

Mount Mercy University

5 Year Plan for Assessing Student Learning

2012-2013 through 2016-2017

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 ('12-17) 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)	Yearly 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.	Program Coordinator Survey Senior Survey Alumni Survey	2013-2014 Yearly Yearly
1c. Evaluate their points of view by analyzing <i>multiple perspectives</i> .	Capstone Survey Core Capstone Project Rubric Alumni Survey IDEA #11	Yearly
1d. <i>Integrate knowledge</i> across the disciplines.	Capstone Survey Capstone Reflection Paper Rubric National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Yearly Yearly 2012, 2016
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	2015-2016

Engaging in Strategic Communication Students will...	Primary Data Sources	5-year ('12-17) 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 2012, 2016 Yearly
2b. Meet appropriate standards of quality when they communicate.	Capstone Reflection Paper Rubric Program Assessment Reports (WS?)	Yearly Yearly
2c. Demonstrate respect and responsibility in communication with others.	Core Capstone Project Rubric IDEA #8	Yearly

Serving the Common Good Students will...	Primary Data Sources	5-year ('12-17) 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	2012, 2016 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 Reflection Paper Rubric Capstone Survey Capstone Project Rubric Alumni Survey NSSE Survey	Yearly 2012, 2016
3c. <i>Articulate an ethical framework</i> based on a respect for all human beings and the natural environment	NSSE Survey Program Assessment Reports (WS #3)	2012, 2016 2016-2017
3d. <i>Examine the core values of social justice</i> , particularly the Mercy commitment to advocate for persons who are vulnerable and marginalized.	Core Capstone Project Rubric Capstone Survey	Yearly

Promoting Purposeful Living Students will...	Primary Data Sources	5-year ('12-17) timeline
4a. Discern and <i>clarify their vocational choices</i> .	Senior Survey Alumni Survey NSSE Survey	Yearly Yearly 2012, 2016
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 2012,2016
4c. Demonstrate the ways in which their abilities and knowledge enable them to be <i>responsible leaders or participants</i> .	Capstone Reflection Paper Rubric Capstone Project Rubric NSSE Survey	Yearly 2012, 2016
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 2012, 2016
4f. Analyze the evolving nature of relationships in their lives, professions and communities.		

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. At least 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 each term for coordinators to discuss activities and findings.

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.

Starting in Fall 2009, randomly selected student assignments are scored by the faculty for domain assessment purposes using the applicable rubric. Faculty members teaching in each domain are also invited to meet periodically, discussing results and process refinements.

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.

