

University of Dayton Plan for Assessment for Undergraduate Student Learning

Guiding Principles on Assessment

The University of Dayton considers assessment for student learning to be an integral component of the daily operations of every unit on campus, both in the classroom setting and outside of the classroom. All academic units at UD engage in some form of assessment. The purpose of assessment is for continuous improvement. The definition of “unit” is left to the discretion of the deans and vice presidents – whatever is appropriate for their situation. A unit is defined as a department or a program that contributes directly to student learning experiences. Faculty or staff could conceivably belong to more than one unit for the purposes of assessment. Each academic unit must assess two or more of the University institutional learning goals in addition to unit-specific learning outcomes (see terminology in next section); units engaged in co-curricular work also assess the University’s institutional learning goals. Units may also assess the outcomes of specific programs (e.g., Humanities Commons).

These primary principles guide assessment at the University of Dayton.

1. Assessment for student learning is purposeful.
 - a. Assessment is formative for the instructor: Evidence of student learning is evaluated and used by the faculty and staff who offer the course or experience to improve the course or experience in the future.
 - b. Assessment is formative for the program: Evidence of student learning is evaluated and used collectively by the major or program to improve the major or program in the future. Units provide evidence of the use of assessment data to drive improvements that help students learn better.
 - c. The principle of assess twice, intervene once is utilized to determine the impact of changes in the course or experience which were intended to lead to improvement.
2. Assessment is pervasive.
 - a. Assessment for student learning is a collective responsibility for faculty and staff.
 - b. Evaluation of student learning is conducted by the implementers of the course or experience through direct assessment for learning whenever possible.
3. Criteria for student learning are based on the goals of the course or experience.
 - a. Ideally, one or more of the goals of the course or experience is linked to the one or more of the seven UD “Habits of Inquiry and Reflection” (HIR) institutional learning goals.
 - b. At UD we conduct assessment “for” learning improvement instead of “of” learning.
4. Assessments should be efficient.

- a. Assessments should be structured to effectively collect data in order to both determine the current state of goals and objectives and develop strategies for improvement.
- b. Data collected should be necessary and sufficient to address the assessment question. There is no intent to collect data just in case it might be needed in the future.
- c. Where relevant, University and unit assessment activities should be designed in conjunction with the assessment activities required by outside agencies and accrediting bodies; there is no intent to duplicate activities.

The University holds local units responsible for planning and implementing their own assessment activities. The University will not dictate to units how to conduct their assessments, yet it does require that assessment be conducted on a regular basis and that a summary of assessment results and actions taken as a result of the assessment activities be reported annually to the University Assessment Committee (UAC), which acts under the authority of the Provost. The UAC serves as a resource to the units represented on the committee, as well as for the campus community more broadly.

Learning Aspirations, Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

University-wide HIR Institutional Learning Goals (ILGs)

In 2005, the Marianist Education Working Group researched and facilitated the development of the “Habits of Inquiry and Reflection.” This document established a set of best practices for the Marianist-based education at the University of Dayton. The seven institutional learning goals (ILGs) in the (HIR) serve as learning goals for the University. The UAC has adopted these ILGs to direct the University’s assessment process. Specifically, HIR stated that these goals

could be promoted in different ways, through different structures and activities, in the student’s major, in General Education and Competencies programs [replaced with the Common Academic Program curriculum starting with the 2013-14 entering class], in co-curricular programming, and in learning experiences that transpire outside the formal curriculum. They are not to be regarded as the exclusive responsibility of a limited segment of the university community. Rather, they should shape all intentional planning for students’ educational experience in every division of the university. (Marianist Education Working Group, 2006, p. 7)

Originally, the HIR document used the term student learning outcomes (SLOs). The UAC has determined that the SLOs identified in the HIR are sufficiently complex to consider that they are aspirational value statements instead of specific learning outcomes. It should be understood that these statements are interpreted broadly and are not expected to be addressed as measurable outcomes. In order to clarify assessment practices and align terminology, going forward we will call these institutional learning goals (ILGs). This document includes some clarification about the terminology in order to avoid misinterpretation.

