

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 learner support 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 academic units and learner support units. Since no single educational or process 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. Nuventive Improve is being utilized 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,

Karen

Karen Stokes Chapo
Program Manager Assessment

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 and 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 characterized by the use of a particular tool 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?

Nuventive Improve 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. Nuventive Improve 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. Karen Stokes Chapo (karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu) is happy to help with any questions about assessment. There are also many online resources available on the assessment website at: www.wmich.edu/assessment. There are also people available to come and consult with departments, units and/or individuals and to do presentations for any faculty, staff, departments or colleges on assessment related topics. To request a visit and for more information, contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at: #387-3867.

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)

Assessment Plan Resources

This following website contains resources for developing outcomes, including definitions, the key components of an assessment plan, a video to assist with writing learning outcomes and more.

www.wmich.edu/assessment/resource/assessment-plan-resources

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 Chapo at: karen.stokeschapo@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

**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 are presented with transitions between lesson sections, minimal use of differentiated modalities and grouping patterns	Scope and sequence are 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
<p>Context of and purpose for writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i></p>	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).
<p>Content Development</p>	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.
<p>Genre and disciplinary conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic</i></p>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s)	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization,	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.

<i>fields (please see glossary).</i>	including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.	task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.	content, 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@aacu.org*)

Technology for Assessment

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

The above site contains information about all things assessment at WMU, including information about securing funding for assessment grants, assessment recognition/awards, institutional assessment participation, course evaluation system, resources and more.

Nuventive Improve (Formerly called TracDat)

Nuventive Improve 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. Nuventive Improve 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. The pre-formatted reports are dynamically available at any time to share electronically

All departmental or unit assessment plans are to be entered into [Nuventive Improve](#). 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

Company information on Nuventive Improve:
<http://www.nuventive.com/nuventive-improve>

Login to Nuventive Improve:
<https://itent-tracdat.cc.wmich.edu:8443/tracdat/>

Programs and Assistance

Assessment Mentor Program

The Assessment Mentor Program is designed to provide help for those would like assistance in learning more about assessment of student learning, developing an assessment plan, restructuring and/or rewriting student learning outcomes and more. The University Assessment Steering Committee has identified several mentors who are available for faculty, staff and departments to work with to assist them with their assessment efforts. If you are interested, please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and we can connect you with a mentor: uaus-info@wmich.edu

WMU Assessment in Action Conference

The Assessment in Action Conference is an annual collaborative program sponsored by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to provide the WMU community with a venue to learn and share ideas about assessment. This event provides access to assessment resources, time to network with colleagues, as well as focused skill-building learning in areas of assessment. Breakout session topics differ each year and topics will be chosen based on the needs of constituents. The WMU Assessment in Action Conference is held on a Friday each year in March or early April.

Assessment Contacts

University Contacts

- Karen Stokes Chapo, Program Manager Assessment
387-3867, karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu
- WMU Assessment Website: (<http://www.wmich.edu/assessment>)

College Contacts

- College of Arts and Sciences - James Cousins: james.cousins@wmich.edu
- College of Aviation - Ray Thompson: raymond.thompson@wmich.edu
- Haworth College of Business - Devrim Yaman: devrim.yaman@wmich.edu
- College of Education and Human Development - Marcia Feters:
marcia.feters@wmich.edu
- College of Engineering and Applied Sciences - Matthew Cavalli:
matthew.cavalli@wmich.edu
- College of Fine Arts - Scott Irelan: scott.irelan@wmich.edu
- College of Health and Human Services - Ron Cisler: ron.cisler@wmich.edu
- Division of Student Affairs - Ciji Heiser: ciji.heiser@wmich.edu
- University College - Ewa Urban: ewa.l.urban@wmich.edu
- The Graduate College: Christine Byrd-Jacobs: christine.byrd@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/assessment/committee>

College Academic Advisors
College of Arts and Sciences (2)
College of Aviation
College of Education and Human Development
College of Engineering and Applied Sciences
College of Fine Arts
College of Health and Human Services
Committee to Oversee General Education
Division of Student Affairs
Graduate College
Graduate Studies Council
Haenicke Institute for Global Education
Haworth College of Business
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Office of Institutional Effectiveness
Lee Honors College
Rotating Learner Support Unit (2)
Undergraduate Studies Council
University Libraries Representative
WMU Essential Studies Representative
WMUx

Executive Committee Members:

Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Rotating Member

Office of Institutional Effectiveness
Program Manager Assessment

Office of Institutional Effectiveness
Senior Administrative Assistant

Division of Student Affairs
Director of Assessment/Effectiveness

University College
Director of Assessment/Effectiveness

WMU Essential Studies
Director

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.

