

# Addressing Outcomes Assessment in Planning programs Planning Accreditation Board Requirements

American Planning Association

National Conference

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## Purpose of Workshop

- Review: Program Outcomes Assessment in the context of new PAB Accreditation Standards and Criteria
- Provide guidance and share ideas
  - To assist site visit team members in evaluating self-study report (SSR) and information gathered on-site
  - To assist program directors in leading the self-study process

## What you should expect to gain from this session . . .

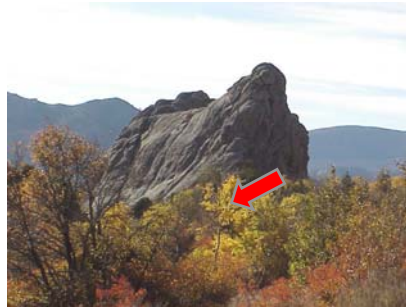
1. Familiarity with general purposes of outcomes assessment in higher education
2. Ability to use concepts of outcomes assessment in the context of PAB accreditation
3. Understand how mission, goals and objectives in the context of a strategic plan figure into program assessment

## What you should expect to gain from this session . . .

4. How to establish meaningful and measurable performance indicators
5. Mastery of the agreed upon **Required Knowledge, Skills and Values of the Planning Profession** (Standard 4A)
6. Understand the expectations for reporting progress in the accreditation review

# Outcomes Assessment

- Long-standing movement in higher education
- Common expectation of accreditors who evaluate programs' quality for internal and external audiences
- Increased expectation for accountability



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5

## Purpose of Outcomes Assessment

*American Association of Higher Education*

1. **Assessment begins with educational values** (the program has a clearly defined mission);
2. **Effective assessment is multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time** (assessment measures not only what students know but also how they apply their knowledge);
3. **Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes** (the participants in a program have shared goals);

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6

## Outcomes Assessment Purpose

*American Association of Higher Education*

4. **Assessment requires attention to the experiences leading to outcomes, not just the outcomes themselves** (understanding how learning activities enhance student training is important);
5. **Effective assessment is ongoing** (outcomes assessment is a continuing process);
6. **Effective assessment involves representatives from across the community** (that is faculty, students, alumni, employers and other stakeholders have a role in the assessment process).

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7



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## WHAT DOES PAB EXPECT REGARDING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT?



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8

**IF YOU DON'T KNOW  
WHERE YOU ARE  
GOING.....**

**.... how will you know  
when you get there?**

## **Standard 1: Mission and Strategic Plan**

The **program** or the department in which it resides shall have a **clearly defined mission** supported by **goals** and **measurable objectives** appropriate to the profession of planning. The program shall have a **strategic plan** for achieving its goals and objectives – either as a free-standing plan or as part of a broader departmental strategic plan – and must be **able to demonstrate progress** toward their attainment.

- A. Strategic plan
- B. Mission statement
- C. Program goals
- D. Measurable objectives

## Parsing the Standard.....

- Breaking the standard into its key components
- Improves comprehension of the standard
- KEY WORDS to notice:
  - Should
  - Must
  - Shall
- Results in a “checklist” rubric of important items – as a guidepost for writing SSR and reviewing a standard as a site visitor
- .... Good idea to parse all the standards

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11

### Example: Standard 5A Program Autonomy

Program autonomy: In accordance with customary university procedures, the planning faculty shall have responsibility for the design of its curriculum and shall have an independent voice in the appointment, promotion, tenure, and evaluation of its faculty, and the admission and evaluation of its students.

- In accordance with customary university procedures
- The planning faculty
  - shall have responsibility for design of its **curriculum**
  - shall have an **independent voice**
    - Appointment
    - Promotion
    - Tenure
    - Evaluation
    - ..... of its faculty
  - (shall have an **independent voice**)
    - Admission of students
    - Evaluation of students

