

2019-2020 Program Assessment Meta-Assessment Report

The 2019-2020 academic year was the first in our transition from 5-year assessment reports of all program learning outcomes (PLOs) to annual assessment reports of a single outcome. The *Handbook* was revised during the previous year, and the effort was supported by various workshops, a revision of the *Assessment of Program Learning Outcomes* web page, and an Interim Program Assessment Coordinator.

Assessment planning was overseen by an informal administrative committee consisting of Todd Huspeni (AVC for Teaching, Learning, and Strategic Planning), Vera Klekovkina (GEP Assessment Coordinator), and Daniel Graf (Interim Program Assessment Coordinator, hereafter the Assessment Coordinator), in addition to the Assessment Subcommittee, chaired by Paul Doruska and Maggie Böhm-Jordan.

Activities

According to the *Handbook*, annual program assessment reports are due on the 3rd Thursday of October. However, for this year, the target date was postponed to 20 February 2020 to allow more time for programs to transition to the new format. A new coversheet/rubric was developed by the Assessment Subcommittee (Academic Affairs) for meta-assessment of annual program assessment reports, and all submitted reports were evaluated by at least two committee members.

Chair Workshop and Follow-Up

To introduce the new annual program assessment protocol to the various academic units, the Assessment Coordinator presented the *Handbook* changes and provided a demonstration of the new reporting format. This presentation occurred on 27 August 2019 during contract week at a mandatory meeting of the chairs/discipline coordinators. This was followed on 7 October 2019 with a *Program Assessment Support Survey* as well as individual emails to each unit chair/discipline coordinator to verify the programs for which reports would be expected and to get the contact information for unit assessment personnel.

Assessment of Program Learning Outcomes Web Site Development

The *Assessment of Program Learning Outcomes* web page (<https://www.uwsp.edu/acadaff/Pages/assessmentLearning.aspx>) was revised to provide resources for annual assessment reporting and to distinguish program assessment from GEP assessment. Posted resources included the materials distributed to chairs/discipline coordinators at that beginning of the semester as well as the rubric/coversheet described below.

Graduate Program Assessment

A five-year plan for graduate program assessment was approved by the Assessment Subcommittee (8-0-0) on 27 September 2019 and the Graduate Council (8-0-1) on 21 November 2019 (attached). In summary, for this first year, each of the non-collaborative graduate programs was requested to submit PLOs. For 2020-2021, each program would provide a five-year plan, and the following year produce their first annual report on assessment of a single PLO.

Program Assessment Rubric/Coversheet

A new program assessment rubric/cover sheet was developed by the Assessment Coordinator and edited and tested by the members of the Assessment Subcommittee during the Fall semester (attached). It was approved (9-0-0) on 8 November 2019.

Delinquent Report Protocol

Because the submission deadline had been changed from October to February, a revised Delinquent Report Protocol was produced with specific dates and benchmarks to be applied only for the 2019-2020 academic year (attached). The protocol was approved by the Assessment Subcommittee (9-0-0) on 22 November 2019 and passed (with friendly amendments) by the Common Council (voice vote) on 19 February 2020.

Program Assessment Training

In addition to the resources posted on the *Assessment of Program Learning Outcomes* web page, training workshops were offered to the faculty preparing reports on Thursday 31 October and Friday 1 November 2019 and during the CITL Winterim Teaching Conference on 17 January 2020. Only 12 programs expressed interest in training opportunities through a survey, though more attended the various sessions.

Meta-Assessment of Program Assessment Reports

During Spring semester, a directory was established on the Assessment Subcommittee's Microsoft Teams site to serve the submitted reports to the committee. Each report was evaluated using the new Program Assessment Rubric by two committee members, and each member of the committee was responsible for 10-13 reports. Completed rubrics were also stored on the Teams site.

Feedback to Programs

Program meta-assessment results were returned to programs via emails to the individual(s) that submitted the original report. Meta-assessment rubrics (with assessor names redacted) were provided as well as specific comments from the Coordinator. Feedback messages consisting of mostly boilerplate text in addition to specific feedback from the Assessment Coordinator (attached) were sent to all programs on 21 May 2020.

