



ASPIRE RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN A MEDICAL, DENTAL AND VETERINARY SCHOOL

APPLICATION CRITERIA

Advice for Schools applying to the ASPIRE to Excellence Assessment of Students theme

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the panel chair for an informal discussion before beginning their application.

The examples provided by the reviewers are shown below under the respective criteria. These examples are intended to be indicative and not exhaustive. You may have other evidence that would be equally important and which support your case for excellence.

CRITERION 1

The assessment programme serves and supports the mission of the institution and the goal of medical, dental and veterinary education globally in enhancing and improving the health of both populations and individuals.

Examples of evidence that might be provided:

- Context, vision, and mission statements of the school.
- Overall academic program map and its outcomes, showing the alignment with context, vision, and mission, setting out what the School wishes to achieve in its programme, whether it claims any distinctive features and in particular whether it aims to address a particular health need.
- A description of the assessment program, detailing how the assessment system fits into the context and vision.
- Outline where assessment fits into the overall academic programme, its purpose at different parts of the curriculum, and how specific assessment activities are combined to facilitate decision-making/student guidance.
- Institutional policy documentation that outlines the assessment philosophy/fit between assessment and curricular activities.
- A description of the process to ensure the needs of the community are represented in the assessment program, possibly including anonymous surveys of stakeholders.
- Mission statement of the university juxtaposed with map of assessment program.
- Narrative explanation of ways in which the assessment programme tailoring takes place.

- Copy of policy statements that outline the goals of the assessment programme along with some indication of how/when students are kept informed of these goals.
- Justification that the assessments used represent good practice.
- Narrative outlining the philosophy used/justifying the approach(es) adopted.

CRITERION 2

The assessment programme supports, enhances, and creates learning opportunities.

Examples of evidence that might be provided:

- Institutional policies or instructions that require strong alignment and examples of that alignment.
- Evidence that the outcomes of the course support the aims, that the learning processes enable students to meet the outcomes, and that the assessment will make it clear to all whether or not these have been achieved. Blueprints are often helpful here.
- Evidence that the various assessment methods used are appropriately related to what is being assessed.
- A description of the mechanisms used to provide feedback and an anonymous survey of students.
- Student testimonials/surveys (ideally collected/submitted by third party).
- Evidence that the results of formative assessments are available in a timely fashion both to students to inform their study and to faculty to inform their teaching and course design.
- A description of the ways advice/support is given to students and anonymous survey of students regarding their perceptions of this process.
- Evidence that feedback is not only timely, but descriptive and specific, allowing students to identify strengths and weaknesses and act upon them.
- Sample copy of documentation/feedback given to learners in response to each assessment activity.
- Institutional policies or instructions that require the use of performance data in curriculum and staff development supported by surveys of students and faculty.
- Description of work/information flow of assessment data/analyses.
- Evidence that students' performance is collected, analysed and fed back to teachers and those responsible for curriculum development.
- Examples of how data has been used first to modify the course and then to measure any change which may have resulted from the modification.
- Anonymous survey of faculty regarding the timing and amount of feedback they provide.
- Evidence that the timing of assessments supports the learning so that not only are assessments related to recent learning, but that subsequent assessment builds on prior learning and assessment to reinforce integration of knowledge into practice
- Evidence that the amount of assessment achieves its purpose/the outcomes.
- Assessment is not overwhelming for students and faculty (anonymous faculty and student surveys).

- A description of the remediation process and an anonymous survey of students who have required remediation and faculty who have been engaged with it. An evaluation report on the nature and effectiveness of the remediation program.
- Policy statements, governance structure, and indication of how the process takes place, how many students are involved, and evidence that the support is effective.
- Evidence of a clear assessment process which is easily available to students and staff.
- Evidence of proactive methods in identifying students with difficulties.
- Evidence of clear responsibility within the School and appropriate training for those individuals.

CRITERION 3

The assessment programme ensures the competence of students as they progress.

