

Northern Arizona University

University Assessment Committee

Annual Assessment Report Template

Purpose: The Annual Assessment Report Template helps academic program faculty to organize, reflect upon, and develop meaningful assessments of student learning. NAU uses a 3-phase cycle to structure assessment efforts:

- Phase 1 – Mission, Student Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Strategy
- Phase 2 – Data Collection
- Phase 3 – Summary of Findings, Interpretations, and Recommendations

Instructions: Select the phase or phases appropriate for your degree program at this time, taking into consideration your current academic goals, strategic plans, and external accreditation requirements. Then, complete the Annual Assessment Report Template for those phases, using the [UAC Feedback Rubric](#) and [Examples of Effective and Distinguished Responses](#) as guides (hyperlinks to both can be found across all sections of this document). Submit your completed template to academic.assessment@nau.edu. You will receive an acknowledgement that it has been received.

University Assessment Committee (UAC) members will review the Annual Assessment Report and provide feedback using the Annual Assessment Report Feedback Rubric. You will receive the completed rubric to share with program faculty. The rubric will also be posted on a password-protected page on the Office of Curriculum, Learning Design, and Academic Assessment (OCLDAA) website. You can follow up on the rubric feedback provided by UAC members by contacting Sue Pieper at OCLDAA to schedule a Café Meeting. The Café Meeting, offered jointly by the UAC and the OCLDAA, is a new, informal opportunity for faculty to discuss how to bolster their assessment efforts to answer meaningful questions about their students' learning. Additionally, program faculty can contact K. Laurie Dickson at OCLDAA to ask questions or request assistance.

General Information

Academic Unit: Geography, Planning & Recreation

Degree Program(s) and Emphases (if applicable): Geographic Sciences & Community Planning

Date of Report Submission:

Report Writers' Contact Information

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PHASE I: MISSION, STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

1. Describe Degree Program Mission

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Degree Program Missions that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Mission Statements](#)

The mission for the Department of Geography, Planning & Recreation is to:

1. Provide effective and challenging courses in geography and public planning for majors and the university liberal studies curriculum;
2. Produce well qualified graduates who are prepared to make significant contributions as professional geographers, educators, and planners;
3. Provide effective outreach and assistance to the people of Arizona and beyond in rural geography, geographic education, remote sensing, geographic information systems, spatial analysis, public planning, and rural resources management;
4. Provide effective outreach and service to rural communities throughout the region, including the Native American nations;
5. Engage in and publish (in appropriate media) the results of geographic/planning research with special emphasis on cultural and physical geography, rural and applied geography, community planning and resource management, and
6. Support and enhance the mission of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Program and other allied programs across the Northern Arizona University campus, to prepare students to effectively assume their future roles as professional geographers, planners, educators, and managers of natural resources.

These goals are specific to the new Geographic Science and Community Planning degree that launched officially during fall, 2011.

(1) GLOBAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

GSP Students will gain awareness of the earth and develop confidence to engage with places, whether in their own communities or across the globe. Through an understanding of geographic scale, students will consider interrelationships between our physical and human environments to explain local and global issues. Likewise, they will explore how local and global influences create contemporary places and landscapes through environmental,

social, and cultural processes. They will apply emerging technologies that engage them locally while thinking globally, better preparing them for a globalizing world.

(2) SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS AND COMMUNITIES

GSP Students will communicate and apply approaches for maintaining sustainable environments, communities, and landscapes for the benefit of future generations. To do so, they will learn the fundamental interrelationships between the earth's physical and human systems. Physical systems include interactions of climate, water, landforms, and habitats, which are increasingly modified by human use and exploitation. In turn, human systems include cultural, social and economic processes that shape community development, design, and sense of place. Students will develop a variety of geospatial technology and community-based skills that support local, regional and global sustainability.