Results

All graduate programs required to submit program learning outcomes by 20 February 2020 did so (listed in attachment).

Sixty-one undergraduate programs (i.e., majors) were identified through review of the *Catalog* and the programs supported for assessment in *Campus Labs*, as well as by querying the relevant administrative units. For this round of reporting, assessment reports were considered acceptable if they provided:

1. a complete set of program learning outcomes (PLOs),
2. a curriculum map, and
3. a five-year assessment plan that accounted, with sufficient detail, for all PLOs.

Of those 61 programs, 52 submitted reports. No reports were submitted from the Health Care Professions (3 programs) and Communications (2 programs). World Languages submitted a single report in aggregate for their 3 programs. Reports for the Geoscience and Business Administration majors were excused. The closure of campus because of COVID resulted in the cancellation of training sessions for the reports not submitted by Health Care Professions and Communications.

Almost all submitted reports had appropriate PLOs (51) and curriculum maps (49), and a majority had suitable five-year plans (40). In feedback to programs, 40 reports were deemed “acceptable” because they met all three criteria listed above. The remaining 12 were designated as “needs some work.” In either case, specific feedback was provided by the Assessment Coordinator regarding issues with the three criteria as well as any data that were reported. Fewer than half (24, 46%) included data in a format that met or approximated the *Handbook* instructions.

Conclusions

In general, the first round of annual assessment well. It is expected that it may take two or three additional rounds to achieve the desired level of compliance, and the quality of meta-assessment from the Assessment Subcommittee will also improve with additional opportunities to put protocols into action. With practice and consistent guidance, the objectives of assessment and expectations for annual reporting will become less abstract for both program assessors and the meta-assessors.

Comments & Recommendations

Going through this first round of annual assessment reporting and providing feedback to programs will have encouraged progress toward improved compliance and quality of reports to be submitted in 2020-2021. Based on the experience of this round, four points should be emphasized in subsequent instructions to programs.

1. A program is determined by its learning outcomes and curriculum. If different majors have the same learning outcomes and overlapping curricula, a single report is perhaps appropriate. By the same token, if majors are divided into “concentrations” with different learning outcomes or nonoverlapping curricula, then those multiple programs should require multiple reports.
2. For programs that are reporting on more than one learning outcome in a year (because they have more than five PLOs), a separate report should be submitted for each PLO to facilitate evaluation with the rubric. (And such programs should also be encouraged to reduce the number of PLOs.)
3. It is helpful to make a distinction between what a program does for assessment to improve student achievement in their program and what needs to be reported to the Assessment Subcommittee. The Assessment Subcommittee should have a clear set of meta-assessment data in mind and encourage that reports be limited to that information. Shorter (but still complete) is better, and information about other PLO’s than the ones being reported should be saved for the relevant report.

4. “Closing the loop” is the goal, and this means demonstrating that more students are learning more. This is different than striving to consistently meet some established standard.

The meta-assessment comments provided by the Assessment subcommittee on the various reports repeated a number of recurrent themes that could be taken up to improve the clarity of report instructions or to edit the rubric itself.

1. It was common for programs to lack PLOs representing dispositions. If student dispositions are required as part of the learning outcomes (the Assessment Subcommittee had multiple discussions about), then their value can be more clearly articulated to programs or the requirement could be removed from the rubric — or it could be made clear that PLOs reflecting dispositions are encouraged but not required.
2. Curriculum maps are often too complicated with too much information or are otherwise difficult to interpret. The model that was provided in the sample report on the web site did not satisfy some report-writers (or was perhaps overlooked).
3. Conversely, five-year plans would typically benefit from more information. Programs should be reminded that the purpose of the plan is to ensure continuity of assessment procedures among program faculty from year to year.
4. To be comparable among programs, assessment results should be easily interpreted as the number of students that met the PLO and the number that did not meet it. Counts are more meaningful than percentages. A single set of numbers is necessary rather than multiple numbers for different sub-criteria or across multiple courses.
5. Benchmarks for what constitutes meeting a PLO need to be made explicit.
6. Information should be provided in the same order as listed by the rubric/cover sheet to facilitate scoring.

