

October 28, 2022

Re: Assessment of Student Learning at the Program Level

Dear Faculty Colleague,

**Thank you** for contributing to the College of Arts and Sciences' system of evaluating student learning at the program level. Your continued effort will advance student learning and ensure we are ready for the next Higher Learning Commission visit. As a faculty-led group, we are committed to working with you to evaluate student learning, document findings and report them. We are eager to learn how you and your colleagues are using the information gathered to improve your program(s) and enhance student learning.

**We know you are very busy!** Therefore, we have streamlined the process to make it as simple as possible.

***For Accredited Degree Programs***

If your program is an accredited degree program, you will need to only submit a document briefly describing where you are in the process (see p. 2).

***For Non-Accredited Degree Programs***

If your program is NOT accredited but has consistently reported on assessment of student learning, you will complete the normal template (see pp. 3-4).

For more information about us (the CAS Assessment Committee—CASAC) or EMU's accrediting body (the Higher Learning Commission—HLS), please see the appendix (see pp. 5-7).

We look forward to working with you this year.

Sincerely,

Your Colleagues on CASAC

*Faculty*

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## Accredited Programs

If your program is accredited by a national (or international) organization, and part of the process involves assessing student learning, please complete the following. Upload to the link below two documents: (1) the completed chart below, and (2) a curriculum map.

**(1) Please complete and upload this chart.**

Accredited Degree Program & Program Code	
Department	
Submitted by	
Email Address	
Accrediting Body	
Date of Next Report (due to accrediting body)	
List of Student Learning Outcomes or Objectives	
Type of Student Work Analyzed	
How information from analysis of student work is used to enhance the program	
One example (in particular, please show how the change led to improvement in student learning)	

**(2) Please upload your program's curriculum map (for information about curriculum maps, see appendix).**

**Please submit parts to:** [https://irim.emich.edu/cas\\_assessment/logon.php](https://irim.emich.edu/cas_assessment/logon.php)

Directions: Scroll to the bottom, select department & academic year; add contact information; upload files & save submission.

**DUE: DECEMBER 2022 - January 2023**

## Programs Consistently Contributing Plans & Reports

Your program has consistently submitted assessment plans and reports. Please use the template below to resubmit assessment plans for 2021-22, the report for 2021-22, the plans for 2022-23, and the program's curriculum map.

<b>Degree Program &amp; Program Code</b>	
<b>Department</b>	
<b>Submitted by</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	

*Please submit completed parts to:* [https://irim.emich.edu/cas\\_assessment/logon.php](https://irim.emich.edu/cas_assessment/logon.php)

Directions: Scroll to the bottom, select department & academic year; add contact information; upload files & save submission.

**DUE: DECEMBER 2022 - January 2023**

### Assessment Plans 2021-22

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### Report for 2021-22

<b>ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCES, DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS, AND ACTIONS FOR "CLOSING THE LOOP"</b>
Describe the results of analyzing student performances toward the goals (or learning outcomes) highlighted for this year.
Describe the "so what" of the analysis (i.e., what did you learn from the process and what changes did you make, or plan to make?).
Based on the observations above, describe how you "closed the loop" of the process. Closing the loop refers to changes to improve the program. Examples could include curriculum changes; new courses; faculty support, such as targeted professional development;

pedagogy, such as changes in assignments; student support, such as advising, resources, or an assessment plan.

### Assessment Plans for 2022-23

<b>PLANS FOR ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING TOWARD MEETING PROGRAMMATIC LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>
List (or copy and paste) your program's goals for students.
List the goals or outcomes your program will focus on for 2021-22.
Describe the student artifacts or performances the program will use to assess how well students met selected program goals and how these will be collected.
Describe the methods or processes the program will use to analyze the student work in order to determine how well students met the selected goals or outcomes.
How do you plan to measure the effects of curricular changes chosen as a result of your program's recent assessment efforts? Would you expect to see the effects reflected in the assessments of SLOs for the upcoming year? If so, where? If not, when would it make sense to begin to look for effects in upcoming assessments?

### Curriculum Map

<p><b>PART THREE</b> <b>Curriculum Map*</b> (for examples, see, <a href="#">Curriculum Map</a> )</p>
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### CASAC Response

The faculty serving on the CASAC will review and respond to your program’s assessment reports and plans—wherever you are in the process. The review is not evaluative. Rather, the purpose of the review and response is to provide constructive and supportive feedback. The process also provides members of CASAC an opportunity to review reports and plans and to observe how well programs have designed systematic ways of assessing student learning, including how findings are used to improve programs and opportunities for students to learn (i.e., how well programs “close the loop”). Each year, CASAC submits a report to the CAS Dean and the University Assessment Committee summarizing the college’s efforts in assessing student learning, and the Dean and UAC provide feedback for purposes of continuous improvement.

## NOTES

***The main purposes for constructing programmatic assessments of student learning are the following:***

- To provide evidence from programmatic perspectives for how well students are learning—mainly, toward achieving the program’s learning outcomes;
- To enhance opportunities for students to learn and meet the learning outcomes;
- To gather and discuss information that helps programs to improve;
- To contribute to EMU’s efforts to retain accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.

