collect and file relevant data routinely, which can then be used to document program effectiveness over time. Available documentation should be assembled by the unit under review and provided to the review team at the outset of the study. The team may request additional information as needed as the review is conducted.

Documentary evidence often used to support evaluative judgments includes:

- *Student Recruitment and Marketing Materials*: brochures and other sources of information about the program, participation policies and procedures, and reports about program results and participant evaluations
- *Program Documents*: mission statements, catalogs, brochures and other related materials, staff and student manuals, policy and procedure statements, evaluation and periodic reports, contracts, and staff memos
- *Institutional Administrative Documents*: statements about program purpose and philosophy relative to other educational programs, organizational charts, financial resource statements, student and staff profiles, and assessment reports
- *Research, Assessment, and Evaluation Data*: needs assessments, follow-up studies, program evaluations, outcome measures and methodologies, and previous self-study reports
- *Staff Activity Reports*: annual reports; staff member vitae; service to departments, colleges, university, and other agencies; evidence of effectiveness; scholarship activities, and contributions to the profession
- *Student Activity Reports*: developmental transcripts, portfolios, and other evidence of student contributions to the institution, community, and professional organizations; reports of special student accomplishments; and employer reports on student employment experiences

In the SAG, each section provides recommended evidence and documentation that should be collected and compiled prior to conducting ratings. The evidence collected is likely applicable across numerous sections.

Raters can best make judgments about the program expectations articulated in the standards when they have a variety of evidence available. Multiple forms of evidence should be reviewed and reported in the narrative section of the SAG worksheets. Through the rating process, a self-study team may identify a need to obtain additional

information or documentation before proceeding, in order to lend substance to judgments about a given assessment criterion. Evidence and documentation should be appended and referenced in the final self-assessment report.

*Step D: Conduct and Interpret Ratings Using Evaluative Evidence*

When the program review team has gathered and reviewed necessary evidence, they will be able to assign and interpret ratings to individual criterion measures, following three steps.

- 1) Rate Criterion Measures
  - a) Team members individually rate criterion measures based on their understanding of the evidence.
  - b) Team discusses and assigns collective ratings for criterion measures.
  
- 2) Provide Narrative Rationale
  - a) Document the reasoning and evidence for the rating assigned to each subsection, in the space provided for *Rationale*.
  - b) Explain what evidence has been collected and reviewed to support individual and/or team ratings and judgments.
  - c) Provide information for follow-up and relevant details about ratings (e.g., if *Partly Meets* is assigned as a rating, what aspects of the program or service do and do not meet which standards statements).
  
- 3) Answer Overview Questions (In the Instrument)
  - a) Respond, in writing in the space provided, to the *Overview Questions* that immediately follow the rating section of each of the 12 components.
  - b) Use answers to the *Overview Questions*, which are designed to stimulate summary thinking about overarching issues, to facilitate interpretation of the ratings and development of the self-study report.

Assessment criterion measures are used to judge how well areas under review meet CAS standards. These criterion measures are designed to be evaluated using a 4-point rating scale. In addition to the numerical rating options, *Does Not Apply* (DNA) and *Insufficient Evidence/Unable to Rate* (IE) ratings are provided. This rating scale is designed to estimate broadly the extent to which a given practice has been performed.

CAS CRITERION MEASURE RATING SCALE

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

Under rare circumstances, it may be determined that a criterion measure used to judge the standard is not applicable for the particular program (e.g., a single sex or other unique institution that cannot meet a criterion measure for that reason). In such instances, raters may use a DNA rating and, in the self-study report, describe their rationale for excluding the practice in the criterion measure. The IE response can be used when relevant data are unavailable to support a judgment. When either the DNA or the IE ratings are used, an explanatory note should be provided in the report. Items rated with 0 should generate careful group consideration and appropriate follow-up action.

Program leaders may wish to incorporate additional criterion measures, such as selected CAS guidelines or other rating scales, into the procedures before the self-assessment process begins. Such practice is encouraged, and the

SAG instrument can be amended to incorporate additional criterion measures for judging the program. In such instances, additional pages to accommodate the additional criterion measures may be required.

Whatever procedures are used to arrive at judgments, deliberate discussions should occur about how to initiate the rating process and select the optimal rating strategy. In such discussions, it is expected that disagreements among team members will occur and that resulting clarifications will inform all participants. It is important that the team achieve consensual resolution of such differences before proceeding with individual ratings.

CAS suggests a two-tiered (individual and group) judgment approach for determining the extent to which the program meets the CAS standard. First, the self-assessment team members (and functional area staff members, if desired) individually should rate the clusters of criterion measures using separate copies of the CAS Self-Assessment Guide. In addition, they will need to document their reasoning and evidence for the rating assigned to each subsection in the space provided for *Rationale*. This individualized rating procedure is then followed by a collective review and analysis of the individual ratings.

The individual ratings should be reviewed, discussed, and translated into a collective rating by the team; then the team is ready to move to the interpretation phase of the self-assessment. Interpretation typically incorporates discussion among team members to assure that all aspects of the program were given fair and impartial consideration prior to a final collective judgment. At this point, persistent disagreements over performance ratings may call for additional data collection.

After the team review is completed, a meeting with relevant administrators, staff members, and student leaders should be scheduled for a general review of the self-assessment results. The next step, including discussion of alternative approaches that might be used to strengthen and enhance the program, is to generate steps and activities to be incorporated into an action plan. This step is best done by the unit staff, informed by the results of the review and, when feasible, in consultation with the review team. The Work Forms will guide this process.

## II. Rating Examples

### *Rating Standard Criterion Measures*

All CAS standards, printed in bold type, are viewed as being essential to a sound and relevant program or service that contributes to student learning and development. Many of the statements contained in CAS standards incorporate multiple criteria that have been grouped for rating purposes. Consequently, raters may need to judge several standards statements through a single criterion measure. Using the “Ethics” standards as an example, the following illustrates how criterion measures are grouped into subcategories for rating.

<b>Part 5. ETHICS</b>					
<b>Suggested Evidence and Documentation:</b>					
1. Program code or statement of ethics					
2. Ethics statements from relevant functional area professional associations					
3. Personnel policies, procedures and/or handbook					
4. Student code of conduct					
5. Operating policies and procedures related to human subjects research (Institutional Review Board, IRB)					
6. Minutes from meetings during which staff reviewed and discussed ethics					
<b>Criterion Measures:</b>					
<b>DNA</b>	<b>IE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>5.1 Ethical Standards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs and services review applicable professional ethical standards and adopt or develop and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice.</li> <li>Programs and services publish and adhere to statements of ethical practice, ensure their periodic review, and orient new personnel to relevant statements of ethical practice and related institutional policies.</li> </ul>					
<i>Rationale:</i>					
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>5.2 Statement of Ethical Standards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statements of ethical standards specify that programs and services personnel respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in communications and records as delineated by privacy laws.</li> </ul>					

### *Using Guidelines to Make Judgments about the Program*

As discussed above, program leaders may wish to include selected *CAS Guidelines* to be rated along with the standards. To accomplish this, criterion measure statements must be written for the guidelines selected. The self-study team can readily create statements to be judged as part of the rating process. Programs generally considered in compliance with the standards especially can benefit by using guidelines because guidelines typically call for enhanced program quality.

Not all programs under review will incorporate guidelines to be rated as part of their self-studies. Even though the guidelines are optional for rating purposes, raters are strongly encouraged to read and review them as part of the training process. When *CAS Guidelines* or other criterion measures are rated, they should be treated as if they were standards.



