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ASPA Releases Outcomes Report: Programmatic Accreditors Widely Use Indicators to Ensure Competent Graduates

CHICAGO – June 2016 – Specialized and professional accreditors are holding programs accountable for outcomes that result in competent practitioners. The Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) reached this conclusion based on the results of a survey administered to its members about outcomes assessment.

Of the 60 programmatic accreditors that responded to the survey (updated from 45 in the original version of the report released in January 2016), all indicated that they have requirements for educational programs to assess outcomes. Approaches to outcomes assessment vary based on the nature of the profession, licensure/certification requirements and public or regulatory pressures.

“The information and data presented in this report is particularly timely given the current environment,” said ASPA Executive Director Joseph Vibert. “Accreditors are regularly questioned about outcomes and accountability to students and the public.”

Requirements for competency assessment were reported by 93% of respondents (i.e., the measurement of student learning outcomes or competency attainment - the knowledge, skills, and professional disposition necessary for safe and effective practice of a profession).

Bright line outcomes requirements were reported by 52% of responding agencies. These requirements involve thresholds related to graduation or retention rates, placement rates for employment or internships, or licensure exam pass rates for professions with such requirements for entry-to-practice.

Program-determined indicators based on the program’s mission and its context within a framework established by the accreditor were used to assess outcomes by 82% of respondents.

The full report, titled “**Outcomes – Getting to the Core of Programmatic Education and Accreditation**,” can be accessed on the [ASPA website](#). It describes the current state of outcomes assessment by specialized and professional accreditors in higher education. The earlier version of the report was presented at the CHEA conference in Washington, DC on January 26, 2016.

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About The Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA)

ASPA, a 501(c)(3) association, represents U.S. based agencies that assess the quality of specialized and professional higher education programs and schools. ASPA focuses on issues of educational quality facing institutions of higher education, governments, students, and the public. ASPA-member accreditors set national educational standards to ensure students receive an education consistent with standards for entry into practice or advanced practice for over 100 specialized disciplines or defined professions – from nursing to architecture, and physical therapy to engineering. www.aspa-usa.org