

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Policy

Subject:	Assessment and Outcomes
Policy:	Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Policy
Revised:	May 2026
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Sponsor:	Assessment and Outcomes Committee

Introduction and Purpose:

Student Learning Outcome Assessment, as the term is used at MSU, is the systematic process of gathering, interpreting, and acting upon data related to student learning and their academic experiences with the goal of course and program improvement. Student Learning Outcomes are defined as clear, specific statements that describe what students are expected to know, be able to do, or value by the end of a course, program, or learning experience. The connection between teaching, advising, and learning is a complex one, and it is necessary to use multiple measures to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between curriculum design and delivery to student learning. Assessment is an iterative and adaptive process in which results about student learning inform changes to instructional and advising practices, curriculum structure and course offerings. Assessment results that demonstrate the need for improvement are viewed positively as an opportunity and are not used punitively. The critical element is the use of results in decision-making by MSU faculty. The basis of good assessment practice is a shared understanding of program goals and outcomes to ensure that all those involved in curriculum delivery and advising are working toward the same ends.

The University follows a dispersed approach to assessment, with each academic unit (departments or colleges as appropriate) responsible for assessing their specific academic and advising programs. A designated faculty committee (Core Curriculum Committee) is charged with leading the assessment of the MSU Core.

Responsibilities:

A. Unit Responsibilities

Under the leadership of the department head (or college dean as appropriate), each unit will maintain an appropriate structure and documented process that includes faculty participation, for managing and reporting student learning outcomes assessment efforts. This can be accomplished by including assessment in the charge of curriculum committees or by establishing separate assessment committees. The academic unit is responsible for:

- developing and documenting student learning outcomes and an assessment plan for all degree, minor, certificate, and advising programs.
- carrying out assessment plans.
- ensuring each student learning outcome is assessed every 3 years at a minimum.
- establishing and maintaining a review and decision-making process that is inclusive of all faculty.
- submitting a university assessment report for undergraduate programs on an annual basis.
- submitting a university assessment report for graduate students on a biennial basis.
- publishing assessment plans and annual reports or summaries thereof on the unit's website.
- reviewing program goals and assessment plans on a biennial basis.

Committees are encouraged to develop and document supplementary assessment plans to follow up on specific action items that were identified during unit assessments to monitor effectiveness.

Externally accredited programs are encouraged to utilize the established MSU program assessment reporting process but may submit accreditor-required reports (i.e., self-study, mid-cycle reports, or substantive change reports) in lieu of university assessment reports.

B. Unit Faculty Responsibilities

To meet the guidelines established by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, MSU requires unit faculty to

- articulate and apply student learning outcomes for all degree, minor, certificate, and advising programs.
- assist with collecting and interpreting assessment data as required by assessment plans on an annual basis.
- contribute to reviews of unit assessment results and resulting decision-making process
- engage in review of program goals and assessment plans
- carry out course-level assessment activities for any Core-designated courses they instruct in conjunction with Core program assessments.

Faculty are encouraged to also implement assessment strategies in their courses as a means of improving teaching and learning. Data for course-level assessment is not required to be made public and should not be used punitively.

C. Administration Responsibilities

The administration's role is to coordinate and document assessment activities taking place at the unit level, provide data of institutional scope, and maintain a website and educational resources on MSU's assessment process.

To ensure that assessment proceeds in accordance with the goal of program and course improvement, the provost, deans, directors and department heads are expected to recognize and acknowledge participation in assessment activities through the annual review process at all levels.