



**Comprehensive Curriculum Assessment Plan:**

**Operation Manual**

**University Assessment Committee**

**Fall 2013**

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## I. Overview

The *Comprehensive Curriculum Assessment Plan* or *CCAP* was adopted in 2008 to serve as the University of New Haven's campus-wide foundation system for academic assessment. This manual is the authoritative guide to the operation of the CCAP system. The history of the Plan and the principles guiding its design and implementation appear in Appendix A. In broad terms, the CCAP system involves the following features and activities:

- A CCAP assessment plan is developed for every degree and certificate program; concentrations do not require a separate CCAP unless additional outcomes have been established.
- The courses included in the Core Curriculum also must have a suitable assessment plan.
- The faculty responsible for a program conduct periodic assessments focusing on a portion of the established plan each year.
- Faculty make necessary adjustments to curriculum, delivery methods, and/or the assessment plan itself as suggested by the results of the assessments; note that programs/courses using alternative delivery methods are expected to be assessed against the same outcomes and objectives as those delivered through standard methods.
- An annual report is submitted by the faculty to the UAC that presents a brief overview of assessment activities and actions taken.
- Selected assessment results are collected for use in publications or required reports to administrative offices, accreditation agencies, and elsewhere.

This Manual may be updated periodically by the UAC as the system for CCAP use evolves, as agency expectations change, and as the University and its faculty learn how to conduct assessment activities more efficiently and effectively. The vintage of the Manual's versions are clearly indicated and care should be taken to reference the most recent version—the latest version will be maintained on the UNH public website as well as the Blackboard locations for the Faculty Senate and the “Academic Assessment” course. Suggestions regarding changes to the Manual may be submitted to the chair of the UAC. Newly issued versions will be announced to the faculty and concerned staff.

The sections to follow present useful information and guidance for faculty in these areas:

- The **design** of the CCAP system— its structure and necessary components
- **Use** of the CCAP system— the “how to” details on how to assess and report
- **Resources** available to faculty— how to seek assistance where necessary
- **Appendices**— forms, samples, history, UAC procedures, the “Core,” etc.

## II. Design of the CCAP

### A. What is assessment?

Academic assessment is a form of action research intended to assist the University and its faculty with improvement of practice and, by extension, student learning. The goal isn't to make generalizations to other institutions or higher education in general. The CCAP plan follows the four basic steps of action research: plan, act, observe, and reflect (Suskie, 2009). These steps will be outlined further in this section. Academic assessment differs from institutional assessment in that the purposes of the two (although perhaps to achieve a common goal of

continuous improvement) are different. Academic assessment’s purpose is to establish clear and measurable (observable) student learning outcomes.

Assessment occurs at both the program (major) and course levels, depending on the needs of the individual institution. At UNH, all departments are responsible for creating a CCAP plan for each degree program and therefore, assessment is taking place at the program level.

Assessment for the Core Curriculum at UNH takes place first at the course level, so contributing departments are responsible for creating a suitable assessment plan. These plans are components of a campus-wide Core assessment process.

## B. A Common Language

Consistent with the logic of continuous improvement systems, the premise of the CCAP is that a program should lead to identifiable outcomes in terms of student competence and that those outcomes may be measured through predetermined methods. In order to contribute to a comprehensive and coordinated University-wide process, all programs must adopt a common nomenclature and general procedure. Within that framework, however, it is acknowledged that programs/courses will vary in both their key outcomes and in the nature of their measurements.

While the language of assessment is imprecise and potentially confusing, the UNH community adopts the following definitions in order to standardize terminology and ease communication:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
Objectives	<u>For a Program</u> : Statements describing the expected <i>accomplishments of graduates the first few years after graduation.</i>	Graduates of the Psychology program will secure employment within the field or enroll in a graduate-level program.
	<u>For a Course</u> : Statements describing the expected accomplishments of students <i>following course completion.</i>	Upon successful completion of the Research Methods course, students will complete an independent study or work as a research assistant.
Outcomes	<u>For a Program</u> : Statements describing what students are <i>expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation.</i>	Graduates of the Psychology program will be able to apply the psychoanalytic, Gestalt, behaviorist, humanistic and cognitive approaches to psychology to the solution of a problem.
	<u>For a Course</u> : Statements describing what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of <i>course completion.</i>	Upon completion of the course, students will be able to identify the key features of foundational psychological concepts.
Performance Criteria	Specific, <i>measurable</i> statements identifying the performance required to meet the outcome, as confirmed through evidence.	Graduates of the program will earn a minimum of 80% on a research paper that requires students to explain a psychological phenomenon using a minimum of two approaches to psychology.
Assessment	Processes that <i>identify, collect, analyze, and report data</i> that can be used to evaluate achievement	Student performance will be calculated using a Psychology department research paper rubric

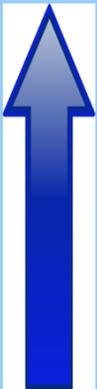
		created by the faculty.
Evaluation	Process of <i>reviewing the results of data collection and analysis</i> and making a determination of the value of findings and actions to be taken	If results of the research paper assess reveal that graduates are earning less than 80%, faculty will discuss...
Based on Rogers, G, <i>The language of assessment</i> , in <a href="http://www.abet.org">Communications Link</a> , www.abet.org.		

One noteworthy exception to the established terminology above is the nomenclature used by the College of Business in relation to the requirements of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). In the AACSB system, the term “Goals” substitutes for Objectives and no post-graduation outcomes are required. Objectives are still required for the UNH CCAP system; however, the College of Business application of the CCAP system uses a format that introduces the term “Goals” between Objectives and Outcomes.

### C. Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom’s taxonomy is a classification of cognitive skills developed by educational psychologists (see Table 1 below). A key feature of Bloom’s taxonomy is the ability to distinguish among types of learning along a hierarchical continuum beginning with lower order thinking skills such as remembering and understanding, and progressing toward higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, applying, evaluating, and creating. Bloom’s taxonomy is useful for developing learning outcomes and assessments; specifically, the action verbs (Table 1, Column IV) associated with each category of learning can be used to compose concrete (i.e., observable and measureable) learning objectives and outcomes. For example, rather than stating that “students can understand foundational concepts in biology,” an instructor might indicate that “students can identify the key features of foundational biology concepts” or “the student can explain the processes related to these concepts.” Similarly, the action verbs and descriptions (Table 1, Column III) can be used to create assessments with specific levels of thinking in mind. For example, if an instructor asks a student to summarize a research article, s/he would be assessing lower levels of learning than if s/he asked the student to critique the research article.

Table 1: Bloom's Taxonomy (Revised)

I. Level	II. Category (Taxonomy)	III. Description	IV. Action Verbs for Objectives and Outcomes
<p>Higher Order Thinking Skills</p>  <p>Lower Order Thinking Skills</p>	<b>Creating</b>	Can the student create new product or point of view?	assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write.
	<b>Evaluating</b>	Can the student justify a stand or decision?	appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate
	<b>Applying</b>	Can the student use the information in a new way?	choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use.
	<b>Analyzing</b>	Can the student distinguish among the different parts?	appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test.
	<b>Understanding</b>	Can the student explain ideas or concepts?	classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase
	<b>Remembering</b>	Can the student recall or remember the information?	define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce state

(from [http://ww2.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms\\_taxonomy.htm](http://ww2.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm))

Table 2 presents a broader sample of action verbs relating to all six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

As a general rule, Core Curriculum courses are expected to emphasize foundational (lower level) cognitive skills as are introductory courses in the majors. As students progress through their degree programs (majors), higher level cognitive skills should be emphasized (see Table 2).

