



Teaching & Learning
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Program Assessment Report

AY 2024-2025

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2024–2025 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT SUMMARY

Promising Practices in Academic Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024–2025 assessment cycle reflects continued progress at the University of Denver in moving toward **intentional, evidence-informed, and improvement-focused assessment practice**. Across programs, faculty are strengthening alignment among learning outcomes, curriculum, and assessment, and are increasingly using multiple forms of evidence to better understand student learning.

This year's reports show that many programs are advancing from collecting data to engaging in meaningful dialogue about student learning. However, a consistent challenge remains: while programs are identifying results, fewer are consistently interpreting those results and using them to inform specific, documented changes. Strengthening this connection between evidence and action is the central priority for continued improvement.

In response, three institutional priorities will guide assessment work in the coming cycle. Programs are expected to (1) revise learning outcomes to ensure they are **measurable, meaningful, and manageable**, (2) develop **multi-year assessment plans** that allow for focused and sustainable evaluation of student learning, and (3) use **curriculum mapping** to clearly identify where outcomes are taught and assessed across required courses and experiences.

The report highlights a range of promising practices that demonstrate how assessment can support teaching and learning when it is embedded within disciplinary contexts. These examples are intended to be generative and illustrate how programs are using assessment to inform curricular decisions, strengthen alignment, and improve student achievement over time.

Resources such as the Assessment Toolkit, the Program Assessment Canvas course, and the University's participation in the **HLC Assessment Academy** provide coordinated support for this work as DU prepares for the 2030 reaffirmation. Together, these efforts position the University to advance a more coherent and sustainable model of assessment focused on continuous improvement and student learning.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

The 2024–2025 assessment cycle reflects continued progress in how the University of Denver approaches student learning. Across programs, faculty are moving beyond data collection toward interpretation, dialogue, and action—and that shift is evident in this year’s reports.

Aggregate results show growth across Data, Dialogue, Discernment, and Diligence, particularly in programs using structured, multi-year assessment cycles. At the same time, a consistent challenge remains: programs are stronger at collecting and discussing evidence than at interpreting it and translating findings into clear, documented changes. Closing this gap is the central focus for the coming cycle.

Three priorities follow from this work. Programs should (1) revise learning outcomes to ensure they are measurable, meaningful, and focused, (2) develop multi-year assessment plans that prioritize depth over breadth, and (3) use curriculum mapping to clearly connect outcomes to required courses and experiences. Together, these provide the foundation for effective and sustainable assessment.

The University’s participation in the HLC Assessment Academy supports this work as part of our preparation for the 2030 reaffirmation. Programs are encouraged to engage with the tools, consultations, and resources available through this initiative.

The examples in this report are intended to be generative. While approaches vary, strong programs share a commitment to using assessment to understand student learning and inform improvement.

Ultimately, this work ensures that our programs deliver on what we promise students—and that we adapt when the evidence calls for change. I hope this report supports that work across the University.

As always, I welcome the opportunity to consult with programs at any stage.

Sincerely,



Stephen P. Riley, PhD

Director of Academic Assessment and Accreditation Liaison Officer

THE ASSESSMENT DATA



For the 2023–2024 academic year, **63 assessment reports were submitted**. This reflects continued growth in the number of reports submitted over the past four year.

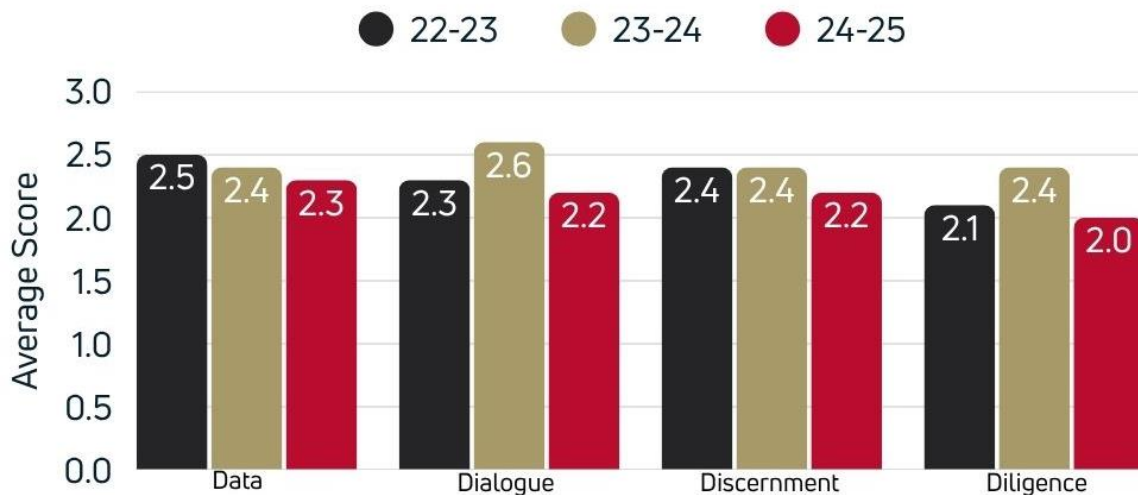
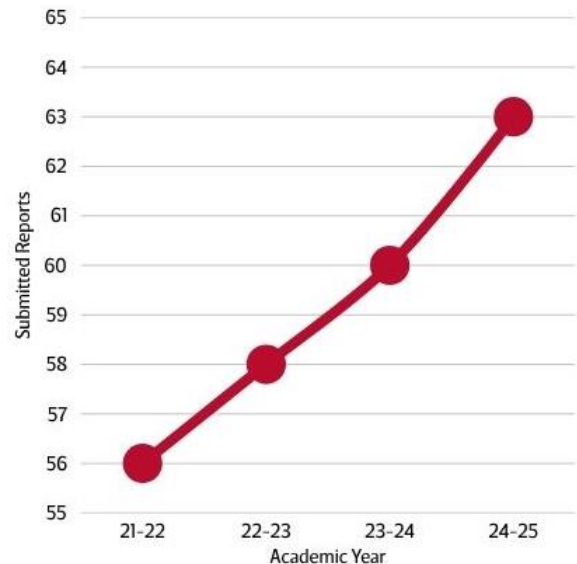
These reports were evaluated using a feedback rubric (see Appendix A) across four dimensions:

