

NMHU Assessment Handbook 2016-2017

Prepared by the Outcomes Assessment Committee, the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning Team and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

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Overview of Outcomes Assessment

Assessment of student learning outcomes at NMHU involves four distinct, but inter-related, tasks, each with different timelines and different entities responsible for oversight. Those three processes are assessment of our common core (General Education Assessment), assessment of academic programs (Annual Outcomes Assessment, Program Review, and Program Specific Accreditation), assessment of educational efforts of the university as a whole (University-Wide Assessment), and Co-Curricular Program Assessment. Support for all assessment activities is provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIER).

Assessment Task		Timeline	Overseeing Entity
General Education Assessment		Data collected every Fall semester	Academic Program Faculty
Academic Program Assessment	Outcomes Assessment	Reports due every fall	Academic Program Faculty
	Program Review	Varies (every 5 years)	Graduate programs: Office of Graduate Studies; Undergraduate programs: Academic Affairs Committee
	Program Specific Accreditation	Varies by program	Academic Program Faculty
University Wide-Assessment		Yearly	Outcomes Assessment Committee
Co-Curricular Assessment		Reports due every summer	Co-Curricular Program Coordinators

There are three basic steps that underlie each aspect of assessment:

- 1) **Defining** student learning objectives (outcomes)
- 2) **Evaluating** student success in achieving those objectives (assessment)
- 3) **Using** the results to implement improvements in programs (closing the loop)

A well-designed outcomes assessment program is based upon assessment activities at the course level, supplemented by program-level data. These data can then be aggregated to provide information regarding specific courses, major programs, the core curriculum, or the university as a whole.

All instructors are expected to have clear learning objectives for their classes, which are assessed at the assignment and course levels. These course-level learning objectives should be aligned with the objectives of the major program. Each program has an outcomes assessment plan in place that specifies how this is accomplished. In addition, instructors of core curriculum courses are expected to align their learning objectives with both the university-wide objectives for our common core, and with

the New Mexico state-mandated core competencies for the relevant core area. Finally, all programs should have learning objectives that are aligned with clear, university-wide expectations regarding outcomes for university graduates.

Assessment procedures at NMHU are based upon the following assumptions:

- All levels of assessment should inform and build upon the others.
- All faculty should be actively involved.
- Assessment should be embedded within regular course or program activities whenever possible.
- Assessment is an ongoing process.
- Assessment is concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of programs, courses, and services, not individuals.
- The specifics of outcomes assessment procedures should be flexible to accommodate the varied needs of the academic programs.
- The results of assessment activities should be clearly linked to program improvements.
- The results of assessment activities should be publicly available.

University-Wide Assessment

The goal of university-wide assessment is to determine whether or not we, as a university, are imparting the knowledge, traits, and skills we value into all of our baccalaureate and graduate degree recipients. After surveying faculty and staff, the following four traits were adopted as our expectations for our graduates:

1. Mastery of content knowledge and skills
2. Effective communication skills
3. Critical and reflective thinking skills
4. Effective use of technology

These traits are reflected, as appropriate, on course syllabi and in the outcomes assessment plans of the academic programs. All General Education and Academic Program Outcomes Assessment data are entered directly into Banner by the faculty members responsible for collecting those data. Reports will then be generated by OIER for such uses as:

- Assessment of NMH students' achievement of the university-wide traits
- Assessment of the core curriculum
- Academic program outcomes assessment
- Accreditation reports
- Data regarding the equivalency of online and face-to-face programs
- Data regarding the equivalency of main campus and center programs
- Data regarding the difference between under-classmen and upper-classmen on achievement of learning outcomes and university-wide traits
- Longitudinal data regarding student achievement of learning outcomes and university-wide traits over time

General Education Assessment

As a liberal arts institution, assessment of our core curriculum is essential to the NMHU mission.

Responsibility for oversight of the assessment of the general education program at NMHU resides with the Outcomes Assessment Committee of the Faculty Senate. Currently this process serves two distinct purposes; to assess the extent to which our students demonstrate the traits identified by the NMHU faculty as defining an NMHU graduate; and to assess the extent to which our students have attained the learning objectives identified by the State Higher Education Department (HED). These are a series of objectives reflecting five general areas of the common core that were developed by a number of committees working on the HED's articulation and agreement initiative.

All instructors of courses in the general education curriculum are asked to submit assessment data at the end of each fall semester. The data-collection system is based in Banner, and is analogous to the system for entering data for Academic Program Assessment. Instructors are asked to indicate which of the four NMHU objectives are addressed in their classes, and to identify an assignment, exam, or some combination of those which they would use to assess each student's mastery of those objectives. In addition, they are asked to identify assessments that they could use to rate each student's mastery of each state core competency (between four and six competencies depending upon their area). The instructors then rate each student as having achieved mastery of the trait or competency (1) or not achieved mastery (0).

Data are entered via an Excel sheet provided each year by the OIER. An example of the Excel sheet and instructions for collecting the data are included in Appendix A.

Annual Academic Program Outcomes Assessment

Every major program must conduct an annual academic program outcomes assessment. The immediate goal of this assessment is to gather specific data regarding how effectively the program is meeting its program-specific student learning objectives. This information can then be used to design improvements to the major curriculum.

Outcomes Assessment Process and Data Collection

Academic Program Outcomes Assessment begins with the development of the assessment plan. A well-developed plan is the key to collecting useful and valid data. Specifics on what should be included in the plans and guidelines for developing them are discussed in the next section. Once the program faculty has developed the plans they are sent to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, where they are entered into a database.

Outcomes assessment data is uploaded directly into Banner by the faculty. Data for each means of assessment is recorded on a separate Excel sheet, with each student coded as a 1 (indicating that student met the criterion for that assessment) or a 0 (indicating that the student did not meet the criterion). This is the same Excel sheet as the one used for General Education Assessment in Appendix A.

