



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Assessment of Student Learning Handbook

“Celebrating Student Learning”

What do you want your students to know and be able to do?

How will you know what your students have learned?

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Assessment of Student Learning Handbook

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Assessment of Student Learning at Western Michigan University

Western Michigan University (WMU) is committed to the success of our students. That success is predicated on the idea that students graduate from the university having added to the knowledge they had entering WMU. Assessment of student learning is crucial to ensuring and documenting that students get the added value they should expect from the institution.

Assessment at WMU is an outcome-based process and occurs in both academic and nonacademic units. Units determine the learning outcomes they desire when a student completes either an individual course or program of study or services they provide. Various assessment tools are used to measure the degree to which the outcomes have been achieved. Benchmarks are established for each outcome and the data obtained through various assessment tools is compared to the benchmarks. If the results show that students are not reaching the stated learning outcomes at an acceptable level, the faculty or staff members of the unit make changes in the course/program. Assessment is then used to determine if the changes result in an increased number of students reaching the desired outcome(s).

Assessment plans have been written for all academic units and are in the process of being written by nonacademic units. Since no single educational or service outcome is common to all units, the plans show the diversity across campus. Different units use various assessment tools as they apply. Assessment plans are not static and can change and evolve as the unit discovers what activities are effective and which are not. TracDat is being utilized by all units as the means to document learning objectives, assessment results, program changes due to assessment, and links between program learning outcomes and strategic plans at the college and university level.

This Assessment Handbook is designed to help units carry out their assessment activities. It contains information on how to write good assessment outcomes, answers to frequently asked assessment questions, resources available on campus, and some sample assessment tools, among other things. This handbook will evolve over time in the same manner as assessment plans. It is hoped that the handbook will aid units in better assessing the learning achieved by our students.

Celebrating Student Learning,

Dave

David Reinhold

Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies

What You Need to Know About Assessment

1. Why do we assess student learning or development?

Western Michigan University touts itself as a student centered research university. As such, students are the main focus of our mission. We must be continually concerned with what our students learn and do what we can to improve. Assessment is at the core of the process by which we measure student learning and improve programs. Students should receive clear learning objectives so they know what they are expected to learn. Data should be collected that measures that learning, and most importantly, that data should be used to make improvements. The use of the data to improve student learning is the essence of assessment. In addition to contributing to the improvement of student learning, assessment results are used to address standards and requirements of professional and regional accreditation agencies. While "assessment for accountability" is often used as a driving factor for initiating assessment activities, on-going assessment is key for instructional planning and program development.

2. How will assessment improve learning or development?

Gathering assessment data is in itself simply data collection. Assessment occurs when that data is analyzed to determine areas in which desired student learning is not occurring, or not occurring to the desired degree. Assessment in itself does not improve learning; it is the processes put in place due to the analysis of the data that improves learning.

3. Who should do assessment? Is this something extra for me to do?

Faculty and staff use assessment results when planning instruction, evaluating programs, and proposing curricular change. Assessment results provide information about the extent to which students have attained the intended learning outcomes and possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for subsequent learning or professional practice.

4. How does assessment of student learning or development help faculty/staff?

Faculty and staff are deeply concerned that students leave their courses/programs with knowledge they didn't possess when they entered. Assessment gives us the answer to this question and suggests areas in which improvement can be made. In this way, faculty and staff become engaged in the learning process of their students.

5. Do assessment results affect faculty /staff evaluation?

WMU has stated from the outset that assessment results will not be used to evaluate faculty or staff. Doing this defeats the purpose. If faculty thinks that results will be used against them, they will be hesitant to do assessment. In reality, faculty who are doing effective assessment should be rewarded no matter what the outcome of the data.

6. It is important for students to know how they are being assessed. How can learning outcome assessment methods be communicated to students?

The easiest and possibly best way is to include this on the courses syllabus and discuss this during the first day of class. It is always a good idea to link the specific learning outcomes of the course to the assessment methods being used. Faculty may feel that

including this on the syllabus will make it too long. In that case, a short discussion of the assessment and how this relates to the learning outcomes can be given to the students as assignments are made.

7. How do faculty/staff within a unit identify student learning or development outcomes?

In some programs, an outside accreditation body dictates the learning outcomes. When this is not the case, the faculty or staff of a particular unit can develop the outcomes. A simple way to develop these outcomes is to think about the skills or knowledge you want students to possess when they complete your program. Ideally, these would be skills or knowledge they do not have when they begin the program. An outcome could enhance a skill of knowledge the student has when they enter the program, however.

8. Aren't course grades enough assessment?

The fact that a student gets a grade at the end of the course, or receives grades on particular assignments and exams, usually is not effective assessment and often doesn't supply much useful data. If a student gets a B in a class with 5 learning outcomes, it is impossible to tell how well the student achieved each one. One could assume that they learned each of the 5 at a B level, but this is only an assumption based upon no facts. It could be that the student achieved 4 of the 5 at an A level and flunked the fifth learning objective. The final grade of B does not indicate that the student did not achieve one of the learning outcomes. The same applies to grades on individual exams/assignments unless the exam/assignment is set up to assess only one learning objective.

