

Annual Assessment Report

Expectations and Guidelines

Purpose of These Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to support your program's assessment efforts by providing clear, actionable guidance on what makes an effective assessment report. The feedback you receive is intended to recognize your strengths, identify opportunities for growth, and help you strengthen the connection between assessment and student learning. All feedback comes from a place of supporting continuous improvement and maintaining a culture of meaningful assessment across campus.

Annual Report Components

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) articulate the knowledge, skills, and abilities students should gain through engagement in your program. Effective SLOs are observable, measurable, and appropriate to the degree level.

Meets Expectations	Does Not Yet Meet Expectations
☐ Observable and measurable ☐ Articulated with appropriate action verbs which state the level of mastery expected ☐ Encompass core program competencies ☐ Comprehensive yet manageable in number ☐ Aligned with program mission ☐ Language and expectations are precise and clear ☐ Aligned with professional/accreditation standards ☐ Distinguishes graduate from undergraduate expectations when applicable	☐ Language focuses on what the program does rather than what students learn ☐ Unclear how an evaluator determines if the outcome is met ☐ Incomplete coverage of essential program competencies ☐ Graduate and undergraduate outcomes are identical or insufficiently differentiated

2. Methods and Measures

Assessment methods are the means of gathering evidence that students have achieved the learning outcomes. Strong methods use direct measures that authentically reflect the outcome and provide actionable data.

Meets Expectations	Does Not Yet Meet Expectations
☐ At least one direct measure per outcome ☐ Methods clearly align with stated outcomes ☐ Sufficient detail provided about instruments ☐ Instruments reflect sound methodology ☐ Assessment is embedded in authentic coursework ☐ Implementation is feasible with current resources	☐ Misalignment between measures and outcomes ☐ Over-reliance on indirect measures ☐ Instruments are vaguely described or not fully developed ☐ Methods assess individual course performance rather than program-level competency ☐ Course grades used as the primary assessment method

Examples of exemplary practice may include multiple measures for outcomes and/or capture cumulative program effect.

3. Criteria of Success

Criteria of success define the benchmark that represents acceptable achievement of an outcome. Strong criteria are specific, measurable, and typically expressed as a percentage or average of students meeting a defined performance level.

Meets Expectations	Does Not Yet Meet Expectations
☐ Specific and measurable ☐ Aligned with outcomes and measures ☐ Based on benchmarks, past data, or external standards ☐ Target identified for each measure ☐ Represent an acceptable level of success ☐ Appropriately rigorous for degree (or course) level ☐ Distinguish graduate from undergraduate expectations, where appropriate	☐ Criteria appear arbitrary without justification ☐ Targets not clearly aligned with measures ☐ Graduate and undergraduate programs use identical criteria or success level is misaligned with degree or course level ☐ Some measures lack defined criteria

Examples of exemplary practice may include both percentage-based and average-based criteria when appropriate, or may include other criteria that are genuinely informative, multidimensional, and/or address multiple skill components or performance levels, rather than reducing all evidence to a single threshold.

4. Summary of Findings

The summary presents the results from your assessment measures. Effective summaries are complete, accurate, and organized to facilitate interpretation without revealing student-identifiable information.

Meets Expectations	Does Not Yet Meet Expectations
☐ Complete data with appropriate granularity ☐ Organized presentation ☐ Aligns with criteria of success language ☐ Clearly indicates if criteria were met, partially met, or not met ☐ Includes sample size (<i>n</i>) and frequency distributions ☐ Provides sufficient detail for decision-making	☐ Missing sample size ☐ Frequency distributions not provided ☐ Contains excessive detail that obscures key findings ☐ Unclear alignment with stated criteria ☐ Conclusion about meeting criteria is ambiguous

Examples of exemplary practice may include comparing findings to past trends or visualizations to enhance understanding. Disaggregated data reveals specific strengths, weaknesses or overall patterns.

5. Analysis

Analysis goes beyond reporting results to interpret what the findings mean for your program. Strong analysis explores patterns, identifies underlying causes, discusses curricular implications, and connects results to instructional practices.

Meets Expectations	Does Not Yet Meet Expectations
☐ Demonstrates thorough interpretation of results ☐ Identifies key patterns in the data ☐ Identifies both strengths and areas needing attention ☐ Provides sufficient context to understand performance ☐ Connects results to specific instructional practices or curricular design ☐ Contextualizes results with relevant program factors	☐ Restate data without interpretation ☐ Presents dimensional results without analyzing patterns ☐ Does not connect findings to curriculum ☐ Analysis is brief or superficial

Examples of exemplary practice may include extending analysis to identify probable causes, evaluating competing explanations, and/or considering student preparation, assignment design, or assessment validity.

6. Action Plans

Action plans describe what your program will do based on assessment findings. Effective action plans are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-phased (SMART). They should enable your program to close the assessment loop by evaluating whether interventions improved student learning in the next cycle.

Meets Expectations	Does Not Yet Meet Expectations
☐ Actions clearly follow from specific findings ☐ Include concrete implementation timelines (e.g., “beginning Fall 2026”) ☐ Manageable number of focused actions proposed ☐ Actions are feasible and relevant ☐ Clear direction for program improvement	☐ Missing specific implementation timelines ☐ No measurable improvement targets identified ☐ Actions are vague (e.g., “monitor,” “discuss,” “encourage”) ☐ Lack detail about implementation ☐ Connection to findings are not clear

Examples of exemplary practice may include establishing measurable improvement targets for the next cycle and plans for continuous improvement even when criteria are met.

Additional Guidance

Common Opportunities for Improvement

Based on assessment reports across the University, some common areas where reports can be improved include:

Analysis

- Restating findings without interpretation (please go beyond reporting percentages to explain what they mean).
- Failing to interpret patterns in dimensional or disaggregated data.
- Not connecting results to specific instructional practices or curricular design.

Action Plans

- Missing implementation timelines or not specifying when changes will occur.
- No measurable improvement targets for the next assessment cycle.
- Vague language like “monitor,” “discuss,” or “encourage” instead of concrete actions.
- Using identical assessment approaches for graduate and undergraduate programs.

Criteria of Success

- Undefined success criteria
- Reporting results in the criteria section rather than predetermined benchmarks
- Criteria focused on process rather than outcomes.

Distinguishing Graduate from Undergraduate Assessment

Graduate programs should demonstrate distinct, more advanced expectations in all assessment components:

- SLOs that reflect advanced scholarship, independent research, or professional practice expectations
- Assessment methods that emphasize synthesis, critical evaluation, and original application
- More rigorous criteria of success appropriate to graduate-level mastery
- Analysis that discusses advanced competencies and professional readiness
- Action plans that reference graduate-specific pedagogies and expectations

Closing the Assessment Loop

Effective assessment is cyclical. Programs demonstrating best practices for closing the assessment loop will:

- Report on the status of action plans from the prior cycle
- Evaluate whether implemented changes improved student learning
- Use findings to inform new action plans
- Demonstrate continuous program improvement over time