The institutional learning goals (originally known as student learning outcomes or SLOs) are:

1. Scholarship: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate advanced habits of academic inquiry and creativity through the production of a body of artistic, scholarly or community-based work intended for public presentation and defense.

2. Faith traditions: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate ability to engage in intellectually informed, appreciative, and critical inquiry regarding major faith traditions. Students will be familiar with the basic theological understandings and central texts that shape Catholic beliefs and teachings, practices, and spiritualities. Students' abilities should be developed sufficiently to allow them to examine deeply their own faith commitments and also to participate intelligently and respectfully in dialogue with other traditions.
3. Diversity: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate intellectually informed, appreciative, and critical understanding of the cultures, histories, times, and places of multiple others, as marked by class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and other manifestations of difference. Students' understanding will reflect scholarly inquiry, experiential immersion, and disciplined reflection.
4. Community: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate understanding of and practice in the values and skills necessary for learning, living, and working in communities of support and challenge. These values and skills include accepting difference, resolving conflicts peacefully, and promoting reconciliation; they encompass productive, discerning, creative, and respectful collaboration with persons from diverse backgrounds and perspectives for the common purpose of learning, service, and leadership that aim at just social transformation. Students will demonstrate these values and skills on campus and in the Dayton region as part of their preparation for global citizenship.
5. Practical wisdom: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate practical wisdom in addressing real human problems and deep human needs, drawing upon advanced knowledge, values, and skills in their chosen profession or major course of study. Starting with a conception of human flourishing, students will be able to define and diagnose symptoms, relationships, and problems clearly and intelligently, construct and evaluate possible solutions, thoughtfully select and implement solutions, and critically reflect on the process in light of actual consequences.
6. Critical evaluation of our times: Through multidisciplinary study, all undergraduates will develop and demonstrate habits of inquiry and reflection, informed by familiarity with Catholic Social Teaching, that equip them to evaluate critically and imaginatively the ethical, historical, social, political, technological, economic, and ecological challenges of their times in light of the past.
7. Vocation: Using appropriate scholarly and communal resources, all undergraduates will develop and demonstrate ability to articulate reflectively the purposes of their life and proposed work through the language of vocation. In collaboration with the university community, students' developing vocational plans will exhibit appreciation of the fullness of human life, including its intellectual, ethical, spiritual, aesthetic, social, emotional, and bodily dimensions, and will examine both the interdependence of self and community and the responsibility to live in service of others.

Unit Student Learning Goals

It is widely accepted in the assessment literature that learning goals outline “the roadmap for the curriculum and are the foundation on which the assessment program is built. However, learning goals are broad and not sufficiently specific to be observed,” (Martell, 2005). These goals are intended as the roadmap for units to follow when developing, implementing and measuring their own student learning goals.

Units adopt learning goals relevant to their specific programs. Units provide programs, courses and experiences that collectively meet the institutional learning goal (ILG) aspirations of the university by linking their own goals with elements from the university’s ILGs. Each of the seven institutional learning goals or aspirations will be covered by at least one unit or activity on campus. No one unit will be expected to cover all seven goals, but the UD community is expected to provide many opportunities for student engagement in each of these areas at all developmental levels.

Even though these outcomes are worded in the context of the undergraduate student experience, this does not diminish the importance of the graduate student experience at UD. Assessments of graduate programs are conducted by the academic units.

Course / Experience Student Learning Objectives

Martell (2005) states that learning objectives “identify specific observable behaviors and actions related to goals that faculty will use to describe, monitor, and assess student achievement. Thus, objectives are used as indicators of goals.” It is the responsibility of the units, not the UAC or another administrative body, to develop learning objectives based on their own goals.

In practice, instructors and staff who facilitate courses and experiences determine their learning objectives and measure student demonstrations of learning. The objectives are mapped to both the unit’s objectives and the University’s institutional learning goals. Students should have a variety of experiences that will address the seven HIR aspirational values of the University in a developmental fashion with increasing levels of sophistication in their University programs.

Organization

University Assessment Committee (UAC). The University Assessment Committee (UAC) works under the authority of the Provost and oversees the student learning assessment process at the University of Dayton. The UAC is chaired by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Learning Initiatives. Membership is comprised of unit assessment representatives, often unit associate deans charged with assessment; the Director of Student Development Assessment and Planning; the Assistant Provost for the Common Academic Program; and the Data and Assessment Coordinator.