Table 2: Approximate Correspondence of Course-level with Bloom's Taxonomy

400-Level Courses												
300-Level Courses												
200-Level Courses												
100-Level Courses												
Knowledge	Comprehension		Application		Analysis		Synthesize		Resolution	Evaluate		
Count	Account for	Review	Act	Instruct	Analyze	Point out	Adapt	Invent	Answer	Appraise	Summarize (relative merit)	
Describe (data)	Classify	Rewrite	Administer	Make use of	Break down	Prioritize	Anticipate	Make up	Ascertain	Argue	Support	
Draw	Clarify	Reword	Apply	Manipulate	Categorize	Recognize	Arrange	Model	Certify	Assess	Weigh	
Enumerate	Cite	Summarize	Articulate	Modify	Catalog	Relate	Articulate	Modify	Confirm	Choose		
Expound	Comprehend	Trace	Assess	Operate	Characterize	Research	Categorize	Negotiate	Decide	Compare		
Expose	Conclude	Translate	Calculate	Paint	Classify	Scrutinize	Collaborate	Organize	Decipher	Conclude		
Find	Convert	Understand	Change	Participate	Compare	Search	Combine	Perform	Determine	Contrast (values)		
Identify	Convey		Chart	Predict	Contrast	Select	Communicate	Plan	Establish	Criticize		
Label	Defend		Choose	Prepare	Correlate	Separate	Compare	Pretend	Find out	Critique		
List	Describe		Collect	Produce	Debate	Subdivide	Compile	Produce	Prove	Decide		
Match	Discuss		Compute	Provide	Deduce	Survey	Compose	Progress	Quantify	Defend		
Name	Distinguish (the unrelated)		Construct	Relate	Diagram	Trace	Conceptualize	Produce	Resolve	Describe (ideas)		
Outline	Elucidate		Contribute	Report	Discover		Construct	Propose	Show	Discriminate (values)		
Read	Estimate		Control	Select	Deconstruct		Contrast	Organize	Solve	Estimate		
Recall	Explain (meaning)		Demonstrate	Show	Delineate		Contribute	Rearrange	Test	Evaluate		
Recite	Express		Determine	Solve	Differentiate		Control	Reconcile	Validate	Explain		
Recognize	Generalize		Develop	Transfer	Discern		Create	Reconstruct	Verify	Gauge		
Record	Give Examples		Discover	Utilize	Discriminate (facts)		Design	Recreate		Interpret		
Reproduce	Illuminate		Dramatize	Use	Distinguish		Develop	Reinforce		Judge		
Select	Illustrate		Draw	Workout	Examine		Devise	Relate		Justify		
Sequence	Infer		Employ		Explore		Explain (linkages)	Reorganize		Measure		
Specify	Interpret		Establish		Focus		Express	Reproduce		Predict		
State	Locate		Explicit		Identify		Facilitate	Revise		Prioritize		
Tell	Make sense of		Extend		Illustrate		Formulate	Rewrite		Prove		
View	Paraphrase		Imitate		Infer		Generate	Structure		Qualify		
Write	Predict		Implement		Isolate		Incorporate	Substitute		Rank		
	Report		Interview		Investigate		Individualize	Summarize		Reframe		
	Restate		Include		Limit		Initiate	Synthesize		Select		
	Reveal		Inform		Outline		Integrate	Theorize				

## D. Formative v. Summative Assessment

The use of both formative and summative assessments is important for student learning. Formative assessment occurs *during* the learning process, allowing the instructor to gauge students' comprehension in order to provide feedback and/or modify learning activities in response to strengths/weaknesses. Examples of formative assessments are: in-class activities, homework assignments, quizzes on reading assignments, first draft of papers, etc. Illustrating the use of formative assessment, an instructor may have students solve problems and submit their answers during a lecture. Using classroom clickers is an example of formative assessment using technology to rapidly tabulate student responses. Results of formative assessments allow the instructor to provide targeted explanations to address any misconceptions that are evidenced in student responses. Also, results may lead the instructor to assign additional homework, review material that s/he had not intended to review, introduce supplemental readings into the course, etc. Formative assessments are low stakes, meaning that if the assessments are graded, they are typically weighted a minimal amount in the course grading scheme.

Conversely, summative assessment occurs at the end of an instructional unit (as defined by the instructor and may vary by course/program) and is used to determine the extent to which student have achieved specific learning outcomes. Examples of summative assessments are: midterm and final examinations, final papers, licensing exams, supervisor's final internship evaluations. Summative assessments are high stakes for the student and typically carry a significant weight when calculating course grades.

At the program level, formative assessment may provide useful information to faculty and department chairs regarding student mastery of learning outcomes. Faculty may wish to establish formative assessments via prerequisite coursework to ensure that students will carry forward the necessary prior knowledge needed to succeed in upper-division program courses. At the program level, formative assessment may translate into a final examination given at the conclusion of a 100-level introductory course—an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of essential student learning outcomes necessary to proceed in the program. In addition, formative assessments provide information about students who attrite and afford decision-makers an opportunity to address any issues that are uncovered. Then, a capstone course may serve as a method of summative assessment at the program level, where students are expected to demonstrate achievement of all program outcomes. Other examples of summative assessment for a program include internship site supervisor evaluation, new employer survey, and new graduate survey. No matter which type of assessment is being used, it is important to make the choice that best fits the question that is being asked. Assistance with selected assessments is provided through the Office of Academic Assessment.

## E. Course Grades v. Learning Outcomes Assessments

Grades are awarded upon the completion of courses based on student achievement measures as outlined by the course syllabus. While institution-wide grading systems exist, individual student performance is measured based on an instructor's defined grading system and how s/he chooses to weight certain assignments, assessments, or other graded performance items. At the end of a course, an instructor is able to report about student learning on an individual basis by assigning a grade. In contrast, assessment of student learning outcomes is

based on an entire cohort of students and how they are learning. Course grades are insufficient for assessment primarily because they provide no information regarding what exactly the student(s) did or did not learn. In addition, course grades may measure students on other criteria that a faculty member deems important regarding the learning process. For example, instructors may choose to grade students based on participation, preparedness, or attendance. This does not mean that course grades cannot be used for assessment; they may serve as indirect evidence and can be used if the grades are based on summative assessments that are linked directly to learning goals. For example, a final course grade in a capstone course that is based solely on the student's performance on a program exit exam can be used to assess student learning at the program level.

Student learning outcome assessment is standardized across all students in a program or all sections of a particular course. Simply looking at the distribution of course grades or GPAs for students in a particular program of study is not sufficient. This information will not allow the University to report about student learning in specific areas that are deemed most important. Also, while assessment is considered action research and not empirical research, it is still necessary to ensure that methods are routine and universally applied within a department to limit the potential for bias. It is important to note, however, that some grades may serve as a piece of data for assessment. For example, if a grade on a particular assignment is derived from a rubric that is clearly linked to student outcomes, those grades may be used for assessment purposes.

## F. Elements and Features of Program Assessment Plans

**Elements of a CCAP.** In general, assessment is more successful if it is clearly outlined and planned in advance. A department or program's assessment plan and resulting assessment reports can serve a number of functions:

- *External representation of institutional memory.* Valuable information can be lost as members of the department change roles, go on sabbatical, move to another university, retire, or simply do not recall the challenges, successes, explanations for decisions, solutions to problems, etc., that have occurred through the assessment process. Assessment plans and reports document these processes for future members and leaders of the department.
- *Shared departmental vision.* An assessment plan allows all departmental members to share an understanding of the department's assessment vision. Faculty can comment on and question the plan from an informed standpoint. Faculty are aware of how their courses and educational practices fit in with the rest of the curriculum and what their roles are with regard to assessment.
- *Resource for new and adjunct faculty.* An assessment plan is an efficient means of communicating a department's assessment activities and educational practices to new and adjunct faculty. These faculty do not need to wait for a committee meeting nor do they need to rely on piecemeal information which may leave them with an incomplete or inaccurate depiction of the department's assessment activities.
- *Sharing best practices.* Departments can share their assessment plans with each other and, in doing so, share successful approaches to assessment, creative solutions to overcoming obstacles to assessment, innovative changes made to curriculum and instruction to improve student learning, etc.
- *External audiences.* An assessment plan demonstrates to accrediting and funding agencies, parents, students, and others that the department has thought through the

assessment process and is committed to assessing student learning and to improving the teaching and learning process in the department. Assessment reports document evidence of student learning as well as the improvements that have been made to educational opportunities.

**Components of a CCAP.** An assessment plan has four parts:

1. *Objectives*: statements describing the expected accomplishments of students after program completion.
2. *Outcomes*: statements describing competencies—what students are expected to know and about able to do upon successful completion of the program.
3. *Sources of data*: student work products, sometimes called assessment artifacts, such as papers, exams, projects, or other gradable items through which students can demonstrate their level of proficiency in achieving one or more learning outcomes.
4. *Assessment criteria*: specific, measurable statements identifying the performance required to meet the outcome, as confirmed through evidence.

“Section III: How to use the CCAP System” provides details regarding each component of an assessment plan including recommended best practices that can be applied when creating a CCAP.

## G. Elements and Features of Course Assessment Plans for the Core

As of Fall 2013, the Core Curriculum is undergoing substantial revision, including the Core categories, their learning outcomes, and mechanisms to manage its assessment. A subsequent version of this guide will include instructions on crafting core assessment plans and interacting with the committees charged with its oversight.



...stay tuned!

