

Types of Student Affairs Assessment

The authors of *Student Affairs Assessment: A guide for practitioners* describe different types of assessment based on the level of assessment complexity (Upcraft and Schuh, 1996). These have been implemented into the WCU Division of Student Affairs Assessment plan.

High Complexity						Low Complexity
Alignment with Professional Standards	Benchmarking/ Comparison Studies	Outcomes Assessment (Learning)	Campus Climate	Student Satisfaction	Student Needs Assessment	Utilization Data

Alignment with Professional Standards

Several professional organizations have developed standards to guide the practices of their members. For the Division of the Student Affairs, the majority of these standards are created by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS); however, individual departments may follow standards set by their respective professional organizations (e.g., National Association of Colleges and Employers). Some departments within the Division of Student Affairs also have the option of pursuing formal accreditation for their specific area and have chosen to do so (e.g., Department of Counseling and Psychological Services).

Benchmarking/Comparison Studies

This type of assessment involves comparing aspects of the home institution (e.g., organizational structures, staffing, programs, services, spaces, policies) to other universities and colleges. These studies can be particularly helpful in orienting new leaders, informing strategic plans, and determining whether or not to pursue new initiatives. The success of benchmarking studies depends on the extent to which each peer institution is comparable to the home institution's characteristics (e.g., student population, location, organizational structure). Assessment and institutional research staff are often involved in benchmarking studies and can provide support in creating a customized list of peer institutions. Visit the Peer Institutions section below to learn more about WCU's peer list.

Outcomes Assessment (Learning)

Often referred to as "assessment" by faculty, this type of project looks at the level of learning that occurs inside and outside of the classroom. National organizations have published frameworks to guide the development of learning outcomes in higher education (e.g., Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, Association of American Colleges and Universities, National Association of Colleges and Employers). There are typically four levels of learning outcomes: university, divisional, department, and program.

Campus Climate

This type of assessment focuses on the quality of a person's experience but is not limited strictly to satisfaction. The term "campus climate" is often used when studying topics such as diversity and inclusion, behavior/conduct, and space layout and design.

Student Satisfaction

Satisfaction assessments look at the quality of a particular aspect of the college experience. These types of assessments may be focused on overall experiences, technology, facilities, programs, services, processes and more.

Needs Assessments

This type of assessment is used to determine what students need in order to be successful. Topics might include, but are not limited to, health and wellness, academic support, diversity and inclusion, facilities, accommodations, safety, parking, dining, housing, and more.

Utilization Data

Utilization studies involve data regarding participation in programs, events, services, etc. This type of data can be combined with a variety of other data to assist staff in better understanding students who are/are not engaged on campus as well as the level of impact programs and services have on the student experience.