The UAC is a community of learners that supports the development of assessment leaders who are able to help their units develop capacity for assessment and, importantly, assist their units in infusing assessment into their decision-making practices. The UAC facilitates the sharing of assessment practices and results between units to support a systems-level approach to student learning improvement. The UAC is responsible for fostering an assessment culture on campus that is focused on continuous improvement.

Each unit has one representative that serves on the UAC and acts as a liaison between that committee and the unit departments and programs. UAC members are responsible for orchestrating assessment activities for their units and act as resources for unit departments and programs conducting assessment activities. They assist with the development and measurement of goals, and the interpretation of results from the measurements.

Unit. Unit departments and programs are responsible for conducting assessment activities in their area. Summary unit reports are submitted to the UAC yearly by the representative. The purpose of the report is to contribute to the university-wide annual report of continuous improvement for learning that is submitted to the Provost.

Assessment Process

Unit Responsibilities. The units themselves develop goals and then determine learning objectives and assessment methods to measure achievement of those goals. Units develop plans and implement their assessments based on a cycle that will allow for them to monitor improvement. Assessments are implemented as planned and the results are used to engage in continuous improvement. Units are encouraged to engage in reflection of the assessment results through discussions of strengths and methods to address areas needing improvement.

These formative actions can influence unit planning processes and, therefore, result in organizational change. In order to be efficient and effective, this cycle needs to be consonant with unit accreditation needs, where applicable. Therefore, the timing of the cycles may vary from one unit or program to the next; what is similar in all is the need to use assessment results to contribute to continuous improvement. See Appendix B for a table capturing the University of Dayton's accreditation cycles.

The units assure that their goals and assessments link with UD's mission, with UD's HIR institutional learning goals, and with their own mission. Additionally, outside accreditation requirements can be mapped to the unit's goals and objectives. In reviewing their goals, units ask themselves the following questions: Is the unit goal relevant to the expectations of student learning in the course, experience, department, or program? Is the goal measurable? Are direct methods available to assess the goal? If not, are indirect methods available? Do the selected methods of measurement actually reflect attainment of the goal?

Via their respective UAC representative, the units and programs annually submit to the UAC summaries of actions taken as a result of their assessment activities. Units are required to submit relatively short (could be as few as one to two pages) written assessment summaries on an annual basis. The intent of this process is to reinforce the practice of making these evaluations an integral part of the units' overall continuous improvement processes. The submitted summaries highlight actions taken as a result of past assessment activities, and evaluate the effect of those actions. This process encourages units to determine not only the level of accomplishment in relation to the learning goals and objectives, but also how to indicate how the data have been used for improvement. What subsequent changes were made as a result of evaluating the data? Were those changes effective? What do the data show now? Should other changes be made? How do the changes impact other goals and strategies in the unit? What is the relationship between assessment and planning?

Certain units may be in a position to provide ILG assessment data to other units. This sharing of information may contribute to: various accreditation processes, accomplishment of strategic plans, and student recruitment. Thus, every unit is encouraged to view assessment data, not only to be used for internal improvement, but also as information that contributes to the entirety of the UD community with the goal of continuous improvement.

Role and Responsibilities of the University Assessment Committee (UAC). The UAC members work with units to assure that units focus on outcomes, use appropriate measures, and collect data in a way that is purposeful, timely, relevant to their goals for improvement, and efficient. The UAC unit representative is responsible for submitting the annual unit assessment reports to the UAC. In cases in which units have their own accrediting bodies that require specific assessment-related activities, the summaries submitted to the UAC may contain information taken directly from accreditation reports submitted by the unit.

The UAC analyzes assessment reports provided by the units, and writes the annual university-wide assessment report which is shared with the Provost and the Academic Senate. The report, and the unit level reports, will balance the ideal of minimizing reporting requirements with creating a record that demonstrates continuous improvement processes across the university. The report also addresses progress toward institutionalizing the university-wide assessment system and the data gathering efforts. It addresses the actions that units have taken in response to the data that have been gathered. The report emphasizes that the purpose of ongoing data collection is formative with an eye toward continuous improvement, and not to be used in a summative context.

Appendix A

Unit Assessment Report Template

[Insert Academic Year]

Unless specified otherwise, data are based on [insert academic year]

Unit:	Report was completed by:
--------------	---------------------------------

Units should also attach a brief narrative (no more than a page) to explain how the data are used for improvement. The complete report should be submitted to the University Assessment Committee Chair by xxxx.

	Most Recent Reporting Period: ILGs for which the unit collected data and measured progress toward achievement.	Future Plans: When/how data will be collected to measure progress toward achievement of the ILGs. <i>Either Column C or D must be completed for each ILG.</i>		
Institutional Learning Goal (ILG)*	Column A: List departments, courses, and/or experiences for which measurement was taken for each ILG.	Column B: Insert year, or indicate if data collection will not be conducted within the unit.	Column C: For ILGs for which progress toward achievement will be measured <i>within the unit</i> , provide as much detail as possible (e.g., department, course, and/or experiences).	Column D: Complete if the unit will rely on <i>other units</i> for data collection and measurement toward achievement of the ILGs. Provide as much detail as possible (e.g., department, course, and/or experiences).
	A	B	C	D
SCHOLARSHIP				
FAITH TRADITIONS				
DIVERSITY				
COMMUNITY				
PRACTICAL WISDOM				
CRITICAL EVALUATION OF OUR TIMES				
VOCATION				

*The University changed terminology in Fall 2017 to Institutional Learning Goals. They were previously referred to as Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), as stated in the *Habits of Inquiry and Reflection*.

Appendix B

University of Dayton Accreditation Updates

As of January 2017

Accreditation Summary

The chart below lists each of the accreditations held within the University, the accrediting body for each, and the schedule for the review process. The Institutional Researcher for Academics in the Office of the Provost maintains this chart and updates it on a regular basis, typically in January and July each year.

Division	Accrediting Agency	Initial Accred	Most Recent	Review Cycle	Next Scheduled
University	HLC – Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools	1928	2007	10 years	2017
	Ohio Dept. of Higher Education (formerly Ohio Board of Regents)	1963	2008	10 years	2018
Provost	CEA - Commission on English Language Program Accreditation	2016	2016	5 years	2021
Arts & Sciences	ABET, Inc. (for B.S. degree in Computer Science) <i>*As a newly-accredited program the initial accreditation date was set retroactively to 2014.</i>	2014*	2015	6 years	2021
	MPAC – Masters in Psychology Accreditation Council	1997	2008	10 years	2018
	NASAD – National Association of Schools of Art and Design	2005	2012	5 years	2017
	NASM – National Association of Schools of Music	1970	2014	10 years	2024
	NASPAA – Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration	2007	2014	7 years	2021
Business	AACSB International – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business	1983	2014	5 years	2019
<i>(continued)</i>					

Division	Accrediting Agency	Initial Accredited	Most Recent	Review Cycle	Next Scheduled
Education	CAEP – Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (formerly NCATE)	1954	2016	7 years	2023
	ARC-PA – Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant	2014	2016	10 years following full accred	2018
	CACREP – Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs	2010	2009	9 years	2018
	ACEND – Accreditation Council for Education, Nutrition & Dietetics	2003	2013	10 years	2023
	CAPTE – Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education	2006	2009	10 years	2019
	CSWMFT Board – Counselor, Social Worker & Marriage and Family Therapist Board	2007	2012	5 years	2017 <i>(NA after 1-1-18)</i>
Engineering	ABET, Inc. – Engineering Accreditation Commission		2010	6 years	2016
	Chemical Engineering	1969			
	Civil Engineering	1951			
	Computer Engineering	1999			
	Electrical Engineering	1951			
	Mechanical Engineering	1951			
	ABET, Inc. – Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission		2010	6 years	2016
	Electronic and Computer Engineering Technology	2009			
	Industrial Engineering Technology	1980			
	Manufacturing Engineering Technology	1990			
	Mechanical Engineering Technology	1980			
Law	ABA – American Bar Association	1975	2014	7 years	2021
	AALS – Association of American Law Schools	1984	2014	7 years	2021