Assessment Manual

The purpose of this manual is to articulate Arkansas State University's (A-State) processes for executing student-learning assessment to its various constituencies. The overall intent of student-learning assessment at A-State is the continuous improvement of curriculum and student-learning opportunities. A process of assessment is essential to continuous improvement, and therefore, commitment to assessment must be deeply embedded in our core values. Assessment applies not only to student learning and educational outcomes, but also to our institution's approach to improving institutional effectiveness.

> **What is Student Learning Assessment?**
>
> "Assessment is the ongoing process of: 1.) Establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning, 2.) Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes, 3.) Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations, and 4.) Using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning"
>
> *Suskie, L. (2018). Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2009.*

Our commitment to assessing student learning proceeds from the institution's **mission** and **learning outcomes**. It involves faculty and co-curricular leaders at all points in the process and includes analysis of assessment results. Faculty and co-curricular leaders are subject-matter experts, and their input is respected and critical for thorough and effective student-learning assessment. Furthermore, assessment results are used to improve A-State's academic programs, co-curricular learning opportunities, ancillary services, and other operations.

This **Assessment Manual** outlines Arkansas State University's institutional approach to student-learning assessment. It is organized around three core areas:

- **A-State's assessment infrastructure**, including the shared governance committees and accreditor expectations that guide assessment practices;
- **Procedures for documenting student-learning assessment**, such as the use of Nuventive, Simple Syllabus, and university surveys; and
- **Processes for conducting student-learning assessment**, including program-level, general education, and cocurricular assessment cycles.

This manual is designed to support faculty, staff, and assessment leaders in aligning their practices with institutional goals and accreditation standards, fostering a culture of continuous improvement across academic and cocurricular programs.

Assessment Infrastructure

The Office of Accreditation and Assessment utilizes a shared governance committee structure to make decisions, implement change, and oversee the evaluation of assessment efforts. The Office of Accreditation and Assessment coordinates these efforts through three committees that support accreditation and assessment.

Accreditation and Assessment Committee

The **Accreditation and Assessment Committee** (AAC) at A-State is charged with the primary responsibility of planning and directing assessment at the university level and for the **University Learning Outcomes**. The AAC recognizes that faculty and co-curricular leaders are subject-matter experts, and their input is respected and critical for thorough and effective student-learning assessment at A-State.

Program Assessment Committee

The **Program-Assessment Committee** (PAC) at Arkansas State University is charged with the primary responsibility of planning, advising, and directing program-level assessment. The PAC acknowledges that faculty are subject-matter experts, and their input is respected and critical for thorough and effective student-learning assessment of each program offered at A-State.

Cocurricular Assessment Committee

The **Cocurricular Assessment Committee** (CAC) at Arkansas State University (A-State) is charged with the primary responsibility of planning and directing the assessment of co-curricular units. The CAC acknowledges that co-curricular leaders are experts in their field(s) and their input is respected and critical for thorough and effective student-learning assessment of the co-curricular units at A-State.

➤ **See:** **Shared Governance** for more information about shared governance committees at A-State.

At the highest level, the institution is assessed through **University Learning Outcomes** established by the Accreditation and Assessment Committee. These are institutional outcomes that all programs map to in the assessment process. Other assessment efforts reported to the Office of Accreditation and Assessment include Program Assessment, General Education Assessment, and Cocurricular/Other Assessment.

Accreditor Expectations

A-State's institutional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and programmatic accreditors have expectations for the assessment of academic and cocurricular programs as a way of ensuring continuous improvement. The HLC lists their expectations for assessment in **Criterion for Accreditation 3** and **Assumed Practices C**.

Procedures for Documenting Student-Learning Assessment

Using Nuventive

Nuventive is the university's official platform for documenting student-learning assessment. Faculty and assessment leaders use Nuventive to enter outcomes, methods, findings, and summaries that support program review and accreditation reporting. For step-by-step instructions, refer to the **Nuventive Book** in the Office of Accreditation & Assessment's Knowledge Base, which includes specific **How-To Guides** for managing workspaces, entering assessment data, and aligning outcomes with institutional goals.

➤ See: **Nuventive**

Syllabi

A-State syllabi are published in Simple Syllabus. Syllabus templates are determined by college deans and department chairs in conjunction with the Office of Accreditation and Assessment.