Report prepared by Daniel Graf (dgraf@uwsp.edu).

Five-Year Plan for Graduate Program Assessment

The objective of this draft plan is to have a system in place by 2022 for graduate program learning outcome assessment, reporting, and meta-assessment.

This draft plan assumes that graduate programs will be reporting their assessment results to the Assessment Subcommittee (AS) of the Academic Affairs Committee. This may require emending the AS membership to include graduate representation. Alternatively, graduate program meta-assessment could fall to the Graduate Council.

This draft plan assumes that graduate programs will submit annual reports, on the same schedule as undergraduate programs, as described in the *University Handbook* (Chapter 7, Section 2).

1. (2019-2020). By February 2020, all graduate programs will submit their program learning outcomes to the Assessment Subcommittee. The AS will provide feedback to the graduate programs by the end of Spring semester.
2. (2020-2021). By October 2020, all graduate programs will submit five-year assessment plans describing when and how each learning outcome will be assessed and reported.
3. (2021-2022). By October 2021, all graduate programs will submit their annual report of at least one learning outcome.
4. (2022-2023). By October 2022, all graduate programs will submit their annual report of another learning outcome. This is the year that the HLC 4-year assurance argument will be due.
5. (2023-2024). By October 2023, all graduate programs will submit their annual report of another learning outcome.

Assessment Subcommittee: passed 11 October 2019

Graduate Council: passed 21 November 2019

Graduate Programs to be Assessed

MBA Applied Leadership & Decision-Making
MS Community and Organizational Leadership
AuD Audiology
MSE Education
EdD Educational Sustainability
MME Music Education
MS Speech-Language Pathology
MS Athletic Training
MS Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems
MS Natural Resources
MNR Natural Resources

Program Assessment Coversheet / Meta-Assessment Rubric

Program:	Dept.:	Contact:	email:
Focal PLO:			

	Complete	Partial	Absent
1. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)			
a) All PLOs are listed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) PLOs reflect the knowledges, skills, and dispositions that indicate the scope of the program and student achievement expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The focal PLO(s) is stated and assessed according to a 5-year cycle to assess all PLOs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Current Curriculum Map			
a) The curriculum map is sufficiently detailed to be useful for evaluating the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The curriculum map clearly depicts the courses/experiences that will allow students to meet all program learning outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Summary of Previous Results			
• A concise abstract of results (<500 words) describes previous assessment results with enough information for comparison with current results, if applicable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Description of Previous Actions			
• There is an explicit statement of the changes (or not) to curriculum, instruction, or assessment methods based on previous assessment of the focal PLO.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Assessment Strategies/Measures/Techniques/Methods			
a) Direct and/or indirect assessment methods are employed as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) A concise description of assessment methodology (e.g., course, semester, instrument, constituency, method of analysis) is sufficiently detailed as to be repeatable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) An explicit benchmark of student achievement expectations is provided and justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Useful materials (e.g., descriptions of assignments, rubrics) are attached as appendices as necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Assessment Results / Findings / Interpretation			
a) What was measured (e.g., number of sections, number of students, levels of student achievement) is documented and student achievement is meaningfully summarized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Figures and/or tables are used when necessary for clarity and to depict trends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Results are discussed in the context of the stated benchmark(s) and/or previous results.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Implications / Actions			
• It is explained how the results can be used to improve student achievement through changes to curriculum, instruction, and/or assessment methods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Dissemination of Findings			
• The report has been shared with and approved by the faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Updated Five-Year Assessment Plan			
a) The plan covers (at least) five years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The plan makes explicit when, where, and how each PLO will be assessed and when it will be reported.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The plan will result in all PLOs being assessed and reported within a 5-year cycle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Meta-Assessment Score: _____				
Previous Results:	<input type="checkbox"/> none or NA	# not met: _____	# met: _____	% met: _____
Previous Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> curricular	<input type="checkbox"/> instructional	<input type="checkbox"/> assessment
Current Results	<input type="checkbox"/> none or NA	# not met: _____	# met: _____	% met: _____
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> curricular	<input type="checkbox"/> instructional	<input type="checkbox"/> assessment
Does this assessment report:	<input type="checkbox"/> "Close the Loop"	<input type="checkbox"/> demonstrate improvement		
Comments: _____				
Meta-Assessment Completed by: _____ (to be completed by the Assessment Subcommittee)				

Additional comments:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for providing additional comments. It occupies the majority of the page's vertical space.

