**Overview of Effective Assessment and FAQ**

25 September 2023

What is assessment?

Deciding what we want our students to learn and making sure they learn it

* We have evidence of how well our students are achieving our key learning goals
* Quality of evidence is good enough to inform important decisions, especially regarding helping students learn
* We use the evidence to not only evaluate achievement of students but also reflect on what we are doing and, if warranted, change what we are doing

How is assessment related to teaching and learning?

Four Step Teaching-Learning-Assessment Process

1. Establish clear, observable student learning goals

2. Provide learning opportunities to achieve those goals

3. Assess student learning – systemically gather, analyze, and interpret evidence of how well student learning meets the goals

4. Use the results to understand and improve student learning (closing the loop)

What are key differences between grading and assessment?

* Grading does not provide meaningful information on exactly what students have and haven’t learned
* Grading criteria can include behaviors unrelated to learning goals (e.g. late assignment)
* Different purpose – grades focus on individual students, while assessment ensures educational quality, stewardship, and accountability

What is effective assessment?

* Produces evidence that is useful and used in meaningful ways
* Focuses on what is most important
* Uses direct evidence of student learning
* Uses significant learning activities to demonstrate knowledge or skills
* Gives reasonably accurate and truthful information – myth of perfect assessment
* Uses clear and observable terms for learning goals, assignments, rubrics, etc. to allow for consistent application and interpretation
* Creates generalizable evidence that can be used to draw overall conclusions
* Includes an appropriate range of outcomes levels
* Maintains an appropriate balance among validity, reliability, usefulness, and quality
* Conducted ethically, fairly, and equitably

What are effective curricula and academic programs?

* Designed around learning goals, not content areas – promises to the student
* Responsive to the needs of the students, employers, and society
* Provides ample and diverse opportunities to achieve key learning goals
* Has appropriate, progressive rigor
* Concludes with an integrative, synthesizing capstone experience