### III. Formulating an Action Plan, Preparing a Report, and Closing the Loop

The final three steps in the self-assessment process help a review team and unit plan for and take action using the information garnered through the review of documentary evidence and rating process.

#### *Step E: Formulating an Action Plan*

Typically, the assessment process will identify areas where the program is not in compliance with the standards. Action planning designed to overcome program shortcomings and provide program enhancements must then occur. Following is an outline of recommended steps for establishing a comprehensive plan of action using the CAS self-assessment work forms. Space is provided in the SAG for recording relevant information.

- 1) Resolve Rating Discrepancies (Work Form A)
  - a) Identify criterion statements for which there is a substantial rating discrepancy.
  - b) Discuss these items and come to a resolution or final decision. Note any measures where consensus could not be reached.
  
- 2) Identify Areas of Program Strength (Work Form B)
  - a) Identify criterion measure ratings where *strength* in performance or accomplishment was noted (i.e., program exceeds criterion with a rating of 4).
  
- 3) Identify Areas for Improvement (Work Form B)
  - a) Identify criterion measures where program weaknesses (i.e., program shortcomings that fail to meet criterion measures, and received a rating of 0 or 1) were noted.
  
- 4) Recommend Areas for Unit Action (Work Form C)
  - a) Note items that need follow-up action for improvement and indicate what requires action.
  - b) This is the last form to be completed by the review team.
  
- 5) Prepare the Action Plan (Work Form D)
  - a) This step should be completed by the unit being reviewed.
  - b) Use the items requiring attention listed in Work Form C to formulate a brief action plan. The focus and intended outcomes of the next steps to be taken should be identified.
  
- 6) Write Program Action Plan (Work Form E)
  - a) List each specific action identified in the self-study that would enhance and strengthen services.
  - b) Determine the actions needed to improve for each practice.
  - c) Identify responsible parties to complete the action steps.
  - d) Set dates by which specific actions are to be completed.
  
- 7) Prepare Report
  - a) Prepare a comprehensive action plan for implementing program changes.
  - b) Identify resources (i.e., human, fiscal, physical) that are essential to program enhancement.
  - c) Set tentative start-up date for initiating a subsequent self-study.

#### *Step F: Preparing a Report*

To complete the process, a summary document should be produced that (a) explains the mission, purpose, and philosophy of the program; (b) reviews the outcome of the assessment; and (c) recommends specific plans for action.

In addition, depending on the report's audience, describe the process, evidence gathering, ratings, and evaluations, and summarize strengths and weaknesses.

*Step G: Closing the Loop*

Finally, to close the loop on a program's self-study process, functional area staff members must implement the recommended changes to enhance the quality of their program. In this final step, the staff endeavors to put action plans into practice. In some cases, there will be institutional politics to be navigated; continued support from functional area leaders remains essential. Staff members will want to work collectively to secure resources, identify barriers to implementation, and build stakeholder buy-in to the results. CAS recommends that closing the loop on a self-study process be integrated into regular staff meetings, individual supervision, trainings, and annual reports. A key to successfully using program review in post-secondary student services is weaving the entire process, from planning through taking action, into the fabric of the functional area, departmental, and divisional culture.



# ASSESSMENT SERVICES

## CAS Self-Assessment Guide

### Part 1: MISSION

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Current mission statement, brief description of how it was developed, and date of last review
2. Additional goals, values, and statements of purpose
3. Description and copies (if applicable) of where mission statement is disseminated (e.g., included in operating and personnel policies, procedures and/or handbook, hanging in office common space, on website, in strategic plan, and other promotional materials)
4. Institutional/divisional mission statements (e.g., map program mission to broader mission statements)
5. Any additional professional standards aligned with program/service (e.g., standards promoted by functional area organizations)
6. Institutional demographics, description of student population served, and information about community setting

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

#### 1.1 Program Mission and Goals

- The mission of Assessment Services (AS) is to develop and implement a comprehensive assessment program that increases knowledge about students and the educational environment and leads efforts in continuous improvement and data-driven decision making.
- Central to this mission, AS collaborates and consults with institutional leadership, individuals, and departments essential to the success of students.
- The primary goals of AS are to improve student programs and services; enhance student learning, growth, and development; contribute to efforts toward student success, retention, and persistence; and support institutional effectiveness and accreditation.
- Whether organized as a central office or facilitated across departments, AS works in close collaboration with others with expertise and resources to collect evidence of mission effectiveness.

*Rationale:*

#### 1.2 Mission Implementation and Review

- AS develops, disseminates, implements, and regularly reviews its mission.

*Rationale:*

#### 1.3 Mission Statement

- The mission statement is consistent with that of the institution and with professional standards; is appropriate for student populations and community settings; and references learning and development.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. How does the mission embrace student learning and development?
2. In what ways does the AS mission complement the mission of the institution?
3. To what extent is the mission used to guide practice?

Part 2: PROGRAM

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program student learning and development outcomes, and brief description of how they were developed
2. List of current collaborations across the institution that facilitate student learning and development
3. Map of program activities and ways they connect to student learning and development outcomes
4. Map or report of outcome assessment activities, including results
5. Strategic plans program design and enhancement
6. Specifications or requirements (if applicable)

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

2.1 Program Information and Services

- AS identifies ways to support overall institutional efforts led by other departments focused on continuous improvement, such as institutional effectiveness and institutional research.
- AS identifies and helps others understand the distinctions among and when to use assessment, research, evaluation, and program review.
- AS provides training and education to enhance the assessment competence of the staff and faculty with whom it works.

*Rationale:*

2.2 Program Contribution to Student Learning and Development

- Assessment Services (AS) contributes to students' formal education (the curriculum and co-curriculum), learning, and development.
- AS contributes to students' progression toward and timely completion of educational goals and preparation for their careers, citizenship, and lives.
- AS assists departments with whom they work in creating and implementing both programmatic and student learning and development outcomes.
- AS identifies relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes that align with the CAS Learning and Development Outcomes and related domains and dimensions.

*Rationale:*

2.3 Assessment of Learning and Development

- AS engages in outcomes assessment, documents evidence of its impact, and articulates the role it plays in student learning and success.
- AS uses evidence to create strategies for improvement of programs.

*Rationale:*

2.4 Program Design

- AS bases its work on intentional student learning and development outcomes.
- AS reflects developmental and demographic profiles of the student population and responds to needs of individuals, populations with distinct needs, and relevant constituencies.
- AS is delivered using multiple formats, strategies, and contexts and is designed to provide universal access.
- AS functions are framed by the steps of an assessment cycle.
- AS grounds assessment methods in appropriate theories and methodologies.

*Rationale:*

2.5 Collaboration

- AS collaborates with others across the institution in ways that benefit students.
- AS collaborates and consults with other relevant departments to ensure that assessment efforts address institutional needs.
- AS sets clear expectations for assessment priorities when working with a department.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What are the most significant student learning and development outcomes of AS?
2. What difference does AS make for students who engage with it?
3. What is the demonstrated impact of AS on student learning, development, and success?
4. How has collaboration in program development and delivery affected its impact or outcomes?
5. What changes or adjustments have been made as a result of assessment activities?