Each fall the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research generates reports for each academic program summarizing the data entered by their faculty the previous academic year. The program faculty then review the reports, adding their interpretation of the data and how the data will be utilized for program improvement, and then return the reports to OIER. These documents are then posted on the OIER web site and are available to prospective students and their parents.

Currently Highlands utilizes a system of peer review to provide feedback to programs regarding their outcomes assessment reports. Each fall, after the previous year's outcomes assessment report is

completed, a faculty member from another discipline will be asked to review each report. The review is guided by the feedback form in Appendix B. After discussion of the feedback with the members of the discipline each discipline submits the final version of their report to the OIER.

The Outcomes Assessment Plan

In accordance with the NMHU philosophy of keeping outcomes assessment activities flexible, there is no specific reporting format for the annual outcomes assessment. However, there are general requirements. Each plan must include the following elements:

- 1) The mission statement of the academic program.
- 2) A clear description of three to five student learning outcomes that clearly relate to the mission of the program. Programs may include other outcomes also (involving, for example, faculty service or research) but there should be at least three to five student learning outcomes. Each outcome should be linked to one or more of the four University-wide traits.
- 3) A description of the data to be collected to demonstrate each outcome. Programs are encouraged to have more than one measure for each outcome, but care should be taken not to make data collection too cumbersome. A significant portion of the data should be reasonably objective in nature, and specific to the learning outcome, not just whether or not the students passed a particular class. Programs should consider whether it is appropriate to use standardized test scores of some kind. In particular, if the program's alumni regularly take some sort of professional exam after graduating from the program those test scores should definitely be included as part of the outcomes assessment.
- 4) Clear criteria for judging whether each outcome has been met. If the data indicate that an outcome has not been met that might indicate the need for revisions in some aspect of the program.

The next page provides an outline of an Outcomes Assessment Plan and instructions for constructing the plan.

Program Outcomes Assessment Plan and Report Template

(Instructional Degree Program)

(Degree Level)

MISSION AND GOALS

Program Mission

[Insert your program mission here]

Student Learning Outcome 1

[Describe your first student learning outcome here. You should have between 3 and 5 student learning outcomes]

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1

[Identify the NMHU traits that link to this student learning outcome]

First Means of Assessment for Student Learning Outcome 1

[Describe how the first student learning outcome will be assessed]

Second Means of Assessment for Student Learning Outcome 1

[If you have more than one means of assessing the first student learning outcome describe the second means here. We do not recommend having more than 3 means of assessment for each learning outcome]

Student Learning Outcome 2

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

First Means of Assessment for Student Learning Outcome 2

Second Means of Assessment for Student Learning Outcome 2

[Repeat the headings as appropriate for your plan]

Instructions For Preparing an Outcomes Assessment Plan

Student Learning Outcomes

Identify three to five *student learning outcomes* that students in the academic program are expected to attain. These should be measurable and should directly relate to the knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to demonstrate.

If the program has accreditation from an outside agency faculty should consider designing the assessment to ensure the assessment of learning outcomes and collection of data that will address the requirements of the accrediting agency.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcomes

If the student learning outcome links to one or more of the NMHU Traits indicate that here. The students learning outcomes do not have to link to one of the traits, but the chances are good that they will.

The traits are:

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Effective Communication Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective Use of Technology

Means of Assessment for Student Learning Outcomes

Under this heading you describe how each outcome will be measured. Only one means of assessment is required, but more than one may be included (we do not recommend more than three means of assessment for each outcome).

Descriptions of the means of assessment should include the criterion for success, for example “80% of students will score 85% or better on the final paper”. Whenever possible, base the criterion on the percentage of students the program expects to meet a specific threshold (as in the example just given). This will allow the use of the outcomes assessment data collection system in Self-Service Banner, which requires that students be given either a 1 (to indicate that they met the threshold on the measure) or a 0 (to indicate that they did not meet the threshold).

Deciding how to assess student learning outcomes is the most difficult part of designing an assessment plan. Here are some things to consider while designing assessment methods.

Embedded or Add-on Assessments

Assessments can already be *embedded* in courses or other program activities, or they can be *add-on assessments* that are specifically conducted for the outcomes assessment process. Assessments that are already embedded in courses or programs (assignment grades, practicum evaluations, etc.) can provide excellent assessment data because these types of assessments are likely to be direct rather than indirect

measures of student learning. Embedded assessments can possess excellent validity since they are designed directly by faculty to assess your students. In addition, since faculty members are collecting these data anyway outcomes assessment data can be collected without creating additional work for faculty members.

Direct or Indirect Assessments

Measures should be as closely linked to the student learning outcome as possible. Whenever possible they should be *direct measures* of student learning. Examples of direct measures of student learning include:

- Writing samples
- Comparisons between pre and post-test scores (this does not have to be the exact same test as long as you are testing the same area of knowledge or skills)
- Class assignments or tests
- Capstone projects, including theses, field studies and papers
- Case studies
- Team/group projects and presentations
- Field supervisor evaluations from internships and field experience
- Service-learning projects
- Ratings by employers of the level of skills and knowledge possessed by our graduates.
- Student performance on standardized tests such as licensure exams or the ETS content tests.

Indirect measures may be important information, but they are not directly linked to student learning. For example, course grades are an indirect measure because they are assessment of a student's performance in the class as a whole, including such things as attendance and class participation, rather than assessment of his or her learning of some particular knowledge or skill. While programs may choose to include some of these forms of indirect measures in your assessment, program faculty should also work to ensure the inclusion of direct measures of student learning for each outcome. Examples of indirect measures of student learning include:

- Course grades
- Number of alumni admitted to graduate school
- Employment rates of alumni
- Number of students presenting or publishing research

Use of specific assignments and student grades

While course assignments can be excellent direct measures of student learning, there are potential problems with using student assignment grades, including their global nature (they are often not clearly related to a specific skill or knowledge set), their perceived subjectivity, and the fact that grading standards for the same assignment can vary widely between instructors. Grades work best when the assignment is a direct and specific measure of the learning outcome.