- **Data:** the program's use of direct or indirect evidence of student learning
- **Dialogue:** the extent to which faculty engaged in meaningful discussion about results
- **Discernment:** the interpretation of findings and identification of key insights
- **Diligence:** the use of results to inform planned changes

Each dimension is evaluated on a three-level scale:

- **Entry (1):** Work is beginning and shows early development
- **Emerging (2):** Work is developing and increasingly established
- **Enhancing (3):** Work reflects consistent, integrated, and sustained practice

The following graph shows the average scores for all submitted reports in each of the feedback categories over the past three years. These scores are used to understand patterns across programs, not to evaluate individual programs.



INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Across submissions, programs most consistently demonstrate strength in **Data**, particularly in identifying sources of evidence, and are increasingly engaging in **Dialogue** about student learning. However, fewer programs demonstrate strong **Discernment**, where results are interpreted to identify meaningful patterns or implications, and **Diligence**, where findings are clearly connected to specific, planned changes.

Although average scores declined slightly across categories, this reflects a larger and more diverse set of program submissions, including many programs earlier in their development. As a result, overall engagement in assessment has increased even as variation in practice across programs has widened.

The 2024–2025 assessment cycle also reflects important institutional progress. The collection and publication of all program learning outcomes in the DU Bulletin established a shared foundation for assessment across the university. At the same time, this process revealed variation in the clarity and measurability of outcomes, with some programs using outcomes that are difficult to assess consistently or meaningfully. Similarly, many programs continue to operate without clearly defined assessment plans or curriculum maps, leading to practices such as assessing all outcomes annually or relying primarily on indirect measures.

Taken together, these patterns suggest that many programs are effectively engaging in the early stages of assessment—collecting evidence and discussing results—but additional development is needed to support deeper interpretation and more intentional, sustained use of results. Programs demonstrating the most developed assessment practices not only use aligned, direct evidence of student learning, but also engage faculty in structured dialogue that leads to clearly articulated findings and intentional action. In these programs, assessment functions as an integrated cycle in which evidence, interpretation, and action are connected over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

In response to these findings, three priorities will guide program-level assessment work in the coming cycle.

1. REVISE PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES



Programs should review and refine their learning outcomes to ensure that they are **clearly measurable using observable evidence**, aligned with disciplinary or professional expectations, and sufficiently focused in scope to support sustained assessment. Strengthening outcomes will improve the quality of evidence collected and support more meaningful interpretation of results. This work builds on the foundation established through publication in the DU Bulletin and will be supported through consultation, resources, and examples (see Appendix D).

2. IMPLEMENT OR REFINE CURRICULUM MAPPING



Programs should develop or refine a curriculum map that identifies where each learning outcome is introduced, reinforced, and assessed. Effective maps help programs identify gaps or redundancies in learning opportunities and ensure that each outcome is assessed through clearly defined points in the curriculum. They also support the use of **direct evidence of student learning**, such as student work, projects, or performances, with indirect measures used to complement rather than replace this evidence. Curriculum mapping is essential for strengthening alignment among outcomes, curriculum, and assessment practices (see Appendix E).

3. DEVELOP A PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN



Each program should establish a clear, multi-year assessment plan that identifies which outcomes will be assessed each year, where in the curriculum assessment will occur, and what methods will be used. Programs should move away from assessing all outcomes annually and instead adopt a **focused, rotational approach** that allows for deeper analysis and more meaningful use of results. Strong plans support an ongoing cycle of assessment that includes targeted evaluation, structured faculty dialogue, and documented actions based on findings. (see Appendix F).



THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE AND ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

Effective assessment practice is grounded in an ongoing cycle of **review, interpretation, and improvement**. This approach is essential because learning outcomes serve as benchmarks for progress and alignment, enabling programs to evaluate not only what students learn, but how learning develops across the curriculum.