(3) OUR DIVERSE WORLD

GSP Students will develop an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of the planet in terms of its physical and human geography. They will learn how our natural and cultural landscapes have evolved through geographic time, space, scale, and context. They will develop self-awareness of their own situation and awareness and empathy for other peoples, cultures, communities and environments, and an openness to the earth's great geographic differences. They will learn skills of spatial thought and analysis that enhance their ability to work with and appreciate diversity, while maintaining the objectivity needed to succeed in their chosen careers.

2. State Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)

[Examples of Distinguished Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes](#)

GSP Learning Outcomes

1) Global Awareness and Engagement

GSP Graduates will be able to articulate how external or global processes influence and interact with local places and development decisions.

2) Sustainable Environments and Communities

GSP Graduates will be able to evaluate and design more sustainable and livable places while considering the interrelationships between physical and human environments.

3) Our Diverse World

GSP Graduates will be able to objectively appraise different perspectives and approaches originating from diverse places and physical environments.

4) Written Communication

GSP graduates will be able to professionally communicate synthesized knowledge, research, and designs through written products appropriate for diverse audiences and perspectives.

5) Oral Communication

GSP graduates will be able to professionally communicate synthesized knowledge, research, and designs through oral presentations for diverse audiences.

6) Geospatial Techniques

GSP graduates will be able to interpret, design, and produce quality 2D and 3D computer-generated maps and illustrations that communicate spatial knowledge at local, regional, and global scales.

7) Planning and Participation

GSP graduates will be able to work effectively in teams to design more sustainable places through the synthesis and input of various disciplinary and community perspectives.

8) Research and Analysis

GSP graduates will be able to apply relevant qualitative and quantitative research methods to conduct scientific, objective inquiries at local, regional, and global scales.

- The **first three outcomes** above directly align with the three overarching goals of the BS in Geographic Science and Community Planning (GSP). These were designed and adopted through the *Global Learning Initiative's* curriculum redesign process.
- Further, the language and intent of the **last five outcomes** are focused on academic skills that need to be demonstrated by our students. For instance, student communication, research, design, and planning products are expected to demonstrate competence with incorporating aspects of diversity, sustainability, and global perspectives. The eight learning outcomes therefore point directly or indirectly to all three educational goals.

The eight learning outcomes above represent an alignment with the three fundamental educational goals for the GSP program, written and approved by the entire GSP faculty during spring, 2011. The goals were developed through curriculum redesign that occurred first through the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs' **Student Learning and Curriculum Design (SLCD)** initiative during 2009-2010, and more recent participation in the **Global Learning Initiative (GLI)**. The outcomes reflect our program's commitment to all three GLI goals, adopted here for our own educational imperatives. Finally, all outcomes provide a holistic interpretation of the knowledge and skills required for an education in the realm of **Geodesign**, which is an innovative approach to blending student abilities in geospatial sciences, urban design, and GIS techniques.

3. Insert or Attach Degree Program Curriculum Map

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Degree Program Curriculum Maps that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Degree Program Curriculum Maps](#)

See Attachment 1: Assessment Map

See Attachment 2: Curriculum Map

4. Identify the Assessment Question(s)

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Assessment Question\(s\) that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Assessment Question\(s\)](#)

The fundamental purpose of this degree program assessment plan is two fold: 1) to allow GSP faculty to better understand what and how well students are learning, and 2) to inform department-level decision making with regard to the continuous review and improvement of the curriculum and overall teaching goals of the department. Faculty will further use the plan as a tool to remain focused on the core teaching objectives of the program and for specific courses taught. The plan contributes to the faculty understanding of how their own core courses contribute significantly to the overall education of students within the program. With a comprehensive assessment plan in place, students themselves will become better aware of their own goals for learning within the program and better understand the teaching mission and objectives of the faculty. As important, this plan is designed for occasional revision and review as faculty and department goals regarding teaching and assessment change over time.

