Instructions for Program Assessment Report Template

Assessment Reports due Oct. 15, 2025

Annual Undergraduate reporting: 2024-2025

Biennial Graduate reporting: 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

\*Delete Instructions Pages Before Submitting Report\*

Use the template provided after this page to organize your Program Assessment Report. Be sure to delete the instruction pages before submitting. This template works for both Annual (Undergraduate) and Biennial (Graduate) reports. You will distinguish whether you are doing an Annual or Biennial assessment based on the academic year(s) covered.

Header & Programs Table: Please include department head and faculty who are submitting or reviewing report. Please fill in the table with the majors, minors, options, certificates, etc. in as full a manner as possible. This eliminates guesswork for the Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC) and supports records management.

Section 1. Past Assessment Summary

Briefly summarize the findings from the last assessment report conducted related to the PLOs being assessed this year. Include any findings that influenced this cycle’s assessment approach. Alternatively, reflect on the program assessment conducted last year, and explain how that impacted or informed any changes made to this cycle’s assessment plan.

Section 2. Institutional Learning Outcome Assessment Data Request

This is a data request by the Core Curriculum Committee and the Vice Provost of Curriculum, Assessment, and Accreditation that is related to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Information collected will support future institutional learning outcomes assessment.

As a part of MSU’s endeavors to support institutional effectiveness, and address the recent NWCCU recommendations for accreditation related to assessing all programs at MSU, the Vice Provost of Curriculum, Assessment, and Accreditation and the Core Curriculum Committee are asking programs if they can identify at least one course that might address any of the MSU Core Quality learning outcomes at the “Developing” and “Proficient/Mastery” levels.

*Rationale*:

MSU values the skills that students acquire as graduates of this university. Core Quality Learning Outcomes state that MSU *Graduates* will be Effective Communicators, Thinkers & Problem Solvers, and Local & Global Citizens. The inclusion of the word “graduates” implies that all programs address these learning outcomes at some point in their curriculum, not just in Core designated courses. Please review the definitions of the [MSU Core Qualities](https://www.montana.edu/msu-core/core_learning_outcomes.html). The Core Committee uses a set of [Core Assessment Rubrics](https://www.montana.edu/msu-core/core_assessment.html) to assess the Core at the “Beginning” to “Developing” levels. Please review these rubrics, paying attention to the “Developing” and “Proficient” criteria.

Section 3. Actionable Research Question for Your Assessment

What question(s) are you trying to answer in this cycle’s assessment? Research questions should be meaningful (focus on an area you need to know the answer to), relatable (tied to program goals), and measurable. Focus on: What will we be able to improve on if we answer this question? Formulate the question so it is specific to an observable action – not on something that is difficult to measure.

Suggestions for Assessment focused on student achievement of PLOs:

Example: PLO related to students developing problem-solving skills.

1. Macro level question: Can students apply problem-solving steps? Or, how well do students apply problem-solving steps?
2. Micro level question: How have student outcomes on applying problem-solving steps changed over the last three years?

For a deeper dive into assessment beyond student achievement of PLOs that will help you make changes to the program being assessed, consider…

Whether, a change in curriculum is reflected in a change in achievement of a PLO, or whether a particular aspect of a PLO can be assessed rather than just an overall PLO. If so, what question(s) does this assessment address? Programs are encouraged to look deeper than solely achievement of PLOs at threshold levels if those levels are consistently being met. (Remember: Goal of assessment is continuous improvement, not just checking a box.)

Section 4. Assessment Plan, Schedule, and Data Sources:

* 1. Provide a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed, and by what criteria (data). If you are assessing multiple programs, note the rationale for combining those assessments to one report. This schedule can be adjusted as needed. Attempt to assess all PLOs every three years. *You may use the table provided, or you may delete and use a different format.*
     1. Data sources.
        1. Examples of direct evidence of student learning: specifically designed exam questions, written work, performances, presentations, projects (using a program-specific rubric – not a course grading rubric); scores and pass rates on licensure exams that assess key learning goals; observations of student skill or behavior; summaries classroom response systems; student reflections.
        2. Indirect evidence of student learning includes course grades, grade distributions, assignment grades, retention and graduation rates, alumni perceptions, and questions on end-of-course evaluations forms related to the course rather than the instructor. These may provide information for identifying areas of learning that need more direct assessment but should NOT be used as primary sources for direct evidence of student learning.
  2. What are the threshold values for which your program demonstrates student achievement? Provide a rationale for your threshold values. *Delete the example provided in the table before submission and create your own table.*

Section 5. What was Done

Fill in the subcategories as requested and include your program assessment specific rubric. *Example provided should be deleted before submission.*

1. Self-reporting metric. This is used for accreditation purposes.
2. This section allows you to explain your methodology for data collection and analysis; as well as to acknowledge who took part in assessment.