AIA Committee Membership 2020-21

Tonya Dean, Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Mioara Diaconu, School of Social Work

Diana Hernandez, Multi-Cultural Affairs for Students

Ciji Heiser, Division of Student Affairs

Kevin Knutson, College of Arts and Sciences Advising

Jonathan Scherger, University Libraries

Jennifer Townsend, Lee Honors College

K. K. Cathe Springsteen, Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Karen Stokes Chapo, (Chair), Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Ewa Urban, University College

Grants and Awards

Assessment Fellows Grant Program of the University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC)

Purpose of Program: To award grants for research on assessment that advances student learning and program quality—including those programs located at extended sites or branch campus locations—of Western Michigan University. Full and part-time faculty, staff and graduate assistants in academic departments, academic/learner support units, and interdisciplinary units in academic affairs, as well as departments and programs within the Division of Student Affairs are eligible to apply. The focus of the grants is to aid in measuring the achievement of learning and/or operational outcomes but the review committee will give preference to those applications that express interest in measuring learning. Funding preference will also be given for projects involving departments that have not been previously funded by the Assessment Fellows Grant program.

Outcomes can be measured using direct or indirect measures. For projects focusing on operational outcomes, the committee will not prioritize the applications based on the type(s) of measures described.

For projects focusing on learning outcomes, priority is given to activities related to the direct measure of learning or achievement where 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). They can also help to determine whether students have mastered the content of their academic programs. On the other hand, indirect measures ask students to reflect on their learning. Assessment can also include 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, (to include a proposal cover sheet, budget template, plus 4 pages for a 6-page maximum), electronically to Karen Stokes Chapo at karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu. No more than one proposal per department will be reviewed for possible funding each year and only single-year proposals will be considered. Each application must contain three identified sections as noted below. Proposals that exceed 6 pages will not be considered.

1) Objectives: Purpose (title) and objectives for the project are key elements and should be stated clearly. 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?

For project examples, visit:

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_faculty_grant/

For application examples, visit: <https://wmich.edu/assessment/grants>

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 be disseminated?

3) Proposal Budget (maximum award of \$4,000): Refer to the budget template (wmich.edu/assessment/grants). Please note that the Assessment Fellows Grants can be used to support student assistants, research time, materials, software support, or conference registrations. However, Assessment Fellows Grants may not be used to support release time from assigned teaching or administrative responsibilities, costs of academic credit, computer or other technical 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. Consider the following: What materials do you need to purchase, what student assistance do you need, what analytical assistance is required, or what payment is required for the applicant to do what and when?

For information regarding University guidelines for student employment, you can go to the following website: <https://wmich.edu/hr/officemanagement/student-resources>

Timetable: Assessment Fellows Grant applications for are welcome until the end of April each year (due date subject to change). Funds will be made available for awarded projects the following academic year. The associate provost for assessment and undergraduate studies will announce awards by the first week of June each year. The grant project must be completed by the end of the spring semester of the subsequent academic year. Requests for reimbursement of funds must be submitted prior to termination date of the project.

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

Responsibilities of awardees:

Assessment Fellows Cohort: The 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 April.

Assessment Exemplar: Assessment fellows are expected to report the outcomes of their work during WMU's annual assessment conference.

Final Report: A brief report, two to four pages only, shall 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:

- 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: Reflect upon the assessment impact of the grant project.

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 Assessment Fellows Grant Program, Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies, Western Michigan University."*

Summary of Project: Assessment fellows shall write up a brief summary of their assessment projects to be included in the program for the annual WMU Assessment in Action Conference.

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board: Assessment proposals that do not meet the federal definition of research or human subject (45 CFR 46) do not require HSIRB review, approval and oversight; however, if you plan to publish the results in a professional journal, you should seek HSIRB approval prior to implementation and data collection. Most assessments designed to measure achievement of desired student learning outcomes at the classroom, program, or institutional level do not require HSIRB oversight. If you have any questions about your proposed project, please contact the associate director for research compliance at 387-8293 or via e-mail at research-compliance@wmich.edu.

Condition for Acceptance: Awardees authorize the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies to post project findings for the given year on the ScholarWorks Assessment page (http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_faculty_grant/).

Budget Contact Information: The name, email and phone number for the budget contact within the department shall be provided by awardees upon signing the grant contract.

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

Ms. Karen Stokes Chapo, Program Manager Assessment
Phone: 269-387-3867
E-mail: karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu

Western Michigan University Assessment Excellence Award

Collaboration Award

Eligibility

The competition is open to all WMU degree awarding and student support units that have conducted assessment of student learning and program quality in collaboration with other individuals from their own or another department, unit and/or program at WMU for the purpose of program improvement. Examples of this may include several individuals from one department, unit or program working collaboratively to improve a program, several individuals from multidisciplinary programs who are working together on assessment of a mutual program, individuals from different departments, units and/or programs who are working collaboratively on a specific program etc. Many departments, units, and programs have submitted and received UASC approval on their assessment plan(s). Though not required for this competition, those that have not yet submitted an assessment plan to the UASC are encouraged to do so.