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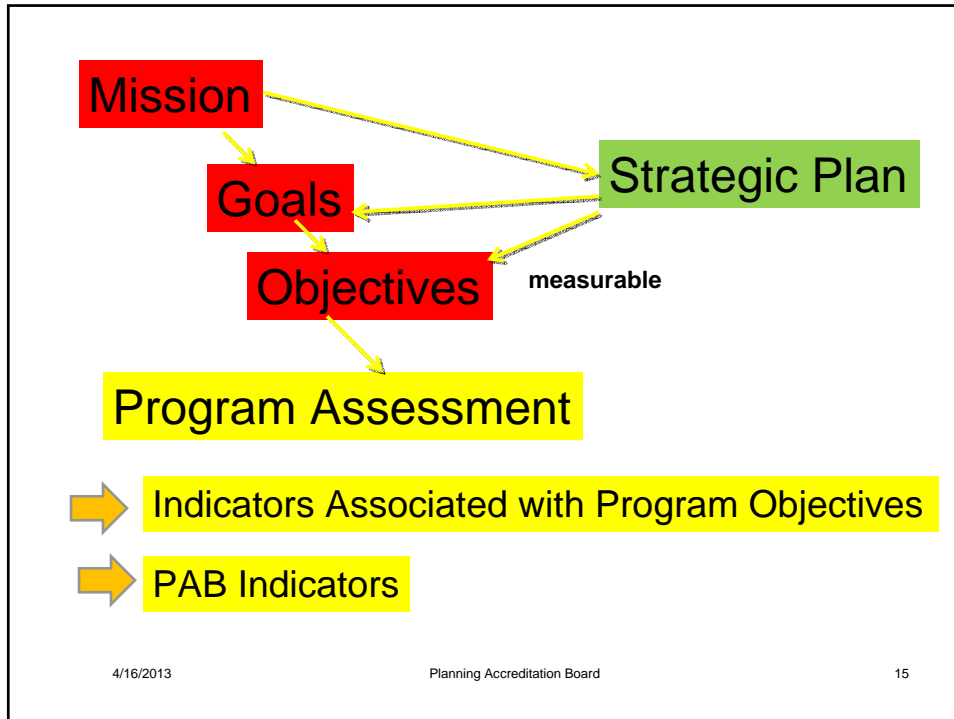
12

## Group Activity: Parse the Criterion

Identify key words, Identify separate concepts, prepare to report

- **2A: Student quality:** The program shall admit students whose educational attainment, previous academic performance, work experience, aptitude, maturity, and motivation indicate potential for success in their studies and in professional practice. Toward that end, the program shall establish admission standards that reflect the institution's policies and the program's goals, and the program shall apply those standards fairly and consistently. The program shall document its admission standards and the extent to which its current students meet or exceed those standards.
- **4C: Instructional delivery and scheduling:** Courses shall be taught by fully qualified faculty, and appropriate instructors shall be assigned for core, specialized and elective courses. In general, most core courses will be taught by fulltime planning faculty. Courses shall be offered in formats and times to assure appropriate student access to them and timely completion of program requirements.

## So What's Next?



## Outcomes Assessment Process

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- “The program, or the department in which it resides, **shall** have a clearly defined approach, methodology, and indicators for measuring the program’s success in achieving the goals it articulated in its Mission and Strategic Plan. “

*Standard 6*

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## Outcomes Assessment Process

- Developing a process for defining and measuring outcomes is an ongoing, collaborative process involving the Program's key stakeholders (faculty, students, alumni, employers and others).

*PAB Outcomes Assessment Manual*

## Description of Process Should Include:

- How the program developed the process it will use to assess outcomes;
- Who was involved in developing the process, and what roles key stakeholders played in that development;
- The components of the process;
- The timeline for implementation of the process;
- How the program has used/will use the results of the assessment to evaluate, support and improve teaching and learning.

## Outcomes Assessment Should

- Provide healthy balance of both internal and external performance indicators. **Internal measures include things like GPAs, the quality a final project, a faculty panel assessment, etc. External performance indicators include things like AICP exam pass rates, employer satisfaction/surveys, longitudinal data on graduates' career trajectories, etc.**
- The ultimate objective and greatest benefit of outcomes assessment is that programs will use all the data they collect to develop an ongoing process aimed at understanding and *improving* student learning.