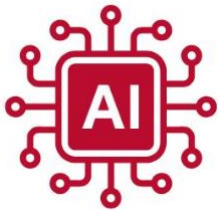
Across programs, the Review phase is increasingly used to understand curriculum as a coherent system. Curriculum mapping has helped faculty identify where key skills are introduced, reinforced, and assessed, revealing both strengths and gaps in student learning opportunities. This work moves assessment beyond individual courses and toward a program-level understanding of learning.

The Report phase has evolved from documentation into interpretation. Faculty are using reports as opportunities to discuss results, identify patterns, and situate findings within disciplinary expectations. These conversations are critical, as they transform data into shared understanding.

The Revise phase connects evidence to action. Programs are using findings to refine assignments, adjust course sequencing, and redesign elements of the curriculum. In more structured environments, such as engineering and law, this process is supported by formal review practices, ensuring that improvement is systematic and sustained over time.

Supporting these efforts are shared resources, including the Program Assessment Canvas course and the Assessment Toolkit, which help faculty develop measurable learning outcomes, align assignments, and collect consistent data.

Together, these practices demonstrate how the assessment cycle supports a shift from **evaluating learning to intentionally improving it**.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, STUDENT LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment relies on the ability to observe and interpret student learning. As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into teaching and learning, it is reshaping how students produce work and how faculty evaluate that work. In this context, traditional assessment approaches—particularly those relying on isolated, text-based products—may no longer provide reliable evidence of student learning. Across higher education, this shift is prompting a reconsideration of how assessment is designed, emphasizing the need for approaches that prioritize **authenticity, transparency, and alignment with learning outcomes**.

At the University of Denver, faculty are engaging with AI not only as a challenge to academic integrity, but as an opportunity to strengthen assessment practice. The Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) emphasizes that AI tools can support teaching and learning when used intentionally—for example, by helping students generate ideas, structure arguments, and reflect on their work—while also requiring clear expectations and thoughtful assignment design.

Across disciplines, emerging practices point to several key directions. First, faculty are designing assessments that make **student thinking and process visible**, rather than relying solely on final products. Multi-stage assignments, drafts, reflections, and process documentation create opportunities for students to demonstrate how their work develops over time and provide more reliable evidence of learning. This

approach also aligns with broader guidance that emphasizes requiring students to show their process and reasoning, particularly for complex assignments.

Second, many programs are incorporating **authentic and applied assessments** that reflect how knowledge is used in professional or disciplinary contexts. Assignments such as projects, presentations, case analyses, and field-based work are less vulnerable to AI substitution and better capture students' ability to apply knowledge, exercise judgment, and solve problems. Research suggests that such approaches not only strengthen academic integrity but also enhance engagement and relevance for students.

Third, faculty are increasingly focusing on **AI literacy as a component of learning**. Rather than attempting to eliminate AI use, some programs are asking students to critically evaluate AI-generated outputs, document how they used AI tools, and reflect on their decision-making. This approach treats AI as part of the learning environment and helps students develop skills in judgment, verification, and responsible use.

At the same time, the integration of AI raises important considerations related to **equity, transparency, and ethics**. Studies highlight the need for clear expectations about AI use, faculty and student training, and attention to potential bias and variability in AI tools. Effective assessment practices in this context require not only thoughtful design but also **shared understanding and communication** about how AI can and should be used.

Together, these developments suggest that effective assessment in an AI-enabled environment is not defined by avoiding AI, but by designing assessments that:

- align closely with intended learning outcomes
- require demonstration of reasoning, process, and application
- incorporate multiple forms of evidence across time
- clearly communicate expectations for AI use

These approaches support a shift from viewing AI as a threat to assessment toward using it as a catalyst for more **intentional, authentic, and learning-centered assessment design**.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

- Review key assignments to ensure they capture **student thinking, process, and application**, not just final products.
- Consider incorporating multi-stage or process-based assessments that make learning more visible.
- If AI tools are used in your field, identify ways to assess students' **judgment, reasoning, and responsible use of those tools**.
- Ensure that assessment methods remain aligned with program learning outcomes in an evolving instructional context.



CLOSING THE LOOP: USING RESULTS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Assessment is most valuable when it leads to action. Closing the loop refers to the process of using evidence of student learning to inform changes in curriculum, instruction, or program structure, and then revisiting those changes over time. This is a key indicator of strong practice because it demonstrates that assessment is actively shaping learning experiences.

Programs across the university are at varying stages in this process. While many are identifying meaningful findings, fewer consistently document how those findings translate into specific, observable changes or how those changes are evaluated over time. Strengthening this connection is essential to advancing assessment as a tool for continuous improvement.

In **Geography**, faculty reviewed assessment data comparing the performance of majors and non-majors on key learning indicators. While findings confirmed strengths in student learning, they also prompted discussion about how results could be more intentionally used to refine courses and strengthen alignment with program goals. This example highlights an important step in closing the loop: moving from identifying results to using them to guide improvement.

In **Political Science**, faculty implemented a redesign of the capstone experience to better align with program learning outcomes. By clarifying expectations and structuring the capstone around integrative learning goals, the program strengthened its ability to evaluate cumulative learning while also improving the student experience.

At the institutional level, the **College of Professional Studies** demonstrates how assessment findings can inform broader program decisions. Programs use evidence of student learning alongside enrollment and workforce data to guide redesign and alignment with professional expectations.

