

TERM	DEFINITION
Academic Program Review	A process to examine the effectiveness of an academic program. The APR process is applied to degree programs, stand-alone minors, General Education, and academic centers and institutes. The process provides feedback (a) to the academic unit primarily responsible for the program, (b) to the appropriate academic administrators, and (c) to external units in the form of confirmation of the existence of the APR process and in the form of summaries of the outcomes.
Accreditation	A voluntary process involving an association of schools and/or colleges to encourage high standards of education. Accreditation indicates that the Commission judges that the institution, in a manner consistent with Commission standards, offers its students on a satisfactory level the educational opportunities implied in its objectives and is likely to continue to do so.- <i>WASC</i>
Accrediting Body	A voluntary, non-governmental association established to administer accrediting procedures. A listed accrediting body is one that is officially listed by the Secretary of Education because it is used as part of the Department of Education’s processes for determining institutional eligibility for certain federal funds. – <i>WASC</i>
Assessment	<p>Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. - Angelo, 1995</p> <p><i>Course Embedded</i> “Course-embedded assessment refers to methods of assessing student learning within the classroom environment, using course goals, objectives, and content to gauge the extent of the learning that is taking place. This technique generates information about what and how students are learning within the program and classroom environment, using existing information that instructors routinely collect (test performance, quizzes, essays, etc...) or through assessment instruments introduces into a course specifically for the purpose of measuring student learning.” – UMASS, Amherst – OAPA Handbook</p> <p><i>Direct Measures</i> “Directly evaluates student work. Examples of direct measures include exams, papers, projects, computer programs, interaction with a client, or musical performances....A direct measure requires: - A student performance such as an exam or project - A set of criteria by which to evaluate the performance - Analysis and interpretation of the results - A feedback loop into department/ gen ed, and/ or institutional decision-making processes”– Walvoord, 2004</p> <p><i>Indirect</i> “Student (or others) perceptions of how well students have achieved an objective” – Allen, 2004</p> <p><i>Norm Referenced</i> “An assessment designed to discover how an individual student’s performance or test result compares to that of an appropriate peer group.” - Glossary of Education Terms and Acronyms.</p> <p><i>Qualitative</i> “Assessment findings that are verbal descriptions of what was discovered, rather than numerical findings.” - Allen, 2004</p> <p><i>Quantitative</i> “Assessment findings are summarized with a number that indicated the</p>

	<p>extent of learning.” – Allen, 2004</p> <p><i>Summative</i> the gathering of information at the conclusion of a course, program, or undergraduate career to improve learning or to meet accountability demands. When used for improvement, impacts the next cohort of students taking the course or program. Examples: examining student final exams in a course to see if certain specific areas of the curriculum were understood less well than others; analyzing senior projects for the ability to integrate across disciplines. – Leskes, 2004</p>
Capstone or Culminating Experience	<p>A capstone or culminating experience is generally located in a capstone course in the senior year of college. It consists of a learning experience, performance task, paper or project on a topic chosen by the student or by the instructor. In some majors the culminating experience consists of writing an academic paper with a literature review or completing an Honors Thesis. In other majors, the culminating experience could be a singing recital or an art exhibit. In the sciences, students may take a standardized test, e.g., the Biology field test, at the end of their last course in the program as culminating experience.</p> <p>In other cases, culminating experiences involve group projects based on real-world problems. For example, Engineering students at CSULA do research as a group on an applied engineering problem in the first quarter, design a solution in the second quarter, and build the solution the third quarter. These students are often asked to write about their project and to present orally to the class. In the case of group projects, communication skills, leadership skills and time management may also come into play along with course content. Similarly, many GE outcomes (e.g. oral and written communication, critical thinking, or knowledge of self) can be measured along with program outcomes in a culminating experience, using a rubric.</p>
Collective Portfolios	<p>Faculty assemble samples of student work from various classes and use the “collective” to assess specific student learning objectives. Portfolios can be assessed by using scoring rubrics; expectations should be clarified before portfolios are examined. – Allen, 2002</p>
Content Analysis	<p>Is a procedure that categorizes the content of written documents. The analysis begins with identifying the unit of observation, such as a word, phrase, or concept, and then creating meaningful categories to which each item can be assigned. For example, a student’s statement that “I learning that I could be comfortable with someone from another culture” could be assigned to the category of “Positive Statements about Diversity.” The number of incidents that this type of response occurred can then be quantified and compared with neutral or negative responses addressing the same category. Allen, 2002</p>
Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)	<p>“...the quality movement brings with it a sense of collective responsibility for learning, a habit of listening to the people we serve, a preference for data, an ethic of continuous improvement, a determination to develop fully the talent of every learner, and an acknowledgment that we are professionally accountable to one another and to those we serve for results.” - Palomba, C.A and Banta, T.W., 1999</p>
Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness	<p>Second of the two main elements for WASC Institutional Review. The focus when evaluating this component will be on educational objectives and design, the collection and use of data, delivery of programs, and ultimately, learner accomplishments. – WASC</p>
Core Commitment to	<p>One of two central elements expected to be demonstrated during the WASC review. When evaluating commitment to capacity, WASC’s objectives include an</p>

