

East Central University
OSRHE Annual Assessment Report for 2007-2008
Executive Summary

Entry-Level Assessment

The East Central University (ECU) Assessment Center uses ACT subject scores, ACT COMPASS computerized placement test scores, and other secondary tests to assess the academic skills of entering freshmen. Entering freshmen with ACT subject scores below 19 must pass the related COMPASS module or other appropriate secondary test to enroll in college-level course work in that subject area. The COMPASS modules used to assess students' academic backgrounds in English, mathematics, and reading are Writing Skills, Algebra, and Reading, respectively. The Integrated Process Skills Test II (IPS) is used to assess the students' academic background in science. During the 2007-08 academic year, a total of 615 beginning freshmen were evaluated. Of this number, 394 beginning freshmen (unduplicated count), or 64% of all beginning freshmen, had at least one ACT subject score below 19. Of this latter group, 233, 38% of all beginning freshmen, were identified as needing at least one zero-level course to remediate academic skills deficiencies. Forty, 7%, of all beginning freshmen, had more than one academic skills deficiency.

About 94% of the entering freshmen qualified to take college-level English and reading intensive college-level course work. Approximately 65% of this cohort qualified to take a college-level math course while about 98% qualified to take college-level science courses. The 2007-08 placement distributions for English show improvement compared to the average placements for the 2002-03 through 2006-07 freshman classes (2002-07), with a significantly higher percentage of students the passing the COMPASS Writing secondary placement. The placement distributions for Mathematics, Reading, and Science show overall improvement with more students passing the COMPASS Algebra, COMPASS Reading Comprehension, and Science secondary placement tests over the previous five-year average with fewer students required to take the remedial courses in these areas.

The ECU Assessment Center tracked student performance in entry-level college courses by dividing students into three cohorts for each ACT subject area based on their performance on the ACT and secondary placement tests. The first cohort consisted of students who had ACT subject scores of 19 or higher. The second cohort contained students who had ACT subject scores below 19, but passed secondary placement testing. The third cohort contained students who had ACT subject scores below 19 and failed secondary testing. Students in the first cohort generally outperformed students in the second and third. The performance of 2007-08 beginning freshmen in four zero-level courses required to remediate skill deficiencies in these subject areas, when compared to the combined results for 2002-03 through 2006-07, the pass rates for ENG 0123, MATH 0214, and PHSCI 0123 were higher. The pass rate for EDUC 0111 (Reading) was lower than the 2002-07 average pass rate.

For college level classes taken by the freshman class of 2007-2008, entry-level assessment and placement worked best for English Composition I (ENG 1113) for the "R" cohort and the "N" cohort in the science course group. The cut scores were not as effective for the other subject areas. A subject ACT score of 19 or higher does not appear sufficient to guarantee consistent success in College Algebra (MATH 1513), the Reading Courses Group, or in the Science

Courses Group. Given the difficulty of the test-exempt “N” cohort in achieving the 70 percent C or higher performance goal, it is probably unrealistic to expect the same level of performance from the other placement cohorts. Furthermore, the data provide further evidence why entry-level assessment and placement at ECU has not significantly improved the retention rates of the freshman classes. Given the poor academic backgrounds of many entering freshmen, the remediation offered at ECU is not sufficient in many cases to provide some students with the skills necessary to succeed at the college level.

Mid-Level (General Education) Assessment

ECU assessed nine student outcomes for six academic skill areas during 2007-08. These outcomes covered critical thinking, library skills, oral or expressive communication, reading, mathematical skills, and written communication. During 2007-08, 358 students took one of the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) multiple-choice sections on Reading (100), Critical Thinking (121), or the CAAP Writing Essay(137) as part of the course requirements for UNIV 3001, the general education capstone course. The test was administered to all UNIV 3001 students. This is the second time ECU has used CAAP, so longitudinal data is limited. The 2007-08 cohort’s relative score was about the same for Critical Thinking and Reading (61.6). ECU students as a group scored below the national average by about 18% of a standard deviation. On the other hand, ECU students scored higher than the national average by 33% of a standard deviation on the Writing Essay. These differences are not statistically significant.

Students received 50 course points (one letter grade) for completing the assigned section of the exam. For a one-hour course this strategy may not induce meaningful participation on the part of many students but ECU students examined in 2007-08 responded that their motivation was higher than students taking the exam the previous academic year. While only 53% of the students taking the Critical Thinking Exam in 2006-07 indicated they “tried their best” or “gave moderate effort”, 70% of the 2007-08 examinees responded this way. The corresponding percentage for the Reading Exam was 54%. In addition, 43% of the students taking the Reading Exam in 2007-08 did not answer the motivation question, compared to 23% for Critical Thinking. These data may indicate students took the exam somewhat more seriously in 2007-08 in spite of scoring slightly lower.