- Some assessment findings, such as written and oral communication rubrics from the senior capstone and JLW courses, will be available each year for GSP faculty to discuss during bi-weekly GSP faculty meetings and the bi-annual faculty retreats at the beginning of fall and spring semester. While student workers and/or a graduate student may assist with analyses as necessary, the Department Chair will be responsible for adding the assessment reports to faculty meeting agendas and for distributing assessment results to the faculty.
- Every year the faculty will consider whether minimal and realistic changes are necessary to improve specific pedagogies of courses or lessons. Every three years, in conjunction with **Phase 3 of the Assessment Reporting Process**, a more comprehensive review of assessment findings will be conducted to determine any major changes that might involve the UCC. The faculty will determine which particular outcomes are being met well, and which ones could use additional attention within the curriculum, thereby encouraging the most significant changes to focus on the needs of particular outcomes.

5. Describe the Assessment Design

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Assessment Designs that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Assessment Designs](#)

The **table in Figure 1** indicates the first three components of the standard assessment matrix, including 1) Learning outcomes, 2) Where the outcome is assessed, and 3) Evidence/Indicators of learning used for assessment.

- **Collection Methods:** All faculty members responsible for the assessment projects listed below have agreed to collect and record annual data through some form of criteria sheet or rubric for those specific assignments. While doubling as course-based assessments, data from these assignments will be used to inform the program-level assessment process. When requested for the 3-year Assessment Cycle reporting process (probably Phase 2 if not others), participating faculty members will provide this annual data to the Department Chair, who in turn will compile the raw data and determine the level of further analysis and reporting necessary.
- **Analysis Methods:** The following approaches will be used to analyze the assessment data:
 - **Direct Evidence:** All direct evidence in the table above will be collected through some form of criteria sheet or rubric by participating faculty members. Some rubrics, including those associated with GSP 303, 375W, 405C and 480C include some or all standardized criteria between classes. A student worker or graduate student may be employed to assist with aggregation and graphics as necessary, as directed by the Department Chair.
 - **Indirect Evidence:** An aggregated report that includes the **Student Questionnaire** data and follow-up **Student Focus Group** data will be provided by the Chair (with assistance from student worker or GA as necessary). This process was piloted during spring, 2012. The professor maintaining the **internship supervisor reviews** will provide an aggregate report of reviews as they pertain to the appropriate program learning outcomes.
 - **Inter-rater Reliability:** To better strengthen and verify the assessment materials submitted by individual faculty members, the following approaches will be used:
 - **Capstone oral presentations:** One or more faculty members in addition to the course instructors will attend and complete rubric evaluations for capstone student presentations that take place at the bi-annual Student Seminar Research Conference or at City Hall (for the planning students).
 - **Internship Supervisor Reviews:** All students in the Community Planning emphasis are required to complete an internship. Supervisors representing the internship agency provide a final review of student competence and accomplishments. These outside reviewers will improve the reliability of internal direct assessment data from individual faculty members.
 - **Written and cartographic (GIS) assessment products:** During Phase 2 of the Assessment reporting process, a team of faculty members will be provided with sample products that represent A, B, C, and if necessary, D/F-level papers and cartographic products. The team of two or three faculty members will convene to review these samples and verify the instructor's own ratings. *This process is not intended to critique the instructor, but to provide an opportunity for inter-rater reliability to strengthen the assessment analysis.*
- This assessment plan aligns with the NAU 3-year Assessment Cycle. Either Phase 1, 2, or 3 of our report is due annually as required by NAU.

- Our annual assessment report (Phase 1, 2, or 3) will be due to the Office of Academic Assessment by June 30 each year. A copy will be distributed to all GSP faculty members.
- The Department Chair will compile and write the annual report in the format specified for Phase 1, 2, or 3. The report will be based on faculty input from the previous spring semester related to assessment work needed to be completed for each phase of the report.
- **Annual Timeline:**
 - June, 2012: Submit Phase 1 Report
 - June, 2013: Submit Phases 2&3 Reports
 - AY 13-14: Academic Program Review for BS and MS degrees
 - June, 2015: Submit Phase 1 Report
 - June, 2016: Submit Phase 2 Report
 - June, 2017: Submit Phase 3 Report

