**ODU Certificate Program Guidelines for Assessment**

Old Dominion University is committed to a continuous “process of systematic assessment” to “ensure the highest possible quality for all university programs” (ODU Mission). The focus of certificate assessment is on student learning outcomes, not on the courses within the certificate.

**Certificate Programs**

Certificate programs “meet the same high-quality standards as its academic degree programs, while addressing the specific needs of students and professionals. Certificates may be pursued in conjunction with or independent from graduate or undergraduate degree programs” (Faculty Handbook, Policy on Certificate Programs).

Assessment of certificate programs is in compliance with the institutional effectiveness standard 3.3.1. This comes from ODU's regional accrediting body the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

**Certificate Assessment Plan Guidelines**

Assessment of certificate programs is dependent upon student learning outcomes. Some certificate outcomes are directly aligned with existing degree programs outcomes while others are not.

Certificate programs in which student learning outcomes are associated and directly aligned with an existing degree program do not require a separate assessment plan. Alignment of the outcomes and subsequent measures within the existing degree program needs to be made clear. With this, the certificate program is embedded into the existing degree program that is assessed annually and reported in WEAVE.

Certificate programs in which student learning outcomes are not associated or aligned with an existing degree must be assessed. For example:

- Certificates that are created using primarily cross-disciplinary or stand-alone courses OR
- A certificate with re-packaged existing courses that are housed within a degree program but the student learning outcomes are significantly different from the degree program outcomes.

Number of credit hours and enrollments do not determine whether or not a certificate needs an assessment plan. Associated licensures or professional certifications with a certificate program do not determine whether or not a certificate is assessed.

Non-credit bearing courses or certificates are not included in the University's Assessment program at this time.

**Assessment Processes**

Assessment of certificates should follow University assessment guidelines and reporting procedures (http://www.odu.edu/about/planning/assessment/cycle/weave):
• 3-5 student learning outcomes must be defined and program objectives should be created where appropriate
  o The focus of certificate assessment should be at the course and certificate program level. A certificate course may have students who are currently earning the certificate, students who are earning a degree, and/or students who may decide to pursue the certificate after taking the course. Because of this, the focus of assessment must be on the course outcomes that all students will attain.
  o In many cases, we find that an ePortfolio can be a very beneficial way to assess certificate students.
• Direct and indirect measures of student learning must be used
• Assessment findings are reported yearly by September 30, in Weave
  o Certificate programs are asked to report data and assess findings upon the cumulative graduation of 5 students.
  o If there are no graduates in a given year, coordinators need to report this in Weave. They are also asked to enter their recruiting and marketing strategy for the upcoming year in an action plan.