9. What is the difference between direct and indirect assessment?

Direct assessment is done when a particular tool is used to measure how well a student has achieved a particular learning outcome. Examples of direct assessment are rubrics, embedded exam questions, and evaluation of portfolio material. Indirect assessment occurs when impressions of learning are obtained. Indirect methods usually consist of a student or employer survey. Most accreditation bodies prefer direct methods of assessment.

10. How can I assess attitudes or other non-quantifiable outcomes?

Not all assessment tools need to result in a numerical evaluation. It is fine to develop an objective way to measure certain outcomes as long as the assessment is as consistent as possible from student to student. In many cases, for example, portfolios are an excellent assessment tool. The material within a portfolio can be assessed in an objective way using specific learning outcomes. Judgments can be made about how well the student achieved the learning outcomes using non-numerical ratings.

11. Why do we do assessment reports (TracDat)?

TracDat allows departments to run assessment reports at any time. These reports show what assessment activities have occurred, what actions have been taken because of those activities, and if the actions had the desired outcome. This way, departments can easily monitor their program improvement via assessment. TracDat also allows the University to run reports to obtain university wide data regarding assessment.

12. Where can we get help with assessment?

There are many resources available on campus for help with assessment. Dave Reinhold (david.reinhold@wmich.edu) and Karen Stokes Chapo (karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu) are happy to help with any questions about assessment. There are also many online resources available on the assessment website at: www.wmich.edu/assessment. TAC (Traveling Assessment Consultation) Teams are also available to come and consult with and to do presentations for any faculty, staff, departments or colleges on assessment related topics. To request a TAC Team visit and for more information, see [page 20](#).

Tools for Assessment

Tips on Writing Student Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes can be at the university, program or course level. They may be defined as the change in a student's knowledge or skills as a result of the student's experience. The focus of the learning outcomes should be on the results of learning, and not on the process used to accomplish the learning. The learning outcomes should be communicated with students so they understand the expectations. Having too many outcomes can be confusing and hard to achieve and assess. It is often advantageous to keep it simple with a core set of learning outcomes that make sense and have clear benefits for the students.

Try keeping the following questions in mind when developing learning outcomes.

- What are your goals? What knowledge or skills do you want students to possess when they finish the course/program?
- How will you know when a change in the student's knowledge or skills has occurred? What specifically will be different about the students?
- How will you assess the degree to which the students have achieved the learning outcome?

We have included two tables to assist you in developing your student learning outcomes. The first one is Bloom's Taxonomy and may be helpful if you are writing outcomes for knowledge. It breaks down learning into six levels. Each level is defined in the table and sample verbs are given that may be used in writing the learning outcomes. You may want to decide which level of learning is desired for each learning outcome you are developing. Once you have decided that, the sample verbs may help you write the specific language.

The second table gives seven levels of skill development. As with the Bloom's Taxonomy table, each level is defined and suggested verbs for writing student learning outcomes are presented. Again, once you decide the level of the skill desired, you can use the suggested verbs to aid you in writing the learning outcome.

Bloom's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain

Categories	Definition	Sample Verbs
Knowledge	Students can remember previously learned material. This may be small or large amounts of information, but students simply need to recall the information, they don't transform it in any way.	Defines, describes, identifies, labels, lists, matches, names, outlines, reproduces, selects, states
Comprehension	Students grasp the meaning of the material and can re-state it in their own words and interpret it by explaining or summarizing.	Converts, defends, distinguishes, estimates, explains, extends, generalizes, gives examples, infers, paraphrases, rewrites, summarizes
Application	Students can use the learned material in new and concrete situations. They can apply rules or formulas to problems they haven't previously encountered.	Changes, computes, demonstrates, manipulates, modifies, operates, predicts, prepares, produces, relates, solves
Analysis	Students can break down information or concepts into their component parts and describe the relationships among those parts. They can recognize the organizational principles involved in the material they have learned.	Breaks down, diagrams, differentiates, discriminates, distinguishes, illustrates, outlines, relates
Synthesis	Students can put parts together to form a new whole. They write papers or speeches, put together research proposals, and develop new classification schemes.	Categorizes, combines, composes, creates, designs, generates, reconstructs, writes
Evaluation	Students can judge the value of material (essays, novels, research reports, etc). Their judgments are based on stated criteria, either criteria provided for the student or criteria selected by the student.	Appraises, concludes, criticizes, justifies, supports

