Assessment at the graduate level will be an important aspect of Ohio State’s accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. Assessment is part of undergraduate education at Ohio State, and now it needs to be integrated into graduate education. The goal of assessment is to improve the quality of education. By defining learning goals and gathering data about their accomplishment, assessment allows informed decisions about how to improve graduate student learning.

There are three main steps to assessment:

1. **Articulate Goals**
   - Describe what students should learn in your discipline. Learning goals often look like: “When a student completes our program, s/he will be able to ....”

2. **Gather Evidence**
   - Evidence defines how well students are achieving the goals. Evidence may include direct measures, such as exams, and indirect measures, such as surveys. Evidence includes both qualitative and quantitative information.

3. **Use Evidence**
   - Use the evidence for improvement. Complete the assessment loop by making changes to your program and/or redefining your goals.

The Graduate School will lead the way to help programs develop and implement assessment plans over the next few years. The Graduate School will help collect direct and indirect evidence, provide web-based resources for the management and analysis of evidence, and provide guidance and workshops.

1. **Overview**
   - Our plan is to roll out assessment to all the graduate programs over the next few years in steps. We will involve the graduate programs in the development and timing of the next steps.

2. **Develop an Assessment Plan**
   - Each graduate program’s assessment plan should have clearly stated learning goals, a method for collecting evidence for each of these goals, and a process for using the information for ongoing improvement of the program. At regular intervals, programs will be able to use their data to self-determine their success in reaching their goals.

3. **Support Graduate Program Data and Process Needs**
   - In the long term, the introduction of assessment to graduate programs will be part of the Graduate School’s larger effort to support the graduate programs by providing access to tools that help streamline many graduate program data needs and administrative processes, including fellowships, program review, student data, and career placement.

Assessment will be implemented in steps. This approach will allow infrastructure to be developed as well as troubleshooting.

1. **Develop Learning Goals**
   - All graduate programs will need to define their learning goals. About half of the programs have submitted learning goals as part of the semester conversion process. We seek to collect learning goals from the remaining programs by December 31, 2012. Information on learning goals will follow separately.

2. **Form an Assessment Committee**
   - The Graduate School will form an assessment committee to provide guidance and suggestions for implementing the roll-out of assessment over the upcoming years. We are seeking nominations/volunteers from the graduate faculty for this committee. Please send nominations to Dena Myers (MYERS.663@OSU.EDU).

3. **Develop Pilot Programs for Assessment**
   - We will begin by identifying 6 to 12 pilot programs. We seek programs that have assessment plans in place as well as those programs that don’t. Please contact Scott Herness (HERNESS.1@OSU.EDU) if you’d like to participate as a pilot program or if you have any other questions.