

# Assessment Policy

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

## Academic/Assessment of Student Learning

Policy Owner: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

*Effective date:* Spring 2024

*Approval date:* Spring 2024

*Schedule for Review:* Fall 2029

Policy Summary:

The aim of assessment at Fort Lewis College is continuous improvement of academic programs and the student learning experience. All degree and certificate-granting academic programs and student affairs programs will engage in assessment annually.

Policy Statement:

### **I. Overview**

- a. Purpose. The Annual Assessment Policy outlines how Programs will assess student learning to identify successes and challenges related to teaching and student learning. Faculty will use these findings to continuously improve the student learning experience and to draft or revise their Program learning outcomes. This document outlines the policies and procedures associated with assessment.

Assessment is summative of student learning, focused at the Program level and on Program goals, not at the individual course level. Assessment results neither reflect nor judge individual faculty performance; the primary focus is on understanding and enhancing the approach to and outcomes of education and student learning. Assessment is intentional, organized, iterative, and reflective; it is a process to evaluate and improve student learning and Program goals through thoughtful data collection and analysis.

Every degree- and certificate-granting Program at FLC must participate in assessment.

“Program” includes all majors, minors, and certificates but not concentrations. It includes all instructional methods - traditional, hybrid, online, distance education.

- b. Personnel.

Program Faculty. Each academic Program is responsible for creating annual and comprehensive assessment plans, completing assessment cycles, and submitting assessment reports.

Department/Program Chairs will assign responsibility for those activities to appropriate faculty. Collaboration is a key component to successful assessment of student learning, and it is vital for

faculty members and staff to participate in the assessment process. All faculty members are responsible for evaluation of student learning and improvement to academic Programs.

Office of Assessment. The Assessment Coordinator reports to the Provost and leads the Office of Assessment. The Assessment Office is responsible for coordinating assessment initiatives within Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Engagement and Diversity Collaborative in collaboration with the Assessment Committee, Programs/Departments, and respective Deans, Chairs, faculty and staff; maintaining all files related to assessment initiatives and correspondence; serving as a resource for preparation of program learning outcomes, assessment plans, annual reports, and other reports pertaining to assessment activities; providing assistance in academic program review, annual assessment, liberal arts core assessment, comprehensive assessment, and other assessment-related initiatives; and maintaining the Office's website.

Assessment Committee. The Assessment Committee *is composed of* faculty from across the college, and is defined by the Fort Lewis College Faculty Senate as follows:

- i. Charge: The Assessment Committee will work with the Office of Assessment to offer assessment aid to faculty, staff, and students, and to serve as peer consultants to Programs/Departments, providing support and guidance regarding assessment. Committee members will also review comprehensive and annual assessment plans and work to request any significant missing information and/or clarifications, provide feedback, and validate final plans with the intention of aligning assessment efforts to program learning outcomes, the strategic plans of the college, and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) assumed practices and criteria for accreditation.
  - ii. Report: The Committee will submit a report annually no later than May 31st summarizing accomplishments, major issues discussed, and recommendations.
  - iii. Membership: The Committee will consist of any number of Senate-assigned faculty members representing diverse Programs/Departments and representing tenured as well as tenure-track faculty. The Committee will also consist of an Assessment Coordinator as well as ex officio members from relevant administrative offices as needed. The Assessment Committee chair is elected by the Committee members.
- c. Required Programs.
- i. All Programs must conduct annual assessment planning and reporting unless otherwise exempted by the FLC Assessment Coordinator or Committee.
  - ii. Assessment of Certificates. All certificates must have learning outcomes. These learning outcomes can be program-based (program learning outcomes) and/or skills-based (skills learning outcomes). It is recommended that all Majors have 4-6 learning outcomes; Certificates may have fewer, but it is recommended they have at least 2-3 learning outcomes. All certificates which are awarded to students upon graduation must be assessed regularly on a schedule set by the department or committee that oversees the certificate. Certificates must report on assessment annually, following the reporting procedures outlined in this Policy.

## II. Annual Academic Assessment

- a. Annual Academic Assessment. Why do we do assessment? We are accountable to our students, to the Board of Trustees, to the public, and others to demonstrate we provide the education to our students that we claim to provide. The Template “Annual Assessment Plan and Report” (AAPR) gives Programs the ability to do this. Programs will use the AAPR to complete their annual assessment planning and reporting. This template and all documents referenced in this Policy can be located through the [Fort Lewis Assessment website](#) or [SharePoint](#).
- b. Timeline and Reporting. Each academic year by September 15th, Programs will download, edit, and upload to their folder on the SharePoint site two AAPR documents: 1) one that completes both assessment planning and reporting for the prior academic year, and 2) one that completes assessment planning for the current academic year.

In the case where a Minor is simply a subset of the Major (same name and subset of courses but fewer credits) then the Minor’s assessment may be reported on the same AAPR as the Major. The AAPR must clearly state the major and minor are both covered in the report.

The Assessment Committee will promptly (within one month of submission) provide feedback to each Program on their AAPRs.

- c. Exemption Request from Annual Assessment and Assessment Reporting. If a Program needs to be excused from annual assessment for one academic year, the assessment liaison or Chair may submit the Annual Assessment Exemption Request Form to the Assessment Coordinator no later than September 15th. This form can be found on SharePoint.

### **III. Annual Assessment of FLC’s Division of Student Engagement**

Each year, the Division of Student Engagement (DSE) and Diversity Collaborative will conduct one outcome-based assessment based on the Learning Domains, and each Department within the Division will conduct an assessment, either outcome-based or an assessment to measure effectiveness and/or efficiency of the Department and its program(s). Before October 15th, the Chair of the DSE Assessment Committee and a member from each Department will complete the Template Assessment Plan provided by the DSE Assessment Committee. The DSE Assessment Committee is composed of a representative from each Department and the Assessment Coordinator. The Committee Chair is elected annually by the DSE Assessment Committee members. Once per year, the DSE Assessment Committee will host an Assessment Showcase at which members from each Department and the Division will report on the assessments conducted. Annual exemptions may occasionally be given due to staffing turnover and/or lack of capacity. Departments may apply for an exemption to the Dean of Student Engagement.

### **IV. Academic Program Review and Comprehensive Assessment Planning**

- a. Academic Program Review. Once every 7 years, Programs will engage in Academic Program Review (APR) in accordance with the Academic Program Review Policy and Schedule (2023-2033). APR is performed at the Department level and includes a review of all Programs within the Department. Any Programs not housed within a Department or that are inter-disciplinary must also perform APR. Non-degree or non-certificate granting programs may go through APR at the request of the Dean or Provost.
- b. Comprehensive Assessment. Once every 7 years, Programs will engage in Comprehensive Assessment Planning (CAP). CAP will be done the year before a Program engages in APR. CAP will facilitate program review and preparation in advance of APR and is intended to help Programs reflect on the last 7 years of assessment and look forward to the next 7 years of

assessment. Programs may use their AAPRs from previous years to inform their CAP. Programs will complete the Template “Comprehensive Assessment Plan and Program Curriculum Map” which can be found on SharePoint.

## **V. Liberal Arts Core (LAC) Assessment**

Once every 7 years all Liberal Arts Core (LAC)-designated courses will participate in LAC assessment in accordance with the LAC Assessment Schedule. The Liberal Arts Core Council has adopted the gt-Pathways content criteria and competencies approved by the Colorado Department of Higher Education for all Fort Lewis College LAC courses. These competencies are in alignment with AAC&U’s Essential Learning Outcomes. The competencies are assessed on an annual and rotating basis, organized by the Assessment Coordinator in collaboration with the LAC Council Co-Chair(s).

### **Reason for Policy**

In accordance with Higher Learning Commission Criteria 4, Fort Lewis College demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through assessment which is designed to promote continuous improvement.

### **Referenced Policies**

Academic Program Review Policy and Schedule

Responsibilities:

*Accountability for Policy:* Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

*For Procedures:* The Assessment Office

Consequences of Non-Compliance:

The FLC Assessment Committee summarizes Program assessment planning and reporting data annually and reports to the Faculty Senate and Provost. Failure to comply with this policy will result in notification to the Provost’s Office and Board of Trustees that the program is out of statutory compliance. Sanctions may be applied for noncompliance.

Review and Revision History:

The policy and procedures were revised Spring 2024.