## III. How to Use the CCAP System

### A. Creating Objectives and Outcomes

Learning objectives and outcomes are the foundation of an academic program and determine which educational opportunities should be provided to students (e.g., curriculum, co-curriculum, learning supports). Review the section titled “A Common Language” on page 6 for the definition of objectives and outcomes adopted by UNH. It is important that objectives/outcomes are created at the discretion of the program faculty and are aligned with the program’s mission, values, priorities, and discipline. Useful activities may include review of documents including:

- program philosophy
- background
- educational objectives
- expectations for students
- college/program mission statement
- college/program website
- self-study documents
- annual reports
- program reviews
- recruiting materials
- employer surveys
- industry advisor board meeting minutes
- course-level objectives via syllabi.

Some departments may find that a meeting with program faculty and chairs can serve as a brainstorming session to begin this process. The following chart includes suggestions to begin the conversation regarding creation of outcomes and objectives (from <http://wac.colostate.edu/llad/v6n1/carter.pdf>).

## **Questions for Brainstorming Objectives and Outcomes**

**Imagine an ideal graduate from your program. What kinds of skills, knowledge, or other attributes characterize that graduate?**

**What is it that attracts students to this program?**

**What value does this program offer a student?**

**How do you know whether your students possess the kinds of abilities, knowledge, skills, and attributes you expect of them?**

**What kinds of assignments or other activities do people in this program use to encourage the kinds of abilities, knowledge, and skills you have identified?**

**What is it that distinguishes this program from related programs in the university?**

**Is there anything about your program that makes it stand out from other similar programs?**

**What kinds of research methodologies are people in this field expected to perform?**

**Oftentimes, disciplines are defined by ways of thinking. What does it mean to think like a person in this discipline?**

**What kinds of jobs do students in this field generally take?**

**What kinds of skills are appropriate to jobs in this field?**

**How do you know whether students possess those skills?**

**What advantages does a student in this program have on the job?**

**What sorts of speaking and writing do professionals in this field do on the job?**

**What sorts of speaking and writing do students do in their classes?**

**Are there any particular types of communication that people in this field are expected to master?**

If your department chooses to have a brainstorming meeting, it is recommended to type up the notes soon thereafter while it is still possible to elaborate where notes may require more detail. While reviewing the notes, the goal is to determine major themes that emerge—these themes will be the basis upon which the program outcomes are formed. Points that were emphasized by faculty or key words that keep coming up will shape into a theme. If there are

several themes that emerge, take care to arrange them in order of importance based on the faculty feedback. Some themes can be combined where appropriate. Once you have a final list of themes (sometimes call goals), formal objectives and outcomes are then written.

The next step is to draft outcomes and objectives that the program faculty will readily see as reflective of their own program. This means identifying the broader values or goals which become objectives, and the detailed information about each, which become outcomes. To be clear—outcomes should describe what students should be able to do or what they should know by the time of graduation; objectives should address the expected accomplishments of students during the first few years after graduation. Each outcome should describe how a student will be different upon completion of their learning experience; when possible, be industry specific. Guiding questions may be: What will they take with them after graduation and what will they contribute to their field of study? When creating objectives and outcomes, recall the importance of moving from concepts to action verbs and the need to go beyond understanding and focus on observable action. Refer to the table on pages 6-7 of this manual for suggested action verbs as well as examples of each.

## B. Collecting and Analyzing Data

Data sources are student work products, sometimes called assessment artifacts, such as papers, exams, projects or performances through which students can demonstrate their level of proficiency in achieving one or more learning outcomes. As with objectives and outcomes, there is a great deal of flexibility in developing this part of the assessment plan. Data sources used to collect information on student performance (i.e., evidence of student learning) and the methods by which data are collected will vary by program. Programs must determine which data sources (assessment vehicles) will give them information which addresses their student learning goals; in other words, they must choose sources providing evidence that students are learning what is expected of them. These decisions will be based on the particular objectives and outcomes established by the program, the needs and preferences of faculty, the structure of the curriculum, the discipline, and other considerations. The sources of assessment data for use in a program CCAP plan or course assessment plan should be chosen so as to yield the most directly useful information. The following table represents various items for consideration:

Possible Data Sources		
Alumni Surveys	Student Exit Surveys	Employer Surveys
Student Presentations	Writing Samples	Student Projects
Team Projects/Presentations	Placement Exams	Graduate School Acceptances
Portfolio Evaluations	Exit Interviews	Lab Reports
Reflection Papers	Bb Discussion Forums	Standardized Achievement Tests
Theses/dissertations	Internship reports	ASL Project Reports
Guided self-assessments	Comprehensive exams (grad)	Case analyses
Journals, reflective diaries		

Among these options, there are still choices to be made, so these guidelines should be considered:

- a) Where possible, two or more data sources should be consulted for each learning outcome. It is a good idea to use various sources that offer different perspectives on the competency being assessed. Consider using both qualitative and quantitative assessments in the appraisal of a particular outcome. See discussion of triangulation below.
- b) All programs should expect to use the results of the annual Alumni Survey conducted by the Office of Academic Assessment.
- c) For all graduate programs, and for those undergraduate programs that require a capstone experience or course, that experience should be emphasized in the assessment plan. Examples might include theses, internship reports, reflective assignments, comprehensive exams, and pre-licensure exams.
- d) It is desirable to begin assessing some competencies early in the program and again later in the program. This also assists in detecting where weaknesses exist in a program in the event the summative assessments indicate problems have arisen. See section “Formative v. Summative Assessment.”

Regardless of the data source chosen, the assessment must be detailed enough to clearly demonstrate alignment with learning goals. This most often requires the use of a detailed scoring guide called a *rubric* or *exam blueprint*. Most faculty already use scoring criteria, though they may not use the term “rubric”. Furthermore, faculty within the same program will often find that they share (albeit implicitly) the same criteria for assessing student success on an assignment. A more detailed discussion of assessment criteria is presented in the next section.

**Course embedded v. Add-on.** The method for obtaining data sources can be *course-embedded* (i.e., the measure is a regular course assignment, such as a final exam or paper) or *add-on* (such as an exit exam or project that is external to a specific course). No matter which method is chosen, it is expected that the assessments can demonstrate what *all* students are achieving in terms of the outcomes set by the program. In other words, evidence of student learning should be collected for all majors (or a representative sample), not just for a specific subset of majors (e.g., honors students). Some more detailed options for collecting assessment data are presented below.

- All majors participate in a senior seminar which includes a course-embedded assessment (e.g. substantial research paper assessed using a rubric). This paper addresses all or most learning outcomes (e.g., method of inquiry, knowledge base, communication, use of technology).
- An array of advanced departmental courses are designated “W” (writing) or “C” (culminating) courses. Each major is required to complete at least one of these courses in which their learning is assessed (via rubric or other detailed assessment technique).
- All majors enroll in several advanced core courses. Each course addresses a different learning goal (e.g., statistics, theory, writing). A separate assessment vehicle is designated for each course as a measure of student learning for each learning outcome.

- Majors take a licensing exam (add-on method), and the department receives specific feedback on each item or section. Items are aligned with one or more departmental goals. The specific feedback allows the department to identify aggregate student strengths and weaknesses which can then be addressed at the level of educational opportunities (e.g., curriculum, instruction, academic supports).
- All majors are required to pass an exit exam which comprises items that are aligned with the program’s major learning goals (add-on method).

**Sampling.** In some cases, a program may have a large number of students to assess. In order to make assessment manageable and sustainable, a program may choose to sample student work (or other data sources) rather than assessing the population. The first step in the sampling process is to determine the full population of students to be assessed—a list of all students in the program you would like to assess with regard to a given learning outcome. For example, this list might contain all students enrolled in a core required course, all seniors graduating in a particular semester, or all students specializing in a certain concentration. There are a number of statistical procedures that can be used to sample student work, but most important is that the sample should be random to ensure a representative sample of all student performance levels. There is no set percentage that is appropriate for a sample. The size of the sample (e.g., 20%, 30%, 50% of the population) will depend on the overall population size. Generally speaking, the smaller the size of the population, the larger the percentage of the population would be needed to create a representative sample. The goal of random sampling is to ensure generalizability to the population in question. To illustrate this point, consider the following example. There are 200 students enrolled in an undergraduate psychology program; the department chair and faculty choose to assess a random sample comprised of 50 students (25%). The sample should be representative of all students enrolled in the program based on demographic factors (e.g. traditional-age, full-time). The closer the sample matches the population, the greater level of generalizability when interpreting assessment results.

