

Assurance Argument
University of Toledo - OH

3/15/2016

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

The institution maintains a practice of regular program review. In response to the last HLC site visit in 2012, the [Office of Assessment, Accreditation and Program Review](#) (OAAPR) was established as a reporting unit within the Office of the Provost to oversee formal academic program review. This combined the administrative efforts related to program review and assessment, improving internal communication and coordination. A vice-provost for University accreditation and program review, and a new director position for accreditation and program review provide additional oversight.

All academic programs participate in an institutional process of program review to ensure regular external review. This was developed in 2011-12 and implemented in 2012-13 with the College of Law. An additional 44 programs were reviewed in 2013-14 and 15 in 2014-15. Programs with external accreditation are reviewed at least six months prior to their scheduled accreditation visit. All programs are [reviewed at least every seven years](#).

Institutional review process involves a self-study completed by the program faculty and at least one student, using a [program review template](#). As the 2012 HLC report suggested, programs are required to include information from annual assessment reports in the self-study along with action items made as a result of data review.

An external team of reviewers knowledgeable and current in the program area is recruited. Prior to a site visit and meetings with faculty, the team reviews the completed self-study and any corresponding materials. Following the campus visit, the team writes and submits an evaluative report including recommendations, assisted by a [provided guide](#) for assessing the appropriateness of program design and efficiency, faculty expertise, continuous improvement efforts and financial sustainability. Programs prepare a response to the external review report, including an action plan, which is submitted to the director of accreditation and program review and the provost for review/further action. For example, the [action plan](#) submitted by the Paralegal Studies program in November 2014 contained specific action items of curricular and operational changes (e.g., examine each course to determine whether it is necessary and suitable for the desired outcomes, establish a schedule of ongoing curriculum review and ensure dedicated administrative support for the program).

In addition to the institutional process facilitated by OAAPR, the College of Graduate Studies (COGS) and the Graduate Council (GC) provide formative feedback for all graduate programs. [GC by-laws designate a Graduate Program Review Committee](#) (GPRC) to collaborate with the UT program review process by reviewing the program self-studies and external review reports and providing recommendations to the GC, provost and OAAPR. GC approved the revised bylaws and GPRC spring 2015 and the GPRC was populated fall 2015; it began its work with programs undergoing review in AY 2016.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE)'s Chancellor's Council of Graduate Schools (CCGS) requires graduate programs to undergo review every 7-10 years. UT's graduate dean is required to provide [annual reports](#) to the Chancellor and CCGS, summarizing findings of graduate program review.

2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

UT awards credit in accordance with federal definitions of credit hour as adopted by the HLC and established under the Chancellor's signature as [Directive 2010-016](#) [OAC 3333-1-02 (13)]. The awarding of credit hours is part of the curriculum processes overseen by the Faculty Senate at the undergraduate level and by Graduate Council at the graduate level. The ODHE's [Guidelines and Procedures for Academic Program Review](#) establishes the minimum credit hours for each degree level and Directive 2010-016 adopts the federal definition of credit hours while further outlining the awarding credit hours for courses such as labs, practicums, internships, etc. Through the curriculum approval processes of the Faculty Senate (undergraduate curriculum) and the Graduate Council (graduate curriculum) credit hours are established at the program, certificate and course levels. The current [Curriculum Tracking System](#) monitors the approval processes at each instructional level and contributes to the transparency of the curriculum approval processes.

The University evaluates and accepts credit from regionally accredited postsecondary institutions. Transfer work is posted to the student's record only if a grade has been recorded on official transcripts. Courses are equated based upon review by the faculty who are credentialed within the subject area. Under Ohio's [Transfer and Articulation Policy](#) (HB5), courses which have been designated as part of the [Ohio Transfer Module](#) (OTM), the Career Technical Assurance Guidelines

(CTAG), the Transfer Assurance Guidelines (TAG), Advanced Placement (AP), and [Military Transfer Assurance Guidelines](#) (MTAG) are guaranteed to transfer between Ohio's public postsecondary institutions. The interface between evaluation and transcription of transfer credit is the responsibility of the director of transfer credit evaluation. This director position is assigned to the Office of the Registrar which reports to the Office of the Provost.

As part of Ohio's transfer and articulation policy, specific third parties are recognized, including American Council on Education (ACE) for military credit evaluation and Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) guidelines for prior learning credit. Credit is evaluated using the [ACE national recommendation guide](#) and/or [Military Transfer Assurance Guides](#) as established by the ODHE for military training and coursework. The [awarding of prior learning credit](#) requires evaluation by a credentialed faculty member to demonstrate and document learning outcomes of each course through either testing or portfolio development. Additionally, the prior learning assessment program follows a course-equivalency credit model for portfolio and credit by exam. Students are required to document their college-level learning toward objectives and learning outcomes of UT courses. Credit cannot be obtained for courses outside of UT through these methods. College credit is granted only for documented, authenticated and demonstrated college-level learning outcomes — not for experience alone. Credit is based on the method of demonstrated prior learning; college-level learning is defined as demonstrated achievement of learning outcomes, theoretical and/or applied, that match the depth and breadth of the content of a college course or curriculum objectives. Since Fall 2007, 583 hours have been awarded as prior learning credit. Although there was a decrease in prior learning credit awarded Fall 2012 through Spring 2014, this past academic year saw the highest credit awarded (122 attempted PLA hours, 110 transcribed and 20 exam scores sent to UT) since credit for prior learning started at UT.