Example: Environmental Geology: The first student learning outcome identified by the Environmental Geology faculty is "Classify and identify geologic materials, including soils, minerals, and rocks". Their measurement of this learning outcome is student performance on the lab midterm in Geology 101

“emphasizing hand specimen description and identification.” Successful attainment of this outcome is indicated by a grade of 70% or greater on this exam.

Use of scoring rubrics

Often the most important student learning outcomes are the ones most difficult to assess with any recognized level of objectivity. These outcomes include things like writing ability and critical thinking skills. Programs often have little choice but to use course assignments as a means of assessing these outcomes. In these cases, the use of a scoring rubric can bring clarity and a measure of objectivity to the assessment process. Rubrics specify exactly how an assignment is graded, tying the grade to evidence of specific skills or information and ensuring that grading is at least somewhat uniform across instructors.

While several programs utilize scoring rubrics as part of their assessment systems, those rubrics tend to be extremely basic. Good rubrics should link aspects of the assignment to specific course objectives, and give detailed explanations of each point in the rating system. An example of a scoring rubric from English is included in Appendix C of . Other examples of scoring rubrics can be found on the web, from OIER, or from other departments.

Measuring outcomes throughout your program and use of matrices

It is not necessary to include assignments from every course in the outcomes assessment plan. This would result in an extremely cumbersome process and an overwhelming amount of data to collect. But faculty should think about where in the program data is collected. For example, if data is only collected from graduates (capstone projects, exit exams, etc.) then the program will not be collecting any data that might help identify problem areas in your program, or to help assess student gains from their point of entry to the program to graduation. One method for helping to clarify the points at which it might be useful to assess students is a matrix.

Matrices can be an extremely useful way to link specific courses and course assignments with program learning objectives. They give a clear rationale for use of specific assignments and grades as an assessment tool for specific objectives, and they provide a logical relationship for aggregating data from the course level to student learning outcomes and university traits.

A template for such a matrix is below. In this template, “I” indicates the course in which the objective is introduced, “P” indicates the courses in which the objective is practiced, and “R” indicates the courses in which the objective is reinforced (adapted from Allen, et. Al, 2002, pg. 44).

Course	Objective I	Objective II	Objective III	Objective IV	Objective V
101	I	I	I	I	I
301		P	P		
302		P	P		
329	P			P	P
433	P			P	P
499	R	R	R	R	R

One benefit of developing such a matrix is that it allows faculty to identify objectives that may be introduced but never practiced, or practiced but never reinforced. Another benefit is that it can help identify where and when in an academic program it would be useful to collect assessment data.

Additional material for the Outcomes Assessment Report

After designing the plan, collecting the data, and entering it into Banner OIER will aggregate the data and provide each program with an Outcomes Assessment Report. The program faculty will then need to discuss the results, come to an interpretation of what the results mean, and explain how the results to improve will be used to improve program.

Utilizing the assessment results

The documentation that assessment results have been used to design and implement program improvements is often referred to as “closing the loop”. This step may seem daunting to faculty, but in some respects it is actually the most important aspect of assessment. As long as the program faculty members look at and discuss the outcomes assessment data, it is almost guaranteed that they will change something about their teaching or program in response to those data. These changes then need to be documented in the annual reports.

Example, Forestry: Forestry faculty determined through outcomes assessment that shorter but more frequent writing assignments were needed in their courses to allow for more feedback from course instructors. In addition, forestry faculty found that “in some of the upper level courses students are given assignments of critiquing journal articles and requiring them to provide feedback not only on content but also structure and organization. Faculty are also allowing students to participate in the review process of manuscripts that have been submitted to professional journals so they get a better perspective of the nuts and bolts of constructing technical review documents.”

Using outcomes assessment data to answer specific questions

Please remember that programs can always design your outcomes assessment plan to answer specific questions about the program, and that plans can be modified from year to year as those questions change. For example, program faculty may be implementing some changes in the program to improve the quality of students’ writing. Outcomes assessment data can be collected specifically to assess if those changes were successful.

Example, Psychology: Psychology faculty reported that “...psychology paper(s) improved from this year to last year, in part due to changes made by the instructor to increase feedback, encourage greater participation in the online class, and deal early with emergent plagiarism issues.”

Academic Program Review

Formal Academic Program Review occurs regularly according to an established schedule. Graduate Program Review is overseen by the Office of Graduate Studies. Undergraduate Program Review is overseen by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate. For those programs that are

accredited by outside professional organizations, academic program reviews are timed to coincide with accreditation reviews.

Information from the Annual Outcomes Assessments should form a major piece of both Program Reviews and reports for accrediting agencies. Specifics of these procedures are available in the Graduate Academic Program Review Manual and the Undergraduate Program Review Manual.

References and Resources

Allen, Mary; Noel, Richard, C.; Rienzi, Beth, M.; and McMillin, Daniel, J. (2002). *Outcomes Assessment Handbook*. California State University, Institute for Teaching and Learning, Long Beach, CA.

