

Expectations for Degree Programs: Curriculum and Assessment

This document articulates expectations for curriculum and assessment that are aligned with high-quality student learning and proposed modifications to curriculum and assessment processes to support these expectations.

Part I articulates the Degree Program Expectations.

Part II identifies recommended changes to committee and Academic Program Review processes to support and maintain the Degree Program Expectations.

Part III identifies the need for resources and support for implementation of these expectations and processes, and requests support from academic leaders to successfully sustain these expectations.

I. Degree Program Expectations: Curriculum & Assessment

A successful, high-quality academic degree program requires degree program faculty members to demonstrate a shared vision of their curricular goals and to ensure that their curricular structures and assessment processes assist students in achieving the stated learning outcomes of their degree program.

Faculty will ensure implementation of the following:

1. Mission & Purpose of a Degree Program

- Broadly describes how and for what purpose the degree program prepares students

2. Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes

- Explicitly articulates what students will know and be able to do upon completion of the degree

3. Curriculum Design with a Curriculum Map

- Clearly describes why and how learning opportunities are structured in a particular manner, including:
 - Scope: Breadth and depth of the degree program;
 - Progression: Learning experiences progress logically, developing the learner to levels of expertise appropriate for the degree program;
 - Alignment: Course learning experiences, course student learning outcomes, and degree program student learning outcomes support the mission and purpose of the degree program; and
 - Integration: Clear relationships exist among the parts of a curriculum.
- Provides a visual representation of the progression, alignment, and integration of the degree program through a well-organized Curriculum Map

4. Strategic Course Learning Design which supports Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes

- Course learning design demonstrates the principles of good curriculum design (e.g., course student learning outcomes, scope, progression, alignment, integration, etc.)

5. Systematic Assessment of Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes

- Faculty regularly assess students' achievement of Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes

6. Use of Assessment Findings for Continual Improvement

- Faculty collectively use assessment findings to identify and celebrate program strengths as evidenced by student learning, and to inform curricular and learning design modifications to enhance student learning.

II. Proposed Modifications to Curriculum & Assessment Processes

To ensure consistent implementation of Degree Program Expectations for the development, review and approval of curriculum, and the achievement of longer-term goals focused on the continual enhancement of student learning, we recommend modifying the following processes:

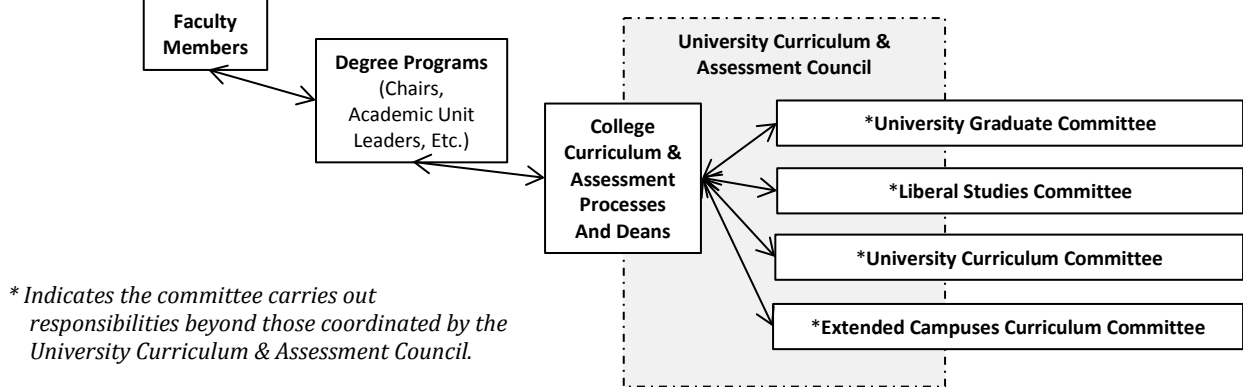
- Incorporate a peer-review feedback process for curriculum based on the Expectations at both the college and university committee levels;

- Move the peer-review feedback process of Annual Assessment Reports to the college level (where review is conducted by faculty closer to the discipline);
- Align the Academic Program Review/ Accreditation process with the Degree Program Expectations; and
- Replace the University Assessment Committee with a Faculty Senate-charged University Curriculum and Assessment Council (UCAC).

The UCAC will coordinate and support the consistent implementation of Degree Program Expectations at the college and university level. It will:

- Provide a forum for university-wide discussion of curriculum and assessment.
- Refine institutional curriculum and assessment policies, procedures, and approaches to support and maintain curriculum and assessment standards adopted by the Faculty Senate.
- Coordinate the college curriculum and assessment processes which will:
 - Review and provide feedback on Annual Assessment Reports; and
 - Review, provide feedback based on expectations, and recommend curriculum to the appropriate university-level committee(s) (Undergraduate, Graduate, Extended Campuses, and Liberal Studies).
- Coordinate the Undergraduate, Graduate, Extended Campuses, and Liberal Studies Program Committees' review of curricula, based on expectations. These committees will continue to make recommendations for approval of curricula to the Provost.
- Incorporate the utilization of the curriculum and assessment standards adopted by the Faculty Senate into periodic review processes (Academic Program Review). Accredited degree programs will continue to use their accreditation process to demonstrate that they have achieved standards in the design of their curriculum and the achievement of student learning outcomes (i.e., assessment).
- Coordinate university-wide support for curriculum and assessment with NAU faculty-support offices (e.g., Office of Curriculum, Learning Design, & Academic Assessment, Faculty Professional Development Office, e-Learning, etc.).

Figure 1. Proposed curriculum and assessment committee structure



III. Charge to Academic Leaders

Charge academic leaders (Provost's Office and Deans) with:

1. Identifying and providing support and training to committee members in college and university-level curriculum and assessment committees;
2. Identifying and providing support to degree programs to prepare for their Academic Program Reviews and to implement their Action Plans following the Academic Program Review process; and
3. Examining the extent to which degree programs achieve faculty-driven curricular expectations.

Appendix A

Tentative Timeline for Implementation

Spring/Summer 2014

- The Advisory Council for Curriculum & Assessment (ACCA)/ or designee will develop an implementation plan for incorporating the Expectations into the curriculum review process and Academic Program Review.
 - ACCA will obtain feedback on the implementation plan and process from the UAC, UCC, UGC, ECCC, and LSC and report their plan to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in fall 2014.
- Academic leaders will identify the types of support needed by degree programs to achieve these Expectations and incorporate methods to provide support to degree programs.

Academic Year 2014-2015

- ACCA will develop a roll-out plan for the use of the Expectations in Academic Program Review and in the modifications to the curriculum and assessment processes, including identifying the training and support necessary to integrate university-level committee processes and coordinate the support of college-level committees.
 - ACCA will obtain feedback on the roll-out plan for the Academic Program Review and the modifications to curriculum and assessment processes from the UAC, UCC, UGC, ECCC, and LSC and report their plan to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
- Academic leaders will continue to identify the types of support needed by degree programs to achieve these expectations and work to incorporate methods to provide support to programs.

Academic Year 2015-2016

- Modified committees and curriculum and assessment processes will use expectations for the review of curriculum and assessment.
- Consider dissolving the ACCA and transitioning its charge to the UCAC.
- Academic leaders will continue to identify the types of support needed by degree programs to achieve these expectations and work to incorporate methods to provide support to programs.