

## Employer Survey

By Wanda I. Overland

An assessment program that periodically receives information from employers is valuable in providing feedback to the department. First, the data collected can be useful in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of specific programs. Lastly, the data can provide information that suggests ways to improve the quality of graduates' job preparation and performance.

According to Banta (1993), the qualities and characteristics that employers look for in prospective employees can be categorized as follows: knowledge, skills, and attitudes or traits. Areas within knowledge include technical skills as they relate to the job, basic adult literacy, and application of one's knowledge. Components within the skills area include communication, ability to work with people, organization and management skills, research, and computing skills.

Research examining how survey data from employers are collected indicates that institutions use either a "broadside" method in surveying, for example sending surveys to employers without identifying specific individuals, or by gathering information about specific graduates. For the last survey method, it is critical that permission is sought from the former student prior to surveying the employer.

The key to an effective employer survey is having questions that assist in measuring identified outcome statements. Listed below are types of questions designed to measure specific student outcomes. The following examples address both the "broadside" survey method and the survey method that gathers information about specific graduates.

### Broadside Survey Method

(For copy-ready forms, please see the Appendix on the [Contents page](#).)

Directions: Please use the rating scale by circling your response to the statements listed for each of the student outcomes. **SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.** Under each student outcome section there is space for you to add comments.

*Student Outcome: Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively.*

1. The graduate is able to prepare and write professional reports.  
SA   A   N   D   SD
2. The graduate can verbally communicate his/her ideas.  
SA   A   N   D   SD
3. The graduate is able to present material effectively.  
SA   A   N   D   SD

To be more effective, he/she would have to:

*Student Outcome: Demonstrated ability to apply one's knowledge.*

1. The graduate has the knowledge base needed for the job.  
SA   A   N   D   SD
2. The graduate has demonstrated an ability to apply his/her knowledge and skills in the workplace.  
SA   A   N   D   SD
3. The graduate is able to conceptualize problems related to field of expertise.  
SA   A   N   D   SD

To be more effective, he/she would have to:

#### Graduate Specific Survey Method

(For copy-ready forms, please see the Appendix on the [Contents page](#).)

Directions: Please use the rating scale by circling your response to the statements listed for each of the student outcomes. **SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.** Under each student outcome section there is space for you to add comments.

*Student Outcome: Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively.*

1. Program graduates are able to prepare and write professional reports.  
SA   A   N   D   SD
2. Program graduates can verbally communicate their ideas.  
SA   A   N   D   SD
3. Program graduates are able to present material effectively.  
SA   A   N   D   SD

To be more effective, he/she would have to:

*Student Outcome: Demonstrated ability to apply one's knowledge.*

1. Program graduates have the knowledge base needed for the job.  
SA   A   N   D   SD
2. Program graduates have demonstrated an ability to apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace.  
SA   A   N   D   SD
3. Program graduates are able to conceptualize problems related to field of expertise.  
SA   A   N   D   SD

To be more effective, he/she would have to:

#### Reference

Banta, T. (1993, Winter). Critique of a method for surveying employers. The Association for Institutional Research, Professional File Number 47.