At present, prior learning credit is initiated through the College of Adult and Lifelong Learning (University College as of July 2016) but is governed by state mandates, [UT policy](#) and [Faculty Senate involvement](#) to insure that rigor and quality are present. International students and transfer credit is evaluated through the Office of Admissions and graduate credit is evaluated and transcribed through [policies](#) established by the College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Council.

3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

UT accepts undergraduate transfer credit from accredited institutions and adheres to Ohio's [Transfer and Articulation policy](#), including [Ohio Transfer Module](#) (OTM) and [Transfer Assurance Guides](#) (TAG) set forth by the ODHE. The state has policies that establish the minimum grade public postsecondary institutions may accept (D-), employs faculty panels of representatives from 4-year and 2-year institutions to establish student learning outcomes and require all Ohio public postsecondary institutions to treat transfer and native students alike. General education is assessed under OTM, career tech prep and industry credentialing under CTAG, undergraduate major fields of study and foreign language under TAG as well as transfer for advanced placement (AP), international baccalaureate (IB), military (MTAG) and CLEP. Students and advisers may assess course equivalencies through [Transferology](#) (between institutions outside of Ohio) or the ODHE's website that equates courses between Ohio's public postsecondary institutions. Course equivalencies are typically classified as "course for course" or, where a direct match is not available or appropriate, as a departmental elective or a pseudo-course (when a departmental match is not identified), with course level determined by the level of the UT course evaluation. UT's Office of the Registrar employs a full-time director of transfer credit evaluation to oversee the establishment of course equivalency tables and maintain Transferology accuracy. The state requires statements on transfer credit to be part of the institution's catalog and offers students an appeal process for transfer credit.

The OTM embodies the general education curriculum currently under review by Faculty Senate for submission for ODHE approval. In Fall 2015, a [faculty liaison position](#) was created to work closely with Faculty Senate, University Teaching Center, Office of the Provost, and colleges and departments. In 2015, ODHE initiated MTAG in which UT participates; approximately 12 MTAGS are available to UT. All MTAGS are included in the degree audit rules.

Graduate students applying for graduate transfer credits follow the [procedure of COGS](#). In addition, content expert graduate faculty and administrators of the degree program [review course syllabi and transfer credit requests for congruence](#) with specific program requirements.

4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

The institution maintains and exercises authority over prerequisites. Faculty curriculum committees of each college, department and/or program determine courses and prerequisites. Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee reviews/recommends new and modified undergraduate course proposals, with [Faculty Senate members having final approval](#). Graduate Council (GC) Curriculum Committee reviews/recommends new and modified graduate course proposals, with [GC members having final approval](#). For programs with external accreditation, establishment/modification of prerequisites aligns with accreditation guidelines if applicable.

Additional processes ensuring the institution maintains authority over prerequisites include advisers of students signing plans of study that implement sequencing informed by prerequisites. The electronic registration system (Banner) is set to block students from registering for courses for which they have not taken prerequisites.

Program faculty set the rigor and content of each course. College-level faculty curriculum committees, departments and/or programs determine course objectives and student learning outcomes that are approved by the governing bodies. The course resources and assessment measures vary according to course level. Examples of course syllabi are available [here](#). The department chair assigns course faculty who are content experts.

The ODHE defines and establishes the [definition of a credit hour](#). In addition to the ODHE definition, accredited programs have curricular expectations from their accrediting standards.

The [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) academic dishonesty policies and the [Student Code of Conduct Policy](#) are covered at student orientations, and published in the undergraduate and graduate student [catalogs](#) and on the [About UT website](#).

Institutional mechanisms ensure that expectations for student learning exist and policies address expectations for student learning. UT faculty determine assessment methods that are most effective in demonstrating and documenting learning outcomes of each course. Expectations for student learning are established in the program's student learning outcomes. Program faculty determine the rigor and content of each course to support these outcomes at the appropriate level, BA/MA/PhD. Program expectations are communicated to students in a variety of ways including program website or handbook. Course expectations are communicated by means of the course syllabus. At the course level, each course outlines the student learning expectations through the syllabi. In 2015, a University-wide [syllabus template](#) was made available to faculty and includes description of the course, meeting

times, student learning outcomes, schedule of activity and students requirements, inside and outside of class time, assessment strategies, grade scales and other information to enhance communication with students. Additional information is in Criterion 4.B.1.

UT maintains access to learning resources. UT provides students with access to a variety of virtual and physical learning resources including the Mulford and Carlson [Libraries](#), [Learning Enhancement Center](#), [The Writing Center](#), [Academic Enrichment Center](#), [Student Disability Services](#), and [Lloyd Jacobs Interprofessional Immersive Simulation Center](#). Additional resources include the UT Virtual Lab (i.e., computer software), wireless residence halls and buildings, online/blended learning support help desk, facility labs and meeting rooms for studying. Departments administering these resources survey students and/or student usage to ensure scheduling aligns with student needs. Enhanced college-specific resources include the [McQuade Court Room](#) in the Paralegal Studies program, state of the art rehabilitation labs in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, and various computer labs throughout the university.

It is expected that UT faculty possess the credentials required by the [ODHE Guidelines and Procedures](#) for instructors of higher education (see Criterion 3.C.2). The Office of the Provost maintains faculty CVs and transcripts, verifying them as current and accurate at the time of hiring. To confirm that UT is in compliance with HLC's faculty qualification expectations by September 2017, the Office of the Provost is re-verifying credentials of all instructors. The provost approves departmental requests for [hires based on equivalent experience](#).

UT maintains/exercises authority over the quality of the dual credit program and ensures its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum. As a public university, UT is required to participate in Ohio's College Credit Plus Program as outlined in [Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3365](#) and corresponding Rules 3333-1-65.1 through 3333.1.65.10 governing this program.

