Quick Guide to Program Assessment Archives

This quick guide was prepared by the WSU Office of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness (ACE) and is intended to help WSU programs and faculty as they develop or maintain their assessment archive for program-level assessment. ACE is also available to collaborate with WSU undergraduate degree programs to develop program assessment archives. Contact us at ace.office@wsu.edu for more information.

Introduction

An assessment archive contains documentation of a program's assessment activities, providing a record of the components of a program's assessment work over time. Assessment materials are program assets and valuable resources for supporting effective curriculum and instruction. In addition to serving the needs of degree programs and faculty, an effective assessment archive demonstrates for university accreditation that each degree program has systematic assessment in place, in a way that fits their own needs and discipline.

General Approach

WSU undergraduate degree programs are responsible for developing and regularly maintaining an assessment archive for program-level assessment, as appropriate for the program's needs and priorities. Chairs and directors should ensure that archives are maintained in a current location, with appropriate access for leadership, committees, and faculty on all campuses, as appropriate, as well as making staff or technical support available as needed.

Each program is responsible for regularly maintaining an archive for their annual degree program assessment reports, assessment plans, and other assessment materials (e.g. rubrics, measures/tools, data, results, findings). While the needs of each degree program and discipline may vary, in general, most pieces of a program's assessment should be in a central location accessible to program faculty. As stewards, the department chair/school director and faculty assessment coordinator should know:

- where they are located
- who is responsible for maintenance
- how they are secure
- how they are up-to-date
- how they are backed up
- who needs/has access

It is important to both protect assessment materials and provide appropriate stakeholders with access. Assessment materials should be accessible by program leadership (chair, director, other) and appropriate committees and/or faculty, on all campuses offering the degree, including online instructors (as applicable). This infrastructure can make evidence of student learning readily available for faculty and degree programs to use in decision-making; reduce the logistical burden on faculty; and support continuity when there are transitions in personnel or roles.

Assessment archives can help regularize data stewardship as well, by ensuring that data are accurate, complete, and protected from accidental or intentional modification, destruction, or loss. For more information about data stewardship, see ACE's [Quick Guide to Assessment Data Stewardship for Academic Programs](#).

Format and Location

Where possible, the assessment archive should be in a central location that both protects assessment materials and provides appropriate stakeholders with access. The needs of each degree program and discipline vary, so what works well for one program may not be a good fit for another.

While each degree program should have a secure location behind a WSU login (e.g. shared drive, SharePoint, other software or secure storage) for storage of assessment materials, it may not make sense for programs to digitize past assessment data or materials, or to digitize materials or processes that the program feels are best kept in hard copy (as an example, some evidence may be collected in hard copy). Additionally, it may not make sense for assessment coordinators to store all working documents and drafts in an assessment archive.

Basic Pieces of an Assessment Archive

The list below suggests some basic pieces of assessment that degree programs should archive in a way that's useful to them and easy to maintain.

- Annual program assessment reports
- Program-level student learning outcomes
- Curriculum map
- Assessment plans
- Assessment measures and tools (e.g., rubrics, exams, survey instruments, etc.)
- Assessment data
- Summaries of assessment data, results, findings
- Documentation of use and decision-making (e.g., notes, summaries, memos, etc.)
- Meeting agendas and notes

Additional Resource

Suskie, L. (2018). Chapter 23: Summarizing and storing evidence of student learning. In Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.