

Policy for externally accredited units: To promote a meaningful review process, and in recognition of GVSU's Assessment Philosophy and Guiding Principles¹, UAC expects externally accredited programs to follow the normal reporting process for student outcomes assessment, including entry of assessment information into the GVAssess database.

Consideration: If a program's accreditation activities include ongoing *direct assessment of student learning*, and if those assessment activities are deemed by UAC to be *consistent with UAC's expectations for student outcomes assessment*, then the program may choose to enter a limited plan into GVAssess. A limited plan differs from a full assessment plan in that a limited plan spans a two-year period and consists only of the 2-4 SLOs, along with an appropriate number of objectives and measures, to be assessed over that timeframe. Limited plans should be updated every two years so that over a six-year period 6-10 SLOs will have been assessed and reported upon in GVAssess. The program's latest accreditation report should also be uploaded to GVAssess to provide context for assessment reviews. All other university assessment planning and reporting requirements will be consistent with those for non-accredited programs.

Policy rationale:

1. **HLC Requirements:** GVSU meets HLC requirements for student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment through its established process of annual reporting and biennial review. GVAssess is used to organize those efforts.
2. **Focused Assessment:** Accreditation reviews typically focus on a comprehensive review of a program. University assessment reviews focus on a small number of purposefully selected SLOs aligned with needs and interests identified by the unit. SLOs are focused on identifying concerns and supporting continuous improvement of student learning.
3. **Continuous improvement:** GVSU's assessment process is aimed at continuous improvement. Faculty are encouraged to focus attention on areas where assessment reveals room for growth, and real gains can be measured to close the loop and document growth. Accreditation reporting seeks to provide assurances that a program meets established standards. Such high stakes reporting tends to minimize or downplay problem areas.
4. **Measures:** University assessment reviews value direct measures of student learning with support from indirect measures. Accreditation reviews vary widely on their assessment of SLOs. Accreditation reviews may focus on factors such as course syllabi, curricular reviews, and faculty qualifications as evidence for program effectiveness. Though valuable, these indirect measures do not directly assess student learning.
5. **Review cycles:** University reporting cycles infrequently align with accreditation review cycles.
6. **Report structure:** Use of GVAssess provides a uniform reporting structure, making analysis of data and sharing of information more transparent, both within UAC and between academic programs: assessment strategies that were successful for one program may be readily shared with interested programs.

¹ <http://www.gvsu.edu/uac/philosophy>

7. **Searching and reporting:** The adoption and use of GVAssess allows for database searching and reporting. Accreditation reviews by their nature have varying structures that omit database fields, thus excluding them from search and report functions.

Recommendations for externally accredited units:

1. **Be selective:** UAC promotes focused, meaningful assessment¹ of a small number of SLOs that are tracked in GVAssess. Accreditation requirements typically consist of many more SLOs than required. Detailed reporting on a small number of SLOs is preferable to shallow reporting on many outcomes. Refer to UAC guidelines² for details.
2. **Be inclusive:** Involve course instructors in deciding which SLOs to investigate. Linking teaching, assessment, and accreditation in this way makes the work meaningful and advances good and improved teaching and learning. Good assessment and good teaching go hand-in-hand.
3. **Be efficient:** Recent data from accreditation reporting data may be used for university reporting if it is focused on specific SLOs. Units should provide a summary of findings into the GVAssess reporting fields and also attach the full report for context and for additional details. Units should always provide clear page references to the full report so reviewers can easily find the relevant information.
4. **Be proactive:** Faculty in charge of assessment activities for externally accredited programs are encouraged to contact the UAC Chair to discuss efficient ways to enter the assessment plan and reporting into GVAssess.

² <http://www.gvsu.edu/uac/guidelines>