

Mills College Statement of Principles of Good Assessment Practice¹

We define good assessments as those that:

- Give us useful information.
 - Correspond to our key learning goals and curriculum
- Give us reasonable accurate, truthful information.
 - We provide clear statements of what we want students to learn.
 - We teach what we are assessing.
 - We collect more than one kind of evidence.
 - We make assignments and test questions crystal clear.
 - We make sure that the assignments and test questions clearly relate to the learning goals.
 - We score student work fairly and consistently.
 - We use assessment results appropriately.
- Are fair to all students.
 - We use a combination of tests, writing assignments and other projects so that all students a given equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know
- Are ethical and protect the privacy and dignity of those involved.
 - We protect the identity of students where possible and appropriate
 - We keep students informed about the nature and purpose of each assessment
 - We minimize potential bias
 - We give appropriate acknowledgement, and gain permission if necessary, when we use items from other assessment instruments in our own
 - We make the following information available to anyone considering our assessment results:
 - ✓The exact wording of assignments and questions given to students.
 - ✓How the participating students were selected and evidence that the students who participated are a representative, unbiased sample of the students
 - ✓The numbers of students or student works in the sample, the number actually participating and the participation rate
 - ✓Information on the precision of results
 - ✓A fair, objective presentation of the results, both intended and unintended, without censorship
 - ✓The necessary caveats regarding conclusions drawn.
 - We discourage others from making inappropriate interpretations of our assessment results
 - We promote the use of multiple sources of information when making any major decisions
- Are systematized.
 - We conduct assessments on a regular basis to see if course and program improvements are having their desired effect and to make sure past performance levels have not slipped.
- Are cost effective, yielding value that justifies the time and expense we put in to them.
 - We will make maximum use of existing information.
 - We will limit the volume of assessment information we collect from students.
 - We will use rubrics whenever possible to save time.
 - We will look at samples of student work rather than censuses whenever possible.
 - We will stagger our assessments by staggering the due dates of assignments, and staggering program assessment across a multi-year period.
 - We would rather do a few assessments well than many poorly.
 - We will establish realistic expectation for quality in our assessment methods and reporting, understanding that dissertation quality research is not the goal.

¹ Taken from *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*, by Linda Suskie, 2004.

We are committed as an institution to:

- Take the time necessary to become familiar with the current thinking about the principles and practice of assessment.
- Have a clear vision of assessment that we share both formally and informally with the community
- Provide communication channels to promote and facilitate assessment.
- Encourage risk-taking, understanding that assessment is action-research, and that trial and error experimentation is part of the process.
- Encourage a sense of community
 - Help faculty understand the importance of building a community with a common understanding of what is important and a curriculum with a purposeful structure.
- Not penalize faculty with less-than-positive assessment results.
- Set clear expectations.
- Provide incentives, resources, and support.
- Recognize and reward faculty for assessment efforts.
- Use assessment results to make decisions.