These examples illustrate that closing the loop is most effective when it becomes a **continuous process of using evidence to inform decisions and revisiting those decisions over time**.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

In your next annual assessment report, identify:

- one key finding derived from assessment evidence
- one specific change implemented in response (e.g., assignment revision, curricular adjustment, added instructional support)
- the expected impact of this change on student learning

Programs should also indicate how and when this change will be revisited to evaluate its effectiveness.



USING CREATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES TO UNDERSTAND STUDENT LEARNING

Assessment is most meaningful when it reflects how knowledge and skills are used in authentic disciplinary or professional contexts. Creative assessment practices are considered strong because they align evaluation with real-world application, allowing students to demonstrate learning in more meaningful and representative

ways.

In **Mechanical Engineering**, students complete multi-stage design projects that require them to develop, test, and refine solutions over time. These assessments allow faculty to evaluate both the process and the outcome of student work, providing a richer understanding of how students approach complex problems.

In the **Master of Social Work**, assessment includes both classroom-based assignments and field-based evaluations. This integration ensures that students demonstrate competencies not only in theory, but in practice, aligning assessment with professional standards and expectations.

In **English and Literary Arts**, student work is assessed through authentic disciplinary products such as essays, portfolios, and creative writing. These assignments reflect the ways in which knowledge is constructed and communicated within the field.

Across programs in the Daniels College of Business, such as **Marketing**, ePortfolios are used to document student learning across multiple courses. These portfolios allow for reflection and provide evidence of growth over time rather than at a single point.

Together, these examples show that creative assessment is not about novelty, but about designing assessments that **align with how learning is applied in context**, making evaluation more meaningful for students and faculty alike.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

In your next annual assessment report, identify:

- one assignment or assessment used to evaluate a program learning outcome
- how this assignment reflects authentic or discipline-aligned application of knowledge or skills
- how student performance on this assignment is evaluated (e.g., rubric, criteria, stages)

Programs should ensure that this assessment is clearly aligned with a program learning outcome and produces interpretable evidence of student learning.



POSSIBILITIES FOR DEALING WITH ASSESSMENT DATA

Assessment data is only valuable when it is interpreted and used in meaningful ways. Effective data use is a core element of strong assessment practice because it enables programs to move from information to insight and from insight to action.

In the **Sturm College of Law**, standardized grading practices allow faculty to compare student performance across courses. This consistency supports program-level understanding of learning and helps identify broader trends in student achievement.

In the **International Disaster Psychology** program, faculty use defined competency thresholds to evaluate performance across both coursework and applied experiences. This structure supports consistent interpretation of data and makes it easier to identify areas where students may need additional support.

Programs in the **Daniels College of Business** use multiple sources of data—including course-based assessments and external feedback—to inform curricular decisions. By integrating different forms of evidence, faculty can interpret results in context and connect them to program goals.

These approaches demonstrate that effective assessment requires not just collecting data, but **combining and interpreting multiple forms of evidence to support informed decision-making**.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

In your next annual assessment report, describe:

- the types of data used to assess each selected outcome (direct and, where appropriate, indirect)
- how multiple sources of evidence were combined or compared
- what key insights were drawn from the data

Programs should move beyond reporting results to clearly interpreting what the data indicate about student learning.



HIGHLIGHT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AS PART OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment not only identifies areas for improvement, but also provides important evidence of student success. Recognizing student achievement is a key aspect of effective practice because it helps programs understand what is working well and how those strengths can be sustained.

In Engineering Management programs, student achievement is reflected in consistent performance across key outcomes and evidence of growth as students progress through the curriculum. This suggests that course sequencing and instructional design are effectively supporting learning over time.

In the **International Disaster Psychology** program, student learning is evaluated through competency-based frameworks, with most students consistently meeting or exceeding defined benchmarks across multiple measures. These results indicate strong alignment between curriculum, assessment, and program expectations.

Across programs in the **College of Professional Studies**, improvements in capstone performance—including lower failure rates—reflect the impact of intentional curriculum design and assessment practices.

These examples demonstrate that student achievement is best understood as the result of **aligned curriculum, intentional assessment practices, and structured opportunities for students to demonstrate learning over time.**

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

In your next annual assessment report, identify:

- at least one area of strong student achievement based on assessment evidence
- the evidence used to determine this strength
- how this strength reflects alignment among outcomes, curriculum, and assessment

Programs should also describe how they plan to sustain or build on this area of success.



CONNECT AND COLLABORATE

Assessment is most effective when it is approached as a **shared, ongoing practice of inquiry**. The examples in this report demonstrate that meaningful assessment does not require large-scale change, but rather develops through small, intentional steps taken within courses and programs over time.

Assessment work is most effective when it is collaborative. Faculty who would like to further develop their approaches—whether refining an assignment, designing a rubric, or interpreting results—are encouraged to **schedule a consultation with the Director of Academic Assessment**.

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Booking: Scan the QR code to book time with Stephen Riley



APPENDIX A: RUBRIC FOR FACULTY REFLECTION ABOUT ASSESSMENT

The Director of Academic Assessment returns annual assessment reports with feedback based on the following rubric. The rubric is used as a developmental guide to support reflection and conversation—not to evaluate or rank programs.

