

# University Assessment Committee Operating Manual

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

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University Assessment Committee

Approved by the University Assessment Committee | 3-22-2022

Approved by the Academic Senate | \_\_\_\_\_

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## Introduction

Ferris State University has long developed, implemented, and utilized assessment practices through more than 10 years of documented program, course, and Student Affairs assessment. This plan acknowledges those practices and seeks to formalize structures in support of comprehensive assessment of student learning. The plan seeks to build upon the assessment accomplishments of the University, including:

- Participation in professional development for faculty and staff in the area of assessment.
- Longstanding history of assessment committees in:
  - o Academic Affairs,
  - o Student Affairs, and
  - o Colleges/Departments/Programs.

Development of the [Senate University Assessment Committee \(UAC\)](#) stems from recognition of the University's need for additional assessment structure and governance identified by the senate's Data-Driven Decision-Making Task Force (DDDMTF), which recommended the University establish a new Academic Senate standing committee in the form of the UAC. This committee is faculty driven with representation from other areas of assessment at the University, and it is charged with the following:

- Collaborate with the Academic Affairs Assessment Committee, Student Affairs Assessment Committee, University Curriculum Committee (UCC), and Academic Program Review Council (APRC) to establish the development, exchange, and advancement of best practices and excellence in assessment.
- Conduct regular peer review of assessment activities to monitor processes and methodologies that assess student learning, student satisfaction, and student priorities.
- Provide feedback and guidance to programs in support of curricular assessment practices that help achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency.
- Evaluate the progress and outcomes of these charges on an annual basis and use data to inform the work of the committee.

## University Assessment Committee Purpose

The purpose of the UAC is to help foster a culture of assessment within the University community where the collection, reporting, analysis, and utilization of assessment data is transparent and done with integrity. The UAC aims to provide clarity and focus on the assessment of student learning. The UAC strives to develop a system for utilizing existing assessment data that is manageable and sustainable over time. The UAC seeks to nurture program effectiveness independent of any program, course, or faculty evaluation at the University.

This University Assessment Committee has developed and maintains the University Assessment Committee Operation Manual (referred to as the manual) Changes to the manual are approved by the Academic Senate and subsequently recommended to Academic Affairs for approval. The UAC scope, function, and processes defined in this document are subject to review, assessment, and reaffirmation approximately every three years.

The UAC manual provides the charge(s) of the UAC and membership and defines the policies related to the assessment of courses and programs at Ferris State University. This manual provides a framework for creating and maintaining a culture of assessment, recognizing that assessment is the shared responsibility of all University stakeholders.

In the spirit of continuous improvement and data-informed decision making, the UAC aims to design and implement a framework that is responsive to the university community's needs and incorporates effective approaches and best practices where applicable.

The UAC manual includes the following approaches and best practices:

1. Integration of an assessment system that drives continuous improvement.
2. Planning of regular assessment that includes identification of priority goals and objectives and establishment of meaningful measures and indicators.
3. Examination of assessment and accountability systems and data for effectiveness, innovative approaches, adherence to best practices, and technical accuracy.
4. Development of recommendations in support of the proposed assessment designs.

## Guiding Principles of Assessment

The committee serves to support a culture of assessment grounded in these guiding principles.

1. Effective assessment is the result of **collaboration** between faculty, students, staff, and administration, and it utilizes input from key stakeholders.
2. Comprehensive assessment involves the total range of the University roles and responsibilities including learning, programs, services, and processes both in and out of the classroom.
3. Measurable assessment is based on clearly stated and realistic objectives, outcomes, goals, and expectations. Objectives are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable and time bound.
4. Systematic assessment is comprehensive, formalized, and utilizes multiple qualitative and quantitative measures to generate data and information; it is periodic and regular; it is conducted in a variety of settings and situations.
5. The assessment process produces data that is stored and shared in ways that allows others to use and build upon them; it drives continuous improvement; and it reflects the totality of the University Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Plan.
6. Intentional assessment aims to inform stakeholders about student learning and curricular effectiveness, as well as improve institutional planning, resource allocation, and the assessment process itself.

## Collaboration with Other Committees

Through collaboration with Senate committees, including University Curriculum Committee (UCC) and Academic Program Review Council (APRC), this manual outlines a process that fosters shared governance and ensures that all constituents have the opportunity and the guidance needed to participate in the assessment process. The UAC review is consultative by nature. The UCC approves new courses and programs and the APRC reviews existing programs. However, the recommendation from the UAC reports is an important input into processes that will be provided to the UCC and APR.

## UAC Collaboration With UCC

UAC role has been defined within the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) process. As outlined in the UCC Curriculum Planning and Procedures Manual ([UCC Manual](#)), the UAC serves as a required Form B consult. Currently, the UCC Manual includes the following information about assessment:

- All proposals are expected to have outcomes, assessment methods, and criterion for success levels associated with the related curriculum.
- Courses and programs are required to have outcomes and include assessment methods defined according to the UCC Manual. Refer to the [UCC Manual](#) for more information.

## UAC Collaboration with the APRC

### Programs Preparing for Program Review

When a program is preparing for the Academic Program Review Council (APRC), the UAC is available to provide input and guidance upon request for the program assessment and course assessment portions of the APRC. Programs that wish to participate in this process as a program group should reach out to the UAC for guidance. Feedback from the UAC can provide a useful starting point from which to prepare the continuous improvement portion of the APR report.

### Programs Referred to the UAC After Program Review

One outcome of APRC review of programs is a recommendation for follow-up reporting after re-evaluation and revision of assessment activities. The UAC will review the APR and PAR reports from the University Assessment System. The UAC is available to provide input and guidance to programs that receive this referral as an outcome of their APR review. See the [APR Guide](#) for more information.

## Summary and Next Steps

The University is committed to successfully fulfilling its educational responsibilities, and to that end, the UAC encourages and ensures continuous improvement through a commitment to assessing student learning and to planning processes that support the University's mission.

Progress in the assessment of academic outcomes has been made and is ongoing. The UAC is adopting this manual along with a Procedures Manual to further integrate assessment into the structural and procedural fabric of the University with an intended phased implementation beginning in Fall 2022.

To build upon this progress, the UAC is committed to facilitating the development of assessment plans with valid and reliable methods that yield useful data for improving programs. Below are several next steps the UAC plans to pursue after implementation of the processes in the Procedures Manual.

The processes in the Procedures Manual will help the UAC to demonstrate how the utilization of assessment findings can improve student learning. Data from UAC reviews will be collected to provide aggregate data to identify trends and the need for educational opportunities. It will also be used to:

- Demonstrate the utilization of assessment findings to improve the assessment of student learning.
- Develop and disseminate regular assessment progress reports on the progress of program and course assessment and use of best practices.
- Create professional development opportunities on assessment best practices for staff, faculty, and administrators.

This manual will be reviewed on an annual basis. The UAC will revise this manual, as necessary, to maintain best practices that focus on mission-based assessment goals for student learning and academic programs.