According to the Code, high school teachers must meet qualification requirements to be the instructor as set forth in [guidelines](#) established by the Chancellor of ODHE. The high school teacher's qualifications are reviewed by the department, then reviewed and verified by the Office of the Provost, which maintains a file on each teacher with his/her vita, transcript showing master's degree and discipline of study (18 credit hours minimum in the area taught if the master's degree is in another discipline), syllabus and provost's letter approving the appointment. The dual credit course offered in the secondary school follows the same course syllabus and learning outcomes, using the same textbook and materials and assessments as the college course. UT has seven qualified high school faculty teaching ten College Credit Plus courses at four high schools teaching in the 2015-16 school year.

Once a high school teacher is approved, a UT faculty mentor is assigned. In addition to conducting at least one observation of each College Credit Plus course taught by the high school teacher during a school year, he/she must agree to additional UT guidelines:

- Meet with the mentee at his/her high school at the semester beginning to review timelines, deadlines for grades and reporting, goals for the course and approval of the syllabus to meet The University of Toledo's and Ohio Transfer Model requirements. The syllabus review ensures student learning outcomes of the same rigor as courses taught by the University faculty;
- Schedule a semester observation visit at the high school during the mentee's class;
- Conduct a mid-semester review to ensure complete tracking according to agreed-upon terms;
- Submit grades in a timely manner to ensure a completed transcript for the high school student; and

- Stay in contact, be accessible and available to assist where necessary during the semester.

In addition, as of fall 2015, UT is required to provide three hours of professional development to all high school teachers instructing a College Credit Plus course as an adjunct. This professional development is scheduled for April 27, 2016.

UT has a unique dual credit arrangement with Toledo Public Schools (TPS): [Toledo Early College](#), a program designed to accelerate students into UT courses, beginning with the freshman year. Students take two years of English, up to four years of mathematics and science and two years of social studies in high school. All other courses, including electives and foreign languages, are taken at UT. Students can earn up to 60 college credits during their high school experience - these are UT courses, not high school courses. College-level courses and required textbooks are provided at no cost to students. College courses qualify for dual credits, allowing them to be counted for high school and college credits. Students will earn credits that will be recorded officially and permanently on TPS and UT transcripts.

5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

UT supports and encourages external accreditation; over 135 programs, colleges and centers maintain external accreditation awarded by over 40 different accrediting bodies. The "[List of Individual Program Accreditations](#)" is maintained by OAAPR.

6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Success of graduates in each undergraduate and graduate program is evaluated by direct and indirect methods. Programs are asked to identify in their Assessment Plans the types of measures utilized, including peer-reviewed publications, external or licensure exams, internship or practicum evaluations, job placement, exit interviews, and graduation or alumni surveys. In their annual [Assessment Reports](#), programs describe at least two of these measures and the process by which assessment data is examined. Program completion records are also maintained in colleges and data stored with the Office of the Registrar.

As part of the institutional process of program review, information about graduates is reviewed including information related to retention, persistence, graduation, licensure rates where appropriate and other methods used by the program to evaluate the success of its graduates.

UT has been able to document evidence of the success of its graduates [from many graduate and undergraduate programs](#) in all colleges and across both campuses but these efforts have historically been driven by individual colleges and programs.

Some academic program graduates must take a licensure exam before they can receive permission to practice in Ohio or another state. [License examination](#) passage rates are often posted on department websites.

Additional colleges/programs are surveying graduates either at the time they leave UT or at a

designated post-graduation time (i.e., six months). [These surveys](#) provide data on post-graduation plans, current employment, participation in internships or fellowships, and obtainment of an advanced degree. Some colleges, e.g. colleges of Communication and the Arts and of Education, maintain a spreadsheet with alumni information, including each student's name, undergraduate major, advanced degree if applicable and place of employment if known.

However, external forces such as accrediting bodies and ODHE reporting requirements have recently increased the need for institutional collection and storage of this type of data. As part of the institution's response to this need, standardized questions will be asked by colleges and departments of their graduates; this data will be included in annual reports for easy access. The director of the Center for Experiential Learning and Career Services, in partnership with The Office of the Provost, Institutional Research, and the Office of the Registrar, [piloted a First Destination Survey](#) that included summer and fall 2015 graduates. It included questions pertaining to the students' immediate plans after graduation (employment, grad school, military, other), employer and wage information if applicable and any participation in experiential learning and/or extracurricular activities. UT received 71 valid responses during a short two-week piloting window. Among these students, 38 were employed full-time, 2 employed part-time, 12 in graduate school, 1 in military, 1 participating in volunteer or service program, and 1 pursuing other options. Approximately 23% (16 students) are currently not employed or actively seeking employment. Pilot results were shared with the individual colleges and University leadership. UT is working at combining this survey with college level graduation surveys, and making it a [required component](#) of the graduation approval procedure in 2016. These efforts will help the institution develop a comprehensive strategy to monitor and track graduates' employment.

The College of Graduate Studies (COGS) [exit surveys](#) are administered three times/year and have a high completion rate, providing colleges with information about the immediate post-graduation placement of graduate students. COGS maintains an archive for this information.

In response to the HLC 2012 institution attention request to enhance internship opportunities across its academic programs, UT worked with the Interns in Ohio program, then with the state's [Ohio Means Jobs](#) program; UT reinvigorated the [Center for Experiential Learning and Career Services](#) and is now offering career and major exploration, professional development (preparing for a career) and workshops and events throughout the year on topics such as choosing a major, job search strategies and interviewing skills and job fairs. In fall 2015, in response to the Ohio Chancellor mandating that all higher education programs offer opportunities for experiential learning, UT's deans are developing plans to fulfill this.

