

# State Higher Education Assessment Questionnaire (SHEAQ)

## National Center for Postsecondary Improvement

University of Michigan \* Room 2339 School of Education \* Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259

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This survey consists of twenty-one questions about the practice and impact of state assessment policies. While the primary emphasis of our work is the impact of student outcomes assessment on the improvement of teaching and learning, we want to place this impact in a broader, comparative context. The survey is divided into six sections: (1) context, (2) objectives, (3) processes, (4) outcomes, (5) evaluation, and (6) future directions. There are both open- and close-ended questions, with space provided for answers after each open-ended question. If you find that the space provided for your answer is not sufficient, please feel free to write on the back of the page, indicating the number of the question you are answering. If you have questions about this survey, please call Michael Nettles, John Cole or Sally Sharp at the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement at the University of Michigan, at 313-647-1654.

This survey is being administered to the state higher education academic officers in each of the 50 states. Your responses will be combined with those of other states and where possible will be reported as group averages. Because some of your responses may identify actions, programs, and relationships unique to your state, we are unable to assure you of the complete confidentiality of your responses. We are very grateful for your time and your willingness to complete this survey; we hope the answers from all 50 states, when compared and analyzed, will help both institutions and policymakers as they address issues of assessment. We will provide you with a draft of our report to give you an opportunity to react to our analysis.

In this space, please identify the person and his/her title who completed this questionnaire. If more than one person collaborated on this questionnaire, please identify each person and his/her title.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Context

1. Have there been any changes in STATE's assessment policy since August 1996?

Yes No

2. Have there been any new policies relating to assessment implemented in your state since August 1996?

Yes No

If your answer is "yes" to either question, please attach documentation describing the changes and/or the new policy, and base your answers to the following questions on the most recent policy or policies.

3. How would you characterize the governance structure for public higher education in STATE? Please mark one only. (Classification system taken from McGuinness et al., 1994)

- \_\_\_\_\_ consolidated governing board for all institutions
- \_\_\_\_\_ consolidated governing board for all senior institutions and a separate board for junior/  
community colleges
- \_\_\_\_\_ regulatory board with program approval authority
- \_\_\_\_\_ advisory board with program review and recommendation authority
- \_\_\_\_\_ planning agency
- \_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Objectives**

4. What is the current objective of STATE's assessment policy? (Please mark all that apply.)

- increasing accountability to public
- increasing fiscal responsibility
- improving teaching
- improving student learning
- promoting planning on campuses
- improving academic program efficiency
- facilitating intrastate comparisons
- facilitating interstate comparisons
- reducing academic program duplication
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Given what you have marked as the objective(s) of STATE's assessment policy, please rate the significance, as you see it, of each of these objectives on a four-point scale, with "1" representing "not significant" and a "4" representing "very significant." Please circle one number for each item checked in question #4.

<u>objective</u>	<u>Significance</u>			
	<u>Not</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Very</u>
increasing accountability to the public	1	2	3	4
increasing fiscal accountability	1	2	3	4
improving teaching	1	2	3	4
improving student learning		1	2	3
4				
promoting planning on campuses	1	2	3	4
improving academic program efficiency	1	2	3	4
facilitating intrastate comparisons	1	2	3	4
facilitating interstate comparisons	1	2	3	4
reducing academic program duplication	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4

6. Since one of our areas of emphasis is the impact of assessment on the improvement of teaching and learning, how would you characterize the relationship between STATE's assessment policy and the improvement of teaching? What, if anything, about your policy demonstrates a commitment to the improvement of teaching?

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**Processes**

In this section, we are seeking to understand the stages of the policymaking process, and what entities play the most important roles during each stage. We are considering five stages in our analysis, so there are five questions, one for each stage. For greater clarity, a definition is provided for each stage as part of the questions. (Stages and definitions adapted from Anderson et al., 1984)

8. On a four-point scale, with a “1” representing “not significant” and a “4” representing “very significant,” please rate each of the following entities in terms of their relative significance in the **problem formation** stage of STATE's assessment policy. During the problem formation stage, “relief is sought from a situation that produces a human need, a deprivation, or dissatisfaction.” Please circle one number for each entity.

<u>entities</u>	<u>Significance</u>			
	<u>Not</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Very</u>
state legislature	1	2	3	4
governor/executive staff	1	2	3	4
exec. agencies (e.g., state ed. department)	1	2	3	4
system boards of trustees/regents	1	2	3	4
campus executive officers	1	2	3	4
faculty	1	2	3	4
external consultants	1	2	3	4
existing policies and practices on campuses	1	2	3	4
other states' policies and practices	1	2	3	4
professional orgs. (e.g., SHEEO; AAHE)	1	2	3	4
regional accreditation association	1	2	3	4
disciplinary accreditation associations	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4

9. On a four-point scale, with a “1” representing “not significant” and a “4” representing “very significant,” now please rate each of the following entities in terms of their relative significance in the **policy formulation** stage of STATE’s assessment policy. During the policy formulation stage, “pertinent and acceptable proposed courses of action for dealing with public problems” are developed. Please circle one number for each entity.

<u>entities</u>	<u>Significance</u>			
	<u>Not</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Very</u>
state legislature	1	2	3	4
governor/executive staff	1	2	3	4
exec. agencies (e.g., state ed. department)	1	2	3	4
system boards of trustees/regents	1	2	3	4
campus executive officers	1	2	3	4
faculty	1	2	3	4
external consultants	1	2	3	4
existing policies and practices on campuses	1	2	3	4
other states’ policies and practices	1	2	3	4
professional orgs. (e.g., SHEEO; AAHE)	1	2	3	4
regional accreditation association	1	2	3	4
disciplinary accreditation associations	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4

10. On a four-point scale, with a “1” representing “not significant” and a “4” representing “very significant,” please rate each of the following entities in terms of their relative significance in the **policy adoption** stage. During the policy adoption stage, “support is developed for a specific proposal such that the policy is legitimized or authorized.” Please circle one number for each entity.