Institutional Capacity	examination of stated purposes, institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures. – <i>WASC</i>
Course Goals	Broad, general statements of what a course aims to achieve. <i>Example:</i> “This course will introduce students to museum quality art” or “This course will expose students to federal and state grant proposal requirements.”
Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes or Objectives	Specific objectives or learning outcomes that are covered and assessed in a particular course. They can be outcomes from an academic program or from GE as well as from the specific content of the course, in Engineering, Nursing, English, Business, etc. <i>Example:</i> “students will demonstrate mastery of basic oral and written communication,” or “students will be able correctly identify properties of soils.”
Criteria	Things to look at in judging the effectiveness, success, or value of a particular thing.” - American College Testing Program, 1990
Critical Thinking	“Critical thinking is defined in seven major categories: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, presenting arguments, reflection, and dispositions. Within each of these categories are skills and subskills that concretely define critical thinking. No single test measures every aspect of critical thinking; in fact, even with all of the tests combined, all critical skills are not assessed. Although a single comprehensive test is not available, many tests are still adequate measures of some critical thinking skills.” - <i>The NPEC Sourcebook on Assessment, Volume 2</i>
Educational (Instructional) Objective	A statement that defines an intended outcome of instruction. It describes what a successful learner is able to do at the end of the lesson or course, defines the conditions under which the behavior is to occur, and often specifies the criterion or standard of acceptable performance.” – CTB McGraw•Hill
Educational Effectiveness Review	The final step in the WASC Institutional Review Process, this stage will ultimately produce a report, limited to 50-pages, focusing on the second core commitment of educational effectiveness. This report can be based on several different models and will then be reviewed by the Commission. – <i>WASC</i>
Evidence	“Evidence is the substance of what is advanced to support a claim that something is true.” Evidence is “intentional and purposeful, entails interpretation and reflection, integrated and holistic, can be both quantitative and qualitative, and can be either direct or indirect.” - <i>WASC</i>
Exit Surveys	Students leaving the university, generally graduating students are interviewed or surveyed to obtain feedback. Data obtained can address strengths and weaknesses of an institution or program and or to assess relevant concepts, theories or skills.” Allen, 2002
Focus Groups	Are a series of carefully planned discussions among homogenous groups of 6-10 respondents who are asked a carefully constructed series of open-ended questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. The session is typically recorded and later the recording is transcribed for analysis. The data is studied for major issues and reoccurring themes along with representative comments.” Allen, 2002
Indicators	“Statistics that reflect something about the performance or status of some aspects of the educational program.” - American College Testing Program, 1990
Institutional Accreditation	The process of evaluating and improving the institutional and educational effectiveness of California State University, Stanislaus within the context, requirements, and standards of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. – <i>10 Methods, CSU Stanislaus</i>
Institutional	Is the first step in the WASC institutional review process. This document states the