**Part 3: ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP**

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program goals and outcomes
2. Operating policies, procedures and/or handbook
3. Personnel and student handbook(s), policies and procedures, and organizational chart(s)
4. Personnel position descriptions, expectations, and performance review templates
5. Periodic reports, contracts, and personnel memos
6. Annual reports by program leaders
7. Program leader resumes, including additional professional involvement
8. Strategic and operating plans
9. Needs assessment of program constituents
10. Report of professional development activities

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

### 3.1 Organization Documents

- Assessment Services (AS) has clearly stated and current goals and outcomes, policies and procedures, descriptions of personnel responsibilities and expectations, and clear organizational charts.

*Rationale:*

### 3.2 Actions of Leaders

- AS leaders serve as experts in administering effective and efficient assessment programs.
- AS leaders ensure awareness and understanding of broad higher education practices.
- AS leaders model ethical behavior and institutional citizenship.
- AS leaders with organizational authority provide strategic planning, management and supervision, and program advancement.

*Rationale:*

### 3.3 Strategic Planning

- AS leaders articulate a vision and mission, as well as set goals and objectives based on the needs of populations served, intended student learning and development outcomes, and program outcomes.
- AS leaders facilitate continuous development, implementation, and assessment of effectiveness and goal attainment congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans.
- AS leaders promote environments that provide meaningful opportunities for student learning, development, and engagement.
- AS leaders develop, adapt, and improve programs and services for populations served and institutional priorities.
- AS leaders include diverse perspectives to inform decision-making.

*Rationale:*

### 3.4 Management

- AS leaders plan, allocate, and monitor the use of fiscal, physical, human, intellectual, and technological resources.
- AS leaders manage human resource processes including recruitment, selection, performance planning, and succession planning.
- AS leaders use evidence to inform decisions, incorporate sustainability practices, understand and integrate appropriate technologies, and are knowledgeable about relevant codes and laws.
- AS leaders assess and take action to mitigate potential risks.
- AS leaders understand and are able to use various research and assessment methodologies and methods.
- AS leaders provide guidance and support to staff implementing assessment practices.
- AS leaders understand the educational value and objectives of diverse programs and services.

*Rationale:*

### 3.5 Supervision

- AS leaders manage human resource processes including professional development, supervision,

evaluation, recognition, and reward.

- AS leaders empower personnel to become effective leaders and to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the unit.
- AS leaders encourage and support collaboration across the institution and scholarly contributions to the profession.
- AS leaders identify and address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement.

*Rationale:*



### 3.6 Program Advancement

- AS leaders advocate for and actively promote the mission and goals of the programs and services.
- AS leaders lead or serve in a leadership role in institutional efforts to use evidence to guide decision making and create a culture of assessment and inquiry.
- AS leaders inform stakeholders about issues affecting practice.
- AS leaders interpret assessment results to guide educational policy development and enactment across a range of disciplines and functions.
- AS leaders facilitate processes to reach consensus where wide support is needed.
- AS leaders advocate for representation in strategic planning initiatives at divisional and institutional levels.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. Explain the extent to which AS leader(s) are viewed as and held responsible for advancing the departmental mission.
2. Explain the opportunities and limitations present for AS leader(s) as they seek to fulfill the program mission.
3. How do AS leaders advance the organization?
4. How do AS leaders encourage collaboration across the institution?
5. How are AS leaders accountable for their performance?
6. How have AS leaders empowered personnel and engaged stakeholders?

## Part 4: HUMAN RESOURCES

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program mission, goals, and outcomes
2. Operating policy and procedure manuals/statements for program and institution
3. Organizational chart(s)
4. Personnel handbook, position descriptions (including student employees, volunteers, and graduate students), expectations, and performance review templates
5. Annual reports, including data on student utilization and staff-to-student ratios
6. Association or benchmark reports on operations and staffing
7. Student and staff personnel profiles or resumes, including demographic characteristics, educational background, and previous experience
8. Reports on personnel, including student employees and volunteers, employment experiences
9. Training agendas and schedules

10. Statement of staffing philosophy
11. Professional development activities
12. Minutes from staff meetings at which human resources related standards were discussed and addressed

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

4.1 Adequate Staffing and Support

- Assessment Services (AS) is staffed adequately to accomplish mission and goals.
- AS has access to technical and support personnel adequate to accomplish the mission.

*Rationale:*

4.2 Recruitment, Supervision, and Professional Development

- AS establishes procedures and expectations for personnel recruitment and selection, training, supervision, performance, and evaluation.
- AS provides personnel access to education and professional development opportunities to improve their competence, skills, and leadership capacity.
- AS considers work/life options available to personnel to promote recruitment and retention.

*Rationale:*

4.3 Employment Practices

- Administrators of AS maintain personnel position descriptions, implement recruitment and hiring strategies that produce an inclusive workforce, and develop promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, and non-discriminatory.
- Personnel responsible for delivery of programs and services have written performance goals, objectives, and outcomes for each year's performance cycle to be used to plan, review, and evaluate work and performance and update them regularly.
- Results of individual personnel evaluations are used to recognize personnel performance, address performance issues, implement individual and/or collective personnel development and training programs, and inform the assessment of programs and services.

*Rationale:*

4.4 Personnel Training

- Personnel, including student employees and volunteers, receive appropriate and thorough training when hired and throughout their employment.
- Personnel have access to resources or receive specific training on institutional and governmental policies; procedures and laws pertaining to functions or activities they support; privacy and confidentiality; access to student records; sensitive institutional information; ethical and legal uses of technology; and technology used to store or access student records and institutional data.
- Personnel are trained on how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified personnel.
- Personnel are trained on systems and technologies necessary to perform their assigned

responsibilities.

- Personnel engage in continuing professional development activities to keep abreast of research, theories, legislation, policies, and developments that affect programs and services.
- Administrators ensure that personnel are knowledgeable about and trained in safety, emergency procedures, and crisis prevention and response, including identification of threatening conduct or behavior, and incorporate a system for responding to and reporting such behaviors.
- Personnel are knowledgeable of and trained in safety and emergency procedures for securing and vacating facilities.

*Rationale:*

4.5 Professional Personnel

- Professional personnel either hold an earned graduate or professional degree in a field relevant to their position or possess an appropriate confirmation of educational credentials and related work experience.

*Rationale:*

4.6 Interns and Graduate Assistants

- Degree- or credential-seeking interns or graduate assistants are qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience.
- Degree- or credential-seeking interns or graduate assistants are trained and supervised by professional personnel who possess applicable educational credentials and work experience, have supervisory experience and are cognizant of the dual roles of interns and graduate assistants as students and employees.
- Supervisors of interns or graduate assistants adhere to parameters of students' job descriptions, articulate intended learning outcomes in student job descriptions, adhere to agreed-upon work hours and schedules, and offer flexible scheduling when circumstances necessitate.
- Supervisors and students both agree to suitable compensation if circumstances necessitate additional hours.

*Rationale:*

4.7 Student Employees and Volunteers

- Student employees and volunteers are carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated; have access to a supervisor; and are provided clear job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing development.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. In what ways are personnel qualifications examined, performance evaluated, and personnel recognized for exemplary performance?
2. How are professional development efforts designed, how do they support achievement of the AS mission, and how do they prepare and educate staff on relevant information?
3. How has the staffing model been developed to ensure successful program operations?

4. Describe the AS philosophy toward engaging graduate interns and assistants, and student employees and volunteers in the program human resource pool.

