# Viterbo University Academic Program Assessment Framework

### Introduction

The central goal of the Viterbo University Academic Program Assessment Framework is to provide a structure for the continuous improvement of academic program quality. The framework is designed to accomplish two results for academic programs:

1. To gather information about the knowledge, abilities, and values of students in the program.
2. To use that information to improve teaching and learning in the program.

### Framework

1. Each academic program (undergraduate, graduate, and certificate) articulates:
* A mission statement that flows from the Viterbo University mission statement
* Program goals
* Student learning outcomes for the program (in alignment with the Degree and Course Differentiation Guide)

Faculty make available in the assessment repository:

* A curriculum map showing where learning outcomes tie into the courses in the curriculum and showing assessment points
* Documents employed in assessment (assignments, portfolios, selected exam questions, rubrics)
* Results (collected data and scores, de-identified)
1. Program assessment should be reflected in all course materials. All course syllabi provide statements of student learning outcomes for the course. The syllabi should support the alignment between course-level and program learning outcomes and provide evidence that opportunities for learning linked to the student outcomes are incorporated in courses.
2. Direct methods (course-embedded assignments, selected exam questions, capstone presentations) are primary. Indirect methods (student surveys, graduate surveys, employer surveys, and focus groups) are supplemental.
3. Programs prioritize mastery-level methods and have at least two direct methods at that level for each outcome. Developmental or mid-point assessment methods which evaluate student progress within the major discipline are also expected.
4. Faculty in programs collect assessment results annually, collaborating regularly on analysis and decisions about targeted actions, and following up on changes with another round of assessment. Programs have an eight-year timetable for assessing all student learning outcomes for the program. Programs with different modes of delivery and locations disaggregate results by modality and location in order to assure consistent quality.
5. Programs involve stakeholders (students, faculty administrators, and advisory boards) and communicate with them regarding assessment initiatives.
6. The chair/program director/program coordinator is responsible for the assessment plan for each program/major offered. The role of assessment coordinator may be delegated to a department faculty member. The assessment coordinator leads the collaborative work of assessment, including collecting, analyzing, reaching decisions about assessment data, and following up on changes. The coordinator updates TracDat, submits the annual results and summary for the September deadline, following review by the assistant dean.

### Annual Assessment Report (using university repository system)

Faculty for each program are responsible for regular updates of the assessment plan and results in the repository system. Annual updates and summary reports are due in September. The timing of the report allows for budget plans to be prepared based on program assessment action plans. The report will be available to the chair, the college dean, the vice president for academic affairs, and the office of assessment and institutional research.

### Structural Support of Continuous Improvement

Academic Program Assessment Committee (APAC)

Faculty on APAC provides faculty oversight in implementing the Viterbo University Assessment Framework, keeping the university community apprised of expectations for procedures and quality of assessment, and recommending policies and procedures for program quality improvement. The committee provides formative feedback to departments and colleges on the quality of assessment activities and use of assessment evidence to ensure effective, high-quality, and sustainable assessment procedures

Program Review

The regular, ongoing work of program assessment is a key component of program review, as shown in the following criteria:

* List the student learning outcomes for the program.
* Describe how the student learning outcomes are current relative to potential employers, market demand, and other institutions.
* Describe the assessment plan for this program, including assessment method, criteria, timeline, and curriculum map. Provide the most recent TracDat review for this program.
* Describe how assessment efforts have been used to make improvements in the program (“close the loop”).
* Describe student performance on external exams (e.g. licensure, certification), if applicable

### Minimum Expectations for Establishing Assessment in New Programs

New programs will establish learning outcomes and a curriculum map along with program design. The deans’ council will determine what year is the first full year of a program, to give programs that are launched in stages a reasonable time frame. Programs with few majors (10 or fewer) may take longer to determine curricular changes.

End of Year 1: Establish a plan: Outcomes aligned with teaching strategies and assessment methods.

End of Year 2: Collect actionable data, test validity of assessment tools and processes, and draw conclusions through analysis.

End of Year 3: Collect actionable data, test validity of assessment tools and processes, and draw conclusions through analysis.

End of Year 4: Take action to improve student learning and/or take action to improve assessment.

End of Year 5: Test the effectiveness of actions, either confirming learning or taking further action. Now the program is counted as an established program.