

OIR Assessment Tool
2010 UND Employer Satisfaction Survey
November 2011

Purpose of Survey: As part of state mandated accountability measures, the North Dakota University System contracted with Noel-Levitz to administer an Employer Satisfaction Survey to determine the level to which North Dakota institutions of higher education are meeting the needs of current employers. The University of North Dakota participated in this survey in 2010 to gain information on employer's levels of satisfaction on skills provided them by recent UND graduates. (2010 UND Employer Satisfaction Survey, summary on the Institutional Research web site)

1. The data collected addresses information relating to what university group or situation? (I.e., from whom is the university collecting this information? Whose perceptions are we reading?)

This is a survey of employers of UND graduates. The survey was sent to employers of students who graduated in Fall 2007, Spring, 2008 or Summer 2008. 361 employers were identified through the UND's Employment Survey, 23 were identified by the Alumni database, and an additional 564 were located by the FINDET office. 948 survey packets were mailed and of these 187 were scored by Noel-Levitz. This represents a response rate of 20%, which is down 4% from 2008.

2. How often is this tool used and analyzed? What time of year?
The survey is administered on even-numbered years. It is mailed in August.
3. To whom does the assessment group believe that an analysis of this report would be beneficial? In other words, what individuals, departments, or programs need this information in order to have reliable information to 'close the loop' on their assessment process?

The survey is divided into four specific sections – 1) knowledge and understanding, 2) qualities generally expected by employees, 3) general skills, and 4) specialized skills. Employers were asked to rate items on five-point scales regarding their importance for successful performance of the job and to rate their satisfaction with the employee's knowledge or skills when hired. The five points of the scale were extremely important or satisfied (5), very important or satisfied (4), somewhat important or satisfied (3), not very important or satisfied (2), and not at all important or satisfied (1). Means were reported for importance and satisfaction, along with gap differences.

The information should be valuable to all academic departments and student support service departments including: Enrollment Services (recruitment re satisfaction of UND graduates in job performance), Career Services, Career Counseling Services, Essential Studies Committee, Student Success Center. This survey is a Kirkpatrick's level 4 evaluation of assessment for UND.

4. What UND student learning goals are assessed?
 - a. Use Y, N, ? to indicate whether the instrument collects data relevant to each of the following Institutional and/or Essential Studies goals:

- ___Y___ 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
- ___Y___ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
- ___Y___ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
- ___Y___ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
- ___N___ 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
- ___Y___ 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
- ___Y___ 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
- ___?___ 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

b. Additional goals

5. What are the findings/results of this tool?

Per the summary of the report, “In general, the 2010 Noel-Levitz Employer Satisfaction Survey presents a positive picture for UND. It appears employers are pleased with the education graduates receive and would hire additional graduates in the future. When compared to the other institutions in North Dakota, nearly all of UND’s scores exceed the summary scores when all NDUS institutions are combined.

Still, particular findings indicate the need to attend to some areas. It appears that UND is not meeting employer expectations with regard to preparing students with “qualities generally expected of employees.” Negative gap scores were reported for all ten items in this general category demonstrating that graduates are not meeting employees expectations in these areas. Qualities with the highest negative gap scores (above -0.20) include: Flexibility (-0.21), Reliability (-0.30), Self-discipline (-0.21) and Positive attitude towards work (-0.23).

Negative gap scores were also reported in five of thirteen areas in the “General Skills” category including: verbal communication (-0.21), critical thinking(-0.24), leadership (-0.03), teamwork (-0.19) and customer service (-0.13) with the highest gap reported for critical thinking.

It should be noted that there was no discussion in the report as to the significance of the gap scores and so it is difficult to determine which are negligible and which are meaningful.

- a. From Question 5a above: For the goals with a Y or ?, describe the relevant findings/results from this survey:

G1. Communication

- *Written communication—Importance 4.09, Satisfaction 4.18, Gap 0.02*
- *Oral communication—Importance 4.44, Satisfaction 4.24, Gap -0.21*

G2. Thinking and reasoning—critical thinking

- *Critical thinking (e.g., evaluating information, making decisions)—Importance 4.37, Satisfaction 4.13, Gap -0.24*
- *Ability to translate theory into practice—Importance 3.75, Satisfaction 3.85, Gap 0.05*