## Part 5: ETHICS

### Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program code or statement of ethics
2. Ethics statements from relevant functional area professional associations
3. Personnel policies, procedures and/or handbook
4. Student code of conduct
5. Operating policies and procedures related to human subjects research (Institutional Review Board, IRB)
6. Minutes from meetings during which staff reviewed and discussed ethics

### Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

#### 5.1 Ethical Standards

- Assessment Services (AS) reviews applicable professional ethical standards and adopts or develops and implements appropriate statements of ethical practice.
- AS publishes and adheres to statements of ethical practice, ensures their periodic review, and orients new personnel to relevant statements of ethical practice and related institutional policies.
- AS adheres to institutional policies regarding when it is appropriate to conduct assessment studies through the institution's human subjects review process.
- AS adheres to the ethical standards of working with human and animal subjects.

*Rationale:*

#### 5.2 Statement of Ethical Standards

- Statements of ethical standards specify that AS personnel respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in communications and records as delineated by privacy laws.
- Statements of ethical standards specify limits on disclosure of information contained in students' records as well as requirements to disclose to appropriate authorities.
- Statements of ethical standards address conflicts of interest, or appearance thereof, by personnel in the performance of their work and reflect the responsibility of personnel to be fair, objective, and impartial in their interactions with others.
- Statements of ethical standards reference management of institutional funds, appropriate behavior regarding research and assessment with human participants, confidentiality of research and assessment data, students' rights and responsibilities, and issues surrounding scholarly integrity.
- Statements of ethical standards include the expectation that personnel confront and hold accountable other personnel who exhibit unethical behavior.

*Rationale:*

#### 5.3 Ethical Obligations

- AS personnel employ ethical decision making in the performance of their duties.
- AS personnel inform users of programs and services of ethical obligations and limitations



emanating from codes and laws or from licensure requirements.

- AS ensures that the privacy or anonymity of study participants and the confidential nature of data are not breached.
- AS personnel recognize and avoid conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment or objectivity and, when unavoidable, recuse themselves from the situation.
- AS follows institutional guidelines related to deleting identifiable information collected about students and other participants to protect their privacy, consistent with institutional policies and governmental guidelines.
- AS personnel perform their duties within the scope of their position, training, expertise, and competence and make referrals when issues presented exceed the scope of the position.
- AS acknowledges methodological limitations of assessment studies and findings.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What is the AS strategy for managing student and personnel confidentiality and privacy issues?
2. How are ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest identified and addressed?
3. How are ethics incorporated into the daily management and decision-making processes of AS?

## Part 6: LAW, POLICY, AND GOVERNANCE

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Emergency procedures
2. Operating policies and procedures
3. Personnel policies, procedures and/or handbook
4. Institutional codes of conduct
5. Contracts
6. Copies of related laws and legal obligations
7. Resources of professional liability insurance

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

### 6.1 Legal Obligations and Responsibilities

- Assessment Services (AS) is in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies that relate to their respective responsibilities and that pose legal obligations, limitations, risks, and liabilities for the institution as a whole.
- AS complies with applicable regulatory requirements, including institutional review boards, as applicable.
- AS adheres to the institution’s records management policies regarding data.
- AS has access to legal advice needed for personnel to carry out their assigned responsibilities.
- AS informs personnel, appropriate officials, and users of programs and services about existing and changing legal obligations, risks and liabilities, and limitations.
- AS informs personnel about professional liability insurance options and refers them to external sources if the institution does not provide coverage.

*Rationale:*

6.2 Policies and Procedures

- AS has written policies and procedures on operations, transactions, or tasks that have legal implications.
- AS regularly reviews policies that are informed by best practices, available evidence, and policy issues in higher education.
- AS has procedures, systems and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations and disseminates timely and accurate information to students, other members of the institutional community, and appropriate external organizations during emergency situations.

*Rationale:*

6.3 Harassment and Hostile Environments

- AS personnel neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

*Rationale:*

6.4 Copyright Compliance

- AS purchases or obtains permission to use copyrighted materials and instruments and includes appropriate citations on materials and instruments.

*Rationale:*

6.5 Governance

- AS informs personnel about internal and external governance organizations that affect programs and services.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What are the crucial legal, policy and, governance issues faced by AS, and how are they addressed?
2. How are personnel instructed, advised, or assisted with legal, policy, and governance concerns?
3. How are personnel informed about internal and external governance systems?

## Part 7: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Diversity statements
2. Goals and objectives related to diversity, equity, and access
3. Training plans and agendas for personnel
4. Lists of programs and curriculums related to diversity, equity, and access
5. Personnel policies, procedures, and/or handbook (specifically statements against harassment or discrimination)
6. Facilities audit
7. Assessment results such as participation rates, demographics, campus climate, and student needs

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

7.1 Inclusive Work Environments

- Assessment Services (AS) creates and maintains educational work environments that are welcoming, accessible, inclusive, equitable, and free from harassment.
- AS does not discriminate on the basis of ability; age; cultural identity; ethnicity; family educational history; gender identity and expression; nationality; political affiliation; race; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; economic, marital, social, or veteran status; or any other basis included in institutional policies and codes and laws.

*Rationale:*

7.2 Structural Aspects of Equity, Access, and Inclusion

- AS ensures physical, program, and resource access for all constituents; modifies or removes policies, practices, systems, technologies, facilities, and structures that create barriers or produce inequities; and ensures that when facilities and structures cannot be modified, they do not impede access.
- AS ensures that all assessment strategies, methods, and tools employ universal design to ensure that all persons are able to access and participate in assessment activities.
- AS responds to the needs of all constituents served when establishing hours of operation and developing methods of delivering programs, services, and resources.
- AS recognizes the needs of distance and online learning students by directly providing or assisting them to gain access to comparable services and resources.

*Rationale:*

7.3 Ensuring Diversity, Equity, and Access

- AS advocates for sensitivity to multicultural and social justice concerns by the institution and its personnel.
- AS ensures that assessment goals and methods are culturally responsive.
- AS establishes goals for diversity, equity, and access; fosters communication and practices that enhance understanding of identity, culture, self-expression, and heritage; and promotes respect for commonalities and differences among people within their historical and cultural contexts.
- AS addresses the characteristics and needs of diverse constituents when establishing and implementing culturally relevant and inclusive programs, services, policies, procedures, and practices.
- AS provides personnel with diversity, equity, and access training and holds personnel accountable for applying the training to their work.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. How does AS ensure constituents experience a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive environment that is equitable and free from harassment?
2. How does AS address imbalance in participation among selected populations of students?
3. How does AS address imbalance in staffing patterns among selected populations of program personnel?
4. How does AS ensure cultural competence of its personnel to ensure inclusion in the program?
5. How does AS encourage and provide opportunities for ongoing professional development for its personnel?

## Part 8: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Promotional material (brochures/sources of information about the program, catalogs, brochures, staff and student handbooks)
2. Media procedures and guidelines
3. List and description of relationships with internal and external partners
4. Minutes from meetings/interactions with key stakeholders

### Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

#### 8.1 Internal and External Populations

- Assessment Services (AS) reaches out to internal and external populations to establish, maintain, and promote understanding and effective relations with those that have a significant interest in or potential effect on the students or other constituents served by the programs and services.
- Regardless of structure, those with responsibility for oversight of AS are engaged in the active development and management of relationships across the institution.
- AS reaches out to internal and external populations to garner support and resources for programs and services, collaborate in offering or improving programs and services to meet the needs of students and other constituents and to achieve program and student outcomes, and engage diverse individuals, groups, communities, and organizations to enrich the educational environment and experiences of students and other constituents.
- AS reaches out to internal and external populations to disseminate information about the programs and services.