Procedure

Nominations should include the names of individuals being nominated, the departments, units, and/or programs involved, the person(s) submitting, along with a brief report highlighting improvements attributed to the assessment process, evaluation and improvement of the collaborative assessment plan, and/or other achievements that raise their assessment activities to a level of excellence.

Award Criteria

The UASC will use the following criteria as a basis for selecting the collaboration award winners:

- Evidence that the individuals have a strong commitment to assessment.
- Evidence that assessment activities have occurred and led to program improvements.
- Evidence that assessment data are being used to improve program quality.
- Evidence of other exemplary assessment achievements that influence the culture of accountability at WMU.
- Evidence that the department, unit or program assessment plan (if applicable) contains elements that are achievable, usable, and sustainable and activities are being conducted in accordance with the plan timetable. Nominations may include assessment reports that highlight and support the above aforementioned evidence.

Submission

Deadline for application submission is TBD. Awards will be announced during the annual WMU Assessment in Action Conference.

Please submit your application electronically to:

Ms. Karen Stokes Chapo, Program Manager Assessment

E-mail: karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu

Telephone: 269-387-3867

Individual Award

This individual-based award is designed to recognize WMU employees who have made a significant contribution in the area of assessment of student learning.

Eligibility

The competition is open to all WMU employees who have made a significant contribution in the area of assessment of student learning. Examples include:

- Authored or co-authored an article. The article must be published (or accepted for publication) in a peer-reviewed journal, proceedings, or equivalent venue.
- Presented or co-presented student learning assessment data at a peer-reviewed conference. The nominee must have made the presentation prior to nomination.
- Assessment work that has resulted in notable changes in programs related to student learning.
- Instrumental efforts in creating and implementing student learning assessment processes within the institution.

Procedures

Self-nominations or nominations from others are acceptable. Individuals submitting a nomination must include:

- The name, title, unit, and contact information of the nominee
- A one-page (maximum) cover letter describing why the nominee is deserving of the award
- Relevant examples of the assessment work completed by the nominee, including a copy of the article, presentation, or a summary report of the assessment accomplishments

Award Criteria

UASC will use evidence of impact as a basis for selecting the individual award winner. Evidence of impact may include number of citations, quality of journal, level of student learning improvement, number of assessment projects, significance of program change, or other evidence as appropriate.

Submission

Deadline for application submission will is TBD. Awards will be announced during the annual Assessment in Action Conference.

Please submit your application electronically to:

Ms. Karen Stokes Chapo, Program Manager Assessment

E-mail: karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu

Telephone: 269-387-3867

Unit Award

This unit-based award is designed to recognize and showcase outstanding efforts in the area of assessment at WMU. 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.

Eligibility

The competition is open to all WMU degree awarding and student support units that have conducted assessment of student learning and program quality. Many units have submitted and received UASC approval on their assessment plan(s). Though not required for this competition, units that have not yet submitted an assessment plan to UASC are encouraged to do so.

Procedure

Nominations include the name of the unit and person submitting, along with a brief report highlighting improvements attributed to the assessment process, evaluation and improvement of the unit's assessment plan, and/or other achievements that raise their assessment activities to a level of excellence.

Award Criteria

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

- Evidence that the unit has a strong commitment to assessment.
- Evidence that assessment activities have occurred and led to program improvements.
- Evidence that assessment data are being used to improve program quality.
- Evidence of other exemplary assessment achievements that influence the culture of accountability at WMU.
- Evidence that the unit's assessment plan (if applicable) contains elements that are achievable, usable, and sustainable; activities are being conducted in accordance with the plan timetable; and, highlight areas of the assessment impact report that support the claim (attach a copy of the unit's most recent assessment impact report).

Submission

Deadline for application submission is TBD. Awards will be announced during the annual WMU Assessment in Action Conference.

Please submit your application electronically to:

Ms. Karen Stokes Chapo, Program Manager Assessment

E-mail: karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu

Telephone: 269-387-3867

Other Resources

Assessment Conferences:

At WMU:

- WMU Assessment in Action Conference: [conference proceedings](#)

Off Campus:

- [The Assessment Institute](#)-Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis
- [Annual Meeting of the Higher Learning Commission](#)
- [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](#)
 - [Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation](#) (online journal 1999-present)
 - [National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment](#)
 - [Association for Institutional Research](#)

Papers and Presentations

- [ScholarWorks at WMU](#) (Archive of assessment publications and presentations)

Websites

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



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Office of
Institutional Effectiveness