



Graduate Course Syllabus

HEA 540: Program Evaluation

Center: Online

Course Prerequisites

HEA 530

Course Description

This course will explore the theories and processes of higher education program evaluation. Candidates will—within the context of a university’s mission, strategic goals, and objectives—learn necessary skills to methodically evaluate higher education programs. Candidates will analyze given sets of case-based data and offer evidence and research-based justifications for programmatic changes. Project management concepts and tools will be applied throughout the course.

Course Outcomes

- Determine opportunities for improving the alignment of academic programs with institutional goals using appropriate qualitative and quantitative evidence
- Design targeted methods of communicating program evaluation findings and eliciting stakeholder approval
- Develop evidence-based processes for the continual improvement of academic programs that respond to an ever-changing academic environment
- Propose program improvement recommendations that align with appropriate regulatory and accreditation standards

Required Materials

Using your learning resources is critical to your success in this course. Please purchase directly through the [SNHU Online Bookstore](#) rather than any other vendor. Purchasing directly from the bookstore ensures that you will obtain the correct materials and that the IT Service Desk, your advisor, and the instructor can provide you with support if you have problems.

Note: The text for this course is available as a free resource in the Shapiro Library. Click the title below to access the text online.

[*Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education*](#)

T. W. Banta & C. A. Palomba

Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Second Edition

2015

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As indicated in our core values, SNHU is committed to “embrace diversity where we encourage and respect diverse identities, ideas, and perspectives by honoring difference, amplifying belonging, engaging civilly, and breaking down barriers to bring our mission to life.”

This may or will be reflected in SNHU’s curriculum as we embrace and practice diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to provide the most transformative experience for our students, faculty, and staff. Because topics pertaining to DEI can be sensitive, please remember that embodying and practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion is one of our core values that you will encounter throughout the academic experience. In higher education, we are expected to think and engage critically. Use a growth mindset to embrace the diverse readings, course assignments, and experiences of your peers and faculty.

For more information about DEI at SNHU, please visit our website at the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#).

Instructor Availability and Response Time

Your class interaction with the instructor and your classmates will take place on a regular, ongoing basis. Your instructor will be actively engaged within the course throughout the week. You will normally communicate with your instructor in the weekly discussions or the General Questions discussion topic so that your questions and the instructor’s answers benefit the entire class. You should feel free, however, to communicate with your instructor via SNHU email at any time, particularly when you want to discuss something of a personal or sensitive nature. Your instructor will generally provide a response within 24 hours. Instructors will post grades and feedback (as applicable) within seven days of an assignment’s due date, or within seven days of a late submission.

Grade Distribution

Assignment Category	Number of Graded Items	Point Value per Item	Total Points
Discussions	9	35	315
Budget Peer Review	1	45	45
Brainstorm Assignment	1	55	55
Short Papers	2	55	110
Final Project			
Milestones	3	55	165
Final Submission	1	310	310
			Total Course Points: 1,000

This course may also contain practice activities. The purpose of these non-graded activities is to assist you in mastering the learning outcomes in the graded activity items listed above.

University Grading System: Graduate

Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Points
A	93–100	4.00
A-	90–92	3.67
B+	87–89	3.33
B	83–86	3.00
B-	80–82	2.67
C+	77–79	2.33
C	73–76	2.00
F	0–72	0.00
I	Incomplete	
IF	Incomplete/Failure *	
W	Withdrawn	

* Please refer to the [policy page](#) for information on the incomplete grade process.

Grading Guides

Specific activity directions, grading guides, posting requirements, and additional deadlines can be found in the Assignment Guidelines and Rubrics section of the course.

Weekly Assignment Schedule

All reading and assignment information can be found within each module of the course. Assignments and discussion posts during the first week of each term are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Assignments and discussion posts for the remainder of the term are due by 11:59 p.m. of the student's local time zone.

In addition to the textbook readings that are listed, there may be additional required resources within each module.

Module	Topics and Assignments
1	Alignment Assessment Essentials Chapter 1: "Some Definitions" and "Assessment Purposes" Chapter 4: "Intentions for Learning: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes" to "Using Matrices and Other Tools" 1-1 Final Project Review 1-2 Discussion: The Value of Alignment 1-3 Brainstorm: Data Needed