**Psychomotor Domain
Outcomes Statements for Skills**

Level in Taxonomy	Sample Outcomes	Suggested Verbs
Perception (Including the translation of perceived cues into action)	“recognizes a malfunction by the sound of the machine.” “relates the taste of food to the need for seasoning.”	Choose, describe, detect, differentiate, distinguish, identify, isolate, relate, select, separate
Set (Readiness to take a particular type of action, including mental set, physical set, and emotional set)	“demonstrates proper bodily stance for batting a ball.” “describes the steps in administering an injection.”	Begin, display, explain, move, proceed, react, respond, show, start, volunteer
Guided Response (Early stages of learning a complex skill and includes imitation and trial & error)	“applies a first aid bandage as demonstrated” “determines best sequence for preparing a meal”	Assemble, build, calibrate, construct, dismantle, display, dissect, manipulate, measure, organize
Mechanism (Learned responses have become habitual and the skill can be performed with competence and proficiency)	“sets up laboratory equipment” “operates a caliper”	Same list as for guided response, with the skill being demonstrated independently and at a higher level of proficiency
Complex Overt Response (Skillful performance of motor acts that involve complex patterns)	“operates a power saw safely and accurately” “demonstrates correct form in the butterfly stroke”	Same list as above, again with greater skill, independence, and fluidity
Adaptation (Skills that are developed to the extent that the student is able to adapt to meet changing or new circumstances)	“adjusts pressure of massage to muscle tenderness” “modifies swimming stroke to counteract rough water”	Adapt, alter, change, rearrange, reorganize, revise, vary
Origination (Creating new movement patterns to fit situation or new problems)	“designs new dress style” “creates new exercise for physical therapy patient”	Arrange, combine, compose, construct, create, design, originate

Formative and Summative Assessment

The central purpose of assessment is to support learning and this is best achieved by a combination of formative and summative assessment. This means assessing learning both in an ongoing way and by 'stepping back' at regular intervals to take stock of learners' progress and achievements. The terms 'formative' and 'summative' do not describe a type or form of assessment, but instead describe how assessments are used. Evidence and feedback from any assessment can be used formatively to inform planning for improvements in learning, as well as contributing to periodic summaries of progress and achievement for reporting and monitoring.

(Retrieved from the website: www.ltscotland.org.uk)

Rubric Samples

Rubrics are scoring tools that provide specific descriptions of expected student performance. They are especially helpful when assessing activities or assignments that appear “subjective” rather than “objective.” For example, when we say that we want to assess a student’s ability to think critically, a rubric can provide the specific expectations for “critical thinking.” Rubrics help students understand the scope of an assignment, the criteria for acceptable performance, and the range of performances possible. Rubrics assist teachers in defining criteria for grading or assessment. Rubrics typically consist of a list of required elements of an assignment along with descriptions of expectations for student work on each element.

At WMU Assessment in Action Day 2011, Dr. Mary Allen, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Bakersfield and Assessment Consultant, presented a workshop on rubric writing. She brought along with her a packet of over 80 rubrics for various colleges and departments that she has shared with our university community. She asked that we refrain from posting them on a public website but we have preserved them in an iWebfolio portfolio. If you are interested in viewing these rubrics, contact Karen Stokes Chappo at: karen.stokeschappo@wmich.edu and she can provide you with access. The next few pages contain several other sample rubrics.

Descriptive Rubric for ABET Standard

Outcome 1: An ability to apply math & science in engineering

Level 5 performance characterized by:

- Combines mathematical and/or scientific principles to formulate models of chemical, physical and/or biological processes and systems relevant to civil engineering
- Applies concepts of integral and differential calculus and/or linear algebra to solve civil engineering problems
- Shows appropriate engineering interpretation of mathematical and scientific terms
- Translates academic theory into engineering applications and accepts limitations of mathematical models of physical reality
- Executes calculations correctly
 - By hand
 - Using mathematical software
- Correctly analyzes data sets using statistical concepts

Level 3 performance characterized by:

- Chooses a mathematical model or scientific principle that applies to an engineering problem, but has trouble in model development
- Shows nearly complete understanding of applications of calculus and/or linear algebra in problem-solving
- Most mathematical terms are interpreted correctly
- Some gaps in understanding the application of theory to the problem and expects theory to predict reality
- Minor errors in calculations
 - By hand
 - Applying math software
- Minor errors in statistical analysis of data

Level 1 performance characterized by:

- Does not understand the connection between mathematical models and chemical, physical, and/or biological processes and systems in civil engineering
- Does not understand the application of calculus and linear algebra in solving civil engineering problems
- Mathematical terms are interpreted incorrectly or not at all
- Does not appear to grasp the connection between theory and the problem
- Calculations not performed or performed incorrectly
 - By hand
 - Does not know how to use math software
- No application of statistics to analysis of data

University of Delaware, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Retrieved from http://www.ce.udel.edu/ABET/Current%20Documentation/Outcome_1.html