**Triangulation.** As mentioned prior, it is desirable to use a minimum of two data sources per outcome to provide additional data for analysis. The use of more than one method for gathering data is a form of triangulation and is intended to increase validity. Triangulation can also refer to the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods when gathering data. In either case, the goal of triangulation is to provide more information and, therefore, allow greater confidence in findings. In the context of CCAPs, departments/programs are encouraged to use more than one data source for assessing student mastery of a specific outcome. Consider the following example. A department conducts a survey (self-report) with all recent graduates who have secured employment; the employer also responds to a survey requesting they rank the UNH graduate on several competencies. Assuming the surveys are directly linked to student outcomes, the department’s CCAP may compare results of the graduate and employer surveys. Then, conclusions regarding student learning are the result of triangulating both data sources. If the two data sources produce similar results, confidence levels increase. Conversely, if results from multiple data sources are dissimilar, faculty can discuss each method and potential shortcomings of the assessment.

### C. Criteria and Using Rubrics

Though in some cases student performance is assessed as “pass/fail,” the vast majority of student work is not characterized as an “all or none” performance. On the contrary, student

performance may commonly be categorized along a continuum (e.g., unacceptable, developing, proficient, superior). Faculty are familiar with this concept of ranked assessment in the form of giving grades. However, assessment, as described in the context of CCAP, provides an even more refined approach to evaluating student performance with the goal of identifying the specific strengths and weaknesses of student performance in greater detail than that which is allowed by a global assignment or exam grade. This more detailed assessment relies on explicit categories – or criteria – which break down an assignment (or other student work product) into its component parts. For example, a research paper may be composed of several components including conducting a literature review; defining research questions; describing methods; analyzing data; and presenting findings, conclusions, and implications for future research. An overall grade of “B” or score of 85/100 on such a research paper would indicate that a student performed fairly well on this task, but does not give the kind of targeted information that would allow the instructor to determine in which specific area(s) performance might be lacking. Obtaining more detailed information could reveal a pattern of performance across students (e.g., many students had difficulty defining clear research questions) that would allow the instructor to enhance learning opportunities to better support students in this area (see section “Making Improvements Based on CCAP Reviews”).

One method for organizing and applying criteria to assess student work products is a rubric—a scoring tool that is used to clearly outline the performance expectations for any assignment. A rubric features more than one level of mastery with specific descriptions of the characteristics that would qualify a piece of work for each level. No matter the type of assignment (e.g. research paper, group project) rubrics can be tailored to fit the needs of the instructor. For summative assessments, rubrics can be used as scoring or grading guides. For formative assessments, they easily provide feedback regarding student performance and the learning process that is ongoing. Example rubrics are available through the Academic Assessment course in Blackboard.

Both faculty and students can benefit from the use of rubrics. For faculty, they provide assistance with consistent and fair grading across students, courses and programs. For students, rubrics provide explicit criteria that a student must meet to master a particular assignment and even provide the individual and opportunity for self-review prior to submission. When students have detailed information regarding expectations, faculty feedback is generally easy to review and incorporate. From both perspectives, student strengths and weaknesses can easily be identified to inform teaching and learning practices.

#### **D. Incorporating Agency Requirements**

Many of the programs at the University must also incorporate the agency requirements for programmatic or college accreditation. The CCAP was designed with accreditation regulations in mind; however, the resulting templates cannot be considered a panacea. The CCAP does not force departments to stray from systems that have been implemented previously and have a history of documenting student learning. Rather, the CCAP may assist departments lacking a formal system or complement systems that are specific to a particular external constituency. Results from the CCAP may be reported in aggregate as a measure of institutional effectiveness; therefore, all departments/programs, regardless of accreditation agency requirements, should report CCAP data as requested via the template provided. Alterations to CCAP forms by department/program may be made in consultation with the Office of Academic Assessment. For example, the College of Business uses an adapted version of the CCAP template which aligns with the requirements of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of

Business (AACSB). Another difference may arise concerning sampling; it is possible that an accrediting agency requires assessment efforts to include all students (e.g. ABET) while the CCAP only requires a sample.

### **E. Guide for Storing Artifacts**

At this time, departments may store assessment artifacts/student work products in a variety of ways. While the institution works to establish a systematic, computerized system for storage, you may contact Kristy Huntley, Director of Academic Assessment for assistance.

### **F. Alumni Survey Data**

The Office of Academic Assessment conducts an Alumni Survey each year to support the CCAP as well as the needs of other offices requiring such information (e.g. Career Development). The results of the Survey are available to all faculty involved in conducting academic assessment through CampusLabs. The survey is conducted typically in the late spring (May-June) targeting all alumni who received a UNH degree or certificate 1 year and 5 years prior. For example, the spring 2013 survey included those who graduated in the class of 2012 (both January and May) and those in the class of 2007 (both January and May). The survey is conducted electronically using email addresses supplied by the Office of Alumni Relations. The survey uses an “ID token” system so that when responses are submitted they are linked to a student’s identity in the UNH database and majors can be identified. If a student has multiple UNH credentials, their responses are associated with the most recent UNH degree. If the student had a double major, the responses are associated with the less populous of the two majors.

The survey is designed based on the reporting needs of various administrative offices and the structure of the CCAP assessment plans that require alumni data. It collects data such as:

- Current employment
- Professional license or certification
- Nature of their current position and its relationship to their UNH major
- Continuing education
- Evaluation of UNH education and preparation
- Satisfaction with their UNH education, overall and in major
- Evaluation of preparation in specific areas, the nature of which tracks with the learning outcomes for the Core and most agencies
- Participation in experiential education and perceived benefit
- Open-ended items on useful features of their UNH education and those things they would recommend changing
- Demographic information (e.g. gender, ethnicity, international status).

The results of this survey (particularly when reported by major) are expected to be widely usable and informative, as virtually all CCAPs include objectives such as employment or further graduate study, and that there is considerable convergence among overarching learning outcomes. As noted elsewhere in this Manual, this Survey should be considered as one data source for use by all programs.

### **G. Planning Assessment Reviews**

A thorough and thoughtful CCAP is a guide for a process that is ongoing and cyclical. The enterprise of assessment doesn’t have to burden faculty when planned and executed with

foresight and purpose. The following hints should dispel erroneous assumptions about the CCAP system (or any similar assessment system) and provide useful guidance to faculty.

1. Some organized assessment activity should occur every year. The assessment activity should be scheduled at a time during the year when faculty are available and a high turnout is expected. In most cases, it is desirable to schedule “assessment days” during which students can be gathered to provide materials and faculty can be scheduled to conduct organized assessment activities.
2. It is not necessary to focus on all learning outcomes every year. In fact, it is a common practice to focus on only one or two outcomes each year and then cycle through the total collection of outcomes on a multi-year cycle.
3. It is not necessary to evaluate assessment data from all students every time; in fact, it is common practice to sample the total archived data. (Refer to the “Sampling” section of this manual).
4. It is not necessary to move through the learning outcomes in the CCAP in any prescribed order. In fact, the faculty may have suspicions that a given learning outcome is weak and choose to begin there in an effort to determine if the suspicion was accurate and, if so, how to begin addressing it.
5. It is not necessary to evaluate each program independently. This often introduces redundancy into the process that is tiresome and not usually productive. In fact, it is common for assessment processes to be guided by a college-level or department-level plan that focuses on identical or similar learning outcomes shared in common by a number of programs. Actually, in some cases, the data will be essentially identical because they are collected from the same sources with many majors contributing work samples. In addition, as mentioned prior, programs with concentrations may use one CCAP, assuming that the key student learning outcomes are essentially the same across concentrations. A CCAP for a concentration is optional unless additional student outcomes exist.
6. It is not necessary to assess all work samples collected at the time they are collected. In fact, the most efficient methods involve archiving work samples from targeted assignments and courses—often using online methods—to be stored until the faculty are ready to evaluate the learning outcome to which the work relates. All faculty, including adjuncts, can be trained to deposit these artifacts for later use. (Refer to section “Guide for Storing Artifacts”).
7. It is not necessary to repeat the initial grading of assignments in order to conduct an assessment. The rubrics devised for assessment purposes are typically different than the considerations used when grading assignments during the course. For example, the original assignment rubric may include deductions for timeliness of the submission whereas the assignment rubric does not. A little practice makes the use of a rubric routine and familiar.

## **H. Submitting a CCAP Plan**

Once the department designs an initial CCAP draft, the plan can be submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment via email. The Office of Academic Assessment will have the opportunity to review and offer recommendations for revisions. The Director of Academic Assessment is available for individual consultation with chairs/directors during all points of the CCAP process. See Section V: Resources for more information.