Examples of evidence that might be provided:

- Copies of the guidelines that are shared with each group of stakeholders as well as an indication of when, where, and how they are shared; any evaluation reports from regulatory bodies or other internal/external groups.
- Policy documentation already mentioned above.
- Evidence that those few students who are judged unsuitable for a medical career are correctly identified and appropriate action taken.
- Description of the assessment program (above), description of the competencies that are valued, alignment of the two with details about the measures.
- Explicit blueprint documenting how the assessment program has been built to cover variety of competencies of interest/levels of Miller's pyramid, etc.
- How does the school set the 'cut-point?' Details of how the School deals with the uncertainty around the 'cut point'
- Utility indicators (i.e., evidence of quality assurance analyses and continuous quality improvement efforts – reliability/ validity/ feasibility/ acceptability/ educational impact) for individual measures where appropriate as well as overall program (accompanied by some explicit statement about where/when/why compromises are made to prioritize different aspects of utility in different aspects of the assessment program).
- Specific evidence that, as far as possible, the assessments are 'passing' competent students and identifying and not allowing progression of those not yet competent.
- Description of the appeals policies and process; summary of appeals over a period of time; data on recent outcomes. Should be in policy documents alluded to above.
- Evidence that the process of appeal is independent of the original decision.
- The use of exemplars could be used to strengthen this section.

CRITERION 4

The assessment programme is subject to a rigorous and continuous quality control process.

Examples of evidence which might be provided:

- Description of the process, examples of quality control output, evaluation reports, description of actions taken, and/or related policies.
- Evidence of a clear system for quality control and enhancement.
- Evidence of how utility indicators improved with quality control.
- Description of all external reviews and copies of all external review reports.
- Provision of reports conducted by external reviewers along with dates/description of process used.
- A list of all external reviews, the recommendations emanating from each, the responses to each, evaluation report after change.
- Narrative indicating how process was changed in response to external examiners recommendations (ideally with indication of whether or not changes were effective).
- Evidence of feedback leading to change and further review.
- A curriculum for faculty training on assessment, a list of available faculty development workshops/educational experiences, the number of faculty participants, the intensity of faculty participation, the requirement for faculty participation.
- Description of faculty development offerings that focus on assessment along with indication of number/proportion of faculty who have taken advantage of their availability.
- Evidence of training programmes, which are congruent with the assessment processes.
- Evidence of the take up of such programmes particularly by staff that have assessment responsibilities.
- List of contributors to assessment, their relevant backgrounds, their roles, and their contributions.

CRITERION 5

The assessment programme demonstrates a commitment to scholarship and innovation, including the dissemination of good practice. The panel takes a broad view of scholarship, recognising that an impact of 'knowledge' through educational research, publications and presentations can be challenging to achieve for some organisations.

The panel encourage applicants to look how this activity can be evidenced in other ways - e.g. through the impact on 'people' (advisory and faculty development), improvements in 'processes' (e.g. assessment techniques or innovative uses of technology) and policies (e.g. contribution to work that enhances assessment policy more widely, such as leadership or membership of national or international groups).

Examples of evidence that might be provided:

1. List of innovations in assessment with associated evaluation reports (local or external).
2. Description of what is new, different, unique about the institution's approach to assessment. Explanation and evidence for these claims.
3. Evidence of the adoption of newer, evidenced-based assessment methods to replace older traditional methods.

4. Evidence that assessment methods are generally well supported by the assessment literature either as practical and effective processes or by good theoretical justification (this can be through the application of others' work to justify the innovation in the applicant).
5. Reports of impact, innovation and scholarship, evidence of uptake elsewhere in the institution (e.g. supporting innovation in other departments) or at other institutions. Evidence can include testimonials, successful grant funding for work in assessment, and indications that the work described in these outlets has been implemented locally.
6. Evidence that a School is sufficiently confident in its processes as to be willing to share and debate them with others (e.g. providing support, guidance and critical friendship to other individuals and/or institutions).

September 2019

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