

Eye on Assessment

Final Semester of the 3-Year Assessment Reporting Cycle

Don't Forget MATS in Spring 2014

The end of our 3-year assessment reporting cycle is quickly approaching. By June 15, all academic degree programs, administrative units, and University Life units must have their assessment data reported in the Mason Assessment Tracking System (MATS).

Reporting Requirements

- Mission statement
- Curriculum map for each degree program (*academic only*)
- Three student learning outcomes (*academic*) or program outcomes (*administrative and UL*) and the associated assessment measures
 - * For undergraduate degree programs, one student learning outcome must be on written communication
- Findings and action plans for all three assessments
- Answers to the Assessment Summary questions
- Answers to the *Students as Scholars* questions (*undergraduate degree programs only*)

Completing the Assessment Reporting Cycle in MATS

Once all of the required assessment data listed above has been reported in MATS, the entry is considered complete. There is an optional "submit" feature that units may use for internal review. Choosing "submit" will alert the department chair, director, or other unit head that all data entry is complete and ready for review. This isn't required by OIA.

Access to MATS

OIA has worked with academic and administrative units to make sure that the correct faculty and staff have access to MATS. However, due to new hires and shifting responsibilities, there might still be some people who need access. Requests should be sent from the unit to OIA at assessment@gmu.edu or 703.993.8834.

Assessment at Mason

Assessment refers to a systematic and ongoing evidence-based evaluation whose primary purpose is program improvement. Mason has a tradition of using assessments to ensure the highest standards of student learning and extracurricular programming. In addition to our own internal use of assessment data, accrediting agencies including SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) and SCHEV (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia) also require that assessment results be reported.

Information about planning for assessment, creating a curriculum map, and identifying and measuring student learning and program outcomes can be found on OIA's web site - assessment.gmu.edu.



OIA UPDATES

BCSSE

Mason's *Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) 2013 Self-Comparison Report* is available at assessment.gmu.edu. Watch for the *Peer Comparison* report later this spring.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Academic units are strongly encouraged to post the student learning outcomes for their programs on department web sites. Given Mason's new strategic plan and focus on the Mason Graduate, it is important that students and faculty are informed about expectations for student learning.

SURVEY RESULTS

Survey results for graduating student exit surveys, the Career Plans survey, and NSSE are available at assessment.gmu.edu. Results are customizable and can be generated at the university, college, and program level.



Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement

The first report from Mason's 2013 administration of the BCSSE is now available at assessment.gmu.edu. The BCSSE is a national survey administered to incoming first-time first-year students before they start college. Some of the major findings of Mason's *Self-Comparison Report* are:

- Forty percent of the 2013 Mason respondents were first-generation students compared to 30% in 2008
- The 2013 freshmen respondents scored significantly higher on the SAT composite than their 2008 counterparts
- More than half of the 2013 respondents (56%) reported that their high school grades were mostly A's - a 17 percentage point increase since 2008
- Compared to their 2008 peers, the 2013 freshmen expect to have more interactions with faculty outside of class and on activities beyond coursework
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents plan to work for pay up to 20 hours a week during the first year in college

Graduating Student Exit Surveys

OIA is asking faculty and staff to encourage graduating students to tell about their experiences at Mason by completing the Graduating Senior Survey or the Graduate Student Exit Survey. These are the institutional exit surveys that provide feedback to academic units for planning and specifically for Academic Program Review. The surveys are found at assessment.gmu.edu.

Presentations and Publications

Karen Gentemann co-authored the chapter "An Overview of Assessment and Its Role in Accreditation" in *Building Bridges for Student Success: A Sourcebook for Colleges and Universities* by the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange at the University of Oklahoma. She also facilitated the *General Education* panel at the Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium, Roanoke, VA in November.

Stephanie Hazel presented "*Students as Scholars: Intentional Learning through Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities*" at the Virginia Assessment Group meeting, Roanoke, VA in November.

Sarah Pérez-Kriz served on the *Institutional Effectiveness* panel at the Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium, Roanoke, VA in November.

Questions? Please contact us at assessment@gmu.edu or 703.993.8834.

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