## Standard 6 Program Assessment

### Two Categories of Outcomes

- Program-Developed
- PAB Outcomes

Some performance indicators could potentially apply to both categories

## Outcomes Associated With Program Goals and Objectives

- Developed in the process described in our Review of Standard 1: Mission and Goals
- Important to identify the following
  - Measurable objectives
  - Specific measures – multiple is ideal
  - Gather relevant data
  - Analyze results and identify issues to address
  - Identify actions and apply to practice
  - Results and Actions are documented in response to Standard 7

## PAB Defined Outcomes

- A. Faculty research/scholarly contributions to the profession: The program shall provide evidence of faculty contributions to the advancement of the profession through research (theoretical and applied) and scholarship.
- B. Student learning and achievement: The program shall report clear indicators of student success in learning the Core Knowledge, Skills, and Values of the profession. Such evidence should clearly identify the learning outcomes sought and achieved for students at either cohort or year level over the accreditation review period.

## PAB Defined Outcomes

- C. Student retention and graduation rates:  
The program shall report student retention and graduation rates (including number of degrees produced each year) relative to program enrollment and to targets set by the program.

## PAB Defined Outcomes (continued)

- D. Outcomes: The program **shall** report student achievement and success after graduation in at least the areas specified below:
1. Graduate satisfaction: The program shall document the percentage of graduates who, two to five years after graduation, report being satisfied or highly satisfied with how the program prepared them for their current employment.
  2. Graduate Employment: The program shall document the percentage of graduates who secure employment within one year of graduation in professional planning, planning-related, or other positions, and the definitions thereof.

## PAB Defined Outcomes (continued)

3. **Graduate certification:** The program shall document the percentage of master's graduates who pass the AICP exam within 3 years of graduation, and/or the percentage of bachelor's graduates who pass the AICP exam within 5 years of graduation. If the program believes that alternative credentials are meaningful to its goals and objectives, the program may supplement its AICP data.
4. **Graduate service to community and profession:** The program shall provide evidence of graduates' contributions to meeting community needs and to providing service to the planning profession, such evidence obtained between 2 and 5 years after graduation.

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25

## So how are programs doing?

- Results from a small sample of beta programs under these new standards

| Assessment Areas  | How well? |
|---|-----------|
| Developing Program Mission, Goals and Measurable Objectives     | Fair      |
| ..... Developing relevant and meaningful performance indicators | Fair      |
| Faculty research/scholarly contributions                        | Good      |
| Student Retention and Graduation                                | Good      |
| Graduate Satisfaction   | Good      |
| Graduate Employment   | Good      |
| Graduate Certification  | Fair      |
| Student Learning and Achievement                                | Fair      |

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26

## Student Learning Outcomes

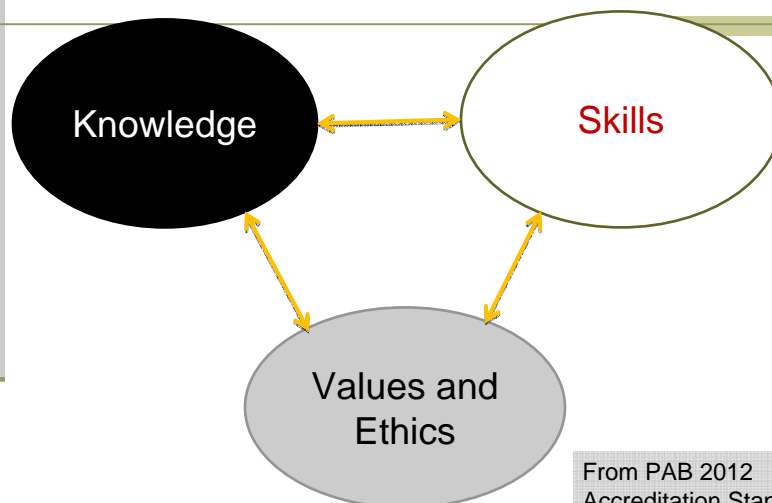
**B. Student learning and achievement: The program shall report clear indicators of student success in learning the Core Knowledge, Skills, and Values of the profession. Such evidence should clearly identify the learning outcomes sought and achieved for students at either cohort or year level over the accreditation review period.**

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27

## Planning Student Learning Outcomes



From PAB 2012  
Accreditation Standard 4A

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28

## Required Knowledge, Skills and Values of the Profession (Standard 4A) “Student Learning Outcomes”

- **General Planning Knowledge:** The comprehension, representation, and use of ideas and information in the planning field, including appropriate perspectives from history, social science, and the design professions.
  - Purpose and Meaning of Planning
  - Planning Theory
  - Planning Law
  - Human Settlements and History of Planning:
  - Global Dimensions of Planning
- **Planning Skills:** The use and application of knowledge to perform specific tasks required in the practice of planning.
  - Research
  - Written, Oral and Graphic Communication
  - Quantitative and Qualitative Methods
  - Plan Creation and Implementation
  - Planning Process Methods
  - Leadership

