The major goals of Central's Quality Improvement Program (CQIP) are the improvement of student learning/development and the improvement of quality/effectiveness of academic programs. To achieve these goals, the University emphasizes an assessment strategy that focuses on the measurement of individual student performance, attitudes, and perceptions. Assessment of the individual student provides excellent information and feedback to the faculty relative to both the individual student and the academic program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Assessment</th>
<th>Program Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment of student performance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment of program effectiveness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is integral to individual learning</td>
<td>• contributes to organizational learning and improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• involves observation and judgment of each student's performance</td>
<td>• provides feedback to improve courses and curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is based on stated outcomes and performance criteria</td>
<td>• provides feedback for faculty improvement of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uses individual feedback for student improvement</td>
<td>• facilitates analysis of patterns of student performance on a range of educational outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• serves to certify student achievement and competency</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CQIP consists of three major goals that are defined by 1 to 4 components. Each component consists of a set of criteria. All academic programs (i.e., major degree programs, minors, certificates, academic enrichment courses) are expected to provide evidence on each of the criteria listed under the components. This evidence, submitted each spring as part of the program’s annual report, is evaluated by the Faculty Senate University Assessment Council.

**Goal A STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Each department/discipline faculty responsible for a program will define, validate, and communicate the student learning outcomes for major programs.

1. **Define Student Learning Outcomes**

   Student learning outcomes are the explicit learning goals for students. For degree programs, student learning outcomes are what students should know and be able to do upon completion of the degree. These expected student outcomes are the content knowledge, skills, and, if appropriate, attitudes defined collaboratively by the faculty in the department/discipline. These student learning outcomes include

   • generalized student learning outcomes or intellectual skills of the University’s General Education Program
   • degree program core outcomes, if applicable
   • program specific outcomes

   For non-degree programs (i.e., minors, certificate programs, and academic enrichment courses), the student learning outcomes are those goals that relate directly or indirectly to specific outcomes of the department/discipline or the generalized student learning outcomes of the General Education Program.

   **Criteria**

   a. The department/discipline faculty collaboratively identified, discussed, and approved the student learning outcomes.
   b. The department/discipline faculty responsible for undergraduate degree programs included the intellectual skills of the General Education Program.
c. The department/discipline faculty included the program/major knowledge, skills, and, if appropriate, attitudes (e.g., discipline specific code of ethics)

2. **Validate Student Learning Outcomes**

   Validation of student learning outcomes refers to review and evaluation of those student learning outcomes by individuals external to the University. In effect, this process is designed to ensure that the student learning outcomes are relevant and appropriate to the specific discipline or field.

   **Criteria**

   a. The department/discipline faculty established a procedure that will ensure regularly scheduled re-validations of program outcomes, thereby facilitating early identification of changes in student learning needs.

   b. The department/discipline faculty used appropriate external groups who possess knowledge of the program and program needs to evaluate the program’s student learning outcomes (e.g., advisory councils, alumni, employers, graduate schools, discipline experts, certification bodies, career services, or similar entities).

   c. The department/discipline faculty documented how the feedback from the validation process was used to redefine and improve program outcomes.

3. **Communicate Program Goals**

   This component addresses the methods by which students, faculty, the University community, and external constituents are informed of the nature, content, and structure of the program assessment outcomes and processes.

   **Criteria**

   a. The department/discipline faculty developed and established a formal and continuing procedure for student orientation to prepare students for the experiences they will have in the program of study, e.g., orientation courses, brochures, and orientation components in an introductory course in the major.

   b. The department/discipline faculty clearly communicated the student learning outcomes to students in every course through a variety of means (e.g., syllabi, learning experiences, assessments, and assignment review).

   c. The department/discipline faculty established and implemented a procedure for assuring that new faculty/members understood:

      - the generalized and program specific student learning outcomes
      - how the student learning outcomes are integrated into the department/discipline programs
      - how assessment is to be used to improve student learning and development

4. **Evaluate the Alignment of Program Student Learning Outcomes with Program Offerings and Assessment Points**

   This component involves the following

   - The evaluation of the program course offerings to identify the specific courses in which certain student learning outcomes are taught and practiced.

   This process is commonly referred to as curriculum mapping. While any number of curriculum mapping methods can be used, one of the more commonly used methods is referred to as a curricular matrix. A curricular matrix displays program outcomes on one axis and program courses on the other. Also displayed are three to four assessment points (courses) for data collection.
• The evaluation of the curricular matrix to identify the assessment points (courses) that will be used to collect formative and summative assessment data.

• The formulation of a plan for communicating the curricular matrix and assessment points to students and faculty.

For non-degree programs, this component involves the identification of processes/student experiences that relate to the learning outcomes identified by the department/discipline faculty.

Criteria
a. The department/discipline faculty collaboratively designed a sequence of courses leading to program coherence.

b. The department/discipline faculty collaboratively performed an analysis of the major program offerings to develop a curricular map which identifies the courses in which specific student learning outcomes were developed and practiced.

c. The department/discipline faculty collaboratively performed an analysis of the curricular matrix and identified the formative and summative assessment collection points (courses).

d. The department/discipline faculty collaboratively formulated a plan for communicating the curricular matrix and formative and summative assessment points to students and faculty.

Goal B TEACHING, ASSESSMENT METHODS, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Each department/discipline faculty responsible for a program will identify and employ a variety of appropriate methods to teach and assess the outcomes of their program(s).

