UTICA UNIVERSITY

Academic Assessment Committee Handbook

Policies and Procedures
2023 - 2024

Revised August 2023

Academic Assessment Committee (AAC)

Responsibility and Authority

The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) is a collegial body responsible for establishing, communicating, reviewing, and reporting on assessment processes in academic programs and identifying areas where professional development is needed. The committee is further responsible for measuring the institution's progress with portions of the MSCHE accreditation Standards III, IV, and V.

Responsibility
The AAC meets weekly throughout the traditional academic year. This committee's responsibilities are

1. Establish procedures, requirements, and standards for annual assessment reports and 5-year program reviews from academic departments.
2. To review academic department's assessment processes and report findings to the Provost and Faculty Senate.
3. To review and provide feedback on program assessment plans and annual goal reports.
4. To review and provide feedback on 5-year program reviews,
5. To identify professional development needs of the faculty with respect to assessment practices.
6. To serve as an advisory board to the Senior Associate Provost.

Authority
The AAC has the authority to require corrective action where necessary and may recommend to the Provost appropriate specific actions to be taken in light of reviewing assessment documentation.

Membership

- Nine faculty members representing each school
- The Senior Associate Provost (Chair)

The Provost serves as an *Ex Officio Member.*

Faculty Terms
Faculty members are selected by their respective deans. Each serves a 3-year term with no term limits. All ACC members are voting members.

Chair Responsibilities
The Senior Associate Provost serves as chair of the AAC and is responsible for
- Setting the agenda for ACC meetings and distributing the agenda in advance of the meetings.
- Chairing the ACC meetings.
- Coordinating communications between the ACC and academic programs or departments.
- Updating all materials, print or electronic, related to academic assessment at Utica University.
- Facilitating the review process for the annual goal reports.
- Generating the committee's semi-annual reports to the Provost and Faculty Senate.
- Facilitating the program review process.
- Coordinating faculty development sessions in effective assessment practices.
- Recording and distributing minutes from each meeting.

Records

Minutes and agendas are stored in the committee's shared drive. All documents related to departmental assessment reports and program reviews are filed in the shared drive titled "Academic Department Assessment."

The AAC reports on its work on a semi-annual basis in a report to the Faculty Senate and Provost. Semi-annual reports from the most recent academic years are posted on the ACC website and are accessible to faculty and staff. (https://www.utica.edu/academic/Assessment/aacc.cfm) Reports from previous years are available through the Senior Associate Provost.

Records Retention

Committee agendas, minutes and related materials will be kept for a full accreditation cycle up to ten years. Assessment documentation (including program reviews, communications with programs, and reports) are permanent records of Utica University and will be retained accordingly.

Assessment Processes

Departmental Annual Goals and Student Learning Assessment

All academic departments that have certificate or degree programs and the General Education Program are expected to assess program-level student learning and operational goals on an annual basis. Plans and results should be submitted to the Senior Associate Provost by August 15 of each year. Departments are responsible for reporting assessment findings only for majors or minors in their programs.

Best practice recommends assessing each learning goal twice during a 5-year review cycle. All full-time faculty in a program should participate in the department's assessment process, from administering the assessments to interpreting the results and generating an action plan. Efforts should be made to include adjunct faculty in the process as well. When warranted, results should be shared with other stakeholders, such as students or alumni.

Annual reports and assessment plans are reviewed by the Academic Assessment Committee (AAC), and feedback is shared directly with departmental faculty in face-to-face meetings and/or by scored rubric. The AAC's review focuses primarily on assessment processes and their effectiveness.

Academic programs should submit a copy of their current assessment *plan* to their respective school deans by September 15. School deans may likewise review the annual reports from August 15 through September 15. If the department's assessment findings suggest a need for additional or increased resources, the chairperson should make an appointment to meet with the school dean to discuss the findings and the recommended action plan/resource request. When appropriate, deans will advocate for academic departments in their school.

In addition to completing annual goal assessments, faculty are required to submit copies of their course syllabi to the respective School office during the first week of classes. Course-level learning objectives are expected to be clearly articulated in each syllabus. Syllabi are filed in the School's shared drive. Likewise, each faculty member's Summary of Professional Activities (SOPAs) should be updated and submitted to the respective School office by August 15 of each academic year.