Appendix A: Outcomes Assessment Excel Sheet and Instructions

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Assessment Number	701									
2	Semester	Fall 2014									
3	Academic Year	2014-2015									
4	Academic Program	Business Undergraduate: Common Outcomes									
5	Program Code	70									
6	First Program Outcome Assessed Description	Business students understand and can perform quantitative business analysis on a company and make appropriate business decisions based on this analysis.									
7	First Program Outcome Assessed Number	1									
8	First Means of Assessment Number										
9	Second Program Outcome Assessed Description										
10	Second Program Outcome Assessed Number	#N/A									
11	Second Means of Assessment Number										
12	Third Program Outcome Assessed Description										
13	Third Program Outcome Assessed Number	#N/A									
14	Third Means of Assessment Number										
15	First NMHU Trait Assessed										
16	Second NMHU Trait Assessed										
17	Third NMHU Trait Assessed										
18	Assessment Material										
19	Criterion for success.										
20	Student ID	Assessment									
21											
22											
23											
24											
25											

Instructions for Using the Outcomes Assessment Excel Sheet

- 1) Row #1, the Assessment Number, will populate automatically as you complete the sheet. Rows 2 and 3 are self-explanatory. Rows 4 and 5 are already filled out and locked.
- 2) In rows 6, 9 and 12 select the program outcomes that these data are meant to assess. In order to do this accurately you will need to be familiar with your program's outcomes assessment plan. If the data only applies to one outcome, then leave rows 6 and 9 blank. If you feel the drop-down list does not accurately reflect your program's outcomes please contact Jean Hill. Ignore rows 7, 10 and 13. These will populate automatically. For rows 8, 11 and 14 you will need to refer to your program's outcomes assessment plan to determine exactly which means of assessment the data you are entering applies to. For example, if the data you are entering corresponds to the first means of assessing the outcome, you should enter 1.

- 3) In rows 15 through 17 please indicate the NMHU traits these data are meant to assess. If the data do not pertain to any NMHU trait just leave these blank.
- 4) In row 18, please describe the assessment material you are reporting. It could be a course grade, a course assignment grade, a test not related to a specific course (such as a licensure exam or nationally normed exam), a portfolio assessment, some other evaluation of the student (such as evaluations from a field supervisor) or results from a student survey. All you need here is a brief description.
- 5) In row 19 please explain your criterion for success. For example, "A grade of C or better on the assignment."
- 6) For rows 21 on, copy and paste your students' ID numbers into column A (including the "@" sign). In column B, enter a 1 if the student met the criterion or a 0 if the student did not. If you get an error when copying your students' ID numbers into the column, just insert a single quotation (') before the @. You can use find and replace to do this.
- 7) Save the file in a csv (comma separated value) format. You will get a message saying only the Active Sheet will be saved. Make sure you have the "Data" sheet showing and hit "Save Active Sheet".
- 8) Upload the data through Self Service Banner. Go to the "Faculty and Advisors" section and look for the "Program Outcomes Assessment Upload". It is at the bottom of the list.
- 9) **IMPORTANT!** Please make sure your data are accurate before you upload. We can't go back and delete incorrect data.

Appendix B: Feedback Form for Outcomes Assessment Reports

NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY
Office of Effectiveness & Institutional Research



PROGRAM: _____ FEEDBACK
 FORM FOR OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLANS AND REPORTS

<i>Please rate the Level of Performance for each measure as "Exceeds" "Meets" or "Needs Improvement".</i>		
MISSION: (Assessment Plan)	Level of Performance	Comments
Department mission is identified		
Department mission statement is student-focused		
LEARNING OUTCOMES: (Assessment Plan)	Level of Performance	Comments
Learning outcomes are identified for the department (not for individual class or course)		
Learning outcomes are clear		
Learning outcomes are measurable		
Learning outcomes span multiple learning domains (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, psychomotor)		
Learning outcomes are student-focused		
Learning outcomes clearly link to the department's mission statement		
ASSESSMENT METHODS: (Assessment Plan)	Level of Performance	Comments
Multiple assessment measures are identified		
Assessment measures are aligned to learning outcomes		
Direct measures of student learning are emphasized		
Assessment measures allow student performance to be gauged over time		
Assessment design includes a timeline for implementation and administration		
If the program is present at the Centers, are they included in the data collection and report?		

REPORTING AND USE OF RESULTS: (Assessment Report)	Level of Performance	Comments
Assessment results are reported		
Assessment results are clear		
Information from the assessment results is shared with multiple constituents		
The assessment results are reviewed and discussed by department faculty		
Assessment results indicate the extent to which priority learning outcome(s) have been achieved		
Assessment results are used to improve student learning (e.g., change/revise learning outcomes,		
change/revise courses or curriculum)		
Assessment results are used to identify how the assessment process should be modified		
Is this report ready to be posted publically on the web?		

Appendix C: Rubric for English Composition Course Essays

WHAT GRADES ON ESSAYS MEAN

The meaning of grades according to the First-Year Composition Program is defined below:

- A Distinctive**
- B Skillful**
- C Competent / Credible / Complete**
- D Ineffective**
- F Extremely Ineffective**

A Distinctive

- Purpose/Focus: Clearly addresses the question or assignment, and a single controlling idea creates coherent and interesting focus throughout; writer addresses applications, implications, or consequences of ideas
- Depth/Complexity: Writing is clear, critical and reflective; shows awareness of assumptions, inferences, and subtle distinctions between ideas
- Organization: Exceptionally effective structure and sophisticated transitions create logical flow for the reader
- Development: All ideas, claims, and sub-claims are fully supported with detail, examples and evidence
- Audience Awareness: Tone and content demonstrate the skillful use of rhetorical strategies to connect with intended audience
- Grammar/mechanics: Shows superior control of sentence-level language: diction, syntax, variety, and transitions. May have a few minor errors.

B Skillful

- Purpose/Focus: Clearly addresses the question or assignment, and a single controlling idea runs throughout
- Depth/Complexity: Shows clarity of thought; demonstrates adequate critical and reflective thinking
- Organization: Essay flows logically from one paragraph to the next
- Development: Issues and ideas are supported with detail, examples and evidence
- Audience Awareness: Tone and content are consistently appropriate for intended audience
- Grammar/mechanics: Shows control of sentence-level language: diction, syntax, variety, and transitions. May have a few errors.