Criterion	Description	No Evidence	Entry	Emerging	Enhancing
Data	The faculty of the program collected meaningful data throughout the year that was clearly aligned with the specific outcomes being assessed	No evidence of data collected or presented for the purpose of analyzing student learning	Evidence that data related to student learning was collected	Evidence that data was collected and analyzed	A clear narrative of how multiple people engaged in collecting and analyzing more than one piece of data related to student learning
Dialogue	The faculty of the program engaged in meaningful dialogue about assessment	No evidence in the report the program engaged in meaningful dialogue during the year regarding any assessment measures	Evidence of one meaningful conversation related to assessment measures in the past year	More than one meaningful discussion about student learning as it relates to the program outcomes	A clear narrative of how multiple people engaged in multiple meaningful discussions about student learning
Discernment	The faculty of the program reported how their assessment work helped inform decisions about the future of the program	No indication the faculty made any decisions based on their assessment process	Evidence of the year's assessment work informing programmatic decisions	More than one piece of evidence of how the assessment work informed programmatic decisions	A clear narrative of how multiple people were involved in making informed programmatic decisions in alignment with their mission and values
Diligence	The faculty reported a plan for implementing changes that will be made regarding student learning	No evidence of a plan to implement decisions from the discernment step in the assessment work	A reported outline for implementing a programmatic decision in the next year	A clear plan for implementing programmatic decisions with an accountability structure to ensure implementation	A clear narrative for implementing programmatic decisions with clear accountability structure involving multiple people to ensure implementation

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT TERMS

ACCREDITATION

Also Known As:

Quality assurance; external review

Accreditation is a peer-review process used to assure the quality of institutions or programs and support continuous improvement. It evaluates whether programs meet established standards and use evidence of student learning effectively. It may apply at the institutional or program level.

See Also:

Program Review; Continuous Improvement

ALIGNMENT

Also Known As:

Curricular alignment

Alignment is the intentional connection among learning outcomes, curriculum, and assessment methods. Strong alignment ensures that what is taught and assessed reflects what students are expected to learn. It is often examined through curriculum mapping.

See Also:

Curriculum Mapping; Learning Outcomes

ASSESSMENT

Also Known As:

Assessment of student learning

Assessment is the systematic process of collecting and using evidence to understand and improve student learning. Its primary purpose is improvement, not evaluation or grading. It supports decisions about curriculum, teaching, and program effectiveness.

See Also:

Evaluation; Data and Evidence; Continuous Improvement

ASSESSMENT PLAN

Also Known As:

Assessment cycle; assessment strategy

An assessment plan outlines how a program will assess learning outcomes over time, including methods, timeline, and responsibilities. Strong plans focus on a manageable number of outcomes each year. Multi-year plans support deeper analysis and sustained improvement.

See Also:

Learning Outcomes; Methods of Assessment; Curriculum Mapping

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Also Known As:

Applied assessment; performance-based assessment

Authentic assessment asks students to apply knowledge and skills in meaningful or real-world contexts. These assessments reflect professional or disciplinary practice and often involve projects, performances, or applied tasks. They provide more representative evidence of learning.

See Also:

Direct Measures; Rubrics and Scoring

BENCHMARKING

Also Known As:

Performance comparison; Comparative analysis; Peer Comparison

Benchmarking is the process of comparing performance, outcomes, or practices to external standards or peer institutions. It is used to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement.

See Also:

Standards, Continuous Improvement, Data.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Also Known As:

Continuous improvement; improvement cycle; using results; assessment cycle

Closing the loop is the process of using assessment findings to make changes and then evaluating whether those changes improved student learning. It connects evidence to action and emphasizes follow-up over time to determine impact. This iterative cycle supports ongoing refinement of curriculum, teaching, and program effectiveness.

See Also:

Assessment; Data and Evidence; Evaluation

CURRICULUM MAPPING

Also Known As:

Curricular mapping

Curriculum mapping identifies where learning outcomes are taught, reinforced, and assessed across a program. It helps programs locate gaps, redundancies, and progression of learning. It is essential for planning and alignment.

See Also:

Alignment; Assessment Plan; Learning Outcomes

DATA AND EVIDENCE Also Known As: <i>Assessment data; evidence of learning</i> Data and evidence refer to information used to understand student learning, including student work, scores, and feedback. Effective assessment uses multiple sources and interprets them in context. Data should inform decisions but not replace professional judgment. See Also: <i>Direct and Indirect Measures; Evaluation</i>	DIRECT MEASURES Also Known As: <i>Types of evidence; assessment measures</i> Direct measures provide evidence of student learning based on actual student performance or work. These include exams, papers, presentations, projects, and portfolios. See also Direct measures provide evidence of student learning based on actual student performance or work. These include exams, papers, presentations, projects, and portfolios. See Also: <i>Assessment; Authentic Assessment; Data and Evidence; Indirect Measures</i>
FEEDBACK Also Known As: <i>Comment(s); Critique; Observations(s); Review</i> Feedback is information provided to students or instructors about performance relative to learning goals or criteria. Effective feedback is timely, specific, and actionable, supporting improvement and deeper learning. See Also: <i>Formative Assessment, Rubric, Self-Assessment.</i>	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT Also Known As: <i>Assessment for Learning; low-stakes assessment</i> Formative assessment occurs during the learning process to monitor progress and provide feedback for improvement. It supports instructional adjustments and helps students identify areas for growth. See Also: <i>Summative Assessment, Feedback.</i>
GRADING Also Known As <i>Scoring; marking</i> Grading is the assignment of a score or mark to represent a student's level of performance. It is typically summative and used for reporting achievement. Unlike assessment, grading does not by itself support program improvement. See Also: <i>Summative Assessment; Evaluation</i>	HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES Also Known As: <i>Active Learning; Deep Learning; HIPs</i> High-Impact Practices are teaching and learning activities shown to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. Examples include internships, undergraduate research, and capstone projects. See Also: <i>Authentic Assessment</i>
INDIRECT MEASURES Also Known As: <i>Types of evidence; assessment measures</i> Indirect measures provide evidence of learning based on perceptions or reflections rather than direct performance. These include surveys, interviews, and focus groups. See Also: <i>Direct Measures, Data and Evidence</i>	INTER-RATER RELIABILITY Inter-rater reliability is the degree to which different evaluators provide consistent scores when assessing the same performance or work. High inter-rater reliability supports fairness and consistency in evaluation. See Also: <i>Reliability, Rubric.</i>

LEARNING OUTCOMES Also Known As: <i>Learning Objectives; Standards; Competencies</i> Learning outcomes are clear, measurable statements of what students should know or be able to do. They guide curriculum design, teaching, and assessment. Strong outcomes focus on observable skills or knowledge. Outcomes can occur at the Institutional, Program, Course, and Unit levels. See Also: <i>Alignment; Assessment Plan</i>	PORTFOLIO Also Known As: <i>Work samples; Artifact compilation</i> A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that demonstrates progress and achievement over time. It often includes reflection and multiple types of evidence. See Also: <i>Direct Measures, Authentic Assessment.</i>
PROGRAM REVIEW Also Known As: <i>Academic program review</i> Program review is a periodic evaluation of a program's quality and effectiveness. It typically integrates assessment data, peer review, and planning. It supports long-term program improvement and alignment with institutional goals. See Also: <i>Accreditation; Evaluation; Continuous Improvement</i>	RELIABILITY Also Known As: <i>Validity</i> Reliability refers to the consistency of an assessment measure across time, contexts, or evaluators. Reliable assessments yield stable and dependable results. See Also: <i>Authentic Assessment; Inter-rater Reliability; Methods of Assessment; Rubrics</i>
RUBRICS Also Known As: <i>Scoring guides; Grading rubrics</i> Rubrics are scoring tools that define criteria and levels of performance for evaluating student work. Analytic rubrics score separate criteria, while holistic scoring provides an overall judgment. Rubrics support consistency, transparency, and meaningful feedback. See Also: <i>Feedback; Direct Measures</i>	SAMPLING Also Known As: <i>Selection, Subset, Representative selection</i> Sampling is the process of selecting a representative subset of students, artifacts, or data for assessment purposes. It allows programs to gather meaningful evidence without evaluating every possible data point. See Also: <i>Data</i>
SCAFFOLDING Also Known As: <i>Supported learning; Guided practice</i> Scaffolded assessment refers to a sequence of assessments designed to build progressively toward more complex learning. Each step supports skill development and prepares students for more advanced tasks. See Also: <i>Formative Assessment, Summative Assessment.</i>	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT Also Known As: <i>Assessment of learning; high-stakes assessment</i> Summative assessment occurs at the end of a learning period to evaluate achievement of outcomes. It is often used for grading and accountability purposes. See also <i>Formative Assessment, Evaluation.</i>

APPENDIX C: ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The annual assessment report is completed by the assessment leader for each credential offered. Reports are submitted through the Program Assessment Canvas course.

If you are new to leading assessment, please contact the Director of Academic Assessment to be added to the course.

This appendix outlines the standard questions included in the annual report to support consistent and meaningful documentation of assessment practices across programs.

SECTION 1: REPORT INFORMATION

1. Report Author's Name
2. Unit
3. Department (if applicable)
4. Program Name(s), including major and degree

SECTION 2: PROGRAMS WITH SPECIALIZED REPORTING

If your program has specialized accreditation that requires you report on assessment of student learning or assurance of learning, you may submit that report in place of completing the form.

Everyone will be asked if the following question:

5. Does your program have specialized accreditation for which you write an annual report that includes assessment of student learning (sometimes called assurance of learning)? If you do, you may submit your report, or a form of it, as your program assessment report. You should have discussed this with the Director of Academic Assessment prior to submission.
 - If you answer “yes” to that question, you’ll see the following question:
6. Upload your 2025 assessment report and any supporting documents. Once you've uploaded your document(s), you'll be taken to the end of the form.
 - If you answer “no” to that question, you’ll be taken to the next section of the form to complete the report.