## I. Making Improvements Based on CCAP Reviews

Data from student learning assessments are aggregated and results are shared among program faculty for discussion and feedback in faculty committees, meetings, workshops, retreats, etc. Results are used to identify patterns in student performance— strengths and weaknesses regarding what students have and have not learned. Program faculty (the most knowledgeable individuals regarding their discipline, their curriculum, their expected learning outcomes, and their students) can then brainstorm regarding possible explanations for the observed results and calibrate the program's response accordingly. For instance:

- *Faculty can recognize and appreciate their students' successes.* Given high levels of student achievement on a particular outcome, faculty can determine if it would be appropriate to challenge students further.
- *Suggestions can be made to address student weaknesses.* Depending on the proposed explanation for student weaknesses, faculty may choose to implement a variety of interventions such as additional assignments, courses, or academic supports (such as tutoring). Faculty may also choose to employ innovative instructional methods, curriculum or co-curricular opportunities.
- *Decisions can be made regarding the appropriateness of program outcomes.* Are they too challenging? Not challenging enough? Still aligned with the program's mission? However, please note that learning outcomes should drive curriculum, not vice versa.
- *Faculty can adapt the curriculum or standards to better align with program outcomes.* Does the curriculum offer sufficient opportunities for students to learn what is expected? Are there consistent expectations and standards across different sections of the same course?
- *Faculty can discuss the appropriateness and usefulness of the assessment activities that are being conducted.* Are the current assessment instruments capturing information that is useful? Are the assessment instruments (e.g. rubrics) aligned with course objectives and program goals?

The goals of assessment (improvement and accountability) may be more specific and vary from department to department. Each may decide to use their assessment data in different ways. Assessment results can address many questions including: (1) Are your students meeting your standards? (2) How do your students compare to peers? (3) Are you students improving? (4) Is your program improving? The department, as part of their assessment plan, should decide how results will be used over time. Benchmarking is helpful particularly when there are programs similar to yours within a close geographic area.

## J. Use of CCAP Data for PPREP Reports

The Periodic Program Review and Evaluation Plan (PPREP) is a comprehensive review of a program or family of programs conducted on a rolling 6-year cycle. Generally, the schedule of PPREP reviews times this internal review to follow closely after an agency review where an agency's accreditation applies. The PPREP system calls for a self-study conducted by the participating faculty, supplemented by a report by external reviewers, and culminating in an action plan agreed to by the faculty and administration. The purpose is continuous improvement and assuring the necessary resources are marshaled to permit improvements. The PPREP review will encompass all aspects of the program—curriculum, students, faculty, facilities, budget, administration, the assessment processes, and so on. It will also consider whatever results and recommendations flowed from agency reviews, where applicable. The PPREP system assumes

that the self-study will include results from curriculum assessments conducted under the CCAP system. It is not expected that a comprehensive set of data will be included, but rather the following general questions should be addressed:

1. How was the CCAP system applied to assess the program(s)?
2. What were the findings of the CCAP assessments since the last comprehensive review?
3. What changes were made as a result of the CCAP assessment? Were they effective?
4. What changes or improvements suggested by the CCAP review remain to be implemented?

In most cases, the annual reports submitted to the UAC relating to the program(s) in question will suffice as these reports address these issues. In some cases, where specific recommendations are made for program improvement, additional data and narrative can be included from CCAP assessments.

## **K. Preparing and Submitting Annual Reports**

Preparing and implementing a CCAP is only part of the continuous quality improvement process. Perhaps the most important part of this process is the review of CCAP data and use of the results to inform departmental practice in the future. To that end, each year departments will prepare and submit an annual report detailing how the CCAP plan was implemented, discoveries made, and data-driven improvements made. A template is used (available from the Assessment Office) when preparing an annual report and includes the follow components:

1. Identification of program objectives/outcomes
2. Department assessment objectives (prior year and next year)
3. Important findings
4. Curricular changes (if any)
5. Identification of program/department overlap (e.g. shared objectives)
6. Impact on Core Curriculum
7. Obstacles (if any)
8. Feedback regarding CCAP process

It is recommended that annual reports be shared with all department constituents including chairs, deans, full- and part-time faculty prior to submission. This can be done during the final department/faculty meeting of the fall semester, allowing for comment and/or discussion prior to submission.

Annual Reports will be submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment via email. Upon review, the University Assessment Committee may request additional information or make recommendations for revision. The final version of the report will be stored as part of an assessment repository for future reference.

## **L. Publication of Data**

Both marketing needs and accreditation requirements necessitate the publication of many elements of our assessment plan and its results. These requirements stem from both the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation standard on public disclosure and the federal government's regulations regarding financial aid. The University's catalogs and website must include each program's formally adopted objectives and learning outcomes as well as those for general education (the "Core Curriculum" at UNH). These will be

taken from the program's current CCAP document on file in the Office of Academic Assessment.

NEASC requires submission of standardized forms with each regular review (5-year interim and 10-year comprehensive) and with any other focused report required by the Commission for Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE). These Student Success Forms call for a list of the programs' sources of assessment data, a description of the process applied, and an overview of changes made to the curriculum as a result of assessment. Those programs with specialized agency accreditation must identify key issues presented in their most recent review. For all programs, and for the University as a whole, annualized data must be presented on rates of retention, graduation, job placement (or other mission-related outcomes), relevant licensures, and for satisfaction of certain learning outcome expectations as required by professional agencies, if any. Much of this information is collected "behind the scenes" by the Office of Institutional Research. Other data can be gleaned from the annual Alumni Survey conducted by the Office of Academic Assessment and any collected by department/college. The remaining information relating to learning outcomes must be produced through the ongoing CCAP assessment system. For these reasons, it is imperative that responsive systems of record-keeping are maintained so that timely and complete queries are possible. Therefore, it is expected that all current CCAPs and assessment evidence will be available and easily accessible when needed.

### **M. Revision of an Approved CCAP Plan**

Based on assessment results, a department may choose to revise a CCAP. Ultimately, a CCAP can be revised at any time and submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment; in fact, a department may choose to incorporate revision of the CCAP into their assessment process. One area that a department/program may wish to revise after initial implementation is the timeline/order for assessing particular outcomes. There may be compelling reasons to add an outcome to the next cycle based on an area of concern or at the request of an external accrediting body. CCAPs should be thought of as documents that guide, not dictate, the process of assessment within each department. Flexibility is important and revisions are expected. An important step in the revision process is submission to the Office of Academic Assessment as it is imperative for the most recent version of a department/program's CCAP to remain on file.

## **IV. Resources**

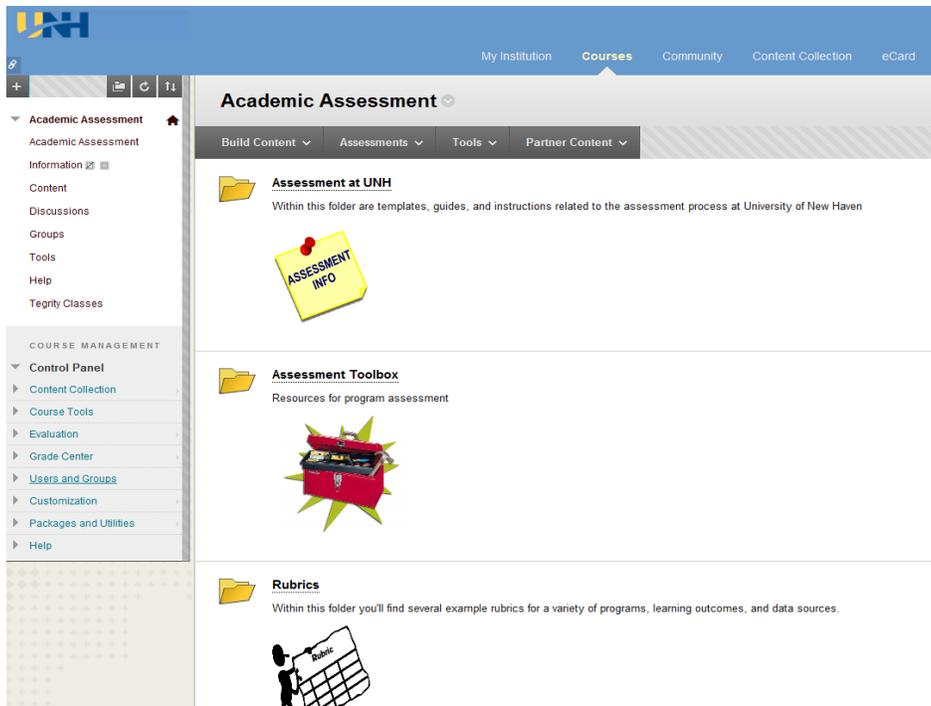
### **A. Office of Academic Assessment**