SPED _____
Impact on K-12 Student Learning

	Meets Expectation (ME) 10	Progressing Toward Expectation (PTE) 5	Focused Attention Needed (FAN) 0	Points
<p style="text-align: center;">Contextual Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Knowledge of community, school and classroom factors °Knowledge of characteristics of students °Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning °Knowledge of students' skills and prior learning °Implications for instructional planning and assessment 	The teacher displays a comprehensive understanding of how contextual factors influence learning goals, plan for instruction, and assessment	The teacher displays some understanding of how contextual factors influence learning goals, plan for instruction, and assessment	The teacher displays minimal, irrelevant, or biased knowledge of how contextual factors influence learning goals, plan for instruction, and assessment	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Learning Goal(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Significance, challenge, and variety °Clarity °Appropriateness for student(s) °Alignment with state standards 	The teacher sets significant, challenging, varied, and appropriate learning goals	The teacher sets some significant, challenging, varied, and appropriate learning goals	The teacher minimally sets significant, challenging, varied, and appropriate learning goals	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Alignment with learning goals and instruction °Clarity of criteria for performance °Multiple modes and approaches °Technical soundness °Adaptations based on individual need(s) of students 	The teacher uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during and after instruction	The teacher uses some multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during and after instruction	The teacher minimally uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during and after instruction	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Design for Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Alignment with learning goals °Lesson unit and structure °Use of variety of instruction, activities, assignments, technology and resources °Use of contextual information 	The teacher designs instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.	The teacher designs some instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.	The teacher minimally designs instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Instructional Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Sound professional practice °Adjustments based on analysis of student learning 	The teacher uses on-going analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.	The teacher uses some on-going analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.	The teacher minimally uses on-going analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Analysis of Student Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Clarity and accuracy of presentation °Alignment with learning goals °Interpretation of data °Evidence of impact on student learning 	The teacher uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement	The teacher uses some assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement	The teacher minimally uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Reflection and Self-Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Interpretation of student learning °Insights on effective instruction and assessment °Alignment among goals, instruction, and assessment °Implications for future teaching °Implications for professional development 	The teacher analyzes the relationship between his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.	The teacher is progressing toward finding the knowledge and skills to analyze the relationship between his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.	The teacher minimally analyzes the relationship between his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Clarity of Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Mechanics, punctuation, capitalization, verb tense agreement, complete sentences, singular/plural agreement °Paragraph development and written expression °Reference support (APA) 	The teacher displays comprehensive skills in their clarity of writing	The teacher is progressing to displaying comprehensive skills in their clarity of writing	The teacher displays minimal skills in their clarity of writing	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Title page °Table of contents, sections clearly defined °Professional graphing 	The teacher displays thorough organization skills	The teacher displays some organization skills	The teacher displays minimal organization skills	/10
<p style="text-align: center;">Research Based Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> °Use of research based strategies 	The teacher uses research based strategies to meet individual student needs	The teacher uses some research based strategies to meet individual student needs	The teacher minimally uses research based strategies to meet individual student needs	/10

Comments:

/100

**Performance Rubric
SPED 5750
Thematic Unit**

Criteria	10 Excellent	8 Average	4 Below Average	0 Missing or Minimal
Organization	Strong intro, lessons are neat, referenced, free of spelling errors and typos.	Intro, references, minimal spelling errors and typos. Simple presentation.	Intro is missing information, referencing problems, multiple spelling errors, careless presentation	Weak or no intro, sloppy presentation, many spelling errors and typos, missing references or formatting problems
Goal/Objectives	Goals and objectives correlate, are measurable, and representative of the lesson.	Some goals/objectives correlate and are measurable and are representative of the lesson	Goals/objectives do not all correlate, are not all measurable and representative of the lesson	Missing goals/objectives and/or identified goals/objectives to not match the lesson
Scope/Sequence of Instruction	Clear scope and sequence, instruction, guided practice, and independent practice reinforce goals/objective. Multiple modalities and grouping patterns are utilized.	Scope and sequence is presented with transitions between lesson sections, minimal use of differentiated modalities and grouping patterns	Scope and sequence is presented but not in order, transitions between lesson sections are not smooth, the use of more modalities and grouping patterns would increase lesson effectiveness	No scope and sequence to the lesson, missing anticipatory set/instruction/guided practice/independent practice/closure.
Evaluation	User friendly, matches' objectives, data collected is pertinent and can be easily organized.	Evaluation is present but can be confusing without instruction, data collected could be more readily assessed	Evaluation is not representative of lesson	No evaluation
Creativity	Lessons are colorful, interesting, engaging.	Lessons are generally engaging and interesting	Too many worksheets!	Non-engaging lesson

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing.

	4	3	2	1
Context of and purpose for writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned tasks and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g. the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and disciplinary conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation.	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of syntax and mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

(Created from Written Communication VALUE Rubric: Association of American Colleges and Universities. For more information, please contact value@aacu.org)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- **Content Development:** The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- **Context of and purpose for writing:** The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: Who is reading it? Who is writing it? Under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writers' intended effect on an audience. Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to work through complexity or confusion; they might want to argue with other writers, or connect with other writers; they might want to convey urgency or amuse; They might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.
- **Disciplinary conventions:** Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer's purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.
- **Evidence:** Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers' ideas in a text.
- **Genre conventions:** Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts and/or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. lab reports, academic papers, poetry, web pages, or personal essays.
- **Sources:** Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

(Created from Written Communication VALUE Rubric: Association of American Colleges and Universities. For more information, please contact value@acu.org)

Technology for Assessment

WMU's Assessment Website: <http://www.wmich.edu/assessment>

iWebfolio

iWebfolio is an advanced electronic portfolio tool that helps individuals archive, organize, reflect and present information contained in: documents, graphics, presentations, web projects, audio and video, or any other digital media. iWebfolio account owners create portfolios and dynamically share them with faculty, staff, employers or others. Comments and reflections can be added to the portfolios. Owner accounts contain 500 megabytes of storage space that can be accessed from any internet browser. Feedback and ratings can be provided by reviewers. Templates can be used for portfolios that are formed around program goals or accreditation standards.

