



University of Washington  
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**End-of-Program Assessment  
Progress, Findings and Effects**

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The Office of Educational Assessment is an agency of the University of Washington which provides a variety of services related to educational research and assessment. The following are programs within which these services are provided:

- Institutional Research
- Student Outcomes Assessment
- Instructional Evaluation
- Test Scoring and Analysis
- Standardized Testing



# End-of-Program Assessment: Progress, Findings, and Effects

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## INTRODUCTION

Formal end-of-Program assessment at the University of Washington (UW) began in 1989 as part of the mandate of the Higher Education Coordinating Board Master Plan and is currently in its third phase of activity. The initial phase took place during the 1989/90 school year when six academic departments offering baccalaureate degrees participated in pilot projects. In the second phase, these projects were used as models as the rest of the departments that provide undergraduate degrees began to develop plans for their own end-of-program assessment activities. In 1992/93, departments began entering into the third phase, implementation of their plans, by collecting assessment data, and making changes to their undergraduate programs as a result of their findings.

This report is intended to provide an overview of the many assessment activities which the various departments at UW have undertaken thus far. It includes sections on assessment plans, implementation of assessment activities, departmental findings, and subsequent changes made. Although we have tried to include a number of examples in each of these areas, there are clearly many more equally noteworthy assessment activities taking place on campus which do not receive specific mention.

## PLANS

Virtually all departments at the University of Washington that offer baccalaureate degrees to five or more students per year have developed end-of-program assessment plans. These plans include a wide variety of assessment strategies which reflect the efforts of individual departments to adopt assessment methods that are relevant to their particular programs and educational goals. Many of the departments based their plans on assessment activities which were already in place. The new requirement for end-of-program assessment, however, has provided them with an opportunity to formalize these activities and make additions and adjustments as necessary. Other departments have addressed the issue of end-of-program assessment by planning and implementing new activities.

In a previous progress report on end-of-program assessment Gillmore<sup>1</sup> delineated the most common assessment methods proposed by the various departments. These include:

- a. Surveys/interviews
- b. Examinations
- c. Tests for incoming and graduating students
- d. Capstone courses
- e. Senior essay, project, or thesis
- f. Evaluation of student performances/presentations/exhibits
- g. Portfolios of student work
- h. Group discussions between faculty and students
- i. Feedback from employers
- j. Feedback from internship programs
- k. Curriculum and course review and restructuring
- l. Professional accreditation

Most departments have incorporated a combination of several of these methods into their assessment plans in order to achieve a comprehensive evaluation of their undergraduate programs.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The task of implementing assessment activities appears to have been a more difficult proposition for many departments than developing their initial plans because it involves moving from a theoretical level of involvement and often requires the department to address a number of unforeseen issues which emerge as this process takes place. Implementation can also require a greater commitment of personnel and financial resources and is, therefore, likely to occur on a more gradual basis than the planning stage.

The majority of the departments have already implemented at least some components of their assessment programs. The actual schedule for implementing assessment plans, however, varies greatly from one department to another. Whereas some departments such as Medical Technology have already fully implemented their assessment programs, collected data, and considered possible curricular changes as a result, other departments such as History are still preparing to put their plans into effect. The fact that some departments are taking longer than others to implement their assessment strategies does not necessarily reflect poorly on their assessment efforts, however. The History department, for example, has taken a very serious approach to assessment and

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<sup>1</sup>Gillmore, G. M., End-of-Program Assessment: A Progress Report. Office of Educational Assessment Reports, 1993.