



### What is Assessment?

"Assessment is any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness" (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p.18). It's how we gather essential feedback about the effectiveness of programs, services, and activities. Assessment is meant to improve a program, as well as to improve student learning and development.

### Why is Assessment Important?

There are several reasons that assessment is important, but accountability, an emphasis on student learning, retention, political pressure, and accreditation are all necessary in the student affairs world. "Learning is an integrated, holistic, transformative activity that incorporates and intertwines academic learning and student development; there are both academic and developmental foundations for learning, but learning and development cannot be separated" (Richard Keeling & Associates, 2009).

### Assessment Tools & Methods

**Direct measures** are student performances that demonstrate that

specific learning has taken place.

- Writing Sample
- Exit Exam
- Pre-Test/Post-Test
- Peer Observation
- Minute Papers
- Pop Quiz
- Rubrics
- Surveys
- Portfolios

**Indirect measures** may imply that learning has taken place but do not specifically demonstrate that learning.

- Photography and Reflection
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Focus Groups
- Individual interviews

### Assessment Resources

To view assessment reading and training materials, go to our webpage at:

<http://castle.eiu.edu/sa-assessment/resources.php>

If you need help on an assessment project, please contact us at:

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## Assessment Newsletter



### Profiles in Assessment

**Q: Why does the Health Service assess patient satisfaction?**

A: That is kind of a two-fold question. First, it is important to assess the satisfaction of our patients. We need to know how we are doing in the eyes of those we serve. The second part is to assess the value of our services for those who use it. We need to understand that value. Internally, we are constantly assessing to make sure it is the best quality to provide. We, as a Health Service, have to take the opportunity to gain feedback from the people who use our services. The needs of our patients change over the years, and we have changed based on the clinical side of that. We have to get feedback from patients on those changes. It is our job to remain up to date and current in order to satisfy our patients.

**Q: How are the results and findings shared with your staff and others?**

A: Results and findings are shared during staff meetings, typically at the beginning of each semester. Prior to the staff meetings, preliminary information is shared with Dr. Baker and myself per Dr. Eric S. Davidson, as we are collecting data. We do this to ensure that we have enough survey results. We also discuss how we are getting information to our students in order to increase completion rates. Eric works with our marketing graduate assistant to share the results with our campus. A presentation is given for the Health Service Advisory Board, and results are also shared with Dr. Nadler, Vice President for Student Affairs.

**Q: How would you encourage others/other departments regarding assessment?**

A: As administrators, it is important for people to understand that we do this to get feedback, not to criticize people's work. Our intentions of doing assessment are not to find problems. We are looking at ways of addressing our changing students' needs. Nothing stays stagnant. It is our responsibility to demonstrate that, as it relates to the mission of the university. Assessment is one way we can do that. We have to stay current, not only in terms of technology and service, but by meeting expectations of our patients. We know in Student Affairs that we contribute to the lives of our students in a significant way that

impacts their success inside and outside of college.

**Q: What were some of the significant findings/themes?**

A: Students who use our services have more positive perceptions than non-users. The students' experience with the medical providers were found to be excellent. The wait time for patients was exceptional, along with the ability to secure a convenient appointment. The most fascinating findings were students' responses related to their academic pursuits. By coming to the Health Service, the negative academic impact of their medical condition was lessened. The mission of Health Service and the University is to afford students the best opportunity we can for them to be successful. It is extremely important that we support the mission of the University and help our students be successful academically.

**Q: What changes have occurred as a result of the assessment findings?**

A: As a result of the assessment findings, we added the MyHealth tab in PAWS giving students' access to the Healthy Panther Portal. We have also improved our marketing of those services. We need to continue to be vigilant with marketing of our services in what we have to offer and what others feel about our service. The overall flow of the clinic has been modified to better serve our students as well.

**Q: What are the important lessons learned through this process?**

A: It is important to understand that staff who invest their lives with their professional work have a difficult time, sometimes, understanding why even a few people may perceive how they performed negatively. We must not dwell on the negatives and must appreciate and celebrate the many, many positive outcomes of the Health Service Patient Satisfaction Survey.

— **Lynette F. Drake**

**Director of Health Service**