Sources

- About UT website
- Academic Enrichment Center
- Accredited Programs and Endorsements-List
- ACE College Credit Recommendations
- Annual CCGS-OBOR reports
- Career Technical Assurance Guidelines CTAGs
- Center for Experiential Learning & Career Services
- College Credit Plus - Ohio Revised Code Section 3365
- College Credit Plus - ORC 3365.11 Credential requirements for instructors
- Course Equivalency Management System CEMS Page

- Curriculum Tracking System (CTS) with sample screen prints of curriculum approval
- Faculty Advisory Board
- Faculty Assessment Guide for Prior Learning Credit
- Faculty Senate Minutes 04-14-2015
- Faculty Senate Minutes 04-14-2015 (page number 18)
- Faculty Senate Minutes 09-29-2015
- Faculty Senate Minutes 09-29-2015 (page number 6)
- First Destination Presentation 1-20-2016
- First Destination Survey-revised Spring 2016
- Gen Ed Faculty Liaison
- Graduate Council Bylaws 4-7-15
- Graduate Council Bylaws 4-7-15 (page number 7)
- Graduate Council Minutes 10-20-2015
- Graduate Council Minutes 10-20-2015 (page number 7)
- Graduate Student Exit Survey Spring 2015 Report
- Interprofessional Immersive Simulation Center IISC
- Learning Enhancement Center
- Legal Specialties Program Review Action Plan
- License examination passage rates
- McQuade Court Room - Mock Trial website
- Military Transfer Assurance Guides MTAGs
- OBOR Academic-Program-Review-Guidelines_FINAL_042915
- OBOR Academic-Program-Review-Guidelines_FINAL_042915 (page number 13)
- OBOR Academic-Program-Review-Guidelines_FINAL_042915 (page number 62)
- ODHE Directive 2010-016, Semester Credit Hour
- Office of Assessment, Accreditation and Program Review website
- Ohio Articulation and Transfer Policy
- Ohio Articulation and Transfer Policy (page number 38)
- Ohio Articulation and Transfer Policy (page number 40)
- Ohio Articulation and Transfer Policy (page number 54)
- Ohio Articulation and Transfer Policy (page number 56)
- Ohio Means Jobs
- Ohio Transfer Module Guidelines and Learning Outcomes
- PR 2013-2020 cycle
- Program Assessment Report-example
- Program Review
- Program Review Questions to Guide External Reviewers
- Program Review Template 2015-16
- Student Disability Services
- Surveying Graduates-Examples
- Syllabus examples
- Syllabus Template University Teaching Center
- Toledo Early College website
- Transfer credit approval process - COGS examples
- Transfer Credit Policy-Grad
- Transferology website
- University Libraries - vital statistics 2014
- UT Catalog 2015-2016
- UT Policy no. 3364_77_01-1 Graduate student academic dishonesty
- UT Policy no. 3364-70-04 Student Code of Conduct

- UT Policy no. 3364-71-04 Academic Dishonesty - Undergraduates
- UT Policy no. 3364-71-17 Credit for Prior Learning
- UT Policy no. 3364-72-11 University Evaluation of Faculty Qualifications DRAFT
- UT Policy no. 3364-77-06 Transfer of Credit to Grad Degree
- Writing Center

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning in its undergraduate, graduate and general education program. The articulation of student learning outcomes provides the foundation for assessment of students' achievement in each program. Proposals for new programs require the inclusion of student learning outcomes, with these outcomes carried forward in the development of assessment plans as well as in future reports submitted to the [University Assessment Committee \(UAC\)](#).

Programs identify their unique student learning outcomes in the [Program Assessment Plans](#). All academic degree and certificate programs submit plans at five-year intervals or as needed to the UAC. Each plan lists student learning outcomes, defined measures for assessing these outcomes, and examples of how faculty uses this information for decisions made in the program.

Course-level student learning outcomes are articulated in the individual course syllabi. Faculty Senate and Graduate Council review proposals for new courses, which include student learning outcomes and syllabi, as part of the internal approval process.

The Office of the Provost provides support for the assessment of student learning and documentation of the process across the institution. Following the last HLC site visit, the Office of Assessment, Accreditation and Program Review ([OAAPR](#)) was established as a unit reporting to the Office of the Provost (see Criterion 4.A.1) and a vice provost for assessment and faculty development position was created. The institution has experienced much progress in terms of improved documentation of its assessment processes, including the measures used and actions informed by analysis of the data, thus promoting and advancing discussions of the assessment of student learning and achievement across the institution.

OAAPR coordinates the reporting and documentation of assessment processes across UT. The university assessment director, a full-time professional staff member supervised by the vice-provost for assessment and faculty development, collaborates with the UAC, Faculty Senate, and individual programs and departments to manage annual assessment processes, and provide assessment training and resources. Responsibilities of the university assessment director are to serve as an ex officio UAC

member and to provide leadership, direction and guidance to ensure achievement of committee goals and objectives. The director also collaborates with the vice-provost for retention and undergraduate studies and serves as a member of the University Retention Committee, ensuring various data reports and summaries are shared appropriately for discussion and analysis.