Module	Topics and Assignments
2	<p>Planning</p> <p><u>Assessment Essentials</u></p> <p>Chapter 2: “Implementing Effective Assessment” to “Providing Resources”</p> <p>Chapter 2: “Obtaining Credible Evidence” to “Ensuring the Use of Assessment Findings”</p> <p>Chapter 4: “Selecting Methods and Approaches” to end of chapter</p> <p>Chapter 6: “Qualitative versus Quantitative Approaches”</p> <p>2-1 Staying on Track: Milestone One Reminder</p> <p>2-2 Practice Quiz: Distinguishing Quantitative and Qualitative Data (non-graded)</p> <p>2-3 Discussion: Case Study for the Final Project</p> <p>2-4 Request to Use Different Institution (Optional)</p>
3	<p>External Data</p> <p><u>Assessment Essentials</u></p> <p>Chapter 2: “Improving and Sustaining Assessment”</p> <p>3-1 Discussion: External Data to Enhance Program Evaluations</p> <p>3-2 Milestone One: Institutional Overview</p>
4	<p>Recommendations</p> <p><u>Assessment Essentials</u></p> <p>Chapter 2: “Establishing Purpose”</p> <p>Chapter 9: “Foundations for Assessment in Student Affairs” to “Assessment Frameworks, Models, and Diagrams” and “Improving Assessment”</p> <p>4-1 Staying on Track: Milestone Two Reminder</p> <p>4-2 Discussion: Strategies for Assessing Student Outcomes</p> <p>4-3 Short Paper: Recommendations, Strategies, and Standards</p>
5	<p>Budgets</p> <p><u>Assessment Essentials</u></p> <p>Chapter 2: “Creating a Written Plan”</p> <p>Chapter 6: “Using Indirect Assessment Methods”</p> <p>Chapter 7: “Assessing Learning in the Major”</p> <p>Chapter 9: “Assessment Plans and Methods” to “Reporting and Sharing Results”</p> <p>5-1 Discussion: Comparing Program Data: Getting an Accurate Portrait</p> <p>5-2 Milestone Two: Recommendations</p>
6	<p>Evaluation Plans</p> <p><u>Assessment Essentials</u></p> <p>Chapter 5 (entire chapter)</p> <p>Chapter 8: “Using Commercial Instruments and the Voluntary System of Accountability”</p> <p>6-1 Staying on Track: Milestone Three Reminder</p> <p>6-2 Practice Quiz (non-graded)</p> <p>6-3 Peer Review Discussion: Calculating the Cost</p>

Module	Topics and Assignments
7	Considering Stakeholders Assessment Essentials Chapter 2: “Engaging Stakeholders” 7-1 Discussion: Who Wants to Know What? 7-2 Milestone Three: Evaluation Plan
8	Communicating Data Assessment Essentials Chapter 9: “Communicating Results” Chapter 10: “Communicating About How Assessment Results Have Been Used” and “Institutional Assessment Reporting” 8-1 Staying on Track: Final Project Reminder 8-2 Discussion: Different Strokes for Different Folks 8-3 Short Paper: Eliciting Support
9	Returning to Alignment Assessment Essentials , Chapter 11 9-1 Discussion: Ensuring Alignment 9-2 Final Project Submission: Program Plan
10	Reflecting on Purpose Assessment Essentials , Chapter 12 10-1 Reflection: What’s the Point?

Attendance Policy

Online students are required to submit a graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class. If a student does not submit a graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class, the student is **automatically dropped** from the course for non-participation. Review the [full attendance policy](#).

Late Assignments Policy

Meeting assigned due dates is critical for demonstrating progress and ensuring appropriate time for instructor feedback on assignments. Students are expected to submit their assignments on or before the due date. Review the [full late assignment policy](#).

SNHU Student Handbook

Review the [student handbook](#).

ADA/504 Compliance Statement

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is dedicated to providing equal access to individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008.

SNHU prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability and takes action to prevent such discrimination by providing reasonable accommodations to eligible individuals with disabilities. The university has adopted this

policy to provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints regarding any action prohibited by Section 504, the ADA, or the ADAAA.

For questions about **support services, documentation guidelines, general disability issues, or pregnancy accommodations**, please visit the [Online Accessibility Center](#) (OAC).

As a student, you must complete an interactive intake process, with supporting documentation, in order to be granted accommodations. Once reasonable accommodations are approved by the OAC, you will receive an accommodations letter. You are then responsible for sharing the letter with your instructor. Accommodations are not retroactive.

If you feel you've been subject to discrimination on the basis of disability, by any party, you may file a complaint or grievance. For more information on the ADA/504 Grievance Policy, go to the [Disability and Accessibility Services](#) website.

Academic Integrity Policy

Southern New Hampshire University requires all students to adhere to high standards of integrity in their academic work. Activities such as plagiarism and cheating are not condoned by the university. Review the [full academic integrity policy](#).

Copyright Policy

Southern New Hampshire University abides by the provisions of United States Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). Any person who infringes the copyright law is liable. Review the [full copyright policy](#).

SNHU Withdrawal Policy

Review the [full withdrawal policy](#).

Southern New Hampshire University Policies

More information about SNHU policies can be found on the [policy page](#).