Syllabi published from fall 2024 and beyond are available in the **A-State Syllabus Library**. Syllabi published between fall 2017 through summer 2024 may be requested from the Office of Accreditation and Assessment. Older syllabi are not stored by the Office of Accreditation and Assessment. A recorded **Simple Syllabus training video** is available online, and one-on-one, or group training may be requested from the Office of Accreditation and Assessment.

➤ See: **Simple Syllabus**

Leaving the Den Exit Survey

The Leaving the Den exit survey is administered to all graduating students during the weeks surrounding August, December, and January commencements. The survey includes several blocks of questions, including questions about students' educational experiences, questions about each university learning outcome, and questions about students' post-graduation plans. Leaving the Den data is accessible on the **Knowledge Base Page** or by request from the Office of Accreditation and Assessment. The data can be disaggregated by graduation term, college, degree, and major.

Processes for Conducting Student-Learning Assessment

Program Assessment

The Office of Accreditation and Assessment requires assessment at the program level. Course level assessments may be used as "key assessments" at the program level. Refer to your specialized accreditor standards to determine whether course-level assessment is required for your accreditation purposes. Programs are assessed by the Program Assessment Committee (see **Committees**) using the **Program Assessment Rubric** on a bi-annual basis in either odd or even academic years, with three distinct deadlines for Outcomes/Methods (March 15th), Findings (October 15th), and End of Cycle Summaries (May 15th), to help keep assessment leaders on-track.

➤ See: **A-State Assessment Cycle** for more details on the assessment deadlines.

Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes

Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes are determined by the department. Program Outcomes must include student learning outcomes (i.e., skills and knowledge), but may also include administrative outcomes (i.e., faculty to student ratios, cohort sizes, etc.) and/or student achievement outcomes (i.e., retention and completion, board pass rates, etc.). These may be decided by a specialized accreditor, by the department, or through Program Review. To update your program-level student learning outcomes, contact the Office of Accreditation and Assessment.

Certificate-Level Student Learning Outcomes

All certificate programs require a minimum of three outcomes. These may be learning outcomes or a combination of learning and administrative outcomes

Determining Appropriate Outcomes

1. For programs with certificates that are fully embedded within a degree program:

1. Track and report the number of students completing the certificate each year. If student enrollment for the certificate program exceeds five students, the certificate must be assessed separately from the larger degree program. If fewer than five students complete the certificate in an academic year, answer "Yes" to the low enrollment question on the Program Information page.
2. If you are unsure as to whether your certificate is embedded, consider the following question: Are the certificate outcomes (a) a subset of the parent degree outcomes, or do they (b) represent a distinct set of competencies?
    1. If (a)—the certificate outcomes are a subset of degree outcomes:
        1. You may adopt the parent degree outcomes and assessment methods
        2. Disaggregate your data by student program enrollment (Note: Program type is available as a filter in Nuventive's Canvas dashboards. Faculty would need to use Canvas for grading to enable this.
    2. If (b)—the certificate represents distinct competencies:
        1. Develop unique outcomes and methods to assess the certificate of program specific competencies.

Special Requirements

Canceled Programs: Canceled programs should be assessed until they are fully taught out. Assessment requirements will change when fewer than five students are enrolled in the program.

Concentration or Emphasis Areas: Concentrations and emphasis areas are all included within the same umbrella workspace. These are differentiated where the concentration or emphasis area diverges in assessment. For instance, if the concentration or emphasis areas diverge at the outcome level, use the “Outcome Short Name” within Nuventive to delineate between concentrations/emphases. See the example below.

> Example: Art BFA has two emphases, Art Education and Studio.

For core or shared outcomes, there is no need for a prefix in the outcome short name. To differentiate outcomes by emphasis, Art BFA will use a prefix of “Art Education:” or “Studio:” before naming the outcome (i.e., “Art Education: Communication” or “Studio: Content Knowledge”). Ensure that you use the colon between the prefix and outcome short name.

➤ For more information on external accreditation and consultant-led reviews, see the **External Academic Reviews page** in the **Accreditation Knowledge Base book**.

General Education Assessment

General Education Assessment is performed at the course level and overseen by the General Education Committee through a process called Quadrennial Review.

