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## Position, policies and procedures related to institutional assessment

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### Position

Program assessments to meet government and accreditation reporting requirements are excluded from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review because such initiatives do not meet the definition of research as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, *Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. . . (45 CFR 46.102(d)).* The primary purpose of program assessment is to improve student learning and programs, and to demonstrate such efforts to government and accrediting organizations ([Stanford #7](#), [UNLV](#), [UHI-Manoa, #4](#), [DePauw U](#), [Webster U](#)).

*Assessment is "the systematic and ongoing process of gathering, analyzing, and using information from multiple sources to draw inferences about the characteristics of students, programs or an institution for the purposes of making informed decisions to improve the learning process" (Linn & Miller, 2005). In this respect assessment also includes the formulation of value judgments in terms of using the information gathered to determine the success of the program and to make improvements in student learning. As the definition suggests, the unit of analysis may be at the individual student level, the program level or the institutional level.*

- *Classroom assessment involves assessment of the individual student typically done by the course instructor.*
- *Program assessment involves the assessment of students as a group in order to determine what and how an educational program is contributing to the learning and development of its students.*
- *Institutional assessment involves the assessment of campus-wide characteristics and issues. This falls more in the realm of institutional research. For the purposes of assessment at the University the unit of analysis will be at the program level.*

Source: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/pres-provost/irds/assessment/faq.html#FAQ1>

### Policies and Procedures

- AAAS conveys summary assessment results to internal and external stakeholders only after removing individuals' identifying information.
- Group data are only conveyed if data for more than nine respondents are available (modeled after PRAXIS reporting standards) to protect respondent confidentiality. Examples of respondent groups include students from a particular degree program, faculty members from a particular unit, alumni, graduate or professional program directors from other institutions or employers.
- Collection of student work for purposes of institutional assessment does not require student consent and does not violate FERPA (Family Educational Rights

and Privacy Act) ([#2](#)) provided all identifying information about individual students is removed from the artifacts being assessed.

- AAAS encourages professional presentations and publications related to assessment processes. AAAS recommends professional presentations focused on assessment processes and use of assessment findings to improve programs and learning be recognized (as appropriate to the unit, field or discipline) as either professional service or scholarship.
- If persons or programs plan to disseminate or publish assessment data (beyond program and learning improvement documentation for internal stakeholders or as required for accreditation purposes), such persons or programs are responsible for meeting IRB requirements.

*Additional Readings:*

1. [Belmont Report](#)
2. [IRB Guidebook](#)
3. [http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/archive/irb/irb\\_chapter2.htm#d3](http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/archive/irb/irb_chapter2.htm#d3)