



Policy AA1.06: Assessment Framework

Oversight	Information
Policy Type	Academics
Policy Owners	Chief Academic Officer
Initial Policy Approval Date	March 3, 2014
Current Revision Approval Date	May 1, 2019
Procedure Effective Date	May 1, 2019

Policy

Philosophy - American Sentinel University is dedicated to providing high quality education to our students. Students' ultimate success and satisfaction with the learning experience received at the University is of utmost importance. Our vision for academic assessment is to establish outcomes, assess learning, and take informed action that helps the university to achieve its most important goal of student learning.

Purpose - The purpose of American Sentinel's outcomes assessment plan is to articulate our processes devoted to continuous improvement of student learning in the areas of general education, program, and course assessment. The assessment process is seen as a shared responsibility of faculty, staff, administration and students.

The outcomes assessment plan is not an evaluation of individual students nor is it an evaluation of individual faculty and staff. Instead, the assessment plan is designed to establish goals or outcomes; assure that the University systematically gathers data from assessments; and to take informed action based on the data to improve teaching and learning. Faculty members are key in establishing outcomes and assessing student learning. Outcomes data is used to assess programs and in course development. Faculty meetings are structured and designed to provide a consistent means for discussions related to student success, assessment, and activities related to assessment.

Focus of Assessment - American Sentinel University assesses student academic outcome in three major areas:

1. Individual Courses
2. Academic Programs
3. General Education Program

Although learning outcomes are the primary focus of this assessment plan and of critical importance in monitoring the success of the University, American Sentinel also collects, analyzes, and reports on a number of other measures that are important in evaluating the institution's effectiveness. These additional measures include measures of graduation, completion, withdrawals, retention, and others. The end-of-course evaluations, which students submit after every course, include student comments on the value/quality of instruction provided by faculty, value/quality of instructional materials, value/quality of web-based instruction, amount



of study time spent on the course, course strengths and weaknesses, comparison to courses taken at traditional universities, self-assessment by students on learning outcomes, and suggestions for improvement.

Guidelines

Methods - For the purpose of student learning assessment, the faculty and administration are committed to the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of assessment results on a term-by-term basis. To accomplish this, faculty members are expected to:

- Establish clear and measurable learning outcomes at the institutional, program, and course level;
- Gather data on student success using various measures;
- Analyze student performance;
- Use results from assessment to improve student learning.

The University values the process of collecting data and the timeliness in using these data to make curricular changes. The assessment program is supported by the University faculty and staff in a variety of ways, including provision of leadership in gaining knowledge about effective assessment practices, convening conversations about assessment findings, and providing professional development opportunities, among many other types of support.

Assessment data are continually compiled and shared with key stakeholders and are used as the foundation for discussions that lead to institutional, academic, and policy changes. American Sentinel continually applies best practices and pursues innovation in the assessment of student learning.

Course Level Assessment - Course assessment focuses on student achievement of course outcomes. Course outcomes emerge from the program outcomes, which are directly tied to industry and professional standards. Mapping the course outcomes to the program outcomes is a way to ensure students are indeed receiving the knowledge and skills that will ultimately show success in meeting the program outcomes.

A syllabus template is required to ensure consistent information is provided to students about their courses. The template includes typical syllabus components: course description, faculty information, course outcomes, text and additional resource material, grading guidelines, assessment criteria, academic honesty policies, guidelines for participation, and a weekly guide to learning outcomes, preparation, and student expectations with respect to assessment activities.

Faculty are to be clear in their communication with students about how assessment activities relate to the intended course outcomes, as well as what represents varied levels of performance using criterion-anchored rubrics or other descriptive feedback mechanisms. More than ever before, students are being asked to take responsibility for their own learning. By faculty providing this information to them and discussing the importance of learning outcomes, they can self-monitor their progress in the course and receive faculty feedback.



In American Sentinel's project-based programs, each competency is mapped to the program's learning outcomes. Student learning is assessed by a faculty coach with a specified rubric at the completion of each competency. Faculty coaches also monitor the progress of each student in the program.

Program Level Assessment - Program assessment is longitudinal and involves the evaluation of student performance on program learning outcomes at multiple points throughout an academic program. All programs at American Sentinel have developed specific program outcomes. These outcomes are available on the University's website. Faculty members are responsible for developing these outcomes. Deans, Chairs, Faculty, and the Assessment Committee are all responsible for developing, executing, and measuring program level assessment, and revising the assessment plan based on the analysis of the generated data. In addition, programs will be assessed during formal Academic Program Reviews with external subject matter experts (for additional details, see Policy AA7.05 Academic Program Review).

The following data are also collected and reported for all of American Sentinel's degree programs:

- Average number of years to complete
- Retention rates
- Graduation rates

Students' progress through a degree program is monitored by the Deans to ensure that overall degree program outcomes are being met. American Sentinel has established a set of program outcomes, required and elective courses, prerequisites, and suggested program tracks to ensure students meet both program and overall course outcomes. Faculty regularly review students' individual and collective progress to ensure timely adjustments are undertaken to maintain high academic and professional standards. Student learning assessment and the academic program review are linked because results of student learning assessments inform the academic program review. Therefore, assessment aids in the understanding of how academic programs are contributing to student learning, growth, and development.

General Education Assessment - American Sentinel's General Education program has specific program outcomes defined in the General Education policy, AA7.02. General Education program assessment is conducted along the same lines as program level assessment.

Procedure

- Not Applicable

Related Documents/References

- AA7.02 General Education
- AA7.05 Academic Program Review



- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that institutions that participate in federal student aid programs report data on enrollments, program completions, graduation rates, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, and student financial aid (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>)
- Federal regulations require institutions to disclose certain consumer information for students in Title IV eligible educational programs that lead to gainful employment in a recognized occupation (34 CFR §668.6).

Definitions

- **Graduation rates.** These numbers show how many students were able to complete a program of study and pass all assignments and assessments required by the institution, *or graduate from an entire degree program, and whether the completion or graduation rates fall within the range of comparability to peer institutions* (DEAC C.14 Policy on Student Achievement and Satisfaction).

Revision History

- February 3, 2016: Added language for program-based programs.
- May 1, 2019: consolidate and added language from AA1.08 Academic Quality
- May 7, 2020: Updated policy format for accessibility guidelines - AHB