*Rationale:*

#### 8.2 Marketing

- Promotional and descriptive information is accurate and free of deception and misrepresentation.

*Rationale:*

#### 8.3 Procedures and Guidelines

- AS has procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy to communicate with the media; distribute information through print, broadcast, and online sources; contract with external organizations for delivery of programs and services; cultivate, solicit, and manage gifts; and apply to and manage funds from grants.

- AS adheres to all institutional policies with respect to the communication of student data to constituents.
- AS establishes and maintains regular and effective communication regarding the administration of assessment efforts and dissemination of data and use of results.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. With which relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies must AS maintain effective relations? Why are these relationships important, and how are they mutually beneficial?
2. How does AS maintain effective relationships with program constituents?
3. How does AS assess the effectiveness of its relations with individuals, campus offices and external agencies?

## Part 9: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Budgets and the budget process
2. Financial statements and audit reports
3. Student fee process and allocation (if applicable)
4. Financial statements for grants, gifts, and other external resources

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

### 9.1 Adequate Funding

- Assessment Services (AS) has funding to accomplish its mission and goals.

*Rationale:*

### 9.2 Financial Planning and Implementation

- AS conducts a comprehensive analysis to determine unmet needs, relevant expenditures, external and internal resources, and impact on students and the institution.
- AS uses the budget as a planning tool to reflect commitment to the mission and goals of the programs and services and of the institution.
- Financial reports provide an accurate financial overview of the organization and provide clear, understandable, and timely data upon which personnel can plan and make informed decisions.

*Rationale:*

### 9.3 Policies, Procedures, and Protocols

- AS administers funds in accordance with established institutional accounting procedures.
- AS demonstrates efficient and effective use and responsible stewardship of fiscal resources consistent with institutional protocols.
- Procurement procedures are consistent with institutional policies, ensure purchases comply with laws and codes for usability and access, ensure the institution receives value for the funds spent, and

consider information available for comparing the ethical and environmental impact of products and services purchased.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What is the funding strategy for AS, and why is this the most appropriate approach?
2. How does AS ensure fiscal responsibility, responsible stewardship, and cost-effectiveness?
3. If applicable, how does AS go about increasing financial resources?

## Part 10: TECHNOLOGY

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Technology policies and procedures
2. Equipment inventory

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

### 10.1 Current and Adequate Technology

- Assessment Services (AS) has adequate technology to support achievement of its mission and goals.
- Use of technology complies with institutional policies and procedures and relevant codes and laws.
- AS has access to sufficient software and hardware for efficient data collection, storage, retrieval, analysis, and dissemination.

*Rationale:*

### 10.2 Use of Technology

- AS uses current technology to provide updated information regarding mission, location, staffing, programs, services, and official contacts to students and other constituents in accessible formats.
- AS uses current technology to provide an avenue for students and other constituents to communicate sensitive information in a secure format, and enhance the delivery of programs and services for all students.

*Rationale:*

### 10.3 Data Protection and Upgrades

- AS backs up data on a regular basis.
- AS articulates and adheres to policies and procedures regarding ethical and legal use of technology, as well as for protecting the confidentiality and security of information.
- AS implements a replacement plan and cycle for all technology with attention to sustainability and incorporates accessibility features into technology-based programs and services.

*Rationale:*

10.4 Student Technology Access

- AS has policies on student use of technology that are clear, easy to understand, and available to all students.
- AS provides information or referral to support services for those needing assistance in accessing or using technology, provides instruction or training on how to use the technology, and informs students of implications of misuse of technologies.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. How is technology inventoried, maintained, and updated?
2. How is information security maintained?
3. How does AS ensure that relevant technology is available for all who are served by the program?
4. How does AS use technology to enhance the delivery of programs, resources, services and overall operations?
5. How does AS utilize technology to foster its learning outcomes?

Part 11: FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Equipment inventory
2. Facilities audit and plans for renovations, additions, and enhancements
3. Capital projects, if applicable
4. Structural design or maps to show space allocation
5. Images of the space

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

11.1 Design of Facilities

- Assessment Services (AS) facilities are intentionally designed and located in suitable, accessible, and safe spaces that demonstrate universal design and support the AS mission and goals.
- Facilities are designed to engage various constituents and promote learning.
- The design of the facilities guarantees the security and privacy of records and ensures the confidentiality of sensitive information and conversations.
- AS has sufficient and secure storage facilities to maintain materials related to assessment initiatives.

*Rationale:*

11.2 Work Space

- Personnel have workspaces that are suitably located and accessible, well equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities.
- Personnel are able to secure their work.
- AS has access to space outside of its office for conducting assessment activities.

*Rationale:*

11.3 Equipment Acquisition and Facilities Use

- AS incorporates sustainable practices in use of facilities and purchase of equipment.
- Facilities and equipment are evaluated on an established cycle and are in compliance with codes, laws, and accepted practices for access, health, safety, and security.
- When acquiring capital equipment, AS takes into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life-cycle costs.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. How are facilities inventoried and maintained?
2. How does AS integrate sustainable practices?
3. How does AS ensure that facilities, workspaces, and equipment are considered in decision-making?
4. How is AS intentional about space allocation and usage?

## Part 12: ASSESSMENT

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program goals, key indicators, outcomes, and related assessment data
2. Program student learning and development outcomes and related assessment data
3. Description of assessment cycle
4. Assessment plans and annual assessment reports
5. Minutes of meetings at which assessment activities and results discussed
6. Professional development activities to improve assessment competence

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

12.1 Assessment Plan and Practice

- Assessment Services (AS) develops an ongoing cycle of assessment plans, processes, and activities.
- AS identifies programmatic goals and intended program outcomes as well as outcomes for student learning and development.
- AS identifies and assesses the learning and development outcome domains and dimensions relevant to the program.
- AS documents progress toward achievement of goals and outcomes.
- AS employs multiple measures, methods, and manageable processes for gathering, interpreting, and evaluating data.
- AS employs ethical practices in the assessment process.
- AS has access to adequate fiscal, human, professional development, and technological resources to develop and implement assessment plans.

*Rationale:*



12.2 Reporting and Implementing Results

- AS interprets and uses assessment results to demonstrate accountability and inform planning and decision-making.
- AS reports aggregated results to respondent groups and stakeholders.
- AS assesses effectiveness of implemented changes and provides evidence of improvement of programs and services.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What is the comprehensive assessment strategy for AS?
2. What are priorities of the assessment program, and how are those developed?
3. How does AS integrate assessment and evaluation into all aspects of daily operations (e.g., advising, event planning)?
4. How are tangible, measurable learning and program outcomes determined to ensure the achievement of AS mission and goals?
5. How effective is the assessment strategy in demonstrating goal achievement and student learning?
6. How does AS use assessment results to inform program improvement?
7. How does AS share assessment results with relevant constituencies?
8. How does AS support ongoing development of assessment competencies for personnel?

*General Standards revised in 2014;*

*AS (formerly Outcomes Assessment and Program Evaluation) content developed/revised in 1986, 1997, 2008, & 2017*

## Work Form A – Rating Discrepancies

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

This work form should be completed following a review of the individual ratings of the team members. Item numbers for which there is a substantial rating discrepancy should be discussed before completing the remaining work forms. Discrepancies among ratings should be identified, discussed, and reconciled for consensus.

