

## Program Review Assessment Component -- Evaluation Guidelines

### **Guidelines from Appendix E of the Faculty Handbook:**

#### 4) Assessment of the Department and its programs

- The purpose of doing assessment is to gain information systematically regarding how well our students are learning what we intend them to learn, and to use this knowledge to improve their educational experience.

#### A) The Departmental Major Assessment Plan should contain the following components:

1. Departmental Mission Statement
  - This should show relationship to the SAU mission, but reflect the department's unique philosophy and goals for its majors
2. Learning Objectives for Majors
  - Describe student learning objectives which flow from the departmental mission
3. Methods for Assessment in the Major
  - A good plan:
    - Uses multiple methods for assessing student learning of objectives
    - Explains why these particular methods were chosen over others
    - Provides for feedback to students during their time within the department so that students have methods, beyond grades, of self-assessment
    - Explains how each objective is being met by the curriculum
4. Documentation of Student Learning in the Major
  - Assessment information must be collected, stored and organized for departmental study
  - How is this done and who is responsible?
5. Use of Assessment Information to Improve Education
  - How and at what intervals does the department study the collected documentation and use this information for program improvement? (Typically prior to Program Review Cycle.)
  - How is this information, beyond grades, fed back to students?
6. Evaluation of the Departmental Assessment Plan
  - The departmental assessment plan should be reviewed at regular intervals (typically, prior to the Program Review cycle) to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of the plan. When and how will this be done?

#### B) Assessment of Teaching and Learning in the Major

1. Present and describe any data which assesses student learning of departmental objectives
  - What does this information reveal about the strengths and weaknesses of the educational experience being offered by the department?
  - How has this assessment study informed the program changes described in Part 2, "PROPOSED ACTIONS"?
2. Evaluate the major program in terms of requirements, sequencing of courses, and prerequisites

#### C) General Education Assessment of Teaching

1. For ALL courses:
  - Indicate how the department's courses teach to the General Education goals (p. 22 of the "1995 Academic Assessment Plan"). (See Attachment 1 for a possible model.)
2. Existing courses designated as General Education courses:
  - Document that department is teaching GenEd courses in accordance with the General Education Program mission, goals, and philosophy outlined on p. 22 of the "1995 Academic Assessment Plan."
  - Present evidence of teaching to divisional goals in each General Education course
  - Indicate which Skills ("Do") and Attitudes/Values ("Think About") each General Education course addresses and present evidence that the course actually does address it. (See Attachment 2 for possible means of documenting evidence.)
3. New courses seeking General Education designation:
  - Demonstrate how the course strives to meet the General Education Program goals

## What I look for when evaluating assessment plans, their implementation, and documentation

### 1. Mission statement

- a. Does the mission statement clearly explain the purpose of the program (why the program exists & it unique)?
- b. Is the mission statement focused on student learning/development?
- c. Is the mission statement related to the SAU mission?
  - i. St. Ambrose University—*independent, diocesan, and Catholic*—enables its students to develop intellectually, spiritually, ethically, socially, artistically and physically to enrich their own lives and the lives of others.
- d. Is the mission statement realistic?

### 2. Learning objectives for majors (intended outcomes)

- a. Learning objectives must be clear, meaningful, and measurable statements of behaviors we want students to demonstrate as a result of our major programs
  - i. Clear
    1. Are the objectives concise and easily understood?
    2. Can I see how the major program will work towards accomplishing these objectives?
    3. Can I see how the major program might go about measuring student achievement of these objectives?
  - ii. Meaningful
    1. Can I see how each objective is important and relevant? Are at least some of the intended outcomes representing higher-level skills and abilities?
    2. Is the objective so narrowly stated as to be unimportant? Is the objective so vague as to be unmeasurable?
  - iii. Measurable
    1. Does the objective specify an outcome that can be observed? Ideally, the objectives should use action verbs (recognize, construct, evaluate, identify, analyze, write, describe, apply, discuss, predict) rather than vague verbs (appreciate, understand, learn, know, comprehend, familiarize, study, cover, gain an awareness of).
    2. Can I identify possible ways in which evidence of the achievement of this objective could be documented? Will the objective lead to an observable behavior/action from a student or to the creation of an observable product?
    3. (optional) Ideally, the objectives would specify the conditions under which students will be asked to demonstrate the intended outcome
    4. (optional) Ideally, the objectives would specify the criteria used to define the minimally acceptable level of performance
  - iv. Student-focused
    1. Do the objectives specify what the program wants *students* to demonstrate or produce? Any objective that states what a department, program, or teacher will do is **not** a student learning objective.
    2. Rule of thumb: If a learning objective can be achieved in an empty classroom, it is not a student learning objective. Example: To provide an enriching environment for learning.
  - v. Alignment & Coverage
    1. Are the objectives aligned with both the University and program mission statements?
    2. Do the objectives comprehensively cover the program mission statement? Are any obvious objectives missing?

#### Student Learning Objective Checklist:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the learning objective clear? Can you identify ways in which the objective could be addressed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the learning objective meaningful? Is the outcome important (non-trivial)? Is it realistic?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the learning objective state the conditions under which the behavior will be observed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Can you easily identify ways to determine if an objective has been met? Does it use an action verb?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the learning objective specify the criteria for the minimum level of acceptable performance?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the learning objective student-centered?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do the objectives include all the important outcomes of the course/department/program?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are the objectives aligned with the mission of the department/college/university?