How WMU is Using iWebfolio

- Program portfolios for accreditation and departmental use
- Faculty Assessment Grant reviewers portfolio
- Faculty Professional Activity Reports (PARs)
- Graduate College Dissertation Completion Fellowship Application
- Faculty/staff position searches

How to Set up an iWebfolio Account

Please read the iWebfolio account distribution policy prior to sending any requests for information to set up iWebfolio owner accounts for your students: [iWebfolio Account Distribution Policy](#)

If the criteria for setting up the accounts are met, send an email to Karen Stokes Chapo at karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu and include the following information:

- Instructor's name
- Semester you are requesting to have your students set up iWebfolio owner accounts
- CRN (course registration number) for the course section you need account for
- Your contact information

In response, we will run an automated process that will send each of the students enrolled in that CRN with an automated email containing a link within it that they will use to set up the iWebfolio owner accounts. The links contains information that will pay for the iWebfolio accounts, which are sponsored by WMU. There is no charge for students to set up an account. Only those students who are enrolled in courses or departments who are using iWebfolio for a specific purpose are eligible to set up an account.

If you are a faculty or staff member, and would like to set up an iWebfolio owner or reviewer account, send an email to: wmu-eportfolio@wmich.edu to request an account.

Questions about iWebfolio

For questions about how to use iWebfolio, please refer to the following website for iWebfolio training tutorials and instructional documents: <http://www.wmich.edu/cepa> and then click on the link iWebfolio Training Information.

To see some examples of portfolios created using iWebfolio, go to the following web page: <http://www.wmich.edu/cepa/contest/winners.html>

And if you have any further questions about iWebfolio contact Karen Stokes Chapo at: wmu-eportfolio@wmich.edu or karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu

iWebfolio Instructional Documents: http://www.wmich.edu/cepa/instructional_doc.html

iWebfolio Tutorials: http://www.wmich.edu/cepa/tutorial_index.html

Company information on iWebfolio: http://www.nuventive.com/products_iwebfolio.html

Login to iWebfolio: <http://www.iwebfolio.com/>

[iWebfolio Account Distribution Policy](#)

TracDat

TracDat is a Web-based tool for storing departmental or program assessment plans. As some have called it, “It’s the garage to store your assessment information.” This tool houses the historical progress of assessment for any department or unit. TracDat is a flexible, easy-to-use, and web-based solution that provides the critical framework for University-wide assessment, strategic planning, accreditation, and quality improvement processes.

This tool helps us track data for program improvement and enables follow-up to ensure that program changes that are made have the intended effect. Learning evidence and results can be easily retrieved. By using this tool departments and/or units can tie program assessment to University-wide assessment. And the pre-formatted reports are dynamically available at any time to share electronically

All departmental or unit assessment plans are to be entered into [TracDat](#). If you would like to set up an account or need assistance with using the tool contact please contact: Karen Stokes Chapo at: karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu or

Company information on TracDat: http://www.nuventive.com/products_tracdat.html

Login to TracDat: <https://tracdatp.cc.wmich.edu:8443/tracdat/>

TracDat Glossary: <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/pdf/TracDatGlossary.pdf>

Programs and Assistance

WMU Assessment in Action Day

Assessment in Action Day is an annual collaborative program sponsored by the Office of Assessment & Undergraduate Studies to provide the WMU community with a venue to learn and share ideas about assessment. This event provides access to assessment resources, time to collaborate with colleagues, as well as focused skill building learning in areas of assessment. Break-out session topics differ each year and topics will be chosen based on the needs of the constituents. WMU AIA Day will be held on a Friday each year in March.

TAC Teams

[TAC \(Traveling Assessment Consultation\) Team](#) - invite a TAC team to help you with assessment in your department

The University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) now offers on-site consultation service for assisting your department or college with your assessment program. The Traveling Assessment Consultation (TAC) Teams will be made up of several knowledgeable members of the WMU community. We will come to you and can:

- Help revise your assessment plan
- Help refine assessment techniques
- Give a presentation to your department or college explaining best practices
- Conduct a question and answer session to start dialog within your department

In order to provide you with the services that will effectively meet your needs, we would like you to fill out a request form that includes a brief questionnaire. The link to the online request form is: <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/tact.php>

[Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#)

The annual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Conference and Workshop will be held each May. This professional development workshop is devoted to closing the loop between conducting and publishing SoTL research. Hands-on breakout sessions assist researchers with specific nuts-and-bolts issues in SoTL such as planning a quality project, methodology behind the research, finding examples of SoTL literature, and collaborating across disciplines.