C Competent / Credible / Complete

- Purpose/Focus: Adequately addresses the question or assignment, but may be inconsistent in focus
- Depth/Complexity: Shows clarity, but demonstrates limited critical thinking and/or reflection
- Organization: demonstrates structure, but reorganization may be required in places for the reader to consistently and easily follow the essay
- Development: Claims and ideas may be inconsistently supported with detail, example, and evidence; connection between claims and evidence may be weak or inappropriate
- Audience Awareness: Tone and/or content are intended for the audience, but may not be consistently appropriate
- Grammar/mechanics: Shows competent writing, but may have some errors that interrupt the flow of reading

D Ineffective

- Purpose/Focus: May neglect parts of the question or assignment
- Depth/Complexity: May be superficial or stereotyped in thought; no evidence of critical thinking or reflection
- Organization: Organization may be confusing, requiring multiple readings in order to comprehend the essay
- Development: May have claims without evidence or with inappropriate evidence, or may have evidence unconnected to claims
- Audience Awareness: Tone and content may be inappropriate for intended audience
- Grammar/mechanics: Sentence-level errors impede the reader's understanding

F Extremely Ineffective

- Fails to adequately address the question or assignment
- Fails to adequately explore the issues and ideas
- Lack of organization restricts reader's comprehension
- Fails to support claims
- Is not written with an intended audience in mind
- Sentence-level errors impede the reader's understanding

Co-Curricular Activities Outcomes Assessment Process

Mission

New Mexico Highlands University is a public comprehensive university serving our local and global communities. Our mission is to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to attain an exceptional education by fostering creativity, critical thinking and research in the liberal arts, sciences, and professions within a diverse community.

Vision

Our vision is to be a premier comprehensive university transforming lives and communities now and for generations to come.

Core Values

- Excellence
- Diversity
- Accessibility
- Responsiveness

Strategic Goals for 2020

1. *Highlands University will achieve academic excellence, academic integration and student success.*
2. *Highlands University will achieve strategic enrollment management.*
3. *Highlands University will achieve a vibrant campus life.*
4. *Highlands University will be a community partner.*
5. *Highlands University will achieve technological advancement and innovation.*
6. *Highlands University will achieve enhanced communication and efficiency.*

Definitions

At NMHU, co-curricular activities are defined as out-of-class experiences that complement and extend the formal learning experience of a course or academic program. Co-curricular activities develop a student's social, intellectual, cultural, democratic, civic, and aesthetic domains. At Highlands, these domains are integrated into our four Student Traits, listed below. Co-Curricular Activities are supervised and/or financed by the institution and facilitate the attainment of NMHU's four essential traits (or student learning outcomes). These experiences are ungraded and non-credited, although they may be compensated through student employment.

Goal

In support of NMHU Strategic Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4, the goal of the Co-Curricular Activities Outcomes Assessment process is to regularly assess the various co-curricular programs at Highlands, including the assessment of student participation in the activity, student satisfaction with the program, impact on the four NMHU Traits (Student Learning Outcomes), and areas for improvement. By closing the loop and

providing feedback, this process will help the co-curricular activities better serve our students through improved programs and activities.

More specifically, the goals for each co-curricular activity are:

- To define student learning objectives (outcomes) for your co-curricular program.
- To link those student learning objectives to the four university traits (the university level student learning objectives):
 - Mastery of content knowledge and skills
 - Effective communication skills
 - Critical and reflective thinking skills
 - Effective use of technology
- To evaluate student success in achieving those objectives via some objective measure such as student survey, success on task, or other predetermined tool.
- To report the results of these measures to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (OIER).
- To receive process / technical feedback on your assessment from OIER.
- To receive feedback on your assessment from supervisor and from peers.
- To write and upload final report on activity assessment, including means to improve the program.
- To use the results to implement improvements in programs (closing the loop within the program).
- To review and discuss the results with other curricular and co-curricular providers in order to share best practices, minimize duplication, and increase opportunities to collaborate (closing the looping across campus).
- To ensure that appropriate budget allocations are considered in the development and continued support of co-curricular activities.

The Co-Curricular Outcomes Assessment process closely mirrors and complements the Academic Outcomes Assessment Process. Please consult the language in the Outcomes Assessment Handbook for more information about the process.

The Basic Ideas of the Assessment Process

- All levels of assessment should inform and build upon the others.
- Anyone who oversees a program should be actively involved.
- Assessment is an ongoing process and should be embedded within program activities whenever possible.
- Assessment is concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of programs and services, not individuals.
- While the student learning outcomes should be linked to the four university traits, the specifics of outcomes assessment procedures and reporting should be flexible to accommodate the varied needs of the programs.
- The results of assessment activities should be clearly linked to program improvements.
- The results of assessment activities should be publicly available.



Current NMHU Co-Curricular Programs considered to be co-curricular activities and expected to participate in co-curricular outcomes assessment include:

- Academic Support
- ARMAS
- Career Services
- Student Professional Development
- Exercise, Sports & Science Extension Activities
- First Year Experience
- Internships
- Language Learning Center
- Library
- Net Tutor
- Student Employment
- Writing Center
- Other programs deemed Co-Curricular

The program directors of these programs/activities are responsible for completing the Co-Curricular Assessments. Any program that feels the primary goal of their program/activity is Co-Curricular (supporting the four traits) rather than Extra-Curricular (contributing to a vibrant campus life) is welcome to participate in Co-Curricular Assessment. Completing a Co-Curricular Assessment will allow programs to assess their effectiveness, demonstrate their contribution to the University's strategic plan and mission, and make a stronger argument in regard to budget requests.

Some programs will contain both Curricular and Co-Curricular elements. In this case, the program coordinator, working with the Outcomes Assessment Committee, OIER, and Dean of Student should determine how best to assess the program.

Program Development of Assessment Plans

- Assessment plans are designed by the programs to meet their specific program outcomes, utilizing the template provided in Appendix A.
- Program coordinators are asked to think about what you want to know about your program. *What information would be useful in improving your program?*
- Assessment plans can and should be modified as the needs of the program change.

Organizing the Assessment Plan around Student Learning Outcomes

The NMHU community of faculty, students and staff identified four traits that NMHU graduates are expected to display:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills
- Effective use of technology

These traits should be reflected in the assessment plans of all co-curricular activities. *How do you expect students to benefit from your program? What skills should they learn? What attitudes or behaviors should change?*

Using the template in Appendix A, the following should be included in the preparation and development of the assessment plan:

- Three to five student learning objectives linked to the student learning outcomes.
- One or more methods of assessment for each learning objectives. A method of assessment can be anything related to your student learning outcomes: assignment scores, performance on a rubric, presentations at conferences, contact information, surveys, etc. Campus-wide resources available for assessment are listed in Appendix G.
- Each method of assessment should be specific, with clear thresholds indicating when the objective has been met. The data should be transferrable into 0's (did not meet threshold) or 1's (did meet threshold) score for data entry.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research reports university-wide attainment of traits.

Assessment of Co-Curricular Activities

Each Program Director/Coordinator of the designated co-curricular activities is responsible, annually, to complete the following process requirements:

1. Develop an assessment plan using the template provided in Appendix A, which will assess 3-5 student learning objectives (outcomes). In that template, these outcomes must be linked to the four university traits (our university-level student learning objectives), and a numerical measure of success (1) or failure (0) must be developed.
2. Collect data over the year on student success in reaching the outcomes.

3. File an assessment report and upload data (see Appendix C) to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (OIER), using the template provided, on whether or not students met the outcomes and how the program will be improved.
4. Participate in an annual peer-review workshop with other Co-Curricular Activities groups to receive feedback, using the form provided in Appendix B.
5. Share results with any relevant academic department to receive feedback, using the form provided in Appendices B and C.
6. Receive feedback from the joint meeting of all stakeholders as called for in the Timeline (Appendix E).
7. Make changes to both the program and the assessment plan based on the Assessment feedback.
8. Repeat the process the next year!

The Co-Curricular Outcomes Assessment Process will be overseen by the Co-Curricular Outcomes Assessment Committee. Please see Appendix D for the membership, duties and responsibilities of the committee; Appendix E for the Timeline; and Appendix F for the Organizational Chart.

Appendix A: Co-Curricular Activities Outcomes Assessment Plan and Report

At NMHU, co-curricular activities are defined as out-of-class experiences that complement and extend the formal learning experience of a course or academic program. Co-curricular activities develop a student's social, intellectual, cultural, democratic, civic, and aesthetic domains. They are supervised and/or financed by the institution and facilitate the attainment of NMHU's four essential traits (or student learning outcomes). These experiences are voluntary, ungraded, and non-credited, although they may be compensated through student employment.

Four identified traits/student learning outcomes that the NMHU community of faculty, students and staff identified that our graduates are expected to display:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills
- Effective use of technology

Program Name:

Main Contact and Email:

Program Mission:

Intended Audience:

Please include data on student utilization of the program over the past year (be sure to include online and Center students if part of your intended audience).

Describe how you measure student satisfaction with your program and results for this year:

Student Learning Outcome:	University Trait(s) linked to which it is linked Learning Outcomes	Measures of Assessment	Timeline for Measurement	Threshold to Determine if outcome has been achieved
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Co-Curricular Outcomes Assessment Plan & Report Template

2016-2017

Student Learning Outcome:	Assessment Measurement Results	Outcome Achieved? (0= No, 1= yes)	Plan for Improvement
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Appendix B: Co-Curricular Peer Review Feedback

PROGRAM: _____				
FEEDBACK FORM FOR CO-CURRICULAR OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLANS AND REPORTS				
Click on the box above category that best describes the plan you are reviewing				
LEARNING OUTCOMES:	<i>Fully Developed and Implemented</i>	<i>Developing/Partially Implemented</i>	<i>No Evidence</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Learning outcomes are clearly linked to the program's mission statement	Anyone reading the report would clearly see how the learning outcomes are central outcomes of the program's mission.	While some learning outcomes have a clear, specific link to the mission, for others this link is absent or hard to see.	The mission is missing or the learning outcomes are generic, with no clear and specific link between the learning outcomes and the mission.	
Learning outcomes and means of assessment are clearly linked to at least one of the four NMHU traits	Each learning outcome is measured in a way that is logically linked with the identified trait and with an objective means of assessment.	Some learning outcomes included and measured but are not linked to one of the traits.	The learning outcomes are not linked to one of the four NMHU traits and are not measured/assessed.	
Learning outcomes are clear and measurable	The learning outcomes and the means of measurement are clearly explained, so that anyone reading the report can understand them.	While some learning outcomes have a clear, logical means of measurement, others are either generic or hard to understand.	The learning outcomes are vague or abstract to the point that they cannot be objectively measured. "Students will become better citizens."	

Measures of student satisfaction are clearly identified and defined	Measures of student satisfaction are clearly explained, so that anyone reading the report can understand them.	While some measures of student satisfaction have a clear, logical means of measurement, others are either generic or hard to understand.	The measures of student satisfaction are vague or abstract to the point that they cannot be objectively measured. "Students will become better citizens."	
ASSESSMENT METHODS:	<i>Fully Developed and Implemented</i>	<i>Developing/Partially Implemented</i>	<i>No Evidence</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Multiple assessment measures are identified	Learning outcomes are measured in more than one way.	Multiple sources of data may be used, but they are lumped together as one means of assessment.	Only one means of assessment is listed for each learning outcome.	
Direct measures of student learning or achievements that are clearly aligned to the learning outcomes are emphasized	The means of assessment is a clear, direct measure of the learning outcome and is as objective as possible, such as specific course assignments or student achievements directly focused on the learning outcome.	The quality, objectivity and validity of assessment measures is mixed.	Measures are limited to global assessments that have little clear connection to the learning outcome, such as course grades or student satisfaction measures. The overall validity of the means of assessment is questionable.	
If the program is present at the Centers or online, those students are included in the data collection and report	Data from Center or online students is clearly and consistently collected and discussed.	Data from Center or online students is collected inconsistently.	The program is offered at the Centers or online, but there is no indication of data collected from Center or online students.	

