Compiled UAC Recommendations

University Assessment Committee (UAC)

(Prepared by C. Yalda, 2014; revised Aug. 2017; revised Feb. 2026 by J. Henderleiter)

The following recommendations are designed to help programs develop assessment processes that are holistic, transparent, internally driven, sustainable, and focused on continuous improvement.

I. Take a Holistic Approach

A holistic approach ensures that assessment reflects the full scope of student learning and program impact.

- Course-level learning outcomes and assessment methods should align directly with broader program outcomes to support a cohesive student experience.
- Develop and evaluate overall Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each academic major, degree program, certificate, emphasis area, stand-alone minor, or stand-alone badge.
    - Courses are guided by a common Syllabus of Record that establishes core SLOs and assessment methods consistent across all sections.
- Develop and evaluate overall Student-Centered Outcomes (SCOs) for co-curricular, advising, and other student support units.
- SLOs/SCOs should be:
    - Aligned to the course/activity and clearly stated
    - Observable and measurable
    - Outcome-centered
    - Written using action verbs

II. Strive for Focused, Ongoing Assessment

Sustainable assessment is driven by the unit's internal needs for quality and growth.

- The goal is for assessment efforts to be focused, internally driven, and sustainable.
    - It is acceptable to focus on measuring and analyzing a few SLOs/SCOs at a time and shift focus annually or within a two-year assessment cycle.
- Programs are encouraged to continually evolve their assessment plans to identify and achieve SLOs/SCOs, archiving old ones and creating new ones as needed.
- Best practice includes using at least two measures to gather data for each SLO/SCO.
    - Prioritize and use direct measures where feasible.
    - Ensure measures are specific and aligned to the corresponding SLO/SCO.

- Use rubrics or standardized evaluation tools whenever possible to ensure results are consistent and reliable across the unit.
- Maintain all rubrics and assessment instruments to ensure transparency and archival stability.
- SLOs and SCOs should include:
  - Measures
  - Achievement targets
  - Data reporting
  - Reflection
  - Action items, where appropriate

III. Utilize Results for Program Improvement

The primary value of assessment lies in its ability to inform action and improvement at the program level.

- Clearly identify achievement targets and clearly defined thresholds for each measure, ideally based on benchmark data.
- Create action items that specify clear, relevant changes or modifications needed based on observed results.
  - Document actions taken (e.g., course adjustments, curricular changes) to address action items and/or reach a resolution.
  - Mark action items as completed or discontinued as appropriate.
- Programs are encouraged to demonstrate how findings are used to:
  - Inform and improve decisions
  - Advocate for needed resources

IV. Involve Faculty and Students

Effective assessment is a collaborative and transparent process.

- Programs should involve faculty/staff in planning, assessment, and reporting processes.
- Individuals or groups responsible for assessment activities should be clearly identified.
- Programs are encouraged to engage in discussions about:
  - Transparency of assessment practices with students
  - How students are informed about assessment processes
  - How students are informed about assessment results
- Stakeholders (including students and the public) have access to brief updates about assessment efforts via GVSU's Student Outcomes website.