During the last five academic years, 84% of those examined have either graduated from ECU or are still enrolled at ECU. This combined graduation/retention rate is more than twice the average six-year graduation/retention rate for the institution. The data continue to show that students who took the College BASE/CAAP have developed the academic skills necessary to complete a degree program.

Program Outcomes Assessment

During 2007-08, 1,363 students were assessed as part of undergraduate program assessment. Degree programs used a variety of instruments to assess student outcomes, including locally developed exams, standardized tests (such as the ETS Major Field Achievement Tests (MFAT) and the Area Concentration Achievement Tests (ACAT)), portfolios, and various constituent surveys. Licensing and certification tests, such as the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Exam,

Oklahoma Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET) Exam, National Council Licensing Exam for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN), and the Certification Exam for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE) were also used. Student performance for many programs met or exceeded performance goals with the majority of students tested either passing the exams or scoring at or above a specified level on these exams. The following are some of the program changes resulting from outcomes assessment::

- In Accounting, changes were made in Fall 2007 in Financial Accounting: An accounting tutor was hired to assist students in mastering the material. Also, we added two simulations that required access to Text web site. Changes were made in Spring 2008 in Financial Accounting: Students conducted financial statement analysis throughout the semester and then presented their finding in a group oral presentation to professionals from the business community at year end. We hoped this project would help students improve their ability to interpret converging information.
- The Early Childhood Education program will place stronger emphasis on EDUC 3463 & 3493, both cover literacy development. With current growth of pre-K in schools, more emphasis will be placed on pre-K instruction, especially oral language in EDUC 3463 & 3043. EDUC 3043 will continue to stress DAP & standards set up by Naeyc. Remediation will be provided for those needing extra help on the performance on the OSAT sub-area III, Child Development and Early Childhood Programs.
- The Math department instituted a number of changes in the prerequisite structure, will no longer offer MATH 3093 Introduction to Theorem Proving and Number Theory by independent study in an effort to improve OSAT scores and students proficiency at writing mathematical proofs. The department will now incorporate a student's MFT score into the course grade for MATH 3715 Linear Algebra in an effort to improve MFT scores. The MFT will be given in the capstone course beginning in 2008. This allows for more preparation time and synthesis of content.
- While Biology performance goals are being met overall, an assignment examining the ability of Program majors to design a scientific experiment has been introduced into BIOL 4881 Biology Senior Seminar, to measure the ability of program graduates to understand the scientific method.
- In the Art program preliminary action is underway to address weaknesses in the three dimensional area through curricular and budgetary enhancements. Though not alarming,, slipping scores on written senior statements prompted the faculty to include more written responses in course work throughout the major. The students average oral senior critique and exit interviews score would not indicate a need for change, but subtle indicators have prompted the department to include more critical readings and oral presentations throughout the major.

Student Satisfaction Assessment

During the Spring 2008 semester, the Assessment Center collected data on the satisfaction of currently enrolled students by surveying 426 students using the ACT Survey of Student Opinions. This sample consisted of general education course sections and upper-level course sections selected by programs going through program review. The 2007-08 results show ECU students still rate most items higher than the public college sample. Overall, the students responding to the survey indicated they were more satisfied with the ECU college environment than the average public student is with their college environment. The rating for "value of the

information provided by the advisor” exceeds the public college norm by the largest amount. Only one of the ratings fell significantly below the public college norm. This was “athletic facilities”. “Student union” received the highest average rating of items under campus facilities.

Graduate Student Assessment

Three hundred and fifty-six graduate students were assessed during the 2007-08 academic year using the Certification Exam for Oklahoma Educators, the Oklahoma State Subject Area Test, the Oklahoma Teacher Certification Test for School Counselors, the State Elementary Principals Exam, the State Secondary Principal Certification Exam, the National Counselor Preparation Exam, the Rehabilitation Counselor Certification Exam, locally developed comprehensive exams, internships, practicums, portfolios, and various constituent surveys. Six of eight students who completed the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Examination passed. Ten out of fourteen candidates taking the test for Reading Specialist passed above the stated goal on the Oklahoma Teacher Certification. Twelve successfully completed their portfolios. The pass rate on the CEOE for School Counseling graduate students exceeded 85 percent in all areas. Other assessment data collected to date indicate that most program goals are either being met or close to being met. In addition, alumni and employer surveys show a high degree of satisfaction with ECU’s graduate programs. In 2007-2008 thirty graduate students enrolled on probationary status.