

**FAQs for Outcomes Assessment – for more information go to <http://assessment.nmsu.edu>**

**Q: What is outcomes assessment of student learning?**

A: Outcomes assessment is a process that helps us determine (and substantiate with evidence) whether or not students are learning what we want them to learn, and that they can actually apply their learning in real-life situations.

**Q: What are the differences between Departmental Assessment, Program Review and Specialized Accreditation?**

A: Departmental Assessment is overseen by the institution, is the ongoing assessment of student learning in academic departments and is reported annually to the Provost. Annual assessment reports are one of many inputs to the program review and specialized accreditation processes. Program Review is overseen internally, is a comprehensive review of overall program effectiveness and is conducted periodically. <http://plan.nmsu.edu/adpr/program-review/>. Since program review is similar in nature to specialized accreditation, only those programs not externally accredited undergo program review.

Specialized Accreditation is overseen by external entities, affirms the program's ability to operate in an ethical and effective manner and is conducted periodically.

**Q: What is the purpose of assessing learning outcomes?**

A: The whole point of assessing learning is to identify where students are succeeding *and struggling* (mostly this part!), and using real data (not anecdotal stories) to identify actions the department can take to ensure that students can demonstrate the skills, knowledge and abilities your faculty have determined are critical to a well-educated individual and professional in your field.

**Q: What are the requirements for Departmental Assessment [ADA]?**

A: Every academic department must engage in and document ongoing assessment of student learning for undergraduate and graduate students. Indicators that the department is doing assessment effectively? Assessment results are foundational to faculty discussion and decision-making aimed at improved learning. Keep in mind, many departments are doing assessment but don't recognize it as such: Look around – you may be doing more than you think!

**Q: Who is responsible for the Departmental Assessment?**

A: Departmental faculty are ultimately responsible for assessing student learning. It is faculty who determine what knowledge, skills and abilities graduates in their programs should possess, and it is faculty who are responsible for ensuring the curriculum is structured so that students have optimal opportunities to achieve the appropriate level of accomplishment on each. It is the Department Head's responsibility to ensure assessment is active and ongoing in the department, and College Deans are accountable for the oversight of departmental assessment in their college.

**Q: Is there a template for annual reporting? How do I submit my annual report?**

A: NMSU uses WEAVE software to maintain documentation/reporting of outcomes assessment. Various aspects of the report (including goals, planning, results, etc.) can be entered throughout the year. Suggested due dates for completing various aspects of the report are posted on our WEAVE website. Colleges may establish internal deadlines. The institutional deadline is Oct. 15 each year (e.g. reports for 2014-15 assessment activity are due fall 2015). For more information and/or to gain access to WEAVE go to <http://assessment.nmsu.edu/weave>.

**Q: Where can I get information about General Education outcomes assessment, the Baccalaureate Experience, the Quality Initiative, and other assessment related information?**

A: Go to <http://assessment.nmsu.edu> and click on the appropriate tab(s) at the top of the page.