Assessment Contacts

University Contacts

- Dave Reinhold, Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies
387-4564, david.reinhold@wmich.edu
- Karen Stokes Chapo, Assessment Programs Specialist
387-3867, karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu
- Center for Practices with Electronic Portfolios and Assessment (CEPA):
<http://www.wmich.edu/cepa>

College Contacts

- [College of Arts and Sciences](#) - Sue Stapleton: susan.stapleton@wmich.edu
- [College of Aviation](#) – Ray Thompson: raymond.thompson@wmich.edu
- [Haworth College of Business](#) – Jack Ruhl: jack.ruhl@wmich.edu
- [College of Education and Human Development](#) - Kathy Cummings:
katharine.cummings@wmich.edu
- [College of Engineering and Applied Sciences](#) - Edmund Tsang:
edmund.tsang@wmich.edu
- [College of Fine Arts](#) – Margaret Merrion: margaret.merrion@wmich.edu
- [College of Health and Human Services](#) - Richard Long: richard.long@wmich.edu

University Assessment Committees

University Assessment Steering Committee

The purpose of this committee is to recommend assessment initiatives, policy, and plans for the University. The UASC is also charged with promoting and supporting assessment by providing education, recognition, information, research support and funding, and faculty development opportunities. The committee provides faculty leadership and direction for all institutional and program assessment endeavors through annual reports and recommendations to the academic departments, the Faculty Senate and the Provost. They also determine what technical development assessment resources are needed at department and program levels and orient colleagues to current assessment programs nationally.

UASC Membership:

<http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/uasc.html>

AAUP Chapter Representative
College Academic Advisors Representative
College of Arts and Sciences Representative (3)
College of Aviation Representative
College of Education and Human Development Representative
College of Engineering and Applied Sciences Representative
College of Fine Arts Representative
College of Health and Human Services Representative
Committee to Oversee General Education
Division of Student Affairs Representative (2)
Extended University Programs Representative
Graduate College Representative
Graduate Student Advisory Committee Representative
Graduate Studies Council Representative, Faculty Senate
Haworth College of Business Representative
International Programs and Area Studies Representative
Lee Honors College Representative
Sindecuse Health Center Representative
Undergraduate Studies Council
University Libraries Representative
WSA Representative

Permanent Members

Assessment In Action Advisory Committee Representative

Karen Stokes, Assessment Programs Specialist, Office of Assessment
and Undergraduate Studies
karen.stokes@wmich.edu
387-3867

College of Education and Human Development Representative

Katharine Cummings, Associate Dean

katharine.cummings@wmich.edu

387-2963

Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies Representative

David Reinhold, Associate Provost

david.reinhold@wmich.edu

387-4564

Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies Representative

Beth van den Hombergh, Project Coordinator – Committee Recorder

beth.vandenhombergh@wmich.edu

387-0397

Office of Information Technology Representative

Sue Brodasky, Executive Assistant

sue.brodasky@wmich.edu

387-0464

Office of the Provost Representative

Eileen Evans, Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness

eileen.evans@wmich.edu

387-2314

[Assessment in Action Advisory Committee](#)

Assessment in Action (AIA) is a subcommittee of the University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) that supports the University community by providing assessment information, training, and support. This committee implements ideas from the UASC including organizing workshops on assessment for the university, supporting TracDat and iWebfolio, organizing portfolio contests for the students, and publishing the online *Assessment Matters @ WMU* newsletter.

AIA Committee Membership

Sue Brodasky, Executive Assistant, Office of Information Technology
387-0464, sue.brodasky@wmich.edu

Maira Bundza, Associate Professor, University Libraries
387-5207, maira.bundza@wmich.edu

Carla Chase, Associate Professor, Occupational Therapy
387-7264, carla.chase@wmich.edu

Katharine Cummings, Associate Dean, College of Education and Human Development
387-2963, katharine.cummings@wmich.edu

Bryce Dickey, Clinical Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences
387-3712, bryce.dickey@wmich.edu

Marcia Feters, Associate Professor, Teaching, Learning, and Educational Studies
387-3538, marcia.feters@wmich.edu
387-5400, Mallinson Institute for Science Education

Dave Reinhold, Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies
387-4564, david.reinhold@wmich.edu

Cathe Springsteen, Project Coordinator
387-4577, kathleen.springsteen@wmich.edu

Karen Stokes Chapo, Assessment Programs Specialist (Chair)
387-3867, karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu

Beth van den Hombergh, Project Coordinator
387-0397, beth.vandenhombergh@wmich.edu

Grants and Awards

Faculty Assessment Grant Program for Academic and Co-Curricular Departments:

Purpose of Program: Grants for research on assessment will be awarded by the University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC), and with the approval of the associate provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies, to advance the formal assessment of student learning outcomes and program quality—including those programs located at extended sites or branch campus locations—of Western Michigan University (WMU). This includes full-time faculty and staff in academic departments, academic support units, and interdisciplinary units in academic affairs, as well as departments and programs within the Division of Student Affairs. The maximum level of award is \$5,000 each, with up to \$25,000 awarded annually. Funding preference will be for projects involving departments that have not been funded previously by the Faculty Assessment Grants program.

Priority is given to activities related to the direct measure of student learning or achievement where direct measures are feasible. Direct measures of learning require students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities in response to a task (e.g., essay, presentation, portfolio, commercial instrument). Direct measures determine whether students have mastered the content of their academic programs; on the other hand, indirect measures ask students to reflect on their learning (Banta 1999).