### 3. Methods for Assessment in the Major

- a. Assessment methods simply describe how to measure the degree to which each learning objective has been met.
  - i. Alignment & Coverage
    1. Do the assessments align with the student learning objectives?
    2. Will the assessments actually yield useful results? Will they actually provide evidence as to the degree to which each learning objective (intended outcome) was achieved?
    3. Taken as a whole, do the assessments measure all student learning objectives? Will the assessments yield information that will address each learning objective? Can I identify any student learning objectives that are not assessed?
  - ii. Multiple measures (with the majority being direct measures)
    1. Since all forms of assessment contain error, does the program identify multiple assessment methods that will be used to assess each learning objective? These assessments can (and should) take a variety of forms.
    2. Are the majority of measures used direct (directly measure student behaviors or products as opposed to indirect measures such as surveys)? Do any of the measures provide for external comparisons (such as norm-referenced tests)?
    3. Are at least some of the measures forms of authentic assessment? A mix of traditional and performance assessments can provide the best overall assessment of student learning.
    4. Did the program justify why these assessment measures were chosen over other methods?
  - iii. Realistic
    1. Do I really believe that the program will implement this assessment plan? Is it feasible given the program's resources? Is the assessment efficient?
    2. Did the program provide evidence of the implementation of the previous assessment plan?
    3. Did the program specify assessment responsibilities and a timeline?
      - a. Who will administer the assessment measures?
      - b. When, where, and how measures will be administered?
      - c. Who will be assessed?
      - d. When and how assessment results will be collected and analyzed?

### 4. Documentation of Student Learning in the Major

- a. The assessment plan must specify how assessment information will be collected and stored
  - i. Does the program maintain assessment information to track trends in student achievement?
  - ii. Does the program identify a timeline and responsibilities with regards to data collection?
- b. Ideally, the assessment plan should describe criteria that will be used to determine the performance of students (and evaluate program activities)

### 5. Use of Assessment Information to Improve Education

- a. The assessment plan must explain how assessment data will be used to make program improvements
  - i. Does the plan specify when and how faculty/staff will review assessment information?
  - ii. Does the plan specify that the program will review and discuss assessment information *before the next program review year*?
  - iii. Does the plan specify how feedback will be given to students (beyond grades)? Will students be given timely and meaningful feedback?

### 6. Evaluation of the Departmental Assessment Plan

- a. The assessment plan must be evaluated regularly as to its effectiveness and feasibility
  - i. Does the plan how and when it will be evaluated?
  - ii. Are changes to the previous assessment plan based on an evaluation?

## **B) Assessment of Teaching and Learning in the Major**

- 1. Present and describe any data which assess student learning of departmental (program) objectives**
  - b. The program review must summarize results for each student learning objective (based on the previous assessment plan)
    - i. Are results for each student learning objective summarized?
    - ii. Did the program identify areas of relative strength? Did the program identify areas for improvement?
    - iii. Does the program identify trends in student performance?
  - c. Proposed changes or additions to the program should be a result of assessment information
    - i. Did the program explain how proposed changes align with information gained from assessment?
    - ii. Are the proposed changes consistent with the summarized assessment information?
  
- 2. Evaluate the major program in terms of requirements, sequencing of courses, and prerequisites**

### Evaluative Rubric for Assessment Plan Development and Implementation

The following rubric is intended for use by a wide audience. This form can be used by departments to do a self-evaluation of the status of assessment in their department, by deans and other administrators to evaluate five-year program reviews, by the Educational Policies Committee to evaluate departmental assessment at the time of five-year program reviews, and to evaluate annual assessment updates.

<b>Plan Element/Activity</b>	<b>Exemplary 3</b>	<b>Acceptable 2</b>	<b>Unacceptable 1</b>	<b>Score for Each Element</b>
<i>Student learning objectives/outcomes (SLOs) assessed during the year</i>	SLOs stated in terms of measurable knowledge, behavior, attitude, or disposition.	Not all of the SLOs stated in measurable terms.	No SLOs listed.	
<i>Assessment method/measure for each SLO</i>	More than one appropriate measure was used for each SLO.	At least one measure was used or developed for each SLO.	Measures were not used or developed or were inadequate.	
<i>Direct measures (over a 5-year period, approximately ½ of the measures used should be direct measures, and at least one direct measure should be applied to each SLO)</i>	Approximately ½ of assessment measures were direct, and there was at least one direct measure for each outcome.	No direct measures were used during the academic year, but direct measures are part of the 5-year plan approved by EPC.	No direct measures were included in the 5-year plan.	
<i>Participants (students or alumni involved for each measure)</i>	Participants were identified for each SLO.	Participants were identified for some SLOs, but there was some lack of clarity.	Participants were not identified.	
<i>Timeframe in which measures were administered or data collected</i>	The timeframe for administration of measures or collection of data was specified.	The timeframe was specified, but not for others or there was some lack of clarity.	The timeframe was not specified.	

<b>Plan Element/Activity</b>	<b>Exemplary 3</b>	<b>Acceptable 2</b>	<b>Unacceptable 1</b>	<b>Score for Each Element</b>
<i>Setting/forum in which measures were administered or data collected</i>	The setting or forum in which each of the measures was administered or data collected was specified.	The setting or forum was specified for some measures, but not for all or there was lack of clarity.	The setting or forum was not specified.	
<i>Results</i>	Results were described for each SLO that was assessed.	Results were described for a subset of the SLOs and/or there was some lack of clarity.	Results were not described for the SLOs that were to be assessed.	
<i>Process for data presentation to and discussion by faculty</i>	The process that was used for the interpretation, review, and discussion of the data/evidence by the faculty was described.	The process was described for a subset of the SLOs and/or there was some lack of clarity.	The process was not described. It is not clear whether the faculty considered the results of the assessment.	
<i>Actions or revisions implemented or planned based on assessment results</i>	Specific actions or revisions have been or will be implemented based on assessment results.	Specific actions or revisions were described but the report of or plan for implementation was unclear or incomplete in some aspects.	There were no specific actions or revisions described.	

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