REPORTING AND USE OF RESULTS:	<i>Fully Developed and Implemented</i>	<i>Developing/Partially Implemented</i>	<i>No Evidence</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Assessment results are reported	Data is reported for all measures.	Some data is reported, but some is missing.	No or very little data is reported.	
Assessment results are clearly explained	Interpretations of results are clearly linked back to the learning outcome and what the results mean for students and the program is explained.	Interpretations go beyond just a description of the results to include some explanation of what the results mean.	Any data that is presented has no or minimal interpretations (e.g., "80% of students met this goal" with no other explanations).	
Assessment results are used by the program faculty or staff to improve student learning (e.g., change/revise learning outcomes, change/revise courses or curriculum)	The report provides specific ways in which the academic program has been modified and improved based upon outcomes results.	The data may have been used to identify an area for improvement, but no changes have been made.	There is no indication that the results have been used to improve the academic program.	
Assessment results are used to identify how the assessment process should be modified	Clear plans to improve the assessment process based upon the data are included.	Recognition that some aspects of the assessment process could be improved but no plans to change them	No discussion of using the results to improve the outcomes assessment process.	

Information from the assessment results is shared with multiple constituents	The final report is written in such a way that anyone, including prospective students and their parents, can read the report and clearly understand the goals of the program, and the successes and challenges the program has had in achieving those outcomes.	The report may be understandable to a wide audience, but it provides little useful information (i.e., all students meet all the learning outcomes, or this is a program that is designed to lead to licensure but no data on licensure attainment is provided).	The report is difficult for anyone outside of the program to understand, or it provides little to no information that gives a clear picture of what students in the program achieve.	
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Appendix C (Sample Sheet): Outcomes Assessment Excel Sheet and Instructions for Uploading Data on Co-Curricular Assessment to OIER

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Assessment Number	701									
2	Semester	Fall 2014									
3	Academic Year	2014-2015									
4	Academic Program	Business Undergraduate: Common Outcomes									
5	Program Code	70									
6	First Program Outcome Assessed Description	Business students understand and can perform quantitative business analysis on a company and make appropriate business decisions based on this analysis.									
7	First Program Outcome Assessed Number	1									
8	First Means of Assessment Number										
9	Second Program Outcome Assessed Description										
10	Second Program Outcome Assessed Number	#N/A									
11	Second Means of Assessment Number										
12	Third Program Outcome Assessed Description										
13	Third Program Outcome Assessed Number	#N/A									
14	Third Means of Assessment Number										
15	First NMHU Trait Assessed										
16	Second NMHU Trait Assessed										
17	Third NMHU Trait Assessed										
18	Assessment Material										
19	Criterion for success.										
20	Student ID	Assessment									
21											
22											
23											
24											
25											

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with a ribbon at the top containing tabs for Home, Layout, Tables, Charts, SmartArt, Formulas, Data, Review, and Developer. The 'Home' tab is active, showing options for Font, Paragraph, Styles, and Cells. The spreadsheet itself has columns labeled A through K and rows numbered 1 through 25. The data is organized into sections: assessment details (rows 1-5), program outcomes (rows 6-14), NMHU traits (rows 15-17), assessment material (row 18), criterion for success (row 19), and student data (rows 20-25). The 'Student ID' column (column B) contains the word 'Assessment' in row 20. The 'First Program Outcome Assessed Number' (row 7) is 1, and the 'Second' (row 10) and 'Third' (row 13) are #N/A. The 'Assessment Material' (row 18) is blank. The 'Criterion for success' (row 19) is blank. The 'Student ID' (row 20) is 'Assessment'. The spreadsheet is titled 'untitled.xlsx' and the status bar at the bottom shows 'Normal View' and 'Ready'.

Instructions for Using the Co-Curricular Outcomes Assessment Excel Sheet

1. Row #1, the Assessment Number, will populate automatically as you complete the sheet. Rows 2 and 3 are self-explanatory. Rows 4 and 5 are already filled out and locked.
2. In rows 6, 9 and 12 select the program outcomes that these data are meant to assess. In order to do this accurately you will need to be familiar with your program's outcomes assessment plan. If the data only applies to one outcome, then leave rows 6 and 9 blank. If you feel the drop-down list does not accurately reflect your program's outcomes please contact OIER. Ignore rows 7, 10 and 13. These will populate automatically. For rows 8, 11 and 14 you will need to refer to your program's outcomes assessment plan to determine exactly which means of assessment the data you are entering applies to. For example, if the data you are entering corresponds to the first means of assessing the outcome, you should enter 1.
3. In rows 15 through 17 please indicate the NMHU traits these data are meant to assess. If the data do not pertain to any NMHU trait just leave these blank.
4. In row 18, please describe the assessment material you are reporting. It could be a course grade, a course assignment grade, a test not related to a specific course (such as a licensure exam or nationally normed exam), a portfolio assessment, some other evaluation of the student (such as evaluations from a field supervisor) or results from a student survey. All you need here is a brief description.
5. In row 19 please explain your criterion for success. For example, "A grade of C or better on the assignment."
6. For rows 21 on, copy and paste your students' ID numbers into column A (including the "@" sign). In column B, enter a 1 if the student met the criterion or a 0 if the student did not. If you get an error when copying your students' ID numbers into the column, just insert a single quotation (') before the @. You can use find and replace to do this.
7. Save the file in a csv (comma separated value) format. You will get a message saying only the Active Sheet will be saved. Make sure you have the "Data" sheet showing and hit "Save Active Sheet".
8. Upload the data through Self Service Banner. Go to the "Faculty and Advisors" section and look for the "Program Outcomes Assessment Upload". It is at the bottom of the list.
9. **IMPORTANT!** Please make sure you data are accurate before you upload. We can't go back and delete incorrect data.