**All degree programs (undergraduate and graduate) are expected by the Higher Learning Commission to systematically assess student learning outcomes.** CASAC coordinates and supports faculty and administrator efforts toward this process.

Rev. September 28, 2022

## Appendix

### **Brief History of CASAC**

The CAS Assessment Committee (CASAC), a faculty-led group that originated in 2012, works to support faculty to build systematic ways of observing and documenting how we know students are meeting learning goals of our programs. Fifty to 75% of all CAS degree programs have contributed assessment reports over the years, and we are working to increase participation in all areas to demonstrate how faculty continuously improve learning opportunities for students.

### **Good News from EMU’s Accrediting Body: The Higher Learning Commission (HLC)**

EMU is a respected university, in part, because it is accredited by the HLC. In its recent evaluation of EMU (Fall 2017), the HLC stated that we “Met” expectations for the criterion focused on student learning (Criterion 4B). In its response to EMU’s accreditation report (Fall 2017), the HLC recognized that college-level assessment committees have established assessment tools and processes, and stated, “it is apparent that faculty are engaged in using assessment data to improve learning.” (For more information about 4B, go to <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html>.) For this, the CASAC again thanks all who actively participated in past assessment efforts.

**HLC Critique – What EMU needs to do next, in terms of assessment of student learning.** *The HLC did, however, identify one area of assessment needing improvement: documenting how curricular or process changes actually enhanced student learning.*

Specifically, the HLC has encouraged EMU (and the college)

to be more intentional about documenting changes made to improve learning (as opposed to improving assessment processes), as well as documenting results from subsequent assessments that will inform the institution about the effectiveness of the changes made.

### **Getting Started or Continuing with the Cycle of Evaluating Student Progress**

While we want to take the HLC's advice and begin to examine specific areas needing improvement, we also recognize many programs are already accomplishing goals of assessing student learning and continually improving students' opportunities for learning. Therefore, this year as you develop your assessment plans and routines we ask you to select one of three options --direct, indirect, or custom-- that best identifies your current program assessment efforts and plan accordingly (see cover letter).

It is helpful to consider three key terms collectively and decide how to engage in and represent "closing the loop." The following definitions of key terms are offered to guide our efforts.

**Assessment:** A term used to describe analysis of student performance (i.e., student created artifacts) in key areas of a course or program. Such assessments are not necessarily related to grades issued in a course; rather, they correspond to students' acquisition of specific knowledge or skills expected by program instructors.

**Closing-the-Loop:** A term used to explain actions taken after assessing student performance in which recommendations for curricular improvements or changes are recommended and implemented. For instance, curricular improvements or changes may include sequencing of content, or the addition of, or modifications to, instructional practices, etc.

**Curriculum Map:** A curriculum map is a visual layout of the learning goals or outcomes expected of students and when, during their program, the students will be introduced to the goals, when they will practice, and demonstrate proficiency in them. You can find a blank template here [Curriculum Map](#)

### **Effective Ways of "Closing the Loop" of the Assessment Cycle**

The assessment of student learning loop gets "closed" in three main ways, particularly providing evidence for:

- Implemented curricular improvements;
- Improved processes of evaluating student work;
- Increased student learning based on curricular or process changes.

**Note:** Remember, the approach your program takes to observing and analyzing representative student work and developing evidence for how well students have met learning goals should be *humane* and *doable*. We know you are all very busy! Most likely, you and your colleagues are already engaged in observing how well students are doing in your programs. Now, *make those observations and evidence more visible*.

**One more suggestion:** As you and your colleagues are planning how to evaluate and provide evidence for student learning from a programmatic perspective, consider a two-three year cycle.

For example:

<p>Year One (2020-21)</p> <p><b>Y1</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make list of learning goals;</li> <li>○ Create curriculum map <a href="#">Curriculum Map</a></li> <li>○ Pilot analysis of selected student work;</li> <li>○ Report on process and any changes you make;</li> <li>○ Submit a report to CASAC.</li> </ul>
<p>Year Two (2021-22)</p> <p><b>Y2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confirm list of learning goals;</li> <li>○ Review accuracy of curriculum map;</li> <li>○ Select representative student work and analyze it;</li> <li>○ Consider and implement changes necessary to support or improve student learning;</li> <li>○ Submit a report to CASAC.</li> </ul>
<p>Year Three (2022-23)</p> <p><b>Y3</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confirm list of learning goals;</li> <li>○ Review accuracy of curriculum map;</li> <li>○ Select representative student work and analyze it;</li> <li>○ Evaluate Y2 changes or improvements to determine if they enhanced student learning;</li> <li>○ Recommend additional changes to support or improve student learning;</li> <li>○ Submit a report to CASAC.</li> <li>○ Repeat this process for continuous improvement.</li> </ul>

**NOTE:** If appropriate for program outcomes and goals for students, you may combine programs under one assessment system and report.