<u>entities</u>	<u>Significance</u>			
	<u>Not</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Very</u>
state legislature	1	2	3	4
governor/executive staff	1	2	3	4
exec. agencies (e.g., state ed. department)	1	2	3	4
system boards of trustees/regents	1	2	3	4
campus executive officers	1	2	3	4
faculty	1	2	3	4
external consultants	1	2	3	4
existing policies and practices on campuses	1	2	3	4
other states’ policies and practices	1	2	3	4
professional orgs. (e.g., SHEEO; AAHE)	1	2	3	4
regional accreditation association	1	2	3	4
disciplinary accreditation associations	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4

11. On a four-point scale, with a “1” representing “not significant” and a “4” representing “very significant,” please rate each of the following entities in terms of their relative significance in the **policy implementation** stage. During the policy implementation stage, there is the “application of the policy to the problem.” Please circle one number for each entity.

<u>entities</u>	<u>Significance</u>			
	<u>Not</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Very</u>
state legislature	1	2	3	4
governor/executive staff	1	2	3	4
exec. agencies (e.g., state ed. department)	1	2	3	4
system boards of trustees/regents	1	2	3	4
campus executive officers	1	2	3	4
faculty	1	2	3	4
external consultants	1	2	3	4
existing policies and practices on campuses	1	2	3	4
other states’ policies and practices	1	2	3	4
professional orgs. (e.g., SHEEO; AAHE)	1	2	3	4
regional accreditation association	1	2	3	4
disciplinary accreditation associations	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4

12. On a four-point scale, with a “1” representing “not significant” and a “4” representing “very significant,” please rate each of the following entities in terms of their relative significance in the **policy evaluation** stage. During the policy implementation stage, “an attempt is made to determine whether or not the policy has been effective.” Please circle one number for each entity.

<u>entities</u>	<u>Significance</u>			
	<u>Not</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Very</u>
state legislature	1	2	3	4
governor/executive staff	1	2	3	4
exec. agencies (e.g., state ed. department)	1	2	3	4
system boards of trustees/regents	1	2	3	4
campus executive officers	1	2	3	4
faculty	1	2	3	4
external consultants	1	2	3	4
existing policies and practices on campuses	1	2	3	4
other states’ policies and practices	1	2	3	4
professional orgs. (e.g., SHEEO; AAHE)	1	2	3	4
regional accreditation association	1	2	3	4
disciplinary accreditation associations	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4
other: _____	1	2	3	4

**Outcomes**

13. There is often a distinction made between the objective(s) of a policy and the outcome(s) of a policy. Questions #4 and 5 explored objectives. In this question, please tell us what you think have been the **outcomes** of STATE's policy. (Please mark all that apply.)

- increasing accountability to public
- increasing fiscal responsibility
- improving teaching
- improving student learning
- promoting planning on campuses
- improving academic program efficiency
- facilitating intrastate comparisons
- facilitating interstate comparisons
- reducing academic program duplication
- other: \_\_\_\_\_
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Please circle one answer to each of the following questions. Is STATE currently using:

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| common instruments across institutions for assessment of teaching?                   | Yes | No |
| common performance indicators for assessment of teaching?                            | Yes | No |
| common performance indicators for assessment of teaching that are linked to funding? | Yes | No |
| common procedures for collecting assessment data on teaching?                        | Yes | No |
| <br>   |     |    |
| common instruments across institutions for assessment of learning?                   | Yes | No |
| common performance indicators for assessment of learning?                            | Yes | No |
| common performance indicators for assessment of learning that are linked to funding? | Yes | No |
| common procedures for collecting assessment data on learning?                        | Yes | No |

15. If any of the items in question #14 is circled, please describe the impetus for the interest in/adoption for each of the measures circled.

16. If there are differences between policy objectives and policy outcomes in STATE, why do you think these differences exist?

17. Provided that the improvement of teaching is an objective of STATE's assessment policy, what has enhanced STATE's success in achieving this objective? Please interpret this question broadly; we are trying to understand what persons, events, and/or processes enhance STATE's success in achieving this objective.

17a. What evidence exists of your state's success at meeting the objective of improving teaching?

18. Provided that the improvement of learning is an objective of STATE's assessment policy, what has enhanced STATE's success in achieving this objective? Please interpret this question broadly; we are trying to understand what persons, events, and/or processes enhance STATE's success in achieving this objective.

18a. What evidence exists of your state's success at meeting the objective of improving learning?

19. Provided that the improvement of teaching is an objective of STATE's assessment policy, what has hindered STATE's success in achieving this objective? Please interpret this question broadly; we are trying to understand what persons, events, and/or processes hinder STATE's success in achieving this objective.

20. Provided that the improvement of learning is an objective of STATE's assessment policy, what has hindered STATE's success in achieving this objective? Please interpret this question broadly; we are trying to understand what persons, events, and/or processes hinder STATE's success in achieving this objective.



**Future Directions**

21. As part of our research in Year Three, we are planning to conduct case studies on the most interesting and/or innovative assessment policies and practices. In your opinion, what campuses/institutions in STATE are doing the most interesting and/or innovative work related to assessment?

**Please return this survey before January 15, 1998 in the envelope provided to:  
NCPI \* University of Michigan \* Room 2239 School of Education \* Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259**