Appendix D: Co-Curricular Outcomes Assessment Committee

1. Membership

Membership consists of six appointed staff members, two from the Student Affairs division, two from the Strategic Enrollment division, and two from the Academic Affairs division. Appointment of staff members to the committee will be made by each division leader: Dean of Students, Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management, and the Provost. Each staff member shall serve for two years. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (OIER) shall have one member serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.

2. Meetings

The chair of the committee shall convene meetings as necessary, but shall have at least one joint meeting with the Outcomes Assessment Committee of the Faculty Senate.

3. Minutes

Minutes shall be maintained by the committee and forwarded to the Dean of Students Office.

4. Reports to

Dean of Students

5. Duties and Responsibilities

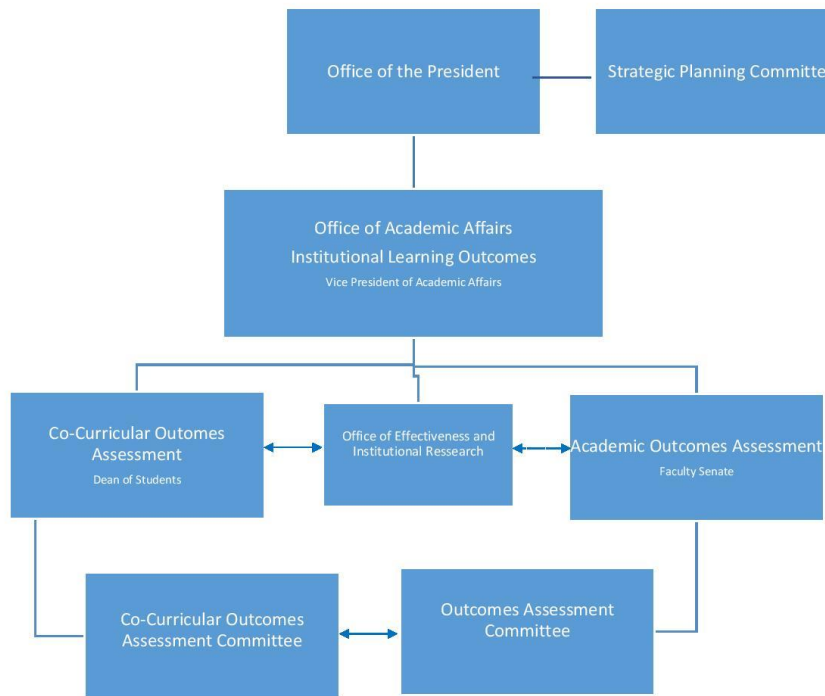
- a. Initiates and monitors implementation of co-curricular assessment processes in identified co-curricular programs throughout the university.
- b. Initiates policy recommendations and reviews proposed policy changes that arise as a result of assessment.
- c. Reviews co-curricular outcomes information (includes outcomes assessment from co-curricular programs, relevant reports from OIER, and other co-curricular assessment data) in support of the university's missions and goals and encourages the use of co-curricular assessment results on program planning and review.
- d. Delivers to the Dean of Students an annual report on co-curricular assessment for any given academic year by the beginning of the next academic year. This report should be a review of the process and procedures from outcomes assessment and how well they are serving the needs of the university, specifically the student learning outcomes.

Appendix E: Co-Curricular Activities Outcomes Assessment Timeline

June	<p>Assessment reports completed using previous year's data, sent to OIER.</p> <p>Assessment reports reviewed by OIER and technical feedback provided to programs.</p> <p>Collection of summer semester data.</p>	<p>Program Directors/Coordinators</p> <p>OIER</p>
July	<p>CCOA Committee set up peer reviews for co-curricular programs.</p> <p>Assessment reports with interpretation and use of results sent back to OIER and CCOA Committee.</p>	<p>CCOA Committee</p> <p>Program Directors/Coordinators</p>
August	<p>Co-Curricular Outcomes Assessment Committee and Faculty Senate Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee host an open meeting to jointly review and discuss reports and provide feedback to programs and OIER (closing the loop).</p> <p>Final assessment reports sent to the programs and posted on OIER website.</p> <p>Review and update Assessment Plan for upcoming year and submit to CCOA Committee and OIER.</p>	<p>CCOA Committee, Faculty Senate Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee, Dean of Students, VPAA and VPSEM, Program Directors, OIER</p> <p>OIER</p> <p>Program Coordinators</p>
September- December	Collection of fall semester data	Program Coordinators
December/January	Compilation of fall semester data	Program Coordinators
January- May	Collection of spring semester data	Program coordinators
June- August	Collection and compilation of summer semester data.	Program coordinators

Note: If the Co-Curricular Program coordinator is a Faculty member and not on contract in the summer, the report should be completed during the academic year, preferably by the end of the Spring semester.

Appendix F: Organization Chart of Co-Curricular Outcomes Assessment Process



Appendix G: Resources and Surveys Available

It is the responsibility of the Co-Curricular Program to determine how the following resources may best be used to assess their programs.

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) is a standardized testing initiative that uses a "value-added" outcome model to examine a college or university's contribution to student learning. The CLA measures to test for critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, critiquing argument, and writing mechanics and effectiveness. The assessment consists of open-ended questions, is administered to students online, and controls for incoming academic ability. Contact: OIER.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) annually collects information at hundreds of 4-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and professional development. The results provide information about how students spend their time and what they gain from participation in co-curricular and other activities. Contact: OIER.

SkyFactor is a professionally-developed student affairs assessment program that collects and aggregates co-curricular activities outcomes, allows peer benchmarking, and permits rapid identification of key issues that need improvement. Contact: Dean of Students.

Survey Monkey is an online program that allows the creation and administration of surveys to students, faculty, and staff. Contact: OIER.

Inspiron is an online program that allows for the creation of both hard copy and online surveys for students, faculty, and staff. Contact: ARMAS.