Part	Discrepancies	Resolution/Final Decision
1. Mission		
2. Program		
3. Organization and Leadership		
4. Human Resources		
5. Ethics		
6. Law, Policy, and Governance		
7. Diversity, Equity, and Access		
8. Internal and External Relations		
9. Financial Resources		
10. Technology		
11. Facilities and Equipment		
12. Assessment		

## Work Form B – Strengths and Areas for Improvement

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

This work form should be completed following a review of the individual ratings of the team members. Examine the ratings of each criterion measure by the team members, and record the following in the form below:

- Strengths: Item number(s) for which all participants have given a rating of 3, indicating agreement that the criterion *exceeds* the standard.
- Areas for Improvement: Item number(s) for which all participants have given a rating of 0 or 1, indicating agreement that the criterion *does not meet* or *partly meets* the standard. Items rated IE for *insufficient evidence/unable to rate* should be listed here as well.

Note – Items not listed in one of these categories represent consensus among the raters that practice in that area is satisfactory, having been rated a 2, which indicates agreement that the criterion *meets* the standard.

Part	Strengths: Items that exceed the standard (consensus ratings = 3)	Areas for Improvement: Items that do not meet or partly meet the standard (consensus ratings = 0, 1)
1. Mission		
2. Program		
3. Organization and Leadership		
4. Human Resources		
5. Ethics		
6. Law, Policy, and Governance		
7. Diversity, Equity, and Access		
8. Internal and External Relations		
9. Financial Resources		

10. Technology		
11. Facilities and Equipment		
12. Assessment		

## Work Form C – Recommendations for Unit Action

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

This is the last form to be completed by the review team. List the items needing follow-up action for improvement and indicate what requires attention. The team or coordinator should consider including any criterion measure rated as being not met by the reviewers, as well as those with significant discrepancies that are not resolved by team discussion.

Part	Item Requiring Attention
1. Mission	
2. Program	
3. Organization and Leadership	
4. Human Resources	
5. Ethics	
6. Law, Policy, and Governance	
7. Diversity, Equity, and Access	
8. Internal and External Relations	
9. Financial Resources	
10. Technology	
11. Facilities and Equipment	
12. Assessment	

## Work Form D – Beginning the Action Plan

### INSTRUCTIONS:

This work form is for use by the staff of the unit being reviewed and is the first step in identifying the actions to be taken as a consequence of study results. Using the Items Requiring Attention listed in Work Form C, write a brief action plan that identifies the focus and intended outcomes of the next steps in to be taken in each area.

#### Part 1. Mission

#### Part 2. Program

#### Part 3. Organization and Leadership

#### Part 4. Human Resources

#### Part 5. Ethics

#### Part 6. Law, Policy, and Governance

#### Part 7. Diversity, Equity, and Access

#### Part 8. Internal and External Relations

#### Part 9. Financial Resources

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Part 10. Technology

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Part 11. Facilities and Equipment

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Part 12. Assessment

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## ASSESSMENT SERVICES

### CAS Standards and Guidelines

#### Part 1. MISSION

The mission of Assessment Services (AS) is to develop and implement a comprehensive assessment program that increases knowledge about students and the educational environment and leads efforts in continuous improvement and data-driven decision making.

Central to this mission, AS must collaborate and consult with institutional leadership, individuals, and departments essential to the success of students.

The primary goals of AS must be to improve student programs and services; enhance student learning, growth, and development; contribute to efforts toward student success, retention, and persistence; and support institutional effectiveness and accreditation.

AS may be organized as an independent office and/or be a collection of initiatives across departments within an institution.

Whether organized as a central office or facilitated across departments, AS must work in close collaboration with others with expertise and resources to collect evidence of mission effectiveness.

AS must develop, disseminate, implement, and regularly review their missions, which must be consistent with the mission of the institution and with applicable professional standards. The mission must be appropriate for the institution's students and other constituents. Mission statements must reference student learning and development.

#### Part 2. PROGRAM

To achieve their mission, Assessment Services (AS) must contribute to

- students' formal education, which includes both the curriculum and the co-curriculum
- student progression and timely completion of educational goals
- preparation of students for their careers, citizenship, and lives
- student learning and development

To contribute to student learning and development, AS must

- identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes
- articulate how the student learning and development outcomes align with the six CAS student learning and development domains and related dimensions
- assess relevant and desirable student learning and development
- provide evidence of impact on outcomes
- articulate contributions to or support of student learning and development in the domains not specifically assessed
- use evidence gathered to create strategies for improvement of programs and services

## STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS

Domain: knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application

- Dimensions: understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines; connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences; constructing knowledge; and relating knowledge to daily life

Domain: cognitive complexity

- Dimensions: critical thinking, reflective thinking, effective reasoning, and creativity

Domain: intrapersonal development

- Dimensions: realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect; identity development; commitment to ethics and integrity; and spiritual awareness

Domain: interpersonal competence

- Dimensions: meaningful relationships, interdependence, collaboration, and effective leadership

Domain: humanitarianism and civic engagement

- Dimensions: understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences, social responsibility, global perspective, and sense of civic responsibility

Domain: practical competence

- Dimensions: pursuing goals, communicating effectively, technical competence, managing personal affairs, managing career development, demonstrating professionalism, maintaining health and wellness, and living a purposeful and satisfying life

[LD Outcomes: See *The Council for the Advancement of Standards Learning and Development Outcomes* statement for examples of outcomes related to these domains and dimensions.]

AS should identify tactics to help departments with whom they work to assess these domains and dimensions.

AS must be

- intentionally designed
- guided by theories and knowledge of learning and development
- integrated into the life of the institution
- reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population
- responsive to needs of individuals, populations with distinct needs, and relevant constituencies
- delivered using multiple formats, strategies, and contexts
- designed to provide universal access

AS functions must be framed by the steps of an assessment cycle.

The assessment cycle may include these steps:

- set program goals and learning and development outcomes
- develop and implement assessment strategies
- review and interpret findings
- develop a plan for data use and ongoing improvement
- implement plan and document evidence of ongoing improvement

AS must collaborate with colleagues and departments across the institution to promote student learning and development, persistence, and success.

AS must ground assessment methods in appropriate theories and methodologies.

AS must identify and help others understand the distinctions among and when to use assessment, research, evaluation, and program review.

AS should support efforts to share common terminology relevant to assessment, planning, and reporting processes across the institution.

AS must assist departments with whom they work in creating and implementing both programmatic and student learning and development outcomes.

AS must provide training and education to enhance the assessment competence of the staff and faculty with whom it works.

AS must set clear expectations for assessment priorities when working with a department.

AS must collaborate and consult with other relevant departments to ensure that assessment efforts address institutional needs.

Whenever there are both AS and institutional research in an institution, there should be clear delineation of responsibilities.

AS must identify ways to support overall institutional efforts led by other departments focused on continuous improvement, such as institutional effectiveness and institutional research.

### Part 3. ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

In institutions that do not have Assessment Services (AS), there should be an individual with adequate assessment experience identified with supporting the efforts of individual offices and collaborations across these units.

To achieve program and student learning and development outcomes, AS must be purposefully structured for effectiveness. AS must have clearly stated and current

- goals and outcomes
- policies and procedures
- responsibilities and performance expectations for personnel
- organizational charts demonstrating clear channels of authority

Leaders must model ethical behavior and institutional citizenship.

Leaders with organizational authority for AS must provide strategic planning, management and supervision, and program advancement.

