

MEANING, QUALITY, AND INTEGRITY OF DEGREES

RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS TO DEFINE THE MEANING, QUALITY, AND INTEGRITY OF DEGREES

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Meaning: a. Definitions	The institution has no process for defining the meaning of its degrees that is comprehensive, coherent, and communicable to multiple internal and external audiences.	The institution is at an early state in creating a process to define the meaning of its degrees. It has articulated tentative definitions and indicators of content and quality, and is refining language used to communicate to internal audiences. Engagement within the institution is spotty.	The institution has developed an inclusive process to define the meaning of its degrees. It has articulated definitions and indicators of content and quality, and the language is present in documents used to communicate to internal and external audiences.	The institution has an inclusive, cyclical process for reviewing and updating the meaning of its degrees. Definitions and indicators guide planning, budgeting, decision-making, and communications with internal and external audiences.
Meaning: b. Domains, Levels of Proficiency, and Relative Emphases	The institution has not identified the overarching domains of learning or levels of proficiency that are represented by its degrees and the relative emphasis each domain receives. The domains may be implicit, based on mission, values, or traditions.	The institution has begun to identify overarching domains of learning and levels of proficiency represented by its degrees and their relative emphasis. These are derived from mission, values, and traditions, as well as students' needs. The process is in early stages.	The institution has identified overarching domains of learning and levels of proficiency represented by its degrees, and their relative emphasis. These are derived from the institution's mission, values and traditions; they have been revised through institution-wide discussions. External stakeholders may also be involved.	The institution has formally identified overarching domains of learning and levels of proficiency represented by its degrees. Relative emphases are derived from mission, values, and traditions. They have been updated through discussions with internal and external stakeholders, as appropriate. The domains and levels of proficiency are embraced by the campus community, including students, and supported by external communities.
Quality: a. A Rich Learning Environment	Educational resources available to students are meager to barely adequate for the degrees offered.	Educational resources available to students are generally adequate but may fall short for some purposes, e.g., STEM programs, graduate degrees.	Educational resources available to students are appropriate for the degrees and degree levels offered. Institutional leadership is committed to expanding and strengthening resources, as needed.	Educational resources available to students are varied, rich, and fully supportive of the degrees and degree levels offered. Through technology, , partnerships, alumni networks, revenue generation, the institution actively supplements what it can provide out of its own resources.
Quality: b. Coherent, aligned, and sequenced learning opportunities	Campus stakeholders assume that courses, programs, and the co-curriculum build sequentially toward each degree level, but little or no attention is focused on the confirmation of this assumption.	Integration of curriculum and co-curriculum, sequencing of experiences, and development of students' knowledge and skills may be present, but they are not collaboratively developed or clearly intentional.	The learning environment is designed with intentionality so that students can meet overall performance expectations of each degree level offered. This design may be illustrated in curriculum maps or co-curricular maps.	The entire learning environment, including pedagogy, grading, curriculum, support services, extra-institutional experiences, is intentionally aligned with the overall goals of each degree level. Curricular and co-curricular maps reflect rising levels of proficiency. Efforts are supported by higher-level institutional infrastructure, processes, and resources.

Integrity: a. Assessment Planning	There is no formal plan for learning assessment at the degree level. Expectations for student performance at the degree level have not been defined beyond required credit hours, course completion, and GPA.	Plans for assessment at the degree level are at draft or pilot stage. Short-term pilots may be in use to test ideas. Plans may or may not explicitly include use of findings for improvement.	The institution has a multi-year plan for assessment at the degree level that identifies when and how each domain and level of proficiency will be assessed. The plan has been recently implemented; it includes analysis and resource needs, and anticipates improvements.	The institution has a fully articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each domain and level of proficiency will be assessed, what resources are needed, and how improvements are implemented. The plan has been implemented and is iterative; it is reviewed and revised, as needed.
Integrity: b. Assessment Findings, Use for Improvement	Expectations for student performance are implicit. There is no formal documentation of achievement, and/or evidence may be anecdotal or indirect. There is no formal process for use and improvement of learning.	Expectations for graduates' performance are more implicit than explicit; they may lack context and be too high or too low. Results of program-level assessment may be aggregated, findings shared with the institutional community, and used for improvement at the degree level.	Expectations for graduates' performance are explicit, informed by the institution's own baselines, and possibly also by external comparisons. Assessment findings at various levels (e.g., program, course, institution) inform discussion and support improvement at the degree level across the institution.	Expectations for graduates' performance are explicit, appropriate, and informed by the institution's baselines, as well as by external comparisons and the institution's aspirations. Assessment findings at multiple levels consistently inform discussion and improvement at the degree level across the institution.
Communication and Transparency	The institution does not communicate internally or externally about the overall meaning of its degrees, beyond traditional boilerplate and marketing language.	Communication usually takes the form of marketing language; sharing of assessment results with external audiences is sporadic and generally limited to "good news."	The institution communicates regularly with internal and external audiences on a broad range of student performances at the degree level.	The institution communicates regularly and candidly about the meaning, quality, and rigor of its degrees and the quality of students' performance. Audiences with access to this communication include the full range of internal stakeholders, as well as policy makers, the public, employers.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the overall "meaning, quality, and integrity" of their degrees. Communication of degree-level outcomes to students, e.g., in syllabi or catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.	Students have some awareness of the overall meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree they are pursuing. Student participation in discussions about the meaning of degrees may be occasional and informal, rather than systematic.	Students have a good grasp of the overall meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree they are pursuing, and of how that relates to outcomes in their major. They are involved in discussions of the meaning of degrees and may use this information to guide their personal development. Information is readily available, e.g., on the web page.	Students are fully informed of the overall meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree they are pursuing and of how each degree level builds on the one before. They participate in campus discussions of how meaning may need to shift, and of ways to improve quality and rigor. They can accurately self-assess and articulate their own development in relation to the overall goals of their degree.
Overall Institutional Commitment to the Meaning of Degrees	The institutional commitment is meager to nonexistent.	The institutional commitment is meager but growing.	The commitment is well established.	The institution is fully committed, embraces the task, and consistently works to strengthen both its degrees and its students' achievement.

Getting from "Initial" to "Highly Developed":

Pervasiveness: Is effort widespread or spotty?

Continuity: Is there a history of effort? Is effort continuous over time, iterative and evolving, or sporadic?

Good practices: Do practices reflect current thinking in assessment and quality improvement?

Good results: Do results reflect well on the institution, its mission, its students, and its graduates?