The Office of Academic Assessment is available for assistance with all aspects of the CCAP system including:

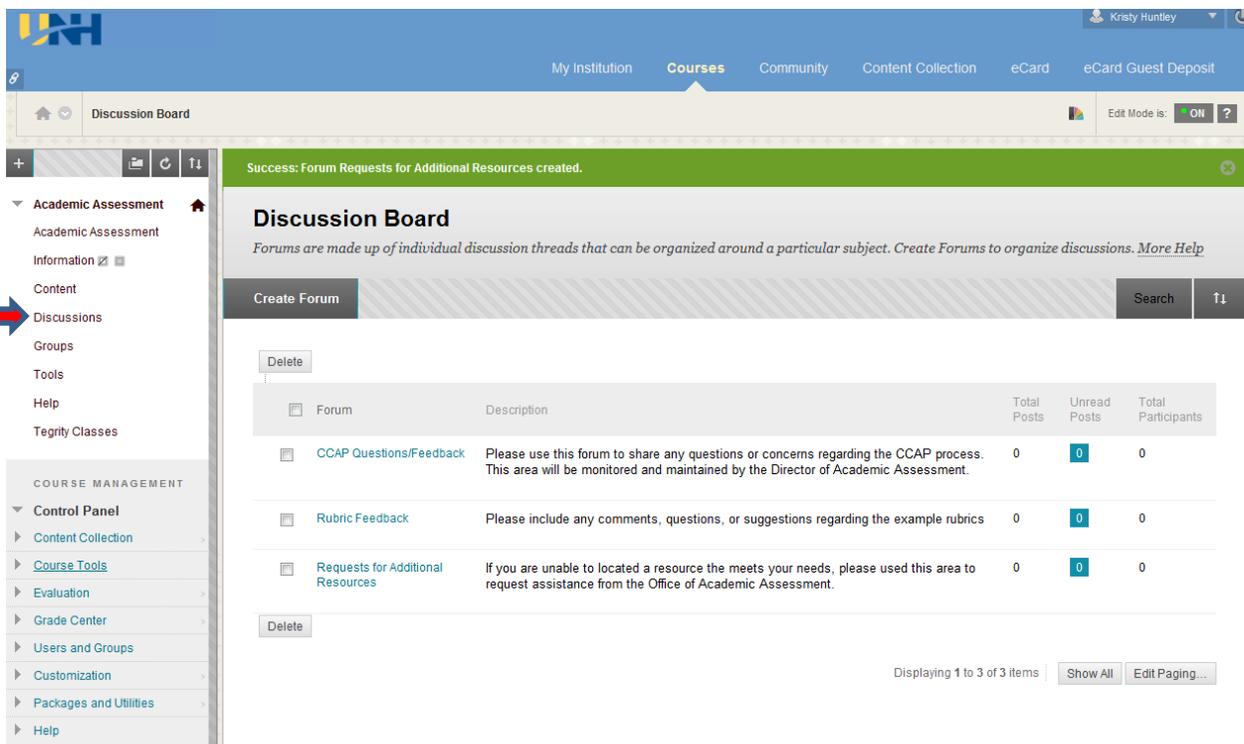
- Guidance on creating objectives, learning outcomes and measurement process
- Training for faculty regarding academic assessment
- Assistance with creating and administering surveys
- Assistance with data analysis for assessment purposes
- Locating benchmark information, internal to UNH as well as external sources

Assistance available through the Office of Academic Assessment may be subject to time constraints or staff resources and therefore is subject to prioritization. The Office maintains an inventory of resources through the Academic Assessment course accessible through Blackboard in which all full-time faculty members are enrolled. Details regarding this course can be found in the next section. In addition, the Office of Academic Assessment maintains a small library of





In addition, “Discussions” have been created to allow for collaboration between faculty, chairs, and administration. This area is monitored by the Director of Academic Assessment who will respond to any inquiries or requests for assistance.



### **C. Requests for Additional Resources**

Scholarship in the area of student learning assessment is encouraged through collaboration with the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs. The Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs is available for consultation regarding potential funding to support assessment efforts. There is additional information available through the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs website (<http://www.newhaven.edu/5762/grants/>) including funding sources, the grant process and upcoming workshops.

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## **V. Appendices**

### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A: About the CCAP System

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix C: CCAP Templates

Appendix D: Alumni Survey

## Appendix A: About the CCAP System

### About the CCAP System—Purpose, History, Scope, Administration

#### 1. Purpose of the CCAP System

In recent years, the University of New Haven has begun a quantum transformation, reflected in newly revised institutional mission and vision, a comprehensive strategic plan, new leadership, growing enrollments, better students, better reputation, significant investments, and many other ways. Fundamental to this transformation is an optimistic focus on the questions, “how are we doing?” and “how can we do even better?”

The comprehensive strategic plan for the University<sup>1</sup> includes specific objectives under two of the four strategic directions (viz., I. Core Liberal Arts and Professional Programs, IV. Institutional Effectiveness) that relate to development of systems to support the cultivation of a culture of continuous improvement. The plan calls for mechanisms to evaluate all our academic programs—undergraduate, graduate, and certificate—and to inform decisions regarding curricular changes, the delivery of education, and the assessment processes we use.

Simultaneously, the higher education environment has escalated its emphasis on assessment. This is evidenced most clearly in standards for accreditation by both the regional and professional agencies, and the trends apparent in the publications and convention programs offered by professional societies. Throughout higher education, institutions are being asked to demonstrate to accreditors and to an increasingly sophisticated marketplace how effectively we deliver on our promises to provide a quality education. Every institution, program, and course is held to a higher standard of proof, and justifiably so.

As we anticipate that the higher education marketplace continues to become more competitive, we too are obligated to evaluate our effectiveness in a comprehensive, critical, and transparent fashion; the purposes for this self-evaluation are to keep pace with market expectations, to improve the education we offer, and to generate evidence that we at the University of New Haven provide the sort of education we promise.

While it is true that some of our programs—particularly those that now enjoy professional agency accreditation—already have in place systems for assessment of learning outcomes, the most efficient and effective route to satisfy our needs is through a campus-wide, comprehensive system for assessing learning outcomes. Such a system must capitalize on our programs’ interdependencies, must focus on our general education program (“GE” or “Core Curriculum”) as intently as on our major programs, and must provide the backbone of a formalized and integrated process through which we routinely “close the loop” on self-assessment—gathering data from multiple sources regarding our effectiveness and using the data to find ways to improve further. This introspective practice must become routine, not just for our professionally accredited programs, but for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> The University of New Haven (2006). *Preparing for the next hundred years: Strategies for our future*. (Author)

In summary, a comprehensive program of curriculum assessment serves these goals:

- (1) To support the objective of bona fide continuous improvement
- (2) To further the inculcation of a “culture of assessment” campus-wide, and
- (3) To satisfy the expectations of accreditors.

Operationally, the CCAP systematizes our thinking about student success in the terms of competencies we expect the student to have acquired. These abilities may be in the form of literacies or technical skill sets. Regardless of their nature, we intend to demonstrate that we have moved beyond an emphasis on what the student merely understands to what the student can do. In fact, the CCAP expects that the learning outcomes are worded in the form, “The student can \_\_\_\_.”

The results of the use of the CCAP system also support more in depth periodic evaluations of programs through the companion system, the Periodic Program Review and Evaluation Plan (PPREP). While some curriculum changes are certainly expected based on the ongoing evaluation of assessment data from the CCAP (i.e., continuous improvement), the same evaluative information can be used to establish improvement objectives and resource requirements in the context of the PPREP review cycle.

## 2. History of the Plan

Outcomes assessment is not new to UNH. Processes for OA have been in place in some departments for many years, particularly those whose programs are accredited by, or are in compliance with the guidelines of, external professional agencies. Rudimentary systems evolved organically in other areas. In the wake of development of enhanced and articulated expectations for assessment by the country’s regional associations in the 1990s, all universities began to build more sophisticated and broad-brush systems for assessment. At UNH, the Exploratory Committee on Outcomes Assessment (ECO) established a preliminary approach in 1999 to evaluate a set of general competencies in our graduates. This system met with limited success, and was ultimately abandoned as the present CCAP system was in development.

The 2006 Strategic Plan placed clearly emphasized the importance of establishing assessment systems to support continuous improvement and better planning at the institutional level. The genesis of the CCAP system was in that strategic goal, as was the simultaneous creation of the companion Periodic Program Review and Evaluation Plan (PPREP), the Key Performance Indicators and Dashboards system (KPI/D), and assessment systems for several focused programs then underway. All were considered “mission-critical” for UNH in light of ambitious developmental aspirations as well as external and governmental requirements.