Note: The AOC does not require programs to include proprietary materials (e.g., exam questions or examples) in their assessment reports. However, programs may choose to include such materials for internal reference if they find it helpful. If student work is included, all identifying information must be removed. Reports may present data on assessment methods (e.g., publications, theses/dissertations, qualifying exams) or successful completions in table format, when relevant to learning outcomes. In cases where student numbers are small and individuals could be identified, reports should emphasize program-level improvements rather than individual outcomes. Departments are responsible for uploading their reports to their websites and should carefully determine what content is appropriate for public access.

1. Rubrics: Your rubric can be different than the example and have a separate set of criteria and levels of evaluation.

Note: Rubrics can be created to assess learning at any course level, with evaluation scores and threshold percentages adjusted accordingly. Some rubrics are designed for use across multiple course levels—for example, to assess outcomes in both lower- and upper-division courses—depending on how the assessment is structured. If you’re evaluating more foundational learning outcomes, it’s appropriate to focus on lower-division coursework where those outcomes are typically introduced and expected to be achieved earlier in a student’s academic progression.

Section 6. What was Learned.

Fill in subcategories. Assessment looks at both meeting thresholds successfully and finding ways to improve. Even if you have met all thresholds at 100%, there is room to reflect and consider what can be improved or looked at more deeply. If programs are consistently meeting thresholds on PLOs, reviewing rigor and/or assessment rubrics may be a deeper step in assessment endeavors.

Section 7. How we Responded.

Explain how what was learned was communicated with faculty and how results of assessment will be used for future curricular or assessment endeavors.

Section 8. Closing the loop(s).

This section is central to your report. It offers a chance to reflect on how current assessment results show progress since the last cycle and to outline how future changes and assessments will build on this foundation. Program assessment is closely linked to the department’s 7-year program review and serves as a valuable resource for budget planning, strategic development, and demonstrating contributions to institutional effectiveness. It also creates a historical record that departments can draw on in future planning.

For further support, see Provost’s Website for:

* [Program Assessment Steps](https://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/program_assessment_overview.html)
* [Define Desired Program Learning Outcomes](https://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/define_desired_program_learning_outcomes.html)
* [Sample Learning Outcomes & Rubrics Examples](https://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/sample_learning_outcomes_and_rubrics.html)
* Various Taxonomy of Learning examples can be found at the bottom of the [Program Assessment Overview webpage](https://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/program_assessment.html), including:
  + [Bloom’s Action Verbs for Learning Outcomes](https://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/blooms_action_verbs_for_learning_outcomes.html)
  + [Taxonomies of the Cognitive Domain](https://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/taxonomies_of_the_cognitive_domain.html)
  + Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning (PDF)
  + Marzano & Kendall’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (PDF)

Same template is used for both the (Annual/UG) 2024-2025 and (Biennial/GR) 2023-2024 & 2024-2025 reports.

# Academic Program Assessment Report

Academic Year(s) Assessed:

College:  
Department:

Department Head:  
Submitted by:

Program(s) Assessed   
List all majors (including each option), minors, and certificates that are included in this assessment – add or subtract rows as needed – please use official titles:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Majors | Minors, Options, etc. |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Section 1. Past Assessment Summary.

Response:

Section 2. Institutional Assessment Data Request.

Based on the rationale on the Instructions page, please review your program learning outcomes (PLOs) and identify whether you have PLOs that address the Core Qualities. There are no right or wrong answers.

Identify 1-2 major-required courses that might have student assignments designed to meet these objectives at least at a surface level. If you cannot identify a course in your program that aligns with this request, please check the appropriate box. At this juncture, this is for information gathering as we plan future institutional assessment endeavors.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Core Quality LOs are Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) | PLO overlaps with MSU Core Quality  Mark X if program has at least one PLO that overlaps with an ILO | Beginning Level  e.g. CORE Courses (US, W, Q, IN, CS, IA, IH, IS, D) | Developing Level  e.g. list one 200- or 300-level course | Proficient Level  e.g. list one 300- or 400-level courses, Capstone, Research (R) Core courses | Not Applicable (N/A)  No course exists in our program that addresses this Core Quality / ILO |
| Thinkers & Problem Solvers |  | Core classes are designed to address an introductory, foundational level of Core Qualities. Some may overlap into the developing level, but most intermediate-to-developing or proficient/mastery level courses will exist within the majors. |  |  |  |
| Effective Communicators |  |  |  |  |
| Local & Global Citizen |  |  |  |  |

Section 3. Actionable Research Question for Your Assessment.