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29

## Required Knowledge, Skills and Values of the Profession (Standard 4A) (continued)

- **Values and Ethics:** Values inform ethical and normative principles used to guide planning in a democratic society. The program shall appropriately incorporate issues of diversity and social justice into all required courses of the curriculum, including:
  - Professional Ethics and Responsibility
  - Governance and Participation
  - Sustainability and Environmental Quality
  - Growth and Development
  - Social Justice

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30

# Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

## What is Assessment?

- “Assessment is the ongoing process of:
  - Establishing clear, measurable ***expected outcomes*** of student learning
  - Ensuring that students have sufficient ***opportunities to achieve*** those outcomes

■ Linda Suskie



# What is Assessment?

- “Assessment is the ongoing process of:
  - Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting **evidence** to determine how well student learning matches our expectations.
  - Using the resulting information to **understand and improve** student learning.”

■ Linda Suskie

# Value of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

- To communicate to ourselves:
  - What we intend for students to learn.
  - The content and sequence of learning
  - Whether students have gained
    - appropriate skills
    - attitudes/values
    - and/or knowledge
  - How successful a learning activity has been in meeting its intended goals

## Value of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

- To communicate to students what we intend for them to learn so they:
  - know what the program involves
  - can organize their efforts toward accomplishing the desired outcomes
  - assess their own performance

## Value of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

- To communicate to other interested parties including professional accrediting agencies and to the public
  - The purpose and degree of success of our programs
  - Our commitment to engage in the process of improvement

## From the perspective of the accreditor and the public ...

- How do we know that your graduates know what you say they know?
- Providing evidence of student learning outcomes
- Using evidence to improve the program

## Value of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

- Learning outcomes provide the basis for **assessing** whether or not students completing your program have attained the agreed upon outcomes
- Program has to **organize itself in such a way** that **student achievement** is captured at various points in time
- Assessment results provide information to support **program improvement**

# Outcomes Measures/ Performance Indicators

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39

# Program Processes and Products Continuum

- ▶ **Inputs**
- ▶ **Processes**
- ▶ **Outputs**
- ▶ **Outcomes**



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## **Program Inputs**

- Resources
- Knowledge Base/Professional Practice
- Faculty
- Students
- Facilities
- Budgets
- Professional Planning Contacts

## **Program Processes**

- Requires Inputs/Resources
- **Learning Experiences** through Curriculum Delivery
- Results: Outputs ~ Outcomes

## Output vs. Outcome Indicators

- Degrees awarded
- Graduation rates
- Graduate satisfaction

**Outputs**

- Employer satisfaction with graduates
- Pass rates on certification exam
- End Product: Competent entry-level professionals

**Outcomes**

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43

## Good outcome indicators...

- Measure what we intend to measure (**validity**)
- Give us **useful** information
- Yield **results specific to the learning outcomes** so that improvements can be made
- Give us **reasonably accurate, truthful** information
- Are **fair** to all students and applied consistently

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44

## Good indicators . . .

- Yield **consistent results** across administrations (**reliability**)
- Are **ethical** and protect the privacy and dignity of those involved
- Are **cost effective**, yielding value that justifies the time and expense we put into them

## Types of Evidence

### Direct

- **Tangible, visible, self-explanatory**
- **Quality and quantity of student learning is concretely exhibited**

### Indirect

- **Signs, indicators, less convincing – “tell us about . . .”**
- **Results may be consistent with student learning, but don’t solicit specifics**

## Common Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning

### Direct

- Tests/Test items
- Portfolios of student work
- Capstone projects
- Rubrics applied to project or paper
- Field supervisor ratings
- Employer ratings of knowledge, skills, values
- Scores and pass rates on licensure exams

### Indirect

- *Course grades*
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Student self-ratings
- Alumni satisfaction with learning
- Honors, awards, and scholarships