Assessment should be focused on determining the extent to which students in a program are progressing toward the goals or standards for the program. Goals or standards for the program typically address the student's development of knowledge, skills, disposition, and thinking processes. Effective assessment occurs in multiple instances, using multiple measures. The measures of student progress should be "authentic" in that they represent the tasks and expectations of professionals in the given discipline. Assessment includes self-assessment as students consider their own progress and make specific plans for their continued growth and learning.

Application Process: Individuals must send a brief proposal application (proposal cover sheet plus 4 pages maximum) to the UASC through the associate provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies, room B124, Henry Hall at WMU. No more than one proposal per department will be reviewed for possible funding each year. Single-year proposals are preferred although multi-year proposals will be considered if a strong rationale is provided in the application. Each application must contain three identified sections as noted below.

- 1) **Objectives:** Purpose (title) and objectives for the project are key elements and should be stated clearly. Examples of Faculty Assessment Grant purposes are:
 - a. Examining and testing the use of published measurement instruments with a specific student group or for a specific service.
 - b. Designing and pre-testing the means for assessing the knowledge base of seniors within a content area.

- c. Designing and pre-testing the means for assessing the information literacy skills of entering students.
- d. Conducting focus groups or targeted interviews for the determination of assessment research design parameters.
- e. Assessing racial acceptance climate on campus.

Objectives flow from purpose and are the specific aims for the project. What is the purpose of the project, what do you intend to do, what assessment methods will be used, what data analysis will be employed, and why is the project important?

- 2) **Dissemination:** Uses and diffusion of information acquired throughout the course of the grant should be stated. For example, how could results be used for program improvement? Is it expected that the results will be used for advising, curricular changes, or changes in service delivery characteristics? Further, the application should note how many faculty and/or students will be impacted by the accomplishments of the grant. How, when, and by whom will the information will be disseminated?
- 3) **Budget:** Refer to the attached Proposal Budget Template. Please note that Faculty Assessment Grants can be used to support student assistants, research time, materials, software support, or conference registrations. However, Faculty Assessment Grants may not be used to support release time from assigned teaching or administrative responsibilities, costs of academic credit, computer equipment, conference travel, or external consultants. Additionally, all proposals will be reviewed to determine the suitability of budgeted items in terms of stated departmental assessment planning activities and fidelity with University policies and regulations. Include information about the materials you need to purchase, the student assistance you might need, any analytical assistance that might be required, or any payments that are required for the applicant to do what and when.

Timetable: Faculty Assessment Grant applications are welcome until April 15 each academic year. Funds will be made available for awarded projects the following academic year. The associate provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies will announce awards by June 1 each year. Grants should be completed by the end of the spring semester of the subsequent academic year. All funds in Faculty Assessment Grant accounts will be swept 40 days after the allotted time period and may not be reclaimed.

Grant Reviewing Criteria: A subcommittee of the UASC will review proposals and recommend projects for funding to the UASC at its May meeting. Applicants will receive reviewer comments in summary form upon request. The subcommittee will use the following criteria to recommend proposals for funding:

- ✓ The resourcefulness of the project in its alignment with the unit, college, or division assessment programs. The project's intent to facilitate change with regard to improvement of student learning, program quality and ongoing departmental program planning initiatives. (40%)

- ✓ Demonstration of student learning outcomes, including a plan for disseminating information and conceptualization of impact on faculty and students. (30%)
- ✓ Budget of expenses congruent with the project goals. (15%)
- ✓ Timeline of activity congruent with project goals. (15%)

Assessment Fellows Cohort: The fellows cohort will meet monthly during the academic year to receive progress reports on projects, study questions related to assessment, and facilitate access to campus resources related to assessment research. Fellows meet September through through April.

Assessment Exemplar: Assessment fellows are expected to report the outcomes of their work during a public session in spring semester, usually in mid- or late March. Fellows may expect their final reports and public presentation documents to be viewed publicly on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website and WMU assessment portfolio and/or assessment website.

Required Final Report: A brief report, two to four pages only, should be sent to the associate provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies no later than the termination date of the project. The required sections for the final report are as follows:

- 1) Description of accomplishments (as related to the original proposal): success in accomplishing the purpose of the grant, or what happened that was different and why. This description must address the degree of attainment of objectives; results of or achievement of stated purpose; and the effectiveness of design or plan.
- 2) Specific outcomes: uses for grant information outcomes, or how the processes involved with the grant affected your department or unit, such as development of departmental assessment activities or programs.
- 3) Summary: Your judgment about the assessment impact from the grant.

Appended to the report should be one copy of any resultant publication (bearing acknowledgment of support*) or each announcement/program/catalogue, or performances/exhibitions/presentations resulting from this project. Similar materials not available at the time of submission of the final report should be forwarded for subsequent attachment.

The reports will be used to demonstrate what accomplishments are possible from these grants, and will be circulated to the University Assessment Steering Committee as well as the academic deans and the provost.