1. Pedagogy and Assessment
This component refers to the specific methods by which the student learning outcomes identified by the department/discipline faculty (See Goal A.) are taught and assessed in courses. Research indicates that students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process, are given clear evaluative criteria by which their performance is to be judged, and are provided with prompt, meaningful feedback. For accreditation purposes, the University will need to provide evidence that faculty regularly employ a variety of teaching and assessment methods, styles, evaluation techniques, etc., leading to active, engaged learners.

Criteria
a. The department/discipline faculty has employed in the program courses a variety of learning experiences, applications, and assessments for the student learning outcomes identified by the department/discipline faculty. These teaching and assessment methods appropriately include such activities as
• Lectures, projects, team learning, discussions, group presentations, etc.
• Structured learning experiences outside the classroom (i.e., co-curricular activities)*
• Clear statements of course outcomes to be learned and/or assessed
• Specific criteria and rating forms (i.e., scoring rubrics)
• Observation and assessment of student performance
• Use of feedback to students
• Use of peer assessment and student self-assessment
b. The department/discipline faculty has shared and discussed the various teaching and assessment methods used in classes for the purpose of improving instruction and student learning.

2. **Professional Development for Improvement of Instruction and Assessment of Student Learning**

   Professional development in this context refers to a plan to prepare faculty to teach and assess the student learning outcomes (both program specific and generalized student outcomes) that have been identified by the department/discipline faculty. As program outcomes change as a result of the outcomes validation process, it might be necessary for faculty to receive some type of professional development to prepare them to teach and assess the new and/or revised outcomes of their curriculum. This plan could also include a method for developing faculty skills related to instructional technology.

   **Criteria**
   a. The department/discipline faculty has established a professional development plan or strategy focused on preparing faculty to teach and assess the student learning outcomes identified by the department/discipline.
   
   b. The department/discipline faculty has documented the professional development activities related to the **teaching** of the student learning outcomes of their programs.
   
   c. The department/discipline faculty has documented the professional development activities related to the **assessment** of the student learning outcomes of their major programs.

**Goal C USE OF ASSESSMENT INFORMATION**

Each department or faculty group responsible for a program will implement student assessment, documenting student progress and how the results are used to improve student learning.

1. **Formative Assessment System**

   Formative assessment refers to assessment performed during a student’s program to document student progress, supply feedback to the student, and provide information for program evaluation. Although formative assessments are typically embedded in individual courses, the data must be reviewed and evaluated by the faculty as a whole or by a designated group of faculty to be considered a formal formative assessment. All programs must have one, preferably two, formal formative assessment points in the curriculum to meet HLC requirements.

   **Criteria**
   a. The department/discipline faculty has provided formative assessment data for input into the University’s assessment database on a yearly basis.
   
   b. The department/discipline faculty has documented and evaluated formative student learning data to be used for feedback to students and improvement of student learning.
   
   c. The department/discipline faculty has documented changes made in curriculum, teaching, and assessment methods based on the evaluation of the formative assessment data.

2. **Summative Assessment System**

   Summative or comprehensive assessment refers to the assessment of the majority (or entire set) of the program’s student learning outcomes. This includes assessment of the outcomes specific to the major and the generalized student outcomes of the general education program. This comprehensive assessment should be administered toward the end of a student’s program and should involve a variety of assessment
measures (e.g., standardized objective tests, performance-based assessments and locally developed instruments).

Department/discipline faculty will determine how the outcomes are assessed (e.g., in or out of the classroom, with or without the use of external evaluators) and documented. Assessment of outcomes at entry to the program also might be used to 1) identify the strengths and weaknesses of entering students; and 2) to measure learning gains made by students when exiting the program by comparison of entry and exit scores/results. **This component applies to degree programs only.**

**Criteria**

a. The department/discipline faculty has provided summative assessment data for input into the University’s assessment database on a yearly basis.

b. The department/discipline faculty has documented and evaluated summative student learning data to be used for measurement of improvement in student learning of individual student competency at the end of the degree program.

c. The department/discipline faculty has documented how the summative assessment results were used to 1) guide course design, 2) modify curricula and instructional methods, 3) improve the formative assessment system, 4) document individual student performance, and/or 5) improve the summative assessment system.

3. **Program Assessment System**

Program assessment is an essential component of the five year program review and the accreditation process, if applicable.

Program assessment is based on the aggregation of individual student performances (i.e., formative, summative, and other assessment inputs) and involves the use of other data and information to improve program quality.

Program assessment might result in changes in individual course requirements, course pedagogy, assessment practices or the degree program curriculum.

**Criteria**

a. The department/discipline faculty has well-defined processes to aggregate individual student performances on formative and summative assessments.

b. The department/discipline faculty has identified and utilized other types of program information (e.g., results of alumni, employer and intern surveys; input from external advisory councils; etc.) in its summative assessment process.

c. The department/discipline faculty has established a routine (ongoing) process for reviewing information related to the performance of the major program and for making changes to improve the quality of the program.

d. The department/discipline faculty has documented program changes (course content, course pedagogy, program curriculum, etc.) that have been implemented.

4. **Graduation Requirement**

This component is NOT an official part of the University Assessment Timetable. This component establishes demonstration of student competency (i.e., minimal proficiency) in the content knowledge and skills that define the degree program as a graduation requirement.

**Criteria**

a. The department/discipline faculty has collaboratively established minimum student performance standards for all program outcomes as a condition of graduation/program completion. Student demonstration of having achieved these
standards is determined by completion of all summative assessment requirements. This graduation requirement is clearly stated in the catalog and communicated to students as part of Goal A. 3.

b. A copy of the student performance standards was made available in the department office, the Office of the Dean, the Office of Assessment, the Office of Testing Services, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.