The 5-Year Program Review Process

The program review process is an opportunity to reflect on a program's effectiveness, its curricular offerings, faculty expertise, student learning and program outcomes, and the strengths and challenges facing the program. Further, it demonstrates the extent to which the program is fulfilling the mission and strategic goals of the institution.

Academic programs are required to complete a self-study as part of the 5-year program review process. Departments scheduled for 5-year reviews should have the self-study completed by November 1 of the academic year when it is due.

For programs that have specialized accreditors, the accreditation reports typically replace the self-study. However, the University may require the program to engage in additional analyses of data, particularly with respect to enrollment trends and economic forecasts. Copies of the program's accreditation report(s), team visit reports, accreditor's responses, and the program's annual updates should be submitted

to the Senior Associate Provost. Program faculty are expected to meet with the Provost to discuss the accreditation report, visiting team report, program goals, and resource needs.

A 5-year program review schedule is established by the AAC and is appended to this handbook.

Procedures

1. The Academic Assessment Committee maintains the 5-year program review schedule. This schedule is updated annually and any modifications based on special circumstances are made.
2. Programs are expected to adhere to the timetable for program reviews. On occasion, a program may request to postpone the review. Circumstances meriting a change in the schedule typically involve a significant loss of program resources that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to complete an effective review. Program reorganization and external accreditation demands might also be reasons to postpone the review.
3. If the program wishes to ask for an extended deadline, the chair or program director should contact the Senior Associate Provost, who chairs the AAC, to appeal for an extension. The AAC has the final authority to approve the request.
4. March/April prior to the review year, directors and/or faculty of the programs that are scheduled for program review in the following academic year will meet with the Senior Associate Provost to review requirements, expectations, and resource/data needs. The Senior Associate Provost is responsible for organizing the meeting.
5. The self-study report that is part of the program review process must be submitted to the school dean and the Academic Assessment Committee on or before November 1 of the review year.
6. The Academic Assessment Committee will the self-study report and meet with the program faculty to discuss the contents of the report.
7. After the meeting with the program's faculty, the Committee will send its final comments to the program faculty. The program faculty then reviews the comments and has seven (7) business days to make corrections to errors of fact.
8. The AAC will correct any errors of fact and submit to the Provost and the respective school dean a record of the review process and a summary of the AAC's evaluation.
9. The Provost will schedule a meeting with the program faculty after receiving the AAC's report. If the program faculty disagrees significantly with the Committee's comments, they should submit their concerns in writing to the Provost prior to the scheduled meeting.
10. The program faculty and respective dean will meet with the Provost to discuss the program review and establish goals and action plans. A record of this meeting will summarize the discussion and document what the University and/or the Provost agrees to support based on the evidence supplied in the report.
11. The department is required to submit an action plan to the Provost that outlines how the goals will be achieved.
12. All documents related to the program review process will be stored in the shared drive titled "Academic Department Assessment."
13. Post-review, the program will continue to report yearly on goals/objectives/learning outcomes.

Assessment Calendar

Date	Event	Responsible Parties
May and/or August	Academic departments hold retreats to review and analyze assessment findings and plan assessments for the following academic year.	Deans, chairs, faculty
August 15	Annual goal assessments completed; SOPAs and syllabi submitted to the respective school office.	Department chairs, program directors, assessment coordinators
August 15-September 15	School deans meet with chairs/directors, if warranted, to discuss findings and resource needs. Assessment plans submitted to the school deans.	School deans and department chairs/program directors
September	AAC begins its review of annual goal reports	AAC, chairs/directors, faculty
November 1	Self-study reports due to the school dean and the AAC	Department chairs, faculty
December	AAC submits its fall report	AAC
January – May	AAC continues the annual report reviews and launches its review of 5-year program review self-studies, meeting with departmental faculty; Provost meets with academic departments and respective school deans regarding their 5-year program reviews. Provost provides a written summary of the meeting to the academic departments. Departments complete a 3-year action plan based on the review.	AAC, chairs/directors, faculty, school deans, Provost
May	AAC submits its spring report	ACC

Program Review Schedule

This schedule is subject to change pending major curriculum revisions and/or department realignment. Certificate programs will be assessed as part of the overall program assessment(s).