## Types of Assessment

### Qualitative

- Flexible, naturalistic methods that are usually analyzed by looking for recurring patterns and themes
- Often underused, underappreciated
- Can give fresh insight and help discover problems and solutions

### Quantitative

- Structured, pre-determined response options that can be summarized into meaningful numbers and analyzed statistically
- Some audiences find quantitative results more convincing



# Types of Measures

## Global

- Need professional judgment to score – many possible answers of varying quality
- Holistic
- Many assessments are of this type

## Objective

- No professional judgment to score correctly – usually one correct answer
- Multiple-choice test
- Matching items
- True-false questions

## Global Measures...

- Assess many important skills that objective tests cannot.
- Assess skills directly.
- Promote deep, lasting learning.
- Allow for nuances in scoring.
- Can capture a lot of information on a broad range of learning goals in a relatively short time.
- Work often assessed with a rubric

## Course-Embedded Assessments

- Developed and implemented within the context of individual course(s) or projects
- Required courses in the major, capstone course ideal -- studio
- Completion of assessment determines part of students' course grades
- Contrast to separate session assessment – issues of motivating student to complete assessment

## Reasons for Assessment

### Formative

- Improve teaching and learning (or service and satisfaction)
- Used while learning is taking place
- Focus on feedback and adjustment

### Summative

- Document learning or service and satisfaction
- Occur **at the end** of the course or service period
- Focus on sum/total, with little feedback

## When Explaining What Assessment Is and Why it is Important....

A common question:

- We give the students grades, so shouldn't that be enough to demonstrate they have mastered the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required?
- Yes, for the purpose of certifying student satisfactory course completion
- No, for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of the program

53

## Why Not Course Grades?

**Jim Nichols' Grade Book Analogy:  
"How you can use student performance  
to assess course and/or program  
strengths and weaknesses? "**

**A way to conceptualize the whole  
outcomes assessment process**

## Typical Grade Book

|         | Grading Dimensions |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
|---------|--------------------|---------|------------|---------------|---------|-------|---------------------|
| Student | Paper 1            | Midterm | Attendance | Participation | Paper 2 | Final | Student Performance |
| #1      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #2      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #3      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #4      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #5      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #6      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #7      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #8      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #9      |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |
| #10     |                    |         |            |               |         |       |                     |

55

## Typical Grade Book

- Rows represent individual students
- Dimensions across the top most typically represent measures of student performance at various points in time and/or results of different measures or instruments
- Student performance at the end of the semester is summarized and a course grade results.

56

## Typical Grade Book: Focus on the Rows

- Student performance may vary across the columns, but, in general, is not important in summarizing individual student performance in each row.
- If all/most students pass the course, presumably, the targeted learning outcomes have been met -- BUT have they?
  - Need to focus on columns

57

## Focus on the Columns: Learning Outcomes

- Analyzing the **row** data results in a summary of individual student performance.
- HOWEVER, analysis of the **column** achievement should identify strengths and weaknesses of the course which are not apparent when looking at student summary data only.

58

## Substituting Student Learning Outcomes

| Student             | Student Learning Outcomes |     |     |      |     |      | Student Performance |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----|-----|------|-----|------|---------------------|
|                     | A                         | B   | C   | D    | E   | F    |                     |
| #1                  | 1                         | 0   | 1   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 84%                 |
| #2                  | 0                         | 1   | 1   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 84%                 |
| #3                  | 1                         | 1   | 1   | 1    | 0   | 1    | 84%                 |
| #4                  | 0                         | 0   | 1   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 67%                 |
| #5                  | 1                         | 1   | 1   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 100%                |
| #6                  | 1                         | 0   | 1   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 84%                 |
| #7                  | 1                         | 1   | 0   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 84%                 |
| #8                  | 1                         | 0   | 1   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 84%                 |
| #9                  | 1                         | 1   | 1   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 100%                |
| #10                 | 1                         | 1   | 1   | 1    | 1   | 1    | 100%                |
| Outcome Performance | 80%                       | 60% | 90% | 100% | 90% | 100% |                     |

59

## Substituting Program Student Learning Outcomes as Column Dimensions

- Unit of analysis changes from an individual course to the academic program
- Achievement of each outcome may be **measured at one or more times** and in one or more ways during the course of the program

60

## Typical Grade Book Summary

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- Rows focus on...
  - Individual student performance
- Columns focus on ...
  - Course student learning outcomes
  - Program student learning outcomes
- Once **particular strengths and weaknesses** are identified, analysis of **how the course or curriculum is delivered** should ensue.