Proposal	institution's approach towards review and must be approved before moving on to the next stage of the process. – <i>WASC</i>
Learning	Learning not only involves the acquisition of basic academic skills and the broad-based knowledge of a liberal education but goes beyond these to include inspiring and enabling students to become autonomous learners, critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers, and thoughtful, reflective citizens with a passion for life-long learning. - <i>Pathways to Learning, CSU Stanislaus</i>
Matrices	Are used to summarize the relationship between student learning objectives and courses, course assignments, or course syllabus objectives to examine congruence and to ensure that all objectives have been sufficiently structured into the curriculum. Allen, 2002
Mission Statement	The Program's mission statement should provide an overview of the department/ program's philosophy, goals, and objectives. Basically, it should embody the program's purpose and the faculty's priorities for the program – Allen, 2004
Outcomes	Used to describe the anticipated or achieved results of programs or the accomplishment of institutional objectives, as demonstrated by such indicators as student attitudes, knowledge and/or performance. – <i>WASC</i>
Planning	The development of a design or scheme of arrangement with a definite purpose. Institutional planning may be of the education program, the physical plant, or budgets and finances, and is intended to accomplish the purposes of the institution. – <i>WASC</i>
Portfolio Approach	As Erwin notes in the NPEC Sourcebook, the portfolio approach uses existing documents to measure student progress in lieu of the standard timed essay test. Proponents of this method argue that this approach enables educators to track the development of writing skills as well as providing a large quantity of information about the classroom setting, which sets the stage for quality improvement. Downfalls to this approach include the absence of scoring standards and measures; since the material will vary greatly, scoring will be open to judgment. - <i>The NPEC Sourcebook on Assessment, Volume 1</i>
Preparatory Review	During this second stage of the WASC institutional review process, the institution is required to produce a 35-page document, which includes a portfolio of evidence displaying the institution's ability to meet the Core Commitment to Capacity – <i>WASC</i>
Program Goals	Broad, general statements of what an academic program aims to achieve. For example, "The BA in Communication provides students with an understanding of the nature and functions of human communication." It defines what the program's goals are or what it provides to the student. These goals should be in alignment with the program's mission statement. <i>Example: (GE Program Goal): "The General Education program is designed to help students achieve a sense of the essential relationship of self to the community and environment with emphasis on their responsibilities to human society."</i>
Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes	Statement of the cumulative knowledge, attitudes, and skills that students should know, acquire, or be able to do at the end of an academic program, e.g., a bachelor's or a master's degree. These are readily measured. <i>Example: "Students with an MS in Research and Evaluation will demonstrate proficiency in using statistical software to analyze large data sets."</i> <i>Example (GE Program Learning Outcomes): As a result of the GE program,</i>

	“students will demonstrate understanding of analysis, criticism, and advocacy in the context of deductive and inductive reasoning,” or “students can perform computations and symbolic manipulations.”
Reflective Essays	“Generally are brief (five to ten minute) essays on topics related to identified student learning objectives, although they may be longer when assigned as homework. Students are asked to reflect on a selected issue. Content analysis is used to analyze results.”– Allen, 2002
Reliability	An indicator of score consistency over time or across multiple evaluators. Reliable assessment is one in which the same answers receive the same score regardless of who performs the scoring or how or where the scoring takes place. The same person is likely to get approximately the same score across multiple test administrations.” - <i>Glossary of Education Terms and Acronyms.</i>
Rubrics	A rating system that specifies the important aspects of a student assignment as well as examples of typical student work at several levels of performance (e.g. unsatisfactory, satisfactory, outstanding). The rubric is used to rate or evaluate a piece of student work on several standards or criteria. For example, a rubric for evaluating student writing may consider spelling and grammar, paragraph construction, logical development of the theme, suitability for the intended audience, etc.
Standards	Standards are a level of accomplishment all students are expected to meet or exceed. Standards do not necessarily imply high quality learning; sometimes the level is a lowest common denominator. Nor do they imply complete standardization in a program; a common minimum level could be achieved by multiple pathways and demonstrated in various ways. Examples: carrying on a conversation about daily activities in a foreign language using correct grammar and comprehensible pronunciation; achieving a certain score on a standardized test. - Leskes, 2004
Student Learning Outcomes or Objectives	What students should know and be able to do by the end of a learning experience (generally a course or degree program). It focuses on what the student will take away from this learning experience. These statements provide the basis for assessment of student learning.
WASC Evidence Guide	A publication developed by WASC to establish a common understanding of the accrediting process and to assist institutions in the assembly and use of evidence in all stages of the WASC review process. The Guide explains how and why WASC uses an institution’s evidence of meeting the two core commitments as a basis for accreditation. – WASC

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