These principles taken from the 2008 proposal document guided the initial design of the CCAP:

- *The system must be formalized and involve the entire campus*
- *The system must allow for the unique needs of a variety of programs*
- *The principal accountability for developing and implementing a system for outcomes assessment must rest with the departments*
- *Accountability for the Core Curriculum must be shared by everyone*

- *Assessment must be based on competencies—knowledge, literacies, and skills a student is expected to have as they complete a program curriculum*
- *Assessments must be based on data and follow established rubrics*
- *A campus-wide system should be based on established, understood, and accepted definitions and concepts*
- *The system must provide for feedback of assessment results so that we routinely “close the loop” with evaluation and planning*
- *The system must reinforce that its purpose is to evaluate the curriculum and not to appraise either individual faculty or individual students*
- *The system must lend itself to periodic focused program review as well as informing ongoing adjustments*
- *The assessment system, having been developed in response to strategic needs, must provide information to inform continued strategic planning.*

In an effort to streamline the UNH processes and simplify the design of the system, the reporting requirements of our external agencies were reviewed to find the most generalizable approach. While no one model will permit exact transferability for all such existing systems on campus, the approach used by ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) was found to offer the best platform and was the plan in use by the academic units with the most highly developed system. With only minor modifications or exceptions, all other agency-accredited programs could be incorporated into this system. Further, the need to import information regarding general education (the Core Curriculum for UNH) to the agency formats was most seamless using the ABET-inspired system.

The initial CCAP document called for professional staff support for the faculty, beyond that embodied in the Associate Provost who retained administrative responsibility. The creation of an Office of Academic Assessment was authorized; a senior director was hired the following year, and additional staff are expected in the future as needs continue to grow. The Office is to provide support to the faculty and UAC Chair through data analysis, management of records, training, consultation on plan design and implementation, provision of an annual alumni survey, and other technical and administrative roles.

### 3. Scope of the System

#### *All Credentials Must Be Assessed*

An approved assessment plan is required for all credentials offered by the University. “Credentials” are defined as degree programs and certificate programs offered for academic credit, that is, all licensed offerings. The fact that some certificates are awarded to students who are enrolled also in degree programs does not exempt them from the need for outcomes assessment since the certificate is intended to be granted as a stand-alone credential. The value added learning of a certificate must be justifiable and demonstrable.

#### *Assessing Concentrations*

Discrete assessment plans for concentrations within a degree program are not necessary, but remain as an option at the discretion of the program faculty. As a rule, the learning objectives and outcomes that apply to a degree program will apply to any concentrations within

the program. The program faculty may opt a) to assess the effectiveness of one or more concentrations in addition to the parent program, b) to assess each of the concentrations separately instead of the parent program, or c) assess only the parent program without regard to concentrations.

#### *Assessing the Core Curriculum*

The general education component of the University's undergraduate curriculum—the “Core Curriculum”—must also be assessed on an ongoing basis. Gen Ed assessment is specifically included in the scope of the CCAP—not only do our regional and professional agencies require Gen Ed assessment, but the results of the assessment are shared by all for a variety of purposes. Responsibility for this assessment resides chiefly with the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC), the custodian of the Core, with assistance from the UAC. Because Core courses are distributed throughout the academic colleges, assessment necessarily must originate at the department level for Core courses. More on the Core is presented in the next section.

#### 4. Incorporating the Core Curriculum

As of Fall 2013, the Core Curriculum is undergoing substantial revision. One of the reasons for revising the Core is to make it more assessable by clarifying the meaning and intent of its categories, defining its learning outcomes, and organizing our approach to its assessment and management. While the redesign is not yet complete, these principles have been established:

- Responsibility for assessment of the Core belongs to the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC). The process will be overseen as necessary by a joint subcommittee in collaboration with the University Assessment Committee.
- The design of the Core is a hybrid with substantial inspiration from the American Association of Colleges and Universities' “LEAP Model”—Liberal Education for America's Promise. The LEAP design has been adjusted to best fit the Core with the unique mission, purposes, and identity of UNH. The specific learning outcomes are those produced by UNH faculty.
- The learning outcomes of courses certified as “core courses” must demonstrate substantial concordance with those of the core category they will fulfill. Certification requires a curriculum map and an assessment plan.
- Assessment of the Core is carried out chiefly at the course level, with analysis and revision guided by coordinating departments or committees. Other assessments that go beyond the course environment are envisioned as later developments. A department that seeks to have its courses certified as core courses makes a commitment to participate in the assessment enterprise by conducting promised assessments in keeping with the Core plan; by providing assessment data to the committees overseeing the process; and by making necessary improvements in its courses as suggested by the assessment results.

#### 5. Role of the University Assessment Committee (UAC)

The UNH Faculty Handbook describes the UAC:

#### **4.4.12 University Assessment Committee—**

**Charge:** *The University Assessment Committee provides university-wide leadership in the development and strengthening the university's assessment of education outcomes. The committee provides a university-wide perspective on student assessment as carried out in undergraduate and graduate programs. Specifically, the UAC (1) reviews, develops, and recommends institutional assessment procedures and policies; (2) develops mechanisms for using assessment data in decision making; (3) reviews the usefulness of assessment strategies, reporting strategies, and feedback processes; (4) provides opportunities to strengthen UNH faculty's uses of assessment to support student learning; (5) highlights best assessment practices, and (6) facilitates periodic evaluation of academic assessment efforts at UNH.*

**Membership:** *Eight full-time faculty—four of whom are elected by the full-time faculty of each college and four of whom are appointed by the college deans. The Director of Institutional Research and the associate provost for undergraduate studies, accreditation, and assessment serve as ex officio members. The committee is chaired by the associate provost. [NOTE: the Director of Academic Assessment has replaced the IR Director in this role.]*

**Reporting:** *Reports to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The committee forwards academic policy recommendations through the Faculty Senate.*

Following the initial creation of the UAC, its principal task was to create the CCAP system and manage the preliminary creation of CCAP assessment plans by the faculty. The UAC retains oversight responsibility for the CCAP even though many of the routine duties associated with the implementation of the system now belong to the Director of Academic Assessment.

The principal roles and duties of the UAC are:

- Education of faculty—together with the Director, providing webinars, workshops, or other events every term in order to strengthen the University's assessment capabilities
- Scanning for best practices—conducting research to determine the most efficient and effective methods for assessment and communicating recommendations to faculty and academic leaders
- Monitor annual reports—receiving and reviewing the annual reports on assessment activities conducted by departments as required by the CCAP
- Assist with assessment of the Core Curriculum—consulting to the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in whose purview the Core resides, providing assessment expertise and insights intended to strengthen general education
- Providing feedback to faculty—on the basis of the annual reports and the assessment of the Core, communicating to faculty where weaknesses are noted, interdependencies are strained, and/or improvements can be suggested, i.e., “closing the loop”
- Providing assessment leadership—coordinating campus-wide improvements, initiatives, awards for best uses of assessment, and other undertakings to support academic assessment at the University.

The UAC does not routinely examine the results of program assessments in any detail—this duty is reserved to the departments in whose custody the programs reside. It is not expected that the UAC will receive raw data or any technical reports on the results of assessment activity, but rather will normally focus on the annual reports and assessments of the Core. Relatedly, the chief provider of technical consultation and guidance on assessment is the Director of Academic Assessment, not the members of the UAC. The faculty members of the UAC do serve as liaisons and may offer useful perspective to faculty in the colleges they represent, but this is not their responsibility in the routine management of the CCAP system.

## Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions



### ***Why do we assess student learning?***

There is considerable evidence that assessment drives student learning. Most importantly, our assessment tools tell our students what we consider to be important and make clear our expectations of what the student will do to be successful in the course or program. They will learn what we guide them to learn through assessment. By using appropriate assessment techniques, we can encourage our students to raise the bar. Think of assessment for learning as the “learning process” where our students and we received significant feedback to improve learning. It’s not always assessment, but the changes it can lead to, that is/are important. Change and innovation take courage; but. They are also at the heart of the teaching profession!

### ***How does assessment help faculty?***

Assessment provides instructors with useful information about their students, including the quality as learning and readiness for learning. Ongoing assessment informs the instructor about the pace and progress of student learning in the classroom.

### ***Is assessment something extra that faculty have to do?***

No, it’s not extra; in fact, you’re already assessing! A large part of the time faculty devote to assessment outside of the classroom will be spent at intra- and inter-disciplinary discussions/workshops regarding what is most important for students to learn and what, if any, improvements should be made.