SECTION 3: CLOSING THE LOOP OF LAST YEAR’S ASSESSMENT

7. Please review last year's assessment report for your program and share any updates on what you've learned from your assessment work that connects to last year's report.

SECTION 4: DATA

8. Please list the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) your program assessed this year?
9. What type(s) of direct student learning data did your program use to assess the Program Learning Outcomes this past year? (Direct Data is the student's own work that is submitted to demonstrate learning)

10. What type(s) of indirect student learning data did your program use to assess the Program Learning Outcomes this past year? (Indirect Data is what a student says about their learning)
11. Please share the conclusions or interpretations you drew from the data you used to assess student learning.
12. Please upload any documents related to student learning data

SECTION 5: DIALOGUE

13. How many times did members of your department meet to discuss assessment. This can include formal assessment meetings, assessment agenda items in other meetings, informal group discussions.

SECTION 6: DISCERNMENT AND DILIGENCE

14. Based on your data, conclusions, and dialogue, please share a short narrative about your assessment work this year and the plans that have resulted from it. You might share any or all of the following:
 - Decisions that will be implemented in the year to come because of your assessment work.
 - Stories of student learning success that should be shared.
 - Assessment practices that are benefiting faculty and students in your program.
 - Trends that you are noticing about student learning that might be important for future reflection.

SECTION 7: CONCLUSION

15. Are there any topics the Director of Academic Assessment could assist you and your program in the coming year?
16. Is there anything else related to this year's assessment that you would like to share?

APPENDIX D: WRITING EFFECTIVE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes define what students should know and be able to do at the end of a course or program. Clear outcomes support alignment across curriculum, teaching, and assessment and provide a foundation for evaluating student learning.

A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK: MEANINGFUL, MEASURABLE, MANAGEABLE

Effective learning outcomes should be:

- **Meaningful** – aligned with disciplinary expectations and program goals
- **Measurable** – based on observable student performance
- **Manageable** – limited in number and scope so they can be assessed over time

BASIC STRUCTURE OF A LEARNING OUTCOME

Use the stem:

"By the end of the [course/program], students will be able to..."

Each outcome should:

- Begin with a **single active verb**
- Focus on **one demonstrable skill or area of knowledge**
- Be assessable through **student work (direct evidence)**

USING DEMONSTRABLE VERBS (BY LEVEL)

The level of the credential should shape the **complexity of the verb** used.

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES OR PROGRAMS

Focus on foundational knowledge, application, and analysis:

- Example verbs: *describe, explain, apply, analyze, summarize*
- Example:
 - *Students will **analyze** communication strategies for real-world scenarios.*

GRADUATE COURSES OR PROGRAMS

Emphasize synthesis, judgment, and independent thinking:

- Example verbs: *evaluate, design, formulate, integrate, critique*
- Example outcome:
 - *Students will **design** solutions to complex problems using theoretical frameworks.*

DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

Focus on knowledge creation and disciplinary leadership:

- Example verbs: *create, theorize, innovate, defend*
- Example outcome:

- Students will **design** original research that contributes to disciplinary knowledge.

COURSES WITH MIXED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

Use shared and differentiated expectations:

- Undergraduate:
 - Students will **analyze** key concepts of defined problems.
- Graduate:
 - Students will **synthesize** concepts to develop advanced solutions.

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

- Using vague verbs (*understand, know, appreciate*)
- Combining multiple skills in one outcome
- Writing outcomes that cannot be assessed through student work
- Including too many outcomes to assess meaningfully

QUICK CHECKLIST

A strong learning outcome is:

- ☐ Observable (can you see it in student work?)
- ☐ Aligned (does it reflect program goals?)
- ☐ Focused (one skill per outcome?)
- ☐ Appropriately leveled (undergraduate vs graduate?)

APPENDIX E: USING CURRICULUM MAPS

WHAT IS A CURRICULUM MAP AND WHY IT MATTERS

A curriculum map is a structured way to show where program learning outcomes are taught, reinforced, and assessed across a program's **required courses and key co-curricular experiences**. By mapping outcomes across the curriculum, programs can see how learning develops over time—from introductory exposure to advanced demonstration—and identify where students provide evidence of learning. This helps ensure that every outcome is intentionally addressed, supports the design of a **multi-year assessment plan**, and enables programs to align assignments, courses, and experiences with clear expectations for student learning. Curriculum maps also help identify gaps (outcomes not assessed), redundancies, and opportunities to strengthen progression across the curriculum.

USING THE CURRICULUM MAP FOR ASSESSMENT PLANNING

Programs should use curriculum maps to:

- Identify **where each outcome is assessed through direct evidence**
- Ensure all outcomes are assessed at the **appropriate level (especially mastery)**
- Select a subset of outcomes to assess each year
- Align assignments and experiences with program-level outcomes
- Support meaningful interpretation of student learning over time

GETTING STARTED

To begin:

1. List your program learning outcomes
2. Identify required courses and key co-curricular experiences
3. Map where each outcome is introduced, reinforced, and assessed
4. Identify the assignments that demonstrate learning
5. Use this map to build a multi-year assessment plan

