

How to Use the Assessment Practices Rubric for Undergraduate Programs:

This rubric is intended to help faculty assessment leads, assessment staff, and the associate deans to identify areas of strength in program-level assessment processes as well as opportunities for improvement. Raters should feel free to describe performance as between two levels; notes and/or highlighting may be helpful to indicate which portion of the description of the higher level of performance is not present or only partially present. A glossary is provided below with definitions of assessment terms.

The purpose of this rubric is for formative feedback. It is not designed to provide a global rating of a program's assessment quality or to rank programs relative to one another. PROC will be able to review faculty assessment leads' self-assessments and associate deans' feedback based on this rubric to identify campus-level trends in the quality of assessment. The Academic Planning & Assessment Support Center's objective will be to – over time – reduce the number of programs using assessment methods that are not effective, and to increase the percentage of programs that are effectively fostering improvement of program-level student learning or establishing a culture of improvement focused on student learning.

Rubric Glossary (see UC Merced's [Academic Program Assessment Glossary](#) for more detail):

Alignment	The connection between learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment. An assignment or course is well aligned when students must demonstrate the intended learning outcome in order to do well.
Assessment	The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purposes of improving student learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999)
Benchmark	An actual measurement of group performance against an established standard at defined points along the path toward the standard. Subsequent measurements of group performance use the benchmarks to measure progress toward achievement (UC Merced Assessment Glossary)
Curriculum Map	A chart identifying the key learning goals addressed in each of the curriculum's key elements or learning activities (i.e. courses)
Direct Evidence	Measures of learning based on student performance or a demonstration the learning itself. Scoring performance on tests, term papers, or the execution of lab skills, would all be examples of direct assessment of learning.
Faculty Assessment Lead	The faculty member responsible for coordinating a program's annual assessment efforts. By default it is the responsibility of the department chair – as per APM-245 – to keep the curriculum of the department under review, but specific responsibility for assessment can be delegated.
Focus Group	A group selected for its relevance to an evaluation that is engaged by a trained facilitator in a series of discussions designed for sharing insights, ideas, and observations on a topic of concern to the evaluation (National Science Foundation, 2010).
Levels of Performance	In a rubric, categories – typically displayed as columns – that describe the progression of performance on a learning outcome. Common category labels include basic-highly proficient, unacceptable-excellent, or initial-capstone.
Indirect Evidence	Proxy signs of student learning, including students, alumni, or others' perceptions of their learning and factors that influence student learning outcomes, like the student experience.
Program Learning Outcome (PLO)	Statements that articulate the intellectual abilities, knowledge, or values/attitudes that students should demonstrably possess as a result of an academic program
Program-level Student Learning	Learning that is developed across multiple courses in the program
Sample Size	The number of students or assignments included in assessment compared to the whole population of students or assignments
Self-Assessments	Assessments based on participants' own evaluation of the extent to which they have achieved relevant objectives.
Reflective Assignment	As assignment, such as paper or short-answer exam question, that asks students to describe and evaluate their own learning.
Rubric	Specific sets of criteria that clearly define for both student and teacher what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performance looks like. Criteria define descriptors of ability at each level of performance and assign values to each level. Levels referred to are proficiency levels which describe a continuum from excellent to unacceptable product