G3. Thinking and reasoning—creative thinking

- *Creativity (identifies new approaches to problems)—Importance 4.09,*

Satisfaction 4.06, Gap -0.04

G4. Thinking and reasoning—quantitative reasoning

- *Advanced computer (e.g., spreadsheets, databases)—Importance 3.44, Satisfaction 3.97, Gap 0.43*

G6. Diversity

- *Understanding of international business environment—Importance 1.99, Satisfaction 2.99, Gap 0.92*

- *Understanding of systems and organizations (e.g., political systems, markets, cultures)—Importance 2.72, Satisfaction 3.42, Gap 0.61*

- *Knowledge of peoples and cultures from other countries—Importance 2.69, Satisfaction 3.47, Gap 0.70*

- *Empathy (understands the situations, feelings, or motives of others)—Importance 4.10, Satisfaction 4.13, Gap 0.02*

G7. Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)

- *Willingness to learn—Importance 4.61, Satisfaction 4.52, Gap -0.02*

b. Other findings/results

Positive gap scores were reported for all 8 items for the category “Employee Knowledge and Understanding indicating that UND graduates exceed employers expectations in these areas. The highest gap scores were for “understanding of international business environment” (0.92), “knowledge of peoples and cultures from other countries” (0.70), “understanding of systems and organization” (0.61), and “knowledge of specific computer applications required of the job” (0.51). It should be noted that with the exception of the computer skills, these items were rated as “not very important by employers”.

Positive gap scores were reported for six of seven items in the category “specialized skills”. Items with the highest positive gap scores (but of lowest importance to employer) were “Negotiation” (0.73) and “Fluency in a language other than English”. The item with the negative gap score and considered somewhat important to employers was “Ability to set goals and allocate time to achieve them” (-0.11).

6. What evidence does the assessment group believe should be collected/compiled for the next accreditation visit?

It may be helpful to collect data from other sources that relate to items with which employers are less than satisfied. Analysis across assessment results may indicate the need for change.

7. Is this tool a direct measure, an indirect measure, or a non-measure of student learning?
Indirect measure

8. Does this tool empower individuals or the university to better understand and assess student learning at the university? If so, how?
Yes, it is an outside evaluation of UND graduates by their employers and identifies areas in which we may wish to concentrate more efforts.

9. Is there a better way to obtain or report the data to be analyzed?
No

10. Does the tool need increased university or administrative support or faculty involvement in order to make it more useable or effective?

It would be preferable to get a higher response rate (20% is low) and make efforts to get information from companies who hired UND graduates outside of the state of ND. The focus seems to be on ND employers.

11. Does the assessment group need any administrative insight or guidance in order to analyze the tool effectively?

No

12. What value does the committee place on this tool for helping to achieve the university's assessment plan?

This is a unique assessment in that it comes from the perspective of employers of UND graduates. It is valuable in determining differences between employers expectations and those of UND faculty or administrators areas delineated by the survey. What we think is important may not be what employers think is important.

13. Review Summary (one or two sentences)

The Employer Satisfaction survey is important to validate employer's expectations and how UND graduates are meeting those expectations. Overall, UND is doing well.

14. Recommendations of the Reviewers

15. ***It is important to have participation from as many UND graduate employers as possible.***

What ways can be added to improve response rates? What might faculty want to know about this survey? (Please provide one to two paragraphs describing some findings from this survey. These paragraphs will be forwarded to academic departments as a means of keeping them informed about the existence of information that might be useful to them.) The Employee Satisfaction Survey collected information on four specific areas—(1) knowledge and understanding, (2) qualities generally expected of employees, (3) general skills, and (4) specialized skills. The survey found that in most areas employers are satisfied to very satisfied with the skills of our graduates. However, there are some skill areas in which graduates are perceived by their employers to fall short—most significantly, in the areas of “verbal communication”, “critical thinking”, “teamwork”, and “ability to set goals and allocate time to achieve them”. As per the report, “critical thinking is the area where employers report UND graduates are least equipped to meet employer expectations.”

Several items related to qualities expected of employees were also noted as areas of dissatisfaction and include flexibility, reliability, self-discipline and a positive attitude towards work. As noted in the report, these qualities are not specifically taught in the classroom setting may be beneficial to college success and therefore warrant consideration.

On balance, 2010 survey presents a positive picture for UND. When compared to other institutions in North Dakota nearly all of UND's scores exceed the summary scores when all NDUS institutions are combined.

Submitted by: Odella Fuqua and Barbara Combs

Date of Submission: 12-01-11

Form revised: 02/03/11