Following a consultative visit and a review of existing assessment processes by Barbara Walvoord, PhD, concurrent professor emeriti, University of Notre Dame, in 2014, the provost created the [faculty assessment representative](#) (FAR) position, for which a faculty member was given the part-time responsibility to [assist in providing professional development and consultation](#) for individual programs/departments. The university assessment director and faculty assessment representative collaborate with other institutional offices to access data and generate reports and work with the University Teaching Center (UTC) to promote effective assessment strategies in course design and curriculum development.

The UAC has been in existence for over a decade, serving a major role in the institutional assessment process, responding to the need to broaden the scope of assessment initiatives at UT, moving beyond compliance and providing more support for faculty and staff development. UAC works in collaboration with OAAPR to support and shape the assessment of student learning across classrooms, programs and the institution.

UAC is composed of [faculty, administrators, a student, and representatives](#) from a variety of units across the institution. UAC was charged by the Office of the Provost with continued development of assessment processes and procedures. Through liaisons from each college, academic support unit (Academic Support Services, International Programs, Student Engagement and Career Services, Registrar, Library, Online Learning, Enrollment Management, College of Graduate Studies, Student Affairs) and the general education curriculum, UAC monitors assessment activity at the program level and oversees, reviews and gives feedback on annual assessment reports. These [annual assessment reports](#) contain information on student learning outcomes, the measures used to assess students' achievement, actions based on data review and analysis, and recommendations for program improvement. An [online database](#) was developed and implemented in 2015 to improve efficiency of annual reporting processes. The new database accommodates data entry, report review and the provision of reviewer feedback, providing options for reporting across programs and service units.

UAC collaborates with appropriate internal and external resources (e.g., nationally-known assessment experts including Dr. Barbara Walvoord, Dr. Marcia Ditmyer, Linda Suskie) to provide leadership for professional development of faculty, administration and staff regarding assessment processes and resources. The UAC website archives assessment activity and resources available for those involved with assessment.

In addition, UAC reviews assessment data at a macro level in order to highlight identified themes emerging from various data points across campus. For example, in fall 2015, UAC [conducted a review of multiple data sources](#) related to the general education program. The data reviewed included departmental general education reports and summary, data from Institutional Research related to general education courses, and results of recent CLA and senior surveys developed to gather feedback from graduating students on how much their experiences at the institution contributed to development of specific skills aligned with the general education outcomes. The general assessment report was [reviewed/discussed](#) by the appropriate Faculty Senate committee and results shared with the Senate at-large.

While all colleges, service units and the Office of the Provost are represented on UAC, assessment processes in individual colleges, units, and departments vary. In 2013, a survey of academic programs

found 44% had an identified assessment coordinator and 52% had either a departmental or program assessment committee. These individuals or groups assumed responsibility for reviewing programs' assessment plans/reports and for making recommendations for improvement, such as curriculum and instruction modifications, the introduction of new or revised measures, or faculty development. An [internal survey](#) created for this assurance argument was distributed to department chairs in spring 2015 (response rate 78%). The survey included the item "*Does your department have an assessment committee in place to plan student evaluation and review performance outcomes?*" Of the reporting departments, 67% had an assessment committee at the department level and 19% had a committee at the level of the program. The remaining departments described other means of assessment oversight, including department chairs and/or program directors.

Following the full site visit and the recommendation by HLC in 2012, a [General Education Assessment Planning Committee](#) was created in 2013 comprised of members of Faculty Senate and UAC (Faculty Senate members of this committee are UAC general education liaisons), and individuals from OAAPR. Using the general education competencies (student learning outcomes) approved by Faculty Senate, this committee began to develop/implement an assessment process for the general education program. Consistent with the approach used for other academic programs, the committee first developed an [assessment plan](#), then worked to implement it across departments contributing to general education. A [report](#) on the achievement of general education learning outcomes was developed and [reviewed by members of the UAC](#) along with other data regarding the program.

The overarching [University Assessment Plan](#) was revised in 2015. The university assessment director, in collaboration with UAC, worked to update and enhance the existing University-wide plan last revised in 2008 and endorsed by the provost. The plan outlines the role and expected practices of each institutional group involved in the process of ongoing student learning assessment, including the responsibility of each academic program and service unit to develop relevant student learning outcomes, corresponding and appropriate measures, mechanisms to analyze/report data and take action as indicated by evidence of student achievement.

The effectiveness of the institution's assessment processes is evidenced by several documented outcomes:

- Overall improved quality and contents of the assessment reports submitted to the UAC. Earlier reports focused mainly on process, while current reports articulate how programs are using data to make informed decisions regarding changes in some aspect of the program curriculum to improve students' achievement.
- Numbers of academic programs and service units submitting completed assessment reports increased, providing additional evidence that the current structure is enhancing the focus on assessment across the institution. The UAC has had strong participation from academic and service units.
- The expanded role of UAC. Beginning in 2015, UAC is reviewing/analyzing not only data produced in academic program/service unit reports but also data generated by other sources across the institution.

2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

All UT graduate and undergraduate degree and certificate programs submit program assessment reports annually. Each report, now in electronic format, lists measurable student learning outcomes for the program. The report requires information about the measures used to assess these learning

outcomes, along with examples of how the program used the results from these measures to develop improvement strategies.

In a similar way, co-curricular programs offered by academic support/service units submit an annual assessment report. Here as well, units are required to articulate outcomes relevant to assisting students' learning, define measures, and provide examples of how results were used to improve activities within the unit.