#### Strategic Planning

- articulate a vision and mission that drive short- and long-term planning
- set goals and objectives based on the needs of the populations served, intended student learning and development outcomes, and program outcomes
- facilitate continuous development, implementation, and assessment of program effectiveness and goal attainment congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans
- promote environments that provide opportunities for student learning, development, and engagement
- develop, adapt, and improve programs and services in response to the changing needs of populations served and evolving institutional priorities
- include multiple perspectives to inform decision making

#### Management and Supervision

- plan, allocate, and monitor the use of fiscal, physical, human, intellectual, and technological resources
- manage human resource processes including recruitment, selection, professional development, supervision, performance planning, succession planning, evaluation, recognition, and reward
- influence others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the unit
- empower professional, support, and student personnel to become effective leaders
- encourage and support collaboration with colleagues and departments across the institution
- encourage and support scholarly contributions to the profession
- identify and address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement
- use current and valid evidence to inform decisions
- incorporate sustainability practices in the management and design of programs, services, and facilities
- understand appropriate technologies and integrate them into programs and services
- be knowledgeable about codes and laws relevant to programs and services and ensure compliance with requirements
- assess and take action to mitigate potential risks

#### Program Advancement

- advocate for and actively promote the mission and goals of the programs and services
- inform stakeholders about issues affecting practice
- facilitate processes to reach consensus where wide support is needed
- advocate for representation in strategic planning initiatives at divisional and institutional levels

AS leaders must enact the following tactics to successfully implement their programs and services:

- understand and be able to use various research and assessment methodologies and methods
- ensure awareness and understanding of broad higher education practices
- understand the educational value and objectives of diverse programs and services
- interpret assessment results to guide educational policy development and enactment across a range of disciplines and functions
- serve as an expert in administering effective and efficient assessment programs
- provide guidance and support to staff implementing assessment practices
- lead or serve in a leadership role in institutional efforts to use evidence to guide decision making and create a culture of assessment and inquiry

#### Part 4. HUMAN RESOURCES

Assessment Services (AS) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish mission and goals.

AS should be coordinated by designated individuals trained to facilitate assessment efforts of the institution and departments.

The number of personnel assigned to assessment efforts should be a function of the size, complexity, and purpose of the institution.

AS must have access to technical and support personnel adequate to accomplish their mission.

Within institutional guidelines, AS must

- establish procedures for personnel recruitment and selection, training, performance planning, and evaluation
- set expectations for supervision and performance
- provide personnel access to continuing and advanced education and appropriate professional development opportunities to improve their competence, skills, and leadership capacity
- consider work/life options available to personnel (e.g., compressed work schedules, flextime, job sharing, remote work, or telework) to promote recruitment and retention of personnel

Administrators of AS must

- ensure that all personnel have updated position descriptions
- implement recruitment and selection/hiring strategies that produce a workforce inclusive of under-represented populations
- develop promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, and non-discriminatory

Personnel responsible for delivery of AS must have written performance goals, objectives, and outcomes **for each year's performance cycle to be used to plan, review, and evaluate work and performance.** The performance plan must be updated regularly to reflect changes during the performance cycle.

Results of individual personnel evaluations must be used to recognize personnel performance, address performance issues, implement individual and/or collective personnel development and training programs, and inform the assessment of programs and services.

AS personnel, when hired and throughout their employment, must receive appropriate and thorough training.

AS personnel, including student employees and volunteers, must have access to resources or receive specific training on

- institutional policies pertaining to functions or activities they support
- privacy and confidentiality policies
- laws regarding access to student records
- policies and procedures for dealing with sensitive institutional information
- policies and procedures related to technology used to store or access student records and institutional data
- how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified personnel and have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments
- systems and technologies necessary to perform their assigned responsibilities
- ethical and legal uses of technology

AS personnel must engage in continuing professional development activities to keep abreast of the research, theories, legislation, policies, and developments that affect their programs and services.

Administrators of AS must ensure that personnel are knowledgeable about and trained in safety, emergency procedures, and crisis prevention and response. Risk management efforts must address identification of threatening conduct or behavior and must incorporate a system for responding to and reporting such behaviors.

AS personnel must be knowledgeable of and trained in safety and emergency procedures for securing and vacating facilities.

## PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

AS professional personnel either must hold an earned graduate or professional degree in a field relevant to their position or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

## INTERNS OR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Degree- or credential-seeking interns or graduate assistants must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and relevant experience. These students must be trained and supervised by professional personnel who possess applicable educational credentials and work experience and have supervisory experience. Supervisors must be cognizant of the dual roles interns and graduate assistants have as both student and employee.

Supervisors must

- adhere to parameters of students' job descriptions
- articulate intended learning outcomes in student job descriptions
- adhere to agreed-upon work hours and schedules
- offer flexible scheduling when circumstances necessitate

Supervisors and students must both agree to suitable compensation if circumstances necessitate additional hours.

## STUDENT EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. Students must have access to a supervisor. Student employees and volunteers must be provided clear job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing development.

### Part 5. ETHICS

Assessment Services (AS) must

- review applicable professional ethical standards and must adopt or develop and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice
- publish and adhere to statements of ethical practice and ensure their periodic review
- orient new personnel to relevant ethical standards and statements of ethical practice and related institutional policies

Statements of ethical standards must

- specify that AS personnel respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in communications and records as delineated by privacy laws
- specify limits on disclosure of information contained in students' records as well as requirements to disclose to appropriate authorities
- address conflicts of interest, or appearance thereof, by personnel in the performance of their work
- reflect the responsibility of personnel to be fair, objective, and impartial in their interactions with others
- reference management of institutional funds
- reference appropriate behavior regarding research and assessment with human participants, **confidentiality of research and assessment data, and students' rights and responsibilities**
- include the expectation that personnel confront and hold accountable other personnel who exhibit unethical behavior
- address issues surrounding scholarly integrity

AS personnel must

- employ ethical decision making in the performance of their duties
- inform users of programs and services of ethical obligations and limitations emanating from codes and laws or from licensure requirements
- recognize and avoid conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment or objectivity and, when unavoidable, recuse themselves from the situation
- perform their duties within the scope of their position, training, expertise, and competence
- make referrals when issues presented exceed the scope of the position

AS must adhere to the ethical standards of working with human and animal subjects.

AS must adhere to institutional policies regarding when it is appropriate to conduct assessment studies through the institution's human subjects review process.

AS must ensure that the privacy or anonymity of study participants and the confidential nature of data are not breached.

AS must follow institutional guidelines related to deleting identifiable information collected about students and other participants to protect their privacy, consistent with institutional policies and governmental guidelines.

Instances involving research on sensitive topics may require protections such as a certificate of confidentiality.

AS must acknowledge methodological limitations of assessment studies and findings.

#### Part 6. LAW, POLICY, AND GOVERNANCE

Assessment Services (AS) must be in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies that relate to their respective responsibilities and that pose legal obligations, limitations, risks, and liabilities for the institution as a whole. Examples include constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and case law; relevant law and orders emanating from codes and laws; and the institution's policies.

AS must have access to legal advice needed for personnel to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

AS must inform personnel, appropriate officials, and users of programs and services about existing and changing legal obligations, risks and liabilities, and limitations.

AS must inform personnel about professional liability insurance options and refer them to external sources if the institution does not provide coverage.

AS must have written policies and procedures on operations, transactions, or tasks that have legal implications.



AS must regularly review policies. The revision and creation of policies must be informed by best practices, available evidence, and policy issues in higher education.

