

## ASSESSMENT BEST PRACTICES

### Importance of Assessment

#### **1. Assessment ensures that students learn**

Assessment data provide evidence of the achievement of each individual learner when measured against acceptable and established benchmarks. Each learner's performance is measured through targeted assessments and is benchmarked against learning objectives derived from the division's mission, vision, professional standards, and program learning objectives. Assessment results and outcomes are analyzed and evaluated to monitor student learning attainment.

##### **The goals are to ensure:**

- learners meet the learning objectives for a program;
- learners understand criteria and benchmarks for their assessments;
- varied opportunities for learning and assessment exist throughout the program; and
- effective feedback is provided to individual learners to ensure successful attainment of learning outcomes.

#### **2. Assessment ensures that courses and programs are effective**

The analyses of assessment data indicate course effectiveness and inform course improvement and development as well as feedback for individual learners and programs. Assessments are designed to provide evidence of candidate learning in relation to the objectives and outcomes associated with each course that are drawn from program level objectives and outcomes. Similarly, attainment of learning across all courses in a program provides evidence of program effectiveness in guiding and achieving stated learning outcomes. On a holistic level, evidence of program effectiveness and data collection and analysis from programs across the unit provide and guide unit level improvement and effectiveness.

##### **The goals are to ensure:**

- a course meets the needs of the learners in successfully achieving the stated learning objectives,
- varied opportunities for learning and assessment exist throughout the course,
- assignments and assessments are aggregated across learners and courses,
- focus is on both the learners and the content,
- learners achieve program level objectives,
- data are captured from key assessments using multiple measures at key points in the program, and
- assessments consist of, but are not limited to summative and formative assessments, internships, portfolios, capstones, and comprehensive exams.

#### **3. Assessment ensures that professional standards are met**

Assessment results provide evidence that professional standards and discipline-specific standards are effectively addressed and that candidates demonstrate achievement of the standards relative to their learning goals. Assessment to demonstrate accountability and mastery of required standards is an

important reason to assess learning accomplishments. Measures of learning assure external constituents, such as potential candidates, trustees, public officials, supporters, and accreditors, that the organization is meeting its goals.

**The goals are to ensure:**

- program specific professional standards are addressed and align to program learning objectives,
- learners demonstrate achievement of these standards in their coursework throughout the program, and
- programs are accountable and can demonstrate to outside constituents and accrediting agencies that their candidates are meeting or even exceeding the standards set by professional bodies.

**4. Assessment ensures that the JHU's mission, vision, and goals are addressed**

Mission, vision, and goals define what JHU aspires to implement in affecting change and values in the community, and specifically in its own student body. Assessment analyses provide evidence that learning outcomes across programs align with the division's mission, vision, and goals as defined and align with the university's mission and vision.

**The goals are to ensure:**

- programs align with each division's stated missions and visions, and specific professional standards if required are addressed and align to program learning objectives,
- programs address and demonstrate commitment to the goals and foundational abilities set forth by each division, and
- candidates are able to attain, model, and master the goals and foundational abilities that each division values in all its members.

**5. Assessment of student learning starts with:**

- Developing program learning objectives that define what the student will learn.
- Creating course learning objectives that are well aligned with the stated program goals.
- Including program and course learning outcomes on syllabi.
- Aligning assessments with the course learning outcomes and assessing students at multiple levels using multiple measures to track growth in learning.
- Ensuring that faculty own the assessment process, and that a culture of assessment is created and nurtured throughout the division.
- Collecting data and synthesizing it in a systematic and purposeful way.
- Applying data analysis to effect course and program improvements, and for allocation of resources.
- Discussing assessment results and creating program improvement plans that outline timeline for improvements and plans for program reviews.