

# Mount Mercy University

## 5 Year Plan for Academic Assessment

### 2018-19 through 2023-24

The assessment plan summarized below is designed to help assure that students are meeting the stated college-wide, program, and core curriculum objectives. Multiple data sources are used to assess student performance across areas, with established cycles for data collection, reporting, and feedback.

#### Mount Mercy University Goals and Objectives for Student Learning

A set of college-wide objectives was adopted in conjunction with the four main educational goals (commonly highlighted as 'Reflect, Engage, Serve, Live') that accompany Mount Mercy's mission statement. A multi-faceted academic assessment plan provides a framework for ongoing analysis of student learning in relation to these objectives.

The plan includes both direct measures of learning (e.g. instructor evaluation of student work) and indirect indicators such as student, alumni and faculty surveys. Some data are collected within courses required for specific academic majors, while other data are collected in core curriculum classes. Annual reports submitted by the academic programs also contribute to this process, with designated objectives assessed according to established timeframes. The Academic Assessment Committee assists in planning, providing feedback, and communicating findings, with steps to address identified needs also compiled for analysis.

Using Reflective Judgment Students will...	Primary Data Sources	5-year timeline
1a. Demonstrate a <i>knowledge</i> of content, assumptions, terminology, and methodology of a broad range of academic disciplines needed for informed and meaningful participation in society, including literature, fine arts, history, mathematics, science, philosophy, religious studies, and social sciences.	Program Assessment Reports Core Domain Assessment (Common Assignment Rubrics) IDEA Survey	All Yearly
1b. Demonstrate a depth of understanding in their major field that successfully <i>prepares them for graduate study or a career</i> following graduation.	Senior Survey Alumni Survey IDEA Survey	All Yearly
1c. Evaluate their points of view by analyzing <i>multiple perspectives</i> .	Capstone Survey Alumni Survey IDEA Survey	All Yearly
1d. <i>Integrate knowledge</i> across the disciplines.	Capstone Survey National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Yearly As offered
1e. Apply creative, logical and scholarly processes in the pursuit of truth to <i>form reasoned judgments</i> and explain the implications of drawing those conclusions.	Reasoned Judgment Rubric IDEA Survey	Yearly

<b>Engaging in Strategic Communication</b> Students will...	Primary Data Sources	5-year timeline
2a. Generate, collect, <i>organize and present ideas</i> and information in written, oral, and visual modes for <i>chosen purposes and audience</i> .	Core Capstone Project Rubric NSSE Survey Alumni Survey	Yearly  As offered Yearly
2b. Meet appropriate standards of quality when they communicate.	IDEA Survey	Yearly
2c. Demonstrate respect and responsibility in communication with others.	IDEA Survey	Yearly

<b>Serving the Common Good</b> Students will...	Primary Data Sources	5-year timeline
3a. Recognize the challenges and opportunities of living in a changing, complex, global society and demonstrate inclusivity and <i>sensitivity to the diverse human conditions</i> .	NSSE Survey Global Awareness Domain IDEA Survey	As offered Yearly Yearly
3b. Explain the significance of personal and social responsibility and <i>be prepared to take action</i> in modes of service, civic participation, advocacy and system change.	Capstone Survey Alumni Survey NSSE Survey	Yearly Yearly As offered
3c. <i>Articulate an ethical framework</i> based on a respect for all human beings and the natural environment.	NSSE Survey Program Assessment Reports IDEA Survey	As offered Yearly Yearly
3d. <i>Examine the core values of social justice</i> , particularly the Mercy commitment to advocate for persons who are vulnerable and marginalized.	Capstone Survey	Yearly

<b>Promoting Purposeful Living</b> Students will...	Primary Data Sources	5-year timeline
4a. Discern and <i>clarify their vocational choices</i> .	Senior Survey Alumni Survey NSSE Survey	Yearly Yearly As offered
4b. <i>Recognize the services and support available</i> to assist them and others in determining which commitments will guide their lives.	Senior Survey Alumni Survey NSSE Survey	Yearly Yearly As offered
4c. Demonstrate the ways in which their abilities and knowledge enable them to be <i>responsible leaders or participants</i> .	NSSE Survey	As offered
4d. Acknowledge the importance of a <i>healthy and balanced life</i> including social, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.	Holistic Health Domain Rubric	Yearly
4e. Recognize the importance of life-long learning.	Alumni Survey NSSE Survey	Yearly As offered
4f. Analyze the evolving nature of relationships in their lives, professions and communities.	NSSE Survey	As offered

## **Academic Program Assessment**

Annual assessment of each program is firmly established at Mount Mercy. Faculty members review and assess selected student learning objectives each year, gathering and interpreting data concerning their graduates and determining appropriate follow-up action. Coordinators for the programs are charged with managing and reporting on this assessment process. Chairs fulfill this role for their own disciplines and collaborate with coordinators on behalf of other programs in the department. Coordinators are expected to work closely with their department chairs, sharing findings and reports with them and contributing to ongoing improvement activities. In addition, programs participate in assessment of the college-wide objectives (discussed above) and the core curriculum.

Each program has established learning objectives for students graduating with a program in that discipline. One to two objectives are assessed each year, rotating through all learning objectives in a five-year cycle. Assessment reports are read by the Academic Assessment committee and feedback is given yearly. Workshops focused on assessment are held periodically for coordinators to discuss activities and findings.

In 2017-18, the Assessment Plan for 2012 to 2017 was evaluated by the Assessment Committee. Based on the results of the evaluation, adjustments were made to the plan. In 2017-18, a new course-based assessment approach was piloted with fifteen programs participating in the pilot. A new assessment report template was designed and provided to all program coordinators to use in the course-based assessment. Additionally, each program was asked to complete a curriculum map. The curriculum map identifies the courses to be assessed in relationship to each of the program outcomes. Each program rotates through the objectives being assessed, over the five years of the plan.

An annual summary assessment report is produced and shared with the Assessment Committee and submitted to the budgeting process for review and funding when appropriate. The summary reports are shared both internally (through the intranet) and externally through the Mount Mercy website.

## **Core Curriculum Assessment**

Mount Mercy's core curriculum includes seven domains of liberal studies. Guided by members of the Core Advisory Team, faculty from each domain collaborated to develop a common assignment addressing the agreed upon outcomes for that area. Performance criteria were also specified and scoring rubrics created.

A key intent of this approach is to empower faculty teaching domain courses to design assignments and criteria that represent meaningful measures of the targeted outcomes. While more complex to administer and synthesize, it is hoped that engaging faculty in all facets will help to build ownership and keep the assessment process as faithful as possible to what is being taught in the various domain courses.

In addition, the Reflection and Action Core Curriculum will be assessed yearly using data from the Mercy Experience Capstone courses. One key component of this one-credit course, in which students enroll concurrently with their major's senior seminar, is a capstone project focused on a social justice issue. The project is designed to engage students in considering disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and global perspectives, while fostering teamwork and communication

A second capstone component used for assessment purposes is a Reflection Paper in which students begin to synthesize and reflect on their work at Mount Mercy as they approach graduation. The paper addresses the institution's mission and goals, with a focus on ways in which studies and experiences in the core curriculum have helped shape their Mercy education.