AS must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations. Systems and procedures must be in place to disseminate timely and accurate information to students, other members of the institutional community, and appropriate external organizations during emergency situations.

Personnel must neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

AS must purchase or obtain permission to use copyrighted materials and instruments. References to copyrighted materials and instruments must include appropriate citations.

AS must inform personnel about internal and external governance organizations that affect programs and services.

AS must comply with applicable regulatory requirements, including institutional review boards, as applicable.

AS must adhere to the **institution's records management policies regarding data.**

#### Part 7. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS

Within the context of each institution's mission and in accordance with institutional policies and applicable codes and laws, Assessment Services (AS) must create and maintain educational and work environments that are welcoming, accessible, inclusive, equitable, and free from harassment.

AS must not discriminate on the basis of disability; age; race; cultural identity; ethnicity; nationality; family educational history (e.g., first generation to attend college); political affiliation; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; marital, social, economic, or veteran status; or any other basis included in institutional policies and codes and laws.

AS must

- advocate for sensitivity to multicultural and social justice concerns by the institution and its personnel
- ensure physical, program, and resource access for all constituents
- modify or remove policies, practices, systems, technologies, facilities, and structures that create barriers or produce inequities
- ensure that when facilities and structures cannot be modified, they do not impede access to programs, services, and resources
- establish goals for diversity, equity, and access
- foster communication and practices that enhance understanding of identity, culture, self-expression, and heritage

- promote respect for commonalities and differences among people within their historical and cultural contexts
- address the characteristics and needs of diverse constituents when establishing and implementing culturally relevant and inclusive programs, services, policies, procedures, and practices
- provide personnel with diversity, equity, and access training and hold personnel accountable for applying the training to their work
- respond to the needs of all constituents served when establishing hours of operation and developing methods of delivering programs, services, and resources
- recognize the needs of distance and online learning students by directly providing or assisting them to gain access to comparable services and resources

AS must ensure that all assessment strategies, methods, and tools employ universal design to ensure that all persons are able to access and participate in assessment activities.

AS must ensure that assessment goals and methods are culturally responsive.

#### Part 8. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Assessment Services (AS) may be a centralized unit or a collection of individual units.

Regardless of structure, those with responsibility for oversight of AS must be engaged in the active development and management of relationships across the institution.

AS should identify external stakeholders vital to achieving its mission and goals and develop a plan for ongoing communication.

AS must reach out to individuals, groups, communities, and organizations internal and external to the institution to

- establish, maintain, and promote understanding and effective relations with those that have a significant interest in or potential effect on the students or other constituents served by the programs and services
- garner support and resources for programs and services as defined by the mission
- collaborate in offering or improving programs and services to meet the needs of students and other constituents and to achieve program and student outcomes
- engage diverse individuals, groups, communities, and organizations to enrich the educational environment and experiences of students and other constituents
- disseminate information about the programs and services

Promotional and descriptive information must be accurate and free of deception and misrepresentation.

AS must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for

- communicating with the media
- distributing information through print, broadcast, and online sources
- contracting with external organizations for delivery of programs and services

- cultivating, soliciting, and managing gifts
- applying to and managing funds from grants

AS must adhere to all institutional policies with respect to the communication of student data to constituents.

AS must establish and maintain regular and effective communication regarding the administration of assessment efforts and dissemination of data and use of results.

AS should identify appropriate levels of transparency for dissemination of data and use of results.

AS should develop partnerships with departments such as institutional research and institutional effectiveness to have access to records necessary to enact its mission and goals.

### Part 9. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Assessment Services (AS) must have funding to accomplish the mission and goals.

Financial resources should be sufficient to support study conceptualization, data collection, data entry and analysis, and the dissemination of assessment and research findings, as well as methodological and technical training for staff.

In establishing and prioritizing funding resources, AS must conduct comprehensive analyses to determine

- unmet needs of the unit
- relevant expenditures
- external and internal resources
- impact on students and the institution

AS must use the budget as a planning tool to reflect commitment to the mission and goals of the programs and services and of the institution.

AS must administer funds in accordance with established institutional accounting procedures.

AS must demonstrate efficient and effective use and responsible stewardship of fiscal resources consistent with institutional protocols.

Financial reports must provide an accurate financial overview of the organization and provide clear, understandable, and timely data upon which personnel can plan and make informed decisions.

Procurement procedures must

- be consistent with institutional policies
- ensure that purchases comply with laws and codes for usability and access
- ensure that the institution receives value for the funds spent
- consider information available for comparing the ethical and environmental impact of products

and services purchased

## Part 10. TECHNOLOGY

Assessment Services (AS) must have technology to support the achievement of their mission and goals. The technology and its use must comply with institutional policies and procedures and with relevant codes and laws.

AS must have access to sufficient software and hardware for efficient data collection, storage, retrieval, analysis, and dissemination.

AS should have access to both statistical analysis software and qualitative analysis software.

AS must use technologies to

- provide updated information regarding mission, location, staffing, programs, services, and official contacts to students and other constituents in accessible formats
- provide an avenue for students and other constituents to communicate sensitive information in a secure format
- enhance the delivery of programs and services for all students

AS must

- back up data on a regular basis
- adhere to institutional policies regarding ethical and legal use of technology
- articulate policies and procedures for protecting the confidentiality and security of information
- implement a replacement plan and cycle for all technology with attention to sustainability
- incorporate accessibility features into technology-based programs and services

When providing student access to technology, AS must

- have policies on the use of technology that are clear, easy to understand, and available to all students
- provide information or referral to support services for those needing assistance in accessing or using technology
- provide instruction or training on how to use the technology
- inform students of implications of misuse of technologies

AS should advocate for integration of institutional databases.

## Part 11. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

**Assessment Services' (AS) facilities must be intentionally designed and located in suitable, accessible, and safe spaces that demonstrate universal design and support the program's mission and goals.**

Facilities must be designed to engage various constituents and promote learning.

Personnel must have workspaces that are suitably located and accessible, well equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities.

The design of the facilities must guarantee the security and privacy of records and ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information and conversations. Personnel must be able to secure their work.

AS must have sufficient and secure storage facilities to maintain materials related to assessment initiatives.

AS must have access to space outside of its office for conducting assessment activities.

AS must incorporate sustainable practices in use of facilities and purchase of equipment. Facilities and equipment must be evaluated on an established cycle and be in compliance with codes, laws, and accepted practices for access, health, safety, and security.

When acquiring capital equipment, AS must take into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life cycle costs.

## Part 12. ASSESSMENT

Assessment Services (AS) must develop assessment plans and processes.

Assessment plans must articulate an ongoing cycle of assessment activities.

AS must identify and assess the learning and development outcome domains and dimensions relevant to the program.

AS should assist departments in identifying relevant student learning and development outcomes.

AS must

- specify programmatic goals and intended outcomes
- identify student learning and development outcomes
- employ multiple measures and methods
- develop manageable processes for gathering, interpreting, and evaluating data
- document progress toward achievement of goals and outcomes
- interpret and use assessment results to demonstrate accountability
- report aggregated results to respondent groups and stakeholders
- use assessment results to inform planning and decision-making
- assess effectiveness of implemented changes
- provide evidence of improvement of programs and services

AS must employ ethical practices in the assessment process.

Programs and services must have access to adequate fiscal, human, professional development, and technological resources to develop and implement assessment plans.

*General Standards revised in 2014;*

*AS (formerly Outcomes Assessment and Program Evaluation) content developed/revised in 1986, 1997, 2008, & 2017*