In fall 2014, the UAC requested all academic programs and service units to update their assessment plans. The [faculty assessment representative](#) (new position in 2014) met with individual academic programs and service units as needed to facilitate this process. As of March 2016, 96% of the assessment plans have been published online. In some cases, individual programs or offices are still in the process of developing assessment plans that include identification of student learning outcomes and appropriate measures. Assessment reports were submitted by 97% of academic programs and service units in fall 2015. The UAC monitors the submission and reviews the content of assessment plans and reports, providing additional support as needed. Programs and service units are encouraged to focus on how data are used to inform changes to student learning with an ultimate goal of improved student persistence and degree completion.

As recommended in the HLC 2012 report, a comprehensive annual assessment report is also developed and submitted for the general education curriculum. Reports from the individual courses/departments comprising the general education program identify their specific course student learning outcomes in alignment with the institution's general education outcomes. The course then identifies the corresponding assessment strategies used to determine student achievement of the outcome and notes students' achievement. Finally, each course/department reports a summary of student strengths and weaknesses, department action items based on analysis of results, and recommendations for University action items. The set of course/department reports is reported in aggregate as a [single assessment report](#) for the general education curriculum (2014-15). The general assessment report was [reviewed/discussed](#) by the appropriate Faculty Senate committee and results shared with the Senate at-large.

3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Each academic/service unit and general education program provides documentation in [annual assessment reports](#) to UAC of how it uses information gained from assessment to improve student learning. The UAC college/service unit liaison summarizes action items and notes trends as well as recommendations for university action items that emerge from the program/unit reports. Program reports describe actions that took place and examples include:

- Changes in the sequence of courses within a program.
- Implementation of a new assessment for a program. For example, the College of Nursing responded to a recent trend in passage rates for a licensure exam by investing in a software package that allows formative practice exams to be integrated into the curriculum.
- Service or program expansion. The Learning Enhancement Center expanded its Supplemental Instruction (SI) program by hiring and training new tutors. DFW rates for the introductory psychology classes combined with data reflecting positive impact of the SI programs in existing content areas supported the expansion of SI into psychology.
- Revisions in pedagogy. For example, during review and analysis of data by the Department of Biology faculty, the faculty noted the differences in students' performance on lower level test items when compared to performance on higher level items in its general education course. As a result, faculty agreed to increase examples of higher order problem solving in lectures and

create additional opportunities for active learning in the course.

- An example of a trend that emerged from review of the various college reports and suggestions for institutional action was the recommendation of a writing center on the HSC, similar to the writing center on the Main Campus. The UT Writing Center is piloting services on the HSC Mondays and Wednesdays, 2 hours/day (Collier Room 4417) to Physician Assistant and Master of Public Health students; if successful, plans are to extend services to all HSC students. The pilot program with the Writing Center has the potential to enhance services/training in writing skills to HSC students, who otherwise would need to travel to Main Campus.

UAC is responsible for [providing recommendations](#) to the provost regarding institutional decisions related to budget and resource allocation based on various sources of data, including the reports generated through UAC, the Office of Institutional Research, OAAPR and other related sources.

Recent recommendations included:

- Institutional support for writing/communication skills and the extension of Writing Center resources to the HSC
- Institutional initiatives related to information literacy
- Institutional initiatives related to technology/online learning — for example, tutorials for computer proficiency or for learning in the online environment

4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

The university assessment plan frames assessment at the institutional level and encourage faculty and staff to utilize assessment processes to nurture effective teaching and learning strategies, enhance faculty collaboration, and encourage individuals working at each level (course, program, and institution) to base decision-making on evidence. The plan schedules longitudinal reviews of assessment reporting for individual programs and service units, aligned with program review and individual program accreditation review cycles.

Faculty and staff are participants in the overall UT assessment strategy; however, this is an area that continues to develop. A survey of academic programs and service units in 2012-13 indicated that while faculty and staff members were involved in the process, UT has room for improvement.

To address this issue, several initiatives were implemented to broaden faculty and staff participation in the assessment process:

1. The faculty assessment representative [provided workshops and met one-on-one](#) with individual programs, faculty and staff to provide support as they develop their assessment processes. Over 200 workshops and meetings were held in 2014-15, including meetings with academic program directors and service units.
2. In conjunction with the UTC, OAAPR hosted the [Course Design Institute](#) (CDI) to teach faculty how to develop student learning outcomes and align relevant and appropriate course assignments, materials and teaching methods. Twenty-three faculty members [participated](#) during June and July 2015. The Office of the Provost supported participation by means of extra summer compensation for participants. CDI will be repeated in summer 2016.
3. OAAPR hosts an annual [Assessment Day](#) each spring to promote best practices in assessment and recognize individuals who contribute to the success of our institutional assessment process. Over 75 faculty and staff members participated in the 2015 event.
4. OAAPR participates in [New Faculty Orientation](#) and encourages new faculty to reflect on the

alignment of assessment strategies and student learning outcomes as well as the need to use the assessment information generated in their courses to revise their courses, with an ultimate goal of improving students' achievement. Resources to provide support for assessment at the course level are shared.

5. OAAPR, in collaboration with Faculty Senate, hosted a General Education Assessment Appreciation Event in fall 2015 for all faculty involved in teaching the general education curriculum, acknowledging individual faculty for their support in teaching and assessing the general education curriculum. Fifty-eight general education faculty members and Faculty Senate leaders attended the first annual event.

Sources

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- General Education Assessment Plan, May 2015
- General Education Assessment Planning Committee Fall 2014 Report
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- General Education Report 2014-2015
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- UAC Meeting Notes 2-13-16 recommendations to provost
- UAC Meeting Notes 2-2015 Review of gen ed
- UAC Member Roster 14-15
- UAC minutes reviewing data sources-gen ed
- UAC Recommendations to Provost 03-07-2016
- University Assessment Committee
- University Assessment Plan 2015
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- UTC Annual Report 2014-2015
- UTC Annual Report 2014-2015 (page number 6)
- UTC-Course Design Institute

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.