KEY FEATURES OF THIS MAP

- Outcomes are assessed across **required courses and key program experiences**.
- Each outcome is addressed at increasing levels:
 - **Introduced**—foundational exposure
 - **Reinforced**—practice with feedback
 - **Mastery**—independent demonstration
- Cells identify **how students demonstrate learning**, using:
 - **Direct evidence**: student papers, projects, and presentations
 - **Indirect evidence**: student reflections, surveys and supervisor feedback

EXAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP (PROGRAM-LEVEL)

KEY

Red = Introduced

Blue = Reinforced

Green = Mastery

Courses and Experiences (Sequence)	Outcome 1: Communication	Outcome 2: Critical Thinking	Outcome 3: Applied Practice	Outcome 4: Professional Ethics
Foundations Course (1000-level)	Short presentation (direct evidence)	Written reflection (direct evidence)	—	Ethics discussion post (direct evidence)
Methods Course (2000-level)	Group presentation with rubric (direct evidence)	Data analysis assignment (direct evidence)	Case study (direct evidence)	—
Intermediate Course (3000-level)	Research paper with rubric (direct evidence)	—	Applied project (direct evidence)	Ethics case analysis (direct evidence)
Advanced Seminar (3000/4000-level)	—	Comparative analysis paper (direct evidence)	Field-based project (direct evidence)	—
Internship (co-curricular)	Supervisor evaluation (indirect evidence)	—	Internship reflection (indirect evidence)	Supervisor feedback (indirect evidence)
Capstone Course	Final presentation with rubric (direct evidence)	Capstone paper (direct evidence)	Applied project (direct evidence)	Ethical analysis in capstone (direct evidence)
Exit Survey (co-curricular)	Student self-assessment (indirect evidence)	Student reflection (indirect evidence)	Alumni feedback (indirect evidence)	Student perception of learning (indirect evidence)

APPENDIX F: ASSESSMENT PLANNING

This template is designed to support programs in planning, implementing, and documenting assessment as an ongoing cycle of improvement. It guides programs through the key steps of identifying learning outcomes, collecting and interpreting evidence, and using results to inform meaningful action.

Rather than serving as a compliance document, this template is intended to support faculty in engaging in a focused, sustainable process of inquiry into student learning.

FIVE STEPS FOR USING THE ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

1. **Define Assessment Roles and Processes**

Describe how assessment work will be coordinated within the program, including who leads the work, how results are shared, and how findings are documented.

2. **Identify Student Learning Outcomes and Map Them to the Curriculum**

List the intended learning outcomes for the program. Outcomes should describe what students should know or be able to do upon completion of the degree. Identify where each outcome is introduced, reinforced, and assessed across the curriculum. Consider both required coursework and shared learning experiences.

3. **Plan Assessment Activities**

Identify the questions the program will investigate next, the outcomes that will be assessed, the evidence that will be collected, and the timeline for completing this work. All outcomes should be assessed over a multi-year cycle.

4. **Interpret Results and Identify Actions**

Reflect on recent assessment activities to identify key findings about student learning. Based on these findings, describe any actions taken or planned to improve the student experience.

Programs are encouraged to focus on a manageable number of outcomes each year and use a multi-year plan to support deeper analysis and sustained improvement.

STEP 1: ASSESSMENT ROLES AND PROCESSES

1. **Who will lead the assessment work?**

(Identify an individual or team responsible for coordinating implementation of the assessment plan.)

2. **How will assessment information be shared within the program?**

(For example, through an annual faculty meeting or program retreat. In addition to student learning evidence, programs may also review enrollment, course progression, and degree completion data.)

3. **What is the plan for producing an annual assessment summary?**

(The annual summary report should document findings, faculty discussion, and any resulting actions. A reporting template is available in the Program Assessment Canvas Site.)

STEP 2: LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM MAPPING

What are the student learning outcomes for the program?

- Program learning outcomes should answer the question, “At the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate what knowledge or skills?”
- Generally, programs have 4-6 outcomes unless more are required by professional accreditation.

Where in the curriculum are students learning and demonstrating each outcome?

Curriculum mapping should:

- ensure that each outcome is assessed at identified points in the curriculum
- emphasize the use of direct evidence of student learning (e.g., student work, projects, performances), with indirect measures used to complement that evidence

STEP 3: ASSESSMENT PLANNING QUESTIONS

Describe how the program will:

- assess a focused set of outcomes each year
- collect and interpret evidence
- engage faculty in reviewing results
- implement and evaluate changes over time

For each outcome, identify the related outcome, evidence source, and timeline. One way to do this is to use the table below:

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:	<i>Enter the program-level outcome being assessed</i>
SOURCES/METHODS FOR EVIDENCE:	<i>List courses, assignments, or other sources of direct evidence; include indirect measures where appropriate</i>
TIMELINE:	<i>Indicate the academic year this work will take place</i>

Programs should move away from assessing all outcomes annually and instead adopt a **rotational, multi-year approach** that supports deeper analysis and more meaningful use of results.

STEP 4: INTERPRETATION AND USE OF RESULTS

What did you learn from your assessment activities?

- What is one **clear finding** about student learning?
- What evidence supports this finding?
- What action has been taken or is planned in response?

Describe how this action is intended to improve student learning and how its impact will be evaluated in a future cycle.