- ***GEC Core SLOs***

- ***Quad Review Process and Calendar***
- ***Quad Rubric***

➤ See: **Nuventive**

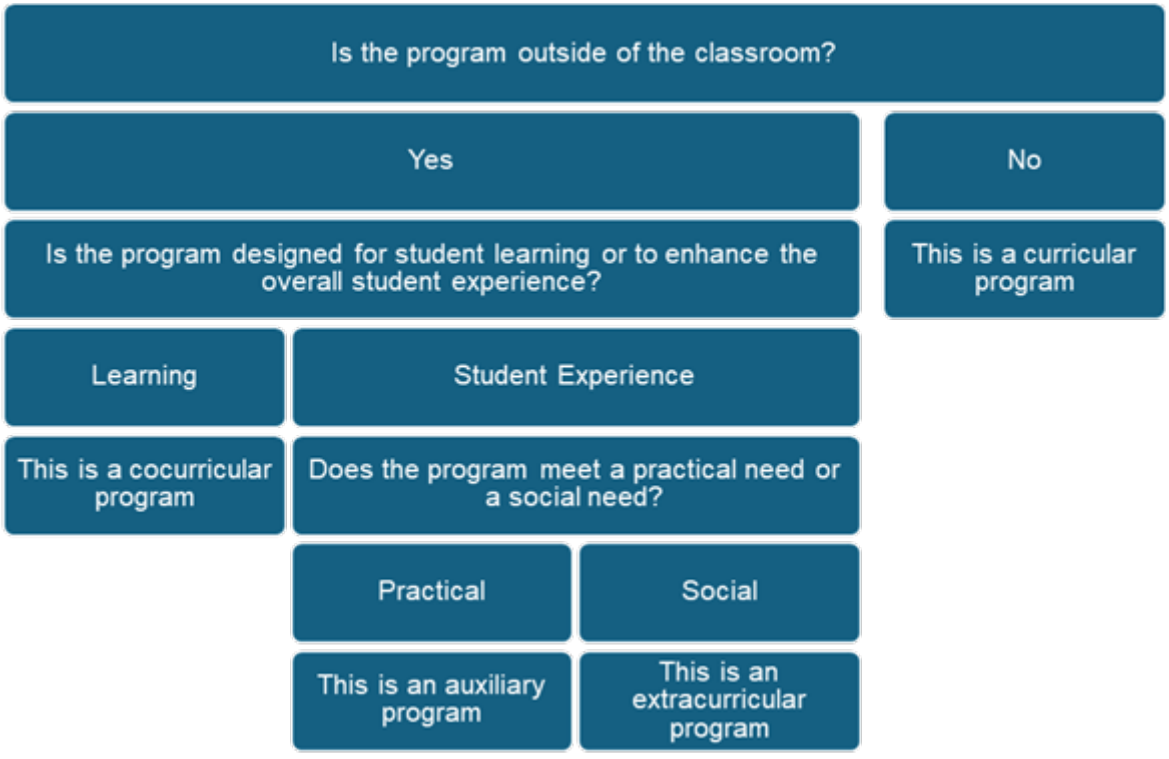
Cocurricular and Other Assessments

In the context of higher education, the terms cocurricular, extracurricular, and auxiliary units refer to different types of activities and support systems that complement academic learning and enhance the overall student experience.

Cocurricular programs and activities are structured activities that complement the academic curriculum. They often align with educational goals.

Extracurricular programs and activities are voluntary activities that students participate in outside of the academic curriculum. These activities may not directly relate to academic goals but contribute to personal growth, social skills, and community engagement.

Auxiliary units provide additional services and support to enhance the educational experience but are not directly tied to academic or cocurricular activities. They often help facilitate student life, well-being, and institutional operations.



Assessment Requirements

Cocurricular Programs	At least one learning outcome.

Extracurricular Programs	At least one outcome. It can be either a learning or an administrative outcome.
Auxiliary Units	At least one administrative outcome.

See More

➤ See: **A-State Assessment Cycle**

➤ See: **Nuventive (Link to Knowledge Base Nuventive Book)**

➤ See: **Simple Syllabus (Link to Knowledge Base Simple Syllabus Book)**

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