

Annual Outcomes Assessment Update - 2019



University of Iowa departments have been actively implementing undergraduate program outcomes assessment for a number of years. This report provides an overview of department levels of engagement with assessment in 2018-19.

Systems for outcomes assessment at the university rest on faculty expertise and department leadership. Each department establishes learning outcomes for its undergraduate programs, determines how to best organize its curriculum to support student learning, devises appropriate strategies for assessing student learning, and decides how to use assessment findings to further develop its programs. Central administration provides support, coordination, and resources to assist departments in carrying out assessment efforts.

Assessment procedures vary widely across departments, but all departments are expected to:

- Develop an assessment plan
- Assign an individual to coordinate assessment of one or more outcomes annually
- Conduct a collective review of assessment findings by faculty on a regular basis
- Identify next steps for program improvement or further development

Figure One presents department levels of engagement in outcomes assessment reported for 2018-19: 75% of departments report ways they have taken action on program-level assessment findings to improve or further develop their programs. Ongoing efforts in these departments include regularly scheduled review of assessment findings, discussion of program implications, and follow-up on actions taken based on their review.

Next steps for these departments are to maintain current levels of assessment and continue acting on lessons learned from their assessment findings. The [2018 Assessment Update](#) provides numerous examples of ways that departments have recently been using program-level assessment findings to make improvements in their majors.

An additional 12% of departments report that faculty collectively review assessment findings on a regular basis. Steps taken include reviewing student coursework, gathering student feedback through senior surveys or exit interviews, and collecting alumni and employer perceptions of program quality.

Next steps for these departments include integrating outcomes assessment into other quality improvement efforts, reviewing assessment strategies to evaluate the quality of data they are collecting, and developing manageable ways to implement assessment processes and utilize findings in the department.

The remaining 13% of departments have taken the step of articulating program learning outcomes, and in many of those cases, appointing an individual to coordinate program-level outcomes assessment. Current efforts in these departments include further developing and pilot-testing assessment strategies. Next steps for these departments include finalizing

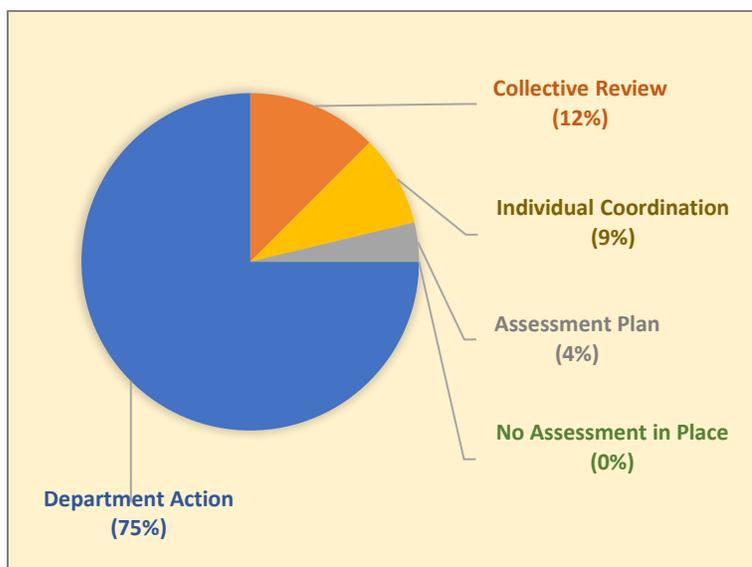


Figure One: Department levels of engagement in undergraduate program outcomes assessment during 2018-19

and implementing assessment plans, and then bringing assessment findings to the full department for review and follow-up action.

The proportion of departments represented at each level of involvement in assessment has remained relatively steady in recent years, but departments represented at each level have changed as some have increased their level of involvement, others have stepped back to redesign assessment plans in order to accommodate new curriculum or program changes, and in some cases, entirely new programs have been launched.

Coordination With Other Departmental and Institutional Assessment

In addition to these annual program-level assessments, academic programs undergo regularly scheduled Academic Program Review, and nearly 40% of undergraduate programs undergo periodic discipline-specific accreditation. A focus on student learning and success is also central to the university's institutional accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The [Spring 2019 HLC Review](#) affirmed the university's undergraduate program assessment practices and encouraged the university to maintain efforts to continue assessing and improving support for student learning and success.

Academic Program and accreditation-related reviews occur every 5-10 years, depending on the department, and typically include an extensive departmental self-study and a visit by a team of external reviewers. The annual cycle of outcomes assessment contributes to these longer-term processes by helping departments maintain program-level outcomes assessment on a year-to-year basis and by making it possible to act on current information as it becomes available between Academic Program Reviews and accreditation-related assessments.

The university compiles a variety of data on student experiences which contribute to campus and departmental assessments. All incoming first-year and transfer students are surveyed through the [Excelling@Iowa](#) platform early in their first semester. This survey explores students' initial experiences at the university and helps get them on course for success early in their university career. The Excelling@Iowa team shares data with campus partners and works with them to reach out and support students during their initial adjustment to the university.

All degree-seeking undergraduates are invited to take the Student Experiences in the Research University ([SERU](#)) survey. SERU gathers information about student engagement, both inside and outside the classroom. Reports of SERU data are given to each department, allowing them to compare students in their major with students in the same major at other SERU institutions and with all UI undergraduates. A series of SERU Briefs summarizing selected campus-wide responses is available on the SERU web site, "[What are students telling us?](#)" SERU also provided student data for the [2018 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) report.

Graduating Seniors are invited to take the [UI Senior Exit Survey](#) at the time they file to graduate. This brief survey asks students about perceptions of their student experience, what most helped or hindered their success at UI, and participation in learning opportunities outside the classroom. Findings are reported to each department for their majors, and provide the basis for the campus-wide [Extending the Classroom](#) report and the annual [Thank You For Making a Difference](#) faculty and staff recognition. Many departments also rely on the annual [First Destination Survey](#), conducted by the Pomerantz Career Center, which asks recent undergraduate alumni if they are employed, pursuing further education, or still seeking work. Departments regularly incorporate information from these campus data sources into their ongoing efforts to assess and improve their programs.

Links Cited:

- Outcomes Assessment Reports: <https://assessment.uiowa.edu/reports-and-surveys#Outcomes>
- Spring 2019 HLC Review: <https://uiowa.edu/accreditation>
- Excelling at Iowa: <https://uc.uiowa.edu/student-success/excellingiowa>
- Student Experience in the Research University (SERU): <https://uiowa.edu/seru/>
- What are students telling us? (SERU reports): <https://uiowa.edu/seru/articles>
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion reports: <https://diversity.uiowa.edu/climate-data>
- Senior Exit Survey reports: <https://assessment.uiowa.edu/reports-and-surveys#Exit>
- First Destination Survey: <https://careers.uiowa.edu/post-graduation-data>