Response:

Section 4. Assessment Plan, Schedule, and Data Sources.

1. Did you change the previously established Assessment Plan Schedule. If yes, how was it changed?
2. Please provide a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed, and by what criteria (data). List your PLOs in full for reference. Add rows as necessary.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ASSESSMENT PLANNING SCHEDULE CHART | | | | | |
| PLO# | PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | 2025-2026 | 2026-2027 | Data Source\* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. What are the threshold values for which your program demonstrates student achievement? Provide a rationale for your threshold values.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Threshold Values | | |
| PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME | Threshold Value | Data Source |
| Example: 6) Communicate in written form about fundamental and modern microbiological concepts. | The threshold value for this outcome is for 75% of assessed students to score above 2 on a 1-4 scoring rubric. | Randomly selected student essays |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Section 5. What Was Done?

1. Self-reporting Metric (required answer): Was the completed assessment consistent with the program’s assessment plan? If not, please explain the adjustments that were made.

No

Yes





1. How was the data collected and analyzed and by whom? Please include method of collection and sample size.
2. Please provide a rubric that demonstrates how your data was evaluated. (Delete example below and replace with program’s assessment-specific rubric.)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Indicators | Beginning - 1 | Developing- 2 | Competent- 3 | Accomplished- 4 |
| Analysis of Information, Ideas, or Concepts | Identifies problem types | Focuses on difficult problems with persistence | Understands complexity of a problem | Provides logical interpretations of data |
| Application of Information, Ideas, or Concepts | Uses standard solution methods | Provides a logical interpretation of the data | Employs creativity in search of a solution | Achieves clear, unambiguous conclusions from the data |
| Synthesis | Identifies intermediate steps required that connects previous material | Recognizes and values alternative problem-solving methods | Connects ideas or develops solutions in a clear coherent order | Develops multiple solutions, positions, or perspectives |
| Evaluation | Check the solutions against the issue | Identifies what the final solution should determine | Recognizes hidden assumptions and implied premises | Evaluates premises, relevance to a conclusion and adequacy of support for conclusion. |

Section 6. What Was Learned.

1. Based on the analysis of the data, and compared to the threshold values established, what was learned from the assessment?
2. What areas of strength in the program were identified from this assessment process?
3. What areas were identified that either need improvement or could be improved in a different way from this assessment process?

Section 7. How We Responded.

1. Describe how “What Was Learned” was communicated to the department, or program faculty. How did faculty discussions re-imagine new ways program assessment might contribute to program growth/improvement/innovation beyond the bare minimum of achieving program learning objectives through assessment activities conducted at the course level?
2. How are the results of this assessment informing changes to enhance student learning in the program?
3. If information outside of this assessment is informing programmatic changes, please describe that.
4. What support and resources (e.g., workshops, training, etc.) might you need to make these adjustments?

## **Section 8. Closing the Loop(s).**

## Reflect on the program learning outcomes, how they were assessed in the previous cycle (refer to #1 of the report), and what was learned in this cycle about any actions stemming from the previous cycle.

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## Self-Reporting Metric (required answer): Based on the findings and/or faculty input, will there be any changes made (such as plans for measurable improvements, realignment of learning outcomes, curricular changes, etc.) in preparation for upcoming assessments?

Yes



No



## In reviewing the last report that assessed the PLO(s) in this assessment cycle, what changes proposed were implemented and will be measured in future assessment reports? What action will be taken to improve student learning objectives going forward?

## Have you seen a change in student learning based on other program adjustments made in the past? Please describe the adjustments made and subsequent changes in student learning.

## If the program sees anything emerging from this assessment cycle that it anticipates would be a factor or an item of discussion in its 7-year program review cycle, please use this space to document that for future reference.

## Submit report to [programassessment@montana.edu](mailto:programassessment@montana.edu)

Update Department program assessment report website.

Update PLO language in CIM if needed ([Map PLOs to Course LOs](https://www.montana.edu/provost/curriculum-development/mapping_program_learning_outcomes_to_course_learning_outcomes.html))