*Acknowledgement of support: *“This work was supported by funds from the Faculty Assessment Award Program, Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies, Western Michigan University.”*

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board: Assessment proposals are generally exempt from review by the HSIRB. However, if you plan to publish the results in a professional journal, you should seek advance HSIRB approval. If you have any questions about your proposed project, please contact Dr. Amy Naugle, HSIRB chair, at 387-8293.

Application Submission: Contact information for the application process, ideas, or questions:

Dr. David Reinhold, Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies
B124 Henry Hall
Western Michigan University
1903 W Michigan Ave
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5253 (mail stop: 5253)
Telephone: 269-387-0399 or 387-4564, E-mail: david.reinhold@wmich.edu

Western Michigan University Assessment Excellence Award

The University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) has established an Assessment Excellence Award for the purpose of recognizing and showcasing outstanding efforts in the area of assessment at WMU. Assessment is defined as the systematic collection and use of the results of student learning and academic program quality to determine the achievement of goals and objectives. An outstanding assessment process is characterized by the use of the results of assessment to improve the activities being assessed. Therefore, criteria for selection will emphasize the demonstration of program improvements as a result of the assessment program.

Individual Award

- **Eligibility**

The competition is open to all WMU employees who have authored or co-authored an article about the assessment of student learning and academic program quality or assessment activities. The article must be published (or accepted for publication) in a peer-reviewed journal, proceedings, or equivalent venue.

- **Procedures**

Individuals must submit a self-generated application that includes the name and contact information for the person submitting, the author(s), and the nominee (if applicable), along with a copy of the article, and information about the publishing venue and dates of publication.

- **Award Criteria**

UASC will use the following criteria as a basis for selecting the individual award winner:

- The article may report on specific research conducted in the area of assessment.
or
- The article may be a report on the practical application of specific assessment methodology that has resulted in feedback and has led to improvement in the academic (or other) program. The link between methodology, data, and program improvement must be clearly evident.

- **Submission**

Please submit your application electronically to:

- Dr. David Reinhold, Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies at E-mail: david.reinhold@wmich.edu

Unit Award

- **Eligibility**

This award is open to academic departments and non-instructional units that have a UASC-approved assessment plan.

- **How a unit is considered for the Award**

Departments / work units who have submitted their annual assessment reports, may subsequently submit an application that includes a brief report highlighting improvements attributed to the assessment process, evaluation and improvement of the assessment plan, and/or other achievements that raise their assessment activities to a level of excellence.

- **Award Criteria**

The following criteria will be used as a basis for evaluating the assessment achievements of the unit:

- Evidence shows that assessment data are being used to improve program quality.
- The assessment plan contains elements that are achievable, usable, and sustainable.
- Assessment activities are being conducted in accordance with the plan timetable.
- Evidence shows that the unit has a strong commitment to assessment.
- Informal assessment activities (those not specifically detailed in the assessment plan) have occurred and led to program improvements.
- Evidence shows other exemplary assessment achievements that influence the culture of accountability at WMU.

- **Procedures**

A self-generated application will consist of the name of the unit and the person submitting, along with a brief essay explaining how the unit's assessment activities warrant recognition. It should relate the unit's activities and accomplishments to the award criteria and highlight areas of the assessment impact report that support the claim. A copy of the unit's most recent assessment impact report should also be included. The UASC will review each submission and select a winner.

- **Submission**

Please submit your application electronically to:

- Dr. David Reinhold, Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies at: david.reinhold@wmich.edu

External Resources

Assessment Conferences:

At WMU:

- [WMU Assessment In Action Day](#)
- [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#)

Off Campus:

- [The Assessment Institute](#)-Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis
- [Annual Meeting of the Higher Learning Commission](#)
- [Atlantic Assessment Conference](#)- North Carolina State University in collaboration with Meredith College and the Virginia Assessment Group
- [More Assessment Conferences](#)

Readings on Assessment

- [Books on Assessment](#)
- **Online Resources**
 - [American Association of Higher Education's 9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning](#)
 - [Measuring Quality: Choosing Among Surveys & Other Assessments of College Quality](#) (by Borden & Owens, American Council on Education, 2001)
 - [Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation](#) (online journal 1999-present)
 - [The National Teaching & Learning Forum](#)
 - [Data Audit and Analysis Toolkit to Support Assessment of the First Year of College](#) (ERIC document by Paulson, 2003)
 - [Assessment Issues](#) (from the Association of College & Research Libraries)
 - [Association for Institutional Research](#)
 - [Measures, Rubrics, & Tools for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes](#) (from Kansas State University)
- [Assessment Resources Guide](#) (compiled by the WMU Libraries)
- **Papers and Presentations**
 - [Black Holes & Gaseous Processes: Big Mistakes in Assessment](#): a presentation by Susan Hatfield (2008)

Websites

- **University Assessment Web sites of Interest**
 - [North Carolina State University](#)
 - [Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis](#)
 - [University of Kentucky](#)
 - [WMU Assessment for Learning Program](#)

- **Nationally Available Commercial Instruments for Assessment**
 - [Inventory of Higher Education Assessment Instruments](#) (from National Center for Post secondary Improvement)
 - [Educational Testing Service](#)
 - [National Post secondary Education Cooperative](#)