61

## LINKING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES TO THE CURRICULUM

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62

# Curriculum Map

| Curriculum Map                                  |  | Course Number | And Title |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|---------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Courses Required of All Students                |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>A. Required Knowledge, Skills and Values</b> |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>A1. General Planning Knowledge</b>           |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| a) Purpose and Meaning of Planning              |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| b) Planning Theory                              |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| c) Planning Law                                 |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| d) Human Settlements and History of Planning    |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| e) The Future                                   |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| f) Global Dimensions of Planning                |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>A2. Planning Skills</b>                      |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| a) Research                                     |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| b) Written, Oral and Graphic Communication      |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| c) Quantitative and Qualitative Methods         |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| d) Plan Creation and Implementation             |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| e) Planning Process Methods                     |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| f) Leadership                                   |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>A3. Values and Ethics</b>                    |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| a) Professional Ethics                          |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| b) Governance and Participation                 |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| c) Sustainability and Environmental Quality     |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| d) Growth and Development                       |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| e) Social Justice                               |  |               |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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63

# Curriculum Mapping

- Links student learning experiences in curriculum to attainment of competencies
- Identifies where in the curriculum a particular competency should be attained
- Becomes a road map once assessment results are analyzed
  - Where were students supposed to develop the core knowledge, skills and values?
  - Review learning experiences provided therein
  - Implement improvements

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64





# WHAT DOES PAB EXPECT IN TERMS OF PROGRESS?



## Standard 7: Progress

The key elements of an outcomes-based assessment plan include making decisions about programmatic changes based on analyzing the outcomes data collected, and by connecting the changes made to long-term objectives, including those objectives that aim towards excellence.

# Standard 7: Progress

A. Progress towards goal attainment: The program shall demonstrate its progress since the last accreditation review in meeting program goals and objectives as measured by performance on the outcomes identified in Standard 6.

Have you reached your goals?  
What is your evidence?

## Outcomes Assessment Plan

| Goal 1:               |  |                      |           |         |                         |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------|-----------|---------|-------------------------|
| Outcome/<br>Objective | Performance<br>Indicator/Measurement<br>Tool | Program<br>Benchmark | Timeframe | Results | Analysis/Action<br>Plan |
|                       |  |                      |           |         |                         |
|                       |  |                      |           |         |                         |
|                       |  |                      |           |         |                         |
| Goal 2:               |  |                      |           |         |                         |
| Outcome/<br>Objective | Performance<br>Indicator/Measurement<br>Tool | Program<br>Benchmark | Timeframe | Results | Analysis/Action<br>Plan |
|                       |  |                      |           |         |                         |

## Standard 7: Progress

- B. Programmatic changes: The program shall document programmatic changes recently completed or currently underway to advance the outcomes identified in Standard 6.
- C. Strategic issues for the next 5-7 years: The program shall identify the critical steps needed to advance its goals and progress during the next reaccreditation period.

## Standard 7: Progress

- D. Public Information: The program shall routinely provide reliable information to the public on its performance. Such information shall appear in easily accessible locations including program websites. Information shall include, but not be limited to:
  - 1. student achievement as determined by the program;
  - 2. the cost (tuition and fees) for a full-time student for one academic year;
  - 3. student retention and graduation rates, including the number of degrees produced each year, the percentage of master's students graduating within 4 years, and/or the percentage of bachelor's students graduating within 6 years

## Standard 7: Progress

D. Public Information: The program shall routinely provide reliable information to the public on its performance. Such information shall appear in easily accessible locations including program websites. Information shall include, but not be limited to:

4. the percentage of master's graduates who pass the AICP exam within 3 years after graduation and/or the percentage of bachelor's graduates who pass the AICP exam within 5 years of graduation; and
5. the employment rate of fulltime graduates in a professional planning or planning-related job within 1 year of graduation.

## Resources

- PAB Provided:
  - Standards of Accreditation
  - Outcomes Assessment Manual
  - Site Visit Manual
- Campus-Based – Assessment or Institutional Research Staff
- Peers in Successful Planning Programs

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