New Procedure for Delinquent, Incomplete, & Inadequate Assessment Reports for 2019-2020

For the current academic year (2019-2020), the annual assessment procedure outlined in the Chapter 7, Section 2 of the *Handbook* has been modified to postpone the due date for program assessment reports to 20 February 2020 (i.e., the 3rd Thursday of February in the spring semester rather than the 3rd Thursday of October in the fall semester). This temporary extension was enacted to allow program faculty to adjust to the shift from semi-decadal to annual assessment reporting.

For the current academic year, program assessment reports will be considered delinquent if they have not been turned in to the Assessment Subcommittee for evaluation by 1 March 2020. The prescribed administrative procedures for dealing with delinquent reports are briefly described in the *Handbook* and detailed in the “Procedures for Delinquent Assessment Reports” approved by the Faculty Senate on 5 December 2012 (attached). These procedures are not applicable during the current academic year because the dates are based on an October due date and span the entire academic year. In addition, it is appropriate for more leeway to be granted during this transition in assessment reporting protocols.

Incomplete and inadequate reports are those determined by the Assessment Subcommittee to be lacking required information or in need of substantial revision to meet reporting and meta-assessment obligations. To be considered complete and adequate for the first round of program assessment, at a minimum all undergraduate majors should be able to provide an up-to-date set of program learning outcomes, a sufficiently detailed curriculum map, and a five-year plan that details how all program learning outcomes will be assessed and reported annually during that time span.

Those programs that submit inadequate, incomplete, and/or delinquent reports will be required to complete assessment reporting training during spring semester 2020. The training will cover all aspects of assessment necessary for annual reporting.

Assessment Subcommittee (9-0-0) on 22 November 2019
Common Council (voice vote) on 19 February 2020

Dear _____,

Thank you for submitting your assessment report(s) last spring. The first year of annual reporting went well, and I think that the faculty of each of the programs, as well as the Assessment Subcommittee, learned a lot about what this new reporting protocol will look like.

This year, because 2019-2020 was the first year of the new annual system, we regarded it as acceptable for the programs to be merely *doing* assessment even if they had no data to report this year. Reports that had sufficient program learning outcomes, curriculum map, and five-year assessment plan were considered acceptable. Of the 51 submitted reports, 40 met those criteria. For those reports that didn't, the most common issue was insufficient detail for the 5-year plan. Just under half (24) of the submitted reports provided results in the requested format — listing the number of assessed students that met and didn't meet the assessed learning outcome. I am very pleased with how this first round of submissions went.

Meta-assessment of these assessment reports was also a new process for the Assessment Subcommittee. We developed a new rubric last fall, and each report was reviewed by at least two subcommittee members. Those rubrics for your report(s) are attached to this message.

I have endeavored to distill the main points of the necessary feedback below: 1) whether your report(s) were ACCEPTABLE or NEED SOME WORK and 2) any brief comments that I think would be helpful in shaping future reports. I have kept those as brief as possible to keep this message short enough that it might be read and encourage your questions.

Finally, as of this instant, we are “planning” for the next submission of annual reports in October. I use “planning” in the sense that the Brewers are still “planning” to have a season this year — we really don't know what we will be able to do yet but hope springs eternal. Please rest assured that the expectations for assessment reporting this fall will reasonably balance our assessment obligations with reality, that these will be communicated in a timely manner, and that assessment training will be provided at the beginning of fall semester.

Enjoy your summer! You earned it.

Sincerely,
Dan
Interim Program Assessment Coordinator