### ***Do results of assessment affect faculty evaluation?***

No. Student learning assessment is about the effectiveness of programs/courses, not individuals.

### ***How can assessment improve student learning?***

There are many ways that assessment can assist with the improvement of student learning; it is not assessment itself but how faculty, staff and institutional leaders use it that leads to improvements in student learning.

### ***What is the difference between assessment and evaluation?***

Assessment is the analysis and use of data by students, faculty and/or departments to make decisions about improvements in teaching and learning. Evaluation is the analysis and use of data by faculty to make judgments about student performance. Evaluation includes the determination of a grade or a decisions regarding pass/fail for an individual assignment or course. Assessment, on the other hand, focuses on a group of students (e.g. cohort) and their

mastery of predetermined outcomes. For this reason, student grades are not sufficient for assessment data.

***How do faculty identify student learning outcomes for a particular program/course?***

Some learning outcomes may be mandates by outside agencies or advisory boards for certain programs. Others are identified through discussion among faculty who have tried to answer the question: “What knowledge or skills do we expect our students to demonstrate upon graduation or course completion?” Learning outcomes inform our decisions regarding curriculum, teaching and assessment.

***What is a program objective?***

Think about what students will need to be able to DO after graduation as a result of your program or course. When developing your program objectives, encompass several levers of learning through the learning sequence of the program. One program outcomes may encompass more than one course. Look at the big picture, not tiny details of skills that could be checked off.

***Where can faculty get help with assessment plans?***

The members of the University Assessment Committee (UAC) are here to help. There are a number of individual members of the UAC who, through reading, attending conferences and hands-on experience, have gained expertise with assessment of student learning. In addition, the Director of Academic Assessment is always available for individual/group consultation regarding plan development. A list of current UAC members can be found through the Academic Assessment course in Blackboard.

***Does assessment affect my academic freedom?***

There is nothing inherent about assessment that infringes on the faculty member’s academic freedom. Assessment is about faculty determining whether or not students are learning and then using the information to inform change in the classroom. The process for assessing student learning at the University of New Haven does not standardize how faculty deliver course content or how they grade students.

## Appendix C: CCAP Templates

### **Program Objectives and Outcomes – [Degree Name] (Program #)**

**1. Program Objectives (what a student is expected to have accomplished a few years following graduation)**

a.
b.
c.
d.

**2. Program Outcomes (what a student is expected to be able to know or do by graduation)**

Outcome	Data Sources for Assessment	Performance Criteria
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

NOTE: The following template is provided for those programs that formally identify learning goals in addition to objectives and outcomes.

**Program Objectives and Outcomes – [Degree Name] (program#)**

**1. Program Objectives (what a student is expected to have accomplished a few years following graduation)**

a.
b.
c.
d.

**2a. Program Learning Goals (high level learning goals for the program)**

Graduates of the program should be able to demonstrate:

1.
2.
3.
4.

**2b. Program Outcomes (what a student is expected to be able to know or do by graduation, as summarized by goals above)**

Outcome	Data Sources for Assessment	Performance Criteria	Date to Begin Measurement
1.			

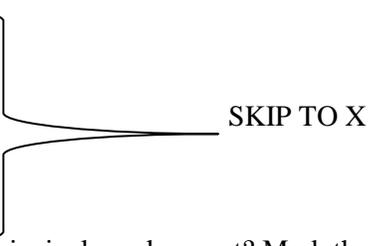
2.			
3.			
4.			

## Appendix D: Alumni Survey

**NOTE: THIS IS THE ALUMNI SURVEY USED AS OF 2012. CHANGES IN FORMAT AND ITEM CONTENT ARE ANTICIPATED IN FUTURE YEARS.**

This is a survey administered to alumni of University of New Haven (UNH). The survey asks former students about their employment and further education, perceptions of institutional emphases, estimated gains in knowledge and skills, involvement as students, and value of their education. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be reported in combination with the responses of other alumni.

### JOBS AND CAREERS

1. Have you received any professional accreditations, licensures, or certifications (not an academic degree) since graduating from your XXX program at UNH?  
 No  
 Yes, please specify:
  
2. Are you working for pay right now?  
 Yes, work full time  
 Yes, work part time  
 No (follow-up questions below)  
Please select the reasons you are not currently working for pay. (Mark all that apply)  
 Looking for work  
 Student  
 Raising a family  
 Volunteer  
 Retired  
 Not working for other reasons  
 SKIP TO X
  
3. In what type of organization is your principal employment? Mark the one best answer.  
 Self-employed in own business or professional non-group practice  
 Private for-profit corporation/company/group-practice  
 Higher education (public or private)  
 Elementary or secondary education (public or private)  
 U.S. military  
 Federal government (except military, state, or local government, institution or agency (except education)  
 Private non-profit organization (except education organizations)  
 Other, please specify:
  
4. Which of the following best describes your current position?  
 Entry level  
 Mid-level  
 Senior level  
 Executive level (except chief executive)  
 Chief executive (CEO, COO, CFO, GM, or principal in a business or other organization)
  
5. Is your current position related to your UNH XXX program field of study/major?  
 Yes, same field as major(s)  
 Yes, related to major(s)

No, not related to major(s)

6. How well did your UNH XXX program prepare you for your current career?
- Very well
  - More than adequately
  - Adequately
  - Less than adequately
  - Very poorly
  - Not applicable

**EDUCATION SINCE GRADUATION**

7. Have you enrolled in further graduate or professional education (including study at UNH) since graduating from your UNH XXX program?
- Yes
  - No SKIP TO XXX
8. How well did your UNH XXX program prepare you for graduate or professional education?
- Very well
  - More than adequately
  - Adequately
  - Less than adequately
  - Very poorly
  - Not applicable
9. Please tell us about the graduate and professional degrees you have either already received or for which you are currently enrolled. Mark all that apply.

Degrees received	Currently enrolled	
		<b>Professional (Law and Medicine)</b>
		Law degree (LLM or JD)
		Medical degree (MD, DDS, DMD, DC, DCM, OD, Pharm.D., DPM, DP, Pod.D. DVM, etc.)
		<b>Master's Degree</b>
		Master of Arts or Science (MA, MS, MFA, etc)
		Business
		Engineering
		Other Master's degree, please specify:
		<b>Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)</b>
		Biological sciences
		Engineering, other applied sciences
		Humanities or arts
		Physical sciences
		Social sciences
		Education
		Other doctorate, please specify:

**EVALUATING YOUR UNH EDUCATION**

10. Overall, how satisfied are you with your UNH education?
- Very Satisfied
  - Generally Satisfied

- Ambivalent
- Generally Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

*Please explain your response:*

11. How satisfied are you with your UNH major program education?
- Very Satisfied
  - Generally Satisfied
  - Ambivalent
  - Generally Dissatisfied
  - Very Dissatisfied

*Please explain your response:*

12. Would you encourage other students to study your XXX major at UNH?
- Definitely Would
  - Probably Would
  - Maybe
  - Probably Would NOT
  - Definitely Would NOT

*Please explain your response:*

13. Based on what you know now, how well do you think your UNH XXX major experience prepared you to:

	<b>Very Poorly</b>	<b>Less Than Adequately</b>	<b>Adequately</b>	<b>More Than Adequately</b>	<b>Very Well</b>
Think analytically and logically					
Write effectively					
Communicate well orally					
Analyze and problem solve					
Use computer technology					
Be an effective citizen of your community and the world					
Be aware of cultural similarities and differences					
Be sensitive to artistic accomplishments					
Conduct research and analysis of data					
Deal with ethical issues you may face in your professional lives or graduate studies					

14. Please tell us about your involvement in experiential education and based on what you know now, how well you think your experiences prepared you for your career and/or continued education.

	Did you participate in this experiential education experience as part of your degree?		How well did these experiences prepare you for your career and/or continued education?					
	Yes	No	Very Poorly	Less Than Adequately	Adequately	More Than Adequately	Very Well	N/A
Internship(s)								
Study abroad								
Faculty mentored research								
Service learning								
Major/Capstone project								
Thesis								
Other (please specify):								

15. What did you find most useful about your UNH academic experiences?

16. What would you change about your academic experiences at UNH?

### ABOUT YOU

17. What is your gender? Mark the one best answer.

- Female
- Male
- Transgender or other

18. What is your race or ethnic group? Mark the one best answer.

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Multiracial/Multicultural
- Other, please specify:

19. Were you an international student when attending UNH?

- Yes
- No

**Thank you for taking time to assist UNH in improving our academic programs.**