	Not Effective at Fostering Improvement of Program-Level Student Learning	Partially Effective at Fostering Improvement of Program-Level Student Learning	Effectively Fostering Improvement of Program-Level Student Learning	Establishing a Culture of Improvement within the Program Focused on Student Learning
Faculty engagement	A single point person completes entire assessment. Lines of evidence selected to reduce need for participation of other faculty rather than for alignment to assessment questions. Not clear if findings are shared with colleagues. Not clear if recommended actions will be implemented by colleagues.	Assessment effort led by a single individual with limited contributions from other faculty such as providing samples of student work or completing a discrete scoring task. Findings and recommended actions communicated out to colleagues.	At least one stage of the assessment process (determining methods and lines of evidence, evaluating student work, analyzing results and drawing conclusions) is completed in collaboration with a significant portion of the faculty from the program. Findings communicated out to colleagues. Responsibility for implementing recommended actions effectively articulated.	Collaboration at multiple points in the assessment process ensures integration of learning outcomes assessment into program-level planning, including concrete strategies to ensure that recommended actions will be implemented.
Continuity with prior assessment work	No reference to prior assessments.	Comparisons made to prior assessments at the end of the process.	Prior assessments reviewed at the beginning of the process and integrated into planning of assessment methods.	Prior assessment results are readily available to program faculty and used at multiple points in the academic year to inform program- and course-level curricular decisions and assessment planning. (e.g. syllabus development, assignment design, catalog edits, etc)
Clarity of expectations for student learning	PLO or central question guiding assessment is vague. No rubric. No articulated benchmarks or definitions of what success looks like.	PLO or central question guiding assessment adequately articulated. Rubric does not consistently describe what meeting expectations looks like, may be overly reliant on subjective terms such as “poor” and “excellent.” Benchmarks not supported by evidence.	PLO or central question guiding assessment adequately articulated. Rubric is designed to be programmatic and describes what meeting expectations looks like with clarity that is likely to add to students’ and faculty understanding. Rationale provided for benchmarks.	PLO or central question guiding assessment clearly articulated. Rubric is programmatic and implemented at multiple points in the curriculum helping students and faculty consistently – across assignment types and time - differentiate between key levels of performance and pinpoint gaps. Benchmarks supported by evidence and contextualized with past student performance, comparator institutions, or disciplinary norms.
Use of direct evidence of student learning	Assignment does not necessarily prompt students to demonstrate learning outcomes or knowledge, skills and abilities to be assessed; quality of student work likely to be skewed by external factors. Sample size is too small or unrepresentative to provide insight into overall abilities of students in the program.	Demonstrating learning outcomes or knowledge, skills, and abilities to be assessed is a clear component of the selected assignment. Sample size is adequate and sufficiently representative to add to the faculty’s understanding of the abilities of students in the program.	Assignment is strongly aligned to or intentionally developed for the learning outcome or knowledge, skills, and abilities to be assessed. Sample size is adequate and sufficiently representative to add to the faculty’s understanding of the abilities of students in the program, including subsets of students.	Assignment is a validated and collaboratively developed assessment of the relevant learning outcome or knowledge, skills, and abilities. Sample includes all relevant students or is sufficient to achieve statistically significant results, providing clear insight into the abilities of students in the program, including subsets of students.
Use of indirect evidence providing curricular context	No additional information on how selected PLO or central question connects to students’ learning experiences throughout curriculum.	Program updates curriculum map with any changes to list of courses addressing the learning outcome, or confirms there have been no changes.	Program uses curriculum map to identify appropriate courses for collection of assessment evidence and/or implementation of improvements.	Program uses curriculum map to understand and, as appropriate, identify improvements to progression of learning experiences that build towards students’ proficiency on the learning outcome.
Use of indirect evidence providing student perspectives	Student perspectives are not included or anecdotal.	Basic input from students – for example, Graduating Senior Survey self-assessments of achievement of the program learning outcomes – has been collected and included in the analysis of results.	More extensive input from students, such as a focus group or reflective assignment, has been collected and included in the analysis of results.	Assessment is designed to foster ongoing dialogue between students and faculty about student learning.
Focus on action	Does not consider impact of recent changes. No references to connections to decision-making in the program.	Considers impact of recent changes based on faculty perceptions of past student performance. Includes individual instructor’s plans for improvement (or decisions to make no change).	Considers impact of recent changes based on comparison to previous assessment results. Includes collaborative plans for improvement (or decisions to make no change).	Assessment is intentionally designed to inform important upcoming program decisions or to track the impact of recent changes.

Percent of PLOs assessed since previous review:

Number of years until next review: