

## University Assessment Committee Statement Concerning the Use of Course Grades or GPA in Assessment

“Because course grades and GPA tend to be aggregates of assignments measuring multiple student learning outcomes, the University Assessment Committee does not find the use of course grades or GPA acceptable for the purpose of evaluating a particular student learning outcome. It may be acceptable, however, to use grades of individual course assignments that measure a single learning outcome, provided that either the grade or the grading standard is collaboratively determined. Examples of this would be juried performances, writing portfolios, or final senior projects.”

### References and Examples of Assessment Policies:

The Higher Learning Commission of NCA states the following in its Assessment Matrix, Section II: a. Faculty, under Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs: **“A few academic units have begun to expand assessment activities beyond teacher evaluation of student learning and grades awarded in courses.”**

<http://www.ncacihe.org/resources/assessment/AssessMatrix03.pdf>

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) notes:

Course grades measure the students' mastery of a course topic taught by a specific professor. The course grade is an aggregate measure comprised of the students' performances on multiple exams, assignments, projects, homework, extra credit, etc. Even if professors teach from a common syllabus, a course grade is too aggregate a measure to provide an assessment of specific skills or knowledge. For example, a course may include an oral presentation assignment that is worth 20% of the course grade. It is possible for one student to get an exceptional grade on that assignment, and another student to fail that assignment, with both students receiving a "C" for the final course grade. The course grade provides no measure of students' demonstrated oral presentation skills or of the capacity of the curriculum to produce the desired oral communication traits in its students.

On the other hand, the grades on the oral assignment are an indicator of students' oral skills. If the faculty agrees on how the assignment is to be evaluated (including articulating its minimum performance standards), an oral presentation assigned within a course may be an appropriate program assessment measure. Thus, course products (cases, papers, presentations, exercises) may be used to meet assurance of learning standards, but course grades, by themselves, cannot.

[http://www.aacsb.edu/resource\\_centers/assessment/frequently-asked.asp](http://www.aacsb.edu/resource_centers/assessment/frequently-asked.asp)

In addition, Minnesota State University at Mankato writes:

The grade a student receives in a course is an important indicator of what a student knows and can do following the completion of a course. Course grades, however, are simply too broad and general in too many cases to function as effective assessment measures. Grades are often too broad in that they may take into consideration such elements as how much a student has improved over time in a course; how much effort a student has expended in a course; or even the attendance of a student. Grades are not often enough specifically tied to what a student was supposed to learn in a course based on the student learning outcomes of that course. Assessment measures, however, are more closely associated with specific student learning outcomes. Assessment measures are designed to be specific, with assessment solely concerned with the manner or degree to which a student can demonstrate knowledge, skill or disposition.

[http://www.mnsu.edu/acadaf/html/PRA\\_F\\_5.htm](http://www.mnsu.edu/acadaf/html/PRA_F_5.htm)