AY 2024 – 2025

Program	Award
CHEMISTRY/BIOCHEMISTRY	BS
HISTORY	BA
COMPUTER SCIENCE	BS
COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA	BA
CRIMINAL JUSTICE	BS

AY 2025 – 2026

Program	Award
PHYSICS	BA & BS
CYBER-SECURITY	BS & MS
DATA SCIENCE	MS
MATHEMATICS	BA

AY 2026 – 2027

Program	Award
HEALTH SCIENCES	BS
PPtDPT	DPT
BIOLOGY	BS
ANIMAL BEHAVIOR	BS
PSYCHOLOGY	BA & BS

AY 2027-2028

Program	Award
PXW	BS
PSYCHOLOGY/CHILD LIFE	BS
GENERAL EDUCATION	N/A

AY 2028-2029

Program	Award
FFCM/FFCI	BS & MS
POLITICAL SCIENCE	BA
ENGLISH	BA

ACCREDITATION SCHEDULE

Program	Accreditor	Date
Dietetics and Nutrition	ACEND	2029
Accounting, Business, Economics & Finance	ACBSP	2022/2026
Masters Business Administration	ACBSP	2022/2026
Construction Management	ACCE	2023/2026
Education	AAQEP	2030
Nursing	CCNE	2025
Occupational Therapy	ACOTE	MS 2028/2029 OTD 2024
Doctor Physical Therapy	CAPTE	Annually/2023-2024
Masters of Social Work	CSWE	2023

ELEMENT	Exemplary	Established	Developing	Undeveloped
Implemented Improvements Based on Previous Reviewers' Feedback	Provides clear and concrete evidence of how improvements from the previous assessment *review* were implemented. This may include improvements made because of assessment or improvements made to the department's assessment processes.	Some but not all of the recommendations for improving the department's assessment process were implemented. If action was not taken when warranted, a reasonable explanation is given as for why.	Feedback from reviewers from previous assessment cycles does not appear to have been considered for this cycle, and there is little to no explanation for why this is so. Minor changes were made to strengthen assessment processes.	The report provides no evidence that any improvements to the department or its assessment processes were implemented.
Student Learning Goals	Goals are clearly articulated, observable, and measurable. They are congruent with the department's mission. Learning outcomes are clear.	Goals are observable and measurable, but the language of some is vague. Each goal is appropriate to the department's mission. The desired outcomes may lack clarity.	The goals are targets, not measurable goals. As such, they are not necessarily measurable.	Most of the goals are unclear, not measurable, and/or inadequate for meaningful assessment.
Plan for Student Learning Assessment	The program has a sustainable assessment plan that describes when and how each learning goal will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. Plan is based on thoughtful inquiry into student learning.	The program has an assessment plan, but does not indicate how improvements will be implemented and assessed. The plan may not be sustainable and does not seem to be informed by inquiry into student learning.	The program has an assessment plan, but not all of the learning goals are included in the plan. Assessment does not appear to be ongoing or systematic in the program.	The program lacks a formal plan for assessing the student learning goals; it relies on short-term planning, such as selecting the goal or course to assess in the current year.
Student Learning Assessment Methods and Targets	Multiple methods that align with learning goals are used to assess student learning. Methods are mostly direct.. When warranted, student learning is assessed at multiple points in the curriculum. Targets and/or benchmarks are clearly indicated and reflect	Assessment methods align with the learning goals, but not all goals are measured by multiple methods. Targets and/or benchmarks are identified, but it is not clear how they were determined.	Most of the methods are indirect or non-specific (e.g. "exam"). Assessment tools are vague, poorly defined, and targets/benchmarks not indicated.	There is no clear relationship between the goals and the assessment methods. Targets are not specified, and measures are not acceptable for good assessment. (E.g. course grades)