6. Describe and ATTACH the Assessment Measures (Please attach Surveys, Assignments & Rubrics, and other measurement tools to this report)

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Assessment Measures that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Assessment Measures](#)

Program Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Tool Name (Attach Tools to Report)	Standards

7. Describe Planned Implementation of Assessment Design by Completing the Following Table:

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Planned Implementation of an Assessment Design that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Planned Implementation of an Assessment Design](#)

Assessment Tool	Data Collection		Data Analysis		Discussion of Findings	
	<u>Who</u> is responsible for collecting the data	<u>When</u> and/or <u>where</u> will data collection take place	<u>Who</u> is responsible for data analysis	<u>When</u> will data analysis take place	<u>Who</u> will be part of the discussion of data and	<u>When</u> will discussions likely take place

PHASE II: DATA COLLECTION

8. Provide a Status Report on Data Collection and Assessment Strategy Modifications by Completing the Following Table Identifying Actual Implementation of Assessment:

Assessment Tool	Data Collection		Data Analysis	
	<u>Who</u> was responsible for collecting the data	<u>When</u> and/or <u>where</u> data collection took place	<u>Who</u> was responsible for data analysis	<u>When</u> data analysis took place

If changes were made to your Assessment Strategy, describe the changes and briefly explain why the assessment strategy was modified

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions Identifying Changes to Your Assessment Strategy that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)

[Examples of Effective Changes Made to an Assessment Strategy](#)

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PHASE III SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9. Describe Findings, Interpretations, and Implications

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Descriptions of Findings, Interpretations and Implications that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)

[Examples of Distinguished Descriptions of Findings, Interpretations and Implications](#)

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10. Describe recommendations for Curricular/ Learning Design Modifications

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Descriptions of Curriculum/ Learning Design Modifications that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Descriptions of Curricular/ Learning Design Modifications](#)

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11. Describe recommendations for Assessment Improvements or Next Assessment Questions

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Descriptions of Assessment Improvements that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Descriptions of Assessment Improvements](#)

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12. Describe recommendations for Dissemination of Findings

[UAC Feedback Rubric Definitions of Recommended Dissemination of Findings that are Distinguished, Effective, and that Need Improvement](#)
[Examples of Distinguished Recommended Dissemination of Findings](#)

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Figure 1: Assessment Matrix:

- The **table below** indicates the first three components of the standard assessment matrix, including 1) Learning outcomes, 2) Where the outcomes is assessed, and 3) Evidence/Indicators of learning used for assessment.

Program Learning Outcomes	GSP 130 - Pre-post test on mapping techniques	GSP 130 - Global Mapping Lab: Unusual Landscapes	GSP 150 Written Exam Questions (two total)	GSP 150 Field Research Lab and Report	GSP 206 - Community Images Survey Project	GSP 303 Neighborhood Design Presentation and Report	GSP331 - Final Mapping and GIS Techniques Exam	GSP 371 - Caesar City- Building Project and Report	GSP 375W Scientific Research Project and Paper	GSP 405 C - Professional Site Plan Design Presentation	GSP 405C - Site Design Staff Report	GSP 480C Original Scientific Research Paper	GSP 480C Professional Research Conference Presentation	GSP Student Survey Questionnaire	Student Focus Group as Questionnaire follow-up	Internship Agency Supervisor Reviews
Global Awareness and Engagement		X					X	X	X			X		X	X	
Sustainable Environments and Communities			X			X		X		X	X			X	X	
Our Diverse World		X	X			X	X	X	X			X		X	X	
Oral Communication						X				X			X	X	X	X
Written Communication					X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Geospatial Techniques	X	X		X		X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X
Planning and Participation					X	X				X	X			X	X	X
Research and Analysis				X	X			X	X			X	X	X	X	

- Intro-level Assessments
- Upper-level Assessments
- Indirect Assessments

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