Since the 2012 HLC visit and following its recommendation, UT increased its focus on student retention, persistence and completion. UT is committed to retention, student success and graduation from a holistic institutional standpoint.

- Two new positions, [vice provost for retention and undergraduate studies](#) and [assistant provost for student success and retention](#), were created to oversee student success and retention initiatives.
- In fall 2015, the [Recruitment and Retention Coordinating Council](#) was split to form two independent committees, one focused on recruitment and one on retention. The [Retention Coordinating Committee](#) is led by the new vice provost for retention and undergraduate studies.

In 2014, UT submitted the [University Completion Plan](#) to the state of Ohio. Several goals to help achieve improved retention, persistence and completion are addressed in the plan.

[Completion Goals for 2014-16](#) include increasing the number of students enrolling in College Credit Plus by 2%/year for the next five years; increase course success rate of students in introductory writing by 5 percentage points and success in introductory mathematics courses by 3 percentage points the next two years over fall 2013/spring 2014 completion rates; increase the number of associate/baccalaureate degrees awarded by 1 percentage point annually for the next two years; and increase the number of adults earning credit utilizing prior learning assessment by 2 percentage points for the next five years. In addition, the University is committed to increasing its first-year retention (first-time, full-time students) to 80% or greater by 2019. This goal is considered reasonable, as first-year retention rose from low numbers (2012) to 67% (2013), 70% (2014) and then to 71.9% for 2015. This is the highest retention rate at the institution in over a decade.

2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

The Office of Institutional Research regularly collects and reports information on student retention, persistence and completion. [Fall-to-fall](#) and [spring-to-spring](#) university retention rates of degree-seeking first-time, full-time students are determined after the census date. Retention rates are also reported per academic college. Student persistence is measured by monitoring the percentage of students who return on a semester-to-semester basis and as the percentage of students who return after completing years 2 and 3 of their studies. UT collects data on year two-to-three and year three-to-four [persistence](#). Student completion rates are determined by monitoring the 4-, 5-, and 6-year completion rates of entering cohorts of degree-seeking first-time, full-time students. This includes data by academic college and is [broken down by gender and race](#).

These data are shared across UT for review, analysis and action. The Office of the Provost, vice provost for retention and undergraduate studies, the assistant provost for student success, the Retention Coordinating Council, the college deans and department chairs are the primary reviewers.

To improve use of available institutional data and identify additional sources of information relevant to persistence and completion, a UT team attended the HLC Persistence and Completion Workshop in July 2015. Participation in the workshop led to an initiative to explore first-year students' intent using Cooperative Institutional Research Program data — an effort to learn more about why students who are admitted with the intent of transferring choose to stay. As a follow-up, the institution applied and has been accepted for membership in the spring 2016 cohort of the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy. This experience will help increase the strategies used to collect and analyze data.

3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Information regarding retention, persistence and completion has been used to develop ways to help UT achieve the goals articulated in the University Completion Plan.

Goal of improving course success rate in introductory writing: After much research and lack of satisfactory results with an earlier system, [Starfish EARLY ALERT™](#), an early alert warning and student tracking system that allows for targeted student outreach based on trigger alert flags, was purchased in 2014 and used in a one-semester pilot partnership between the math and English departments. This focused on ENGL1110 (English Composition I), MATH1200 (Math Modeling and Problem Solving) and MATH1320 (College Algebra). The successful outcomes provide evidence of UT's use of information to improve student success and thereby retention/persistence:

- The goal of improving the DFW rate by five percentage points in ENGL1110 was met for the pilot semester.
- The goal of improving the DFW rate by three percentage points was surpassed in MATH 1200 (60.19% DFW rate fell to 44.59%) for the pilot semester.
- The goal of improving the DFW rate by three percentage points was also surpassed in MATH 1320 (48.45% DFW rate fell to 41.23%) for the pilot semester.

Based on these positive outcomes, use of the early alert system was expanded for Fall 2015 to include MATH1180, MATH1730 (select sections), MATH1850 (select sections), and ENGL1130.

Starfish is also utilized to raise system-generated flags for items which can impact student retention,

including holds in Banner for missing transcripts and past due balance registration holds in Banner. Of the 1,429 students who received flags on these two issues, all but one student remedied the issue.

Goal of increasing the number of associate/baccalaureate degrees awarded by 1 percentage point annually for the next two years: There had been an upward trend in degree completion, with a 13.5% increase in degrees awarded since 2009-10. However, the past two years have seen a decline. Sixty-one associate's degrees and 2,878 bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2013-14 and 69 associate's degrees and 2800 bachelor's degrees in 2014-15, a 2 percentage point decrease from the prior year. Decreased graduation rates over the last two years correspond to decreased retention from 4-6 years ago. Increasing retention rates suggest that these numbers should improve over the next few years.

Goal of increasing the number of adults earning credit utilizing prior learning assessment by 2 percentage points/year: Award of PLA credit hours fell to a low in 2013 of 6 from 43 hours awarded in 2012. Changes made in response were to hire a new [PLA specialist](#), the Board of Trustees approved a change in fee structure, and a process was introduced to systematize the [PLA process](#) for departments to provide more guidance and structure for faculty. As a result of these combined efforts, 122 PLA credit hours were attempted and 110 credit hours were transcribed during 2014-15, exceeding the goal articulated in the University Completion Plan.