	reasonable but challenging expectations.			
Student Learning Assessment Results and Analysis	Program-level results are clearly presented and easy to follow. They relate directly to the goals being measured. Results are specific enough to indicate strengths and weaknesses; they show precisely where and how students are performing at or beyond expectations and where they are performing below expectations. Supporting evidence is attached.	Clear and well-organized discussion of results is presented. Some results are incomplete or findings are not yet available, and it is not entirely clear how the results have been interpreted or what they mean to the department. Trends or patterns, even when appropriate, are not noted. Supporting evidence is included.	Program-level results are presented, but the presentation is difficult to follow or the results are summative and do not identify specific areas of strength or areas where improvement is needed. There is little analysis of findings, and no interpretation is provided. Little supporting evidence is included.	No evidence of assessment results is reported, or the evidence is so general and so brief, it does not report anything meaningful.
Action Plans: Using & Sharing Assessment Results	Evidence demonstrates that assessment-based discussions have led to action or recommendations have been enacted. Improvements are *program* level, not course level, and concern curriculum or pedagogy. Results are shared with key stakeholders external to the department.	Evidence suggests that assessment-based discussions have considered action, but these actions lack specificity or are confined to a single course or assessment method—i.e. they are not really program level. The program indicated a resource need based on assessment results, but did not indicate how the need might be addressed.	An action plan has been identified, but it is not clear how it resulted from assessment findings or assessment-based discussions. No explanation provided when the report concludes that no action is required.	No evidence that the department is using assessment findings to inform planning or continuous improvement.
Operational Goals & Evidence	Goals are clearly articulated and measurable; they are assessed by valid measures, and solid evidence indicates the extent to which the goals have been achieved.	Goals are clearly articulated, but there is an over-reliance on one assessment method. Evidence that the goals have been achieved may be subjective. Further documentation might be required.	Goals are articulated, but the language is vague. There is a lack of alignment between the goals and the supporting evidence.	Goals are more of a process or action step than an outcome; questionable conclusions are made regarding the extent to which the goals were achieved.

Operational Planning & Resource Needs	Planned improvements are clearly identified; they are specific and relate directly to assessment findings. Action plans are appropriate given current resources and demonstrated need.	The connection between the action plan and/or resource request and the assessment results or other evidence is not readily apparent.	Action plans are identified, but they are vague and non-specific. Plans may not be clearly linked to evidence or assessment results.	No operational plan indicated.

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

TO: *<Department Chair or Program Director>*

FROM: Stephanie R. Nesbitt, Interim Provost & Sr. V.P. for Academic Affairs (Incoming) &
                    <Dean of School or Division>

Cc: *<Senior Associate Provost/Chair of AAC>*

SUBJECT: *<Department or Program Name>* 5-Year Program Review Implementation Action Plan
                    Meeting

DATE:

On *<Day, Date>* I met with the *<Department or Program Name>* to discuss their 5-Year Program Review and collaboratively develop their Implementation Action Plan. Faculty members present at the meeting were *<Faculty members>*.

Summary of Meeting

A brief recap of major discussion points and themes.

Identified 5-Year Plan Goals

Identify 2-5 five-year goals based on the collaborative academic assessment process. Goals should recognize feedback from AAC and the Academic Dean, reflection by the faculty, and collaboration with the Provost.

Action Plan

Action 1:	
Related Goal:	
Person(s) Responsible:	
Timeline for Completion:	
Success Measure(s):	

Action 2:	
Related Goal:	
Person(s) Responsible:	
Timeline for Completion:	
Success Measure(s):	

Action 3:	
Related Goal:	
Person(s) Responsible:	
Timeline for Completion:	
Success Measure(s):	

Action 4:	
Related Goal:	
Person(s) Responsible:	
Timeline for Completion:	
Success Measure(s):	

Action 5:	
Related Goal:	
Person(s) Responsible:	
Timeline for Completion:	
Success Measure(s):	

Resource Needs Identified Through the Assessment Process

Utica University embraces its assessment culture and recognizes that excellent assessment processes only exist when assessment findings are used for institutional planning. The following resource needs have been identified through the assessment process. The Provost's Cabinet will review these needs at the Provost's Winter Planning Retreat (January) and create a prioritized University-wide list to be forwarded to the President for review and budget planning purposes.

As Provost of a tuition-driven institution, I cannot guarantee that all identified resource needs will be met. However, I commit to advocating for your needs in all relevant settings, reporting (as transparently as possible) how resource decisions are made, and working collaboratively with the faculty to find alternate solutions when necessary.

Resource	Estimated Cost	One-time or Ongoing Expense	Requested Budget Year

Closing Thoughts

It has been my pleasure to participate in this process with you. I enjoyed our meeting and the opportunity to work with you to create a better University for our students. Thank you for all you do for our students and to enrich our campus community.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie R. Nesbitt

Stephanie R. Nesbitt, J.D., M.B.A.
Dean of the School of Business and Justice Studies
(Incoming) Interim Provost & Sr. V.P. for Academic Affairs