Additional retention, persistence and graduation strategies: As both qualitative and quantitative student retention and persistence data continue to be collected and analyzed, completion strategies similarly evolve. Specific efforts to attract well-prepared students are underway. The [Freshman Class Profile](#) for the past 5 years showed the average ACT, middle 50% of ACT and high school GPA have increased.

Implemented in 2013-14, the goal of the [Success Coach program](#) is to assist and empower students to develop skills, and implement individualized plans for academic and personal success. The assistant provost for student success and retention oversees this initiative. As a result of the success coach initiative, combined with existing resources for students' success, first-year retention rose from 67% (2013) to 70% (2014) and to 71.9% in [2015](#), the highest retention rate at the institution in over a decade. For three years, success coaches have been assigned to every student in the incoming cohort of first year students and follow the student through his/her years at UT. Currently, every first-, second- and third-year student has an assigned coach. Additional resources were made available in 2015 to increase numbers of success coaches, now at 20 coaches. This is also discussed in Criterion 5.D.

In response to data describing the variety of reasons and situations associated with students who do not persist, an integrated retention communication plan and transactional communication campaign have been created. Frequent email reminders to students regarding registration and re-admission are sent. Degree pathways affording opportunities, such as skill-building courses, seminars or two-year associate degrees, have been implemented for students who were not initially accepted into a professional or preferred program. A "retention fund" has been created for well-performing students with financial need. Since summer 2012, 1,353 students have been assisted with over \$1.2M in [Tillotson and Tuition Assistance Grants](#). The [Graduation Planning System](#) will help students to meet education goals by identifying courses that transfer, providing interactive roadmaps for defining personal plans, and helping students monitor their progress.

In response to data indicating lower retention and completion rates for first-generation college students, the [Multicultural Emerging Scholars Program-Summer Bridge and Living Learning Community](#) (MESP) was initiated summer 2015. It is designed to strengthen a student's first academic year by providing a supportive environment and connections with other students who share

goals related to academic achievement and career development. Throughout the summer and academic year, MESP students receive direct support and instruction from a dedicated team of peer mentors, on-site advisers, graduate students and MESP directors. Program-eligible students admitted in the College of Languages, Literature & Social Sciences or the College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics have a high school grade point average between 2.25 and 3.20 and an ACT Composite score between 15 and 20.

The [MESP Summer Bridge](#) component is a residential summer program. During summer 2015, 25 students spent six weeks living in the International House Residence Hall, where they received enhanced instructions in math and English and a survey course in human anthropology, and participated in academic and social enrichment activities. At the end of summer, all 25 students finished the program, earning an average of 7.36 college credits and an average GPA of 3.15. Continuing fall 2015 and spring 2016, 24 students will live in the same residence hall with the community of scholars established during the summer and continue to receive enhanced instruction and advising. The academic progress of this cohort continues to be monitored and plans to expand the program, pending continued positive outcomes, are already being discussed.

Several retention initiatives have been implemented by the Division of Student Affairs in recent years, and are discussed in Core Component 5.D.2.

In addition to creating new initiatives, existing support services have made changes based on data. For example, the Learning Enhancement Center (which reports to the Office of the Provost) has expanded its [Supplemental Instruction](#) (SI) program to include the introductory psychology course, based on its current DFW rates and the success of the SI program. In response to student and faculty feedback, staffing at the Writing Center, open to all University students and faculty and providing face-to-face and online tutoring for writers in all disciplines, was revised to include more faculty presence and oversight. On-site Center faculty have an expanded role in working with students on their writing assignments and supervising other tutors in the Center.

4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of the programs reflect good practice.

UT utilizes Banner by Elucian as our student information system. Banner enables UT to collect, store, manage and apply real-time data in admissions, registration and enrollment and academic administration. In keeping with best practices, IPEDS definitions are used for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion.

As noted earlier, the institution has applied for membership in the HLC's Persistence and Completion Academy, with a goal of enhancing our methods and access additional approaches to using data to inform actions related to persistence and completion.

Sources

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- College Credit Plus Update
- Freshman Class Profile

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- Multicultural Emerging Scholars Summer Bridge Program MESP
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- PLA Specialist-job description and Gleckler resume
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- Retention Census Report Fall 2015
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- SOCHE Presentation 2013
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- Student Affairs Annual Report 2014
- Success Coach - campaign examples
- Success Coaching site
- Success Coach-Position Description
- Supplemental Instruction
- Tillotson and Tuition Grant Assistance
- UT University Completion Plan 2014
- UT University Completion Plan 2014 (page number 8)
- Vice Provost for Retention-job description and Ashburner CV

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

The evidence provided demonstrates that UT takes pride in ensuring that continuous improvement is the cornerstone of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services. The ongoing assessment of student learning harnesses data to incrementally improve its academic community's ability to advance learning, research, and service.

A partnership has been created between academic affairs and student services that intentionally access its curricular and co-curricular programs. The process of regular program review, including internal and external review and the annual process of assessment reporting, ensure that program quality and effectiveness of student learning are monitored. UT's commitment to quality improvement is shared by its academic administrators, faculty, and staff. Annually members of the academy are recognized for their contributions to enhancing student learning on campus.

In summary, UT understands that incremental and breakthrough improvements in student learning can only occur through ongoing evaluation, measurement, and data driven judgments to improve learning. It is clear from the evidence presented that although progress is being made in many areas, institutional methodologies and processes themselves are under constant examination to determine best practices that will enhance student learning, retention and graduation. UT is fortunate to have the faculty and staff devoted to the implementation of those best practices to serve its students.

Sources

There are no sources.