



ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REVIEW AY 2021-2022

Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing

Assistant Provost Deborah Blanchard
Assessment and Outcomes Committee
March 2023

Purpose of Program Assessment at Montana State University

While annual program assessment aids institutional reporting, as determined by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation, as well as Montana State University strategic planning objectives, the primary focus of program assessment is to engage in continually improving degree programs so that student learning outcomes and objectives are met, thereby ensuring graduates have acquired the skills and knowledge needed to be successful upon entering the workforce or graduate-level education.

Assessment Process

All academic programs (majors, minors, and certificates) are required to submit a Program Assessment Report annually for undergraduate programs for the previous academic year, and biennially for graduate programs which cover the prior two years. Minors carrying the same title as a major can be combined for assessment purposes. Standalone minors are assessed independently. Interdisciplinary majors, minors, and certificates are assessed with faculty from across the disciplines involved. Programs that are accredited by an external accrediting body are not required to submit an MSU Program Assessment report currently. The Program Assessment process is an opportunity for programs to examine the extent to which students are learning what is intended by the program, specifically how curricular student learning outcomes (SLOs) relate to the program learning outcomes (PLOs).

Program Assessment is part of MSU's accreditation process and is an opportunity for faculty to reflect on and improve programs to enhance student learning. It is also a tool to document progress towards accomplishments in MSU's strategic plan, particularly around Goal 1.3: Implement evidence-based high quality, high impact teaching and learning practices for every student. At its most basic level, assessment consists of setting goals, collecting information, and taking action. Action can only be taken to improve student learning if critical reflection is undertaken during each assessment cycle. Critical reflection is called "closing the loop" within the reporting structure. All programs are expected to look for ways to improve student learning even if they have met their pre-determined assessment thresholds.

Programs are expected to use the templates provided on the Office of the Provost's website to submit reports. Program Assessment Report templates are updated annually. Report submissions should not contain any student or proprietary course information that should not be public facing. Programs are also expected to post their assessment plans and findings on their department web pages in accordance with NWCCU requirements.

Assessment and Outcomes Committee

The academic assessment process is monitored by the Provost's Office, through the Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC), which consists of representatives from each College and is chaired by Assistant Provost Deb Blanchard. Associate Dean Susan Raph is the representative from the Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing. The AOC leads and facilitates assessment for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs that are not externally assessed. Members of the AOC review Program Assessment Reports annually for the purpose of improving program curricula and student learning outcomes by providing constructive feedback aimed at strengthening program goals. The Committee meets regularly during the year and reviews Program Assessments once they are submitted and provides feedback to all department heads.

Copies of the submitted program report(s) for this College are attached to this report along with the rubric used for reviewing program reports and the AOC reviewers' feedback, which was supplied to the submitter and department head.

All programs are encouraged to reach out to Assistant Provost Deb Blanchard and members of the Assessment and Outcomes Committee for support in their program assessment endeavors. This can include brainstorming, general discussions, or training sessions. Your support of this process is appreciated.

Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing Summary

The Mark and Robyn Jones College of Nursing offers eleven programs. The new DNP in Nursing Practice – Midwife was approved by the NWCCU in March 2023.

All programs are externally accredited except for the Nursing Education Graduate Certificate. Externally accredited programs are not required to submit program assessment reports to the Assessment and Outcomes Committee currently.

Total Number of Academic Programs in MRJCN	11
Undergraduate degrees	2
Masters	2
Doctoral	3
Graduate Certificates	3
Total Number of Academic Programs Assessed:	1
Programs submitting a Year 0 reports	0
Full Assessment reports	1
Programs Not Assessed:	0
Percent of Program Participation:	100%

Observations of Assessment for Nursing Education Graduate Certificate

The Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC) noted that this program had clear outcomes and a rubric that directly tied to an appropriate framework in the field. The biennial cycle allowed for the program to pull student artifacts to help assess for PLO#1: “Learners will be able to develop a variety of evidence-based teaching strategies based on education theory.” It was reported that threshold values were met and exceeded.

AOC reviewers recommended thinking about how assessment based on pass rates indicates student learning. The goal of program assessment is to determine where student learning can be improved. Each course in a program should be able to map to at least one specific program learning outcome. The student work collected from a course should be measured against the PLO in question. That makes the individual grades or course pass rates not as relevant as assessing the student work collectively. Grades and pass rates are indirect evidence of student learning but can help inform the assessors’ research question for what they want to discover through the action of assessment.

Direct evidence of student learning is obtained using student work that is assessed as a collective. The best way to use student work to measure the impact of a course on the overall program is to create a rubric that measures levels of mastery related to the PLO and use it for program assessment.

Next Steps

- The Nursing Education Graduate Certificate is on a biennial cycle. The next report will be due October 15, 2024 (for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years). Updated Program Assessment Report templates will be available by mid-summer on the Provost's website.
- Training workshops are in development for the 2022-2023 AY. Department-specific training can be developed and is available upon request. Please reach out to Assistant Provost Deb Blanchard to schedule.

Appendix



Office of Academic Affairs Evaluation of Assessment Report

Program (s):	Nursing Education Graduate Certificate
Academic Year Assessed:	2021-2022
Date Reviewed:	December 2022
Next Report Expected:	October 2024 (for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years)

The Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC) leads and facilitates assessment for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs that are not externally assessed per industry standard requirements. Members of the AOC review Program Assessment Reports annually for the purpose of improving program curricula and student learning outcomes by providing constructive feedback aimed at strengthening program goals. While annual program assessment aids institutional reporting as determined by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation, as well as Montana State University strategic planning objectives, the main goal of program assessment is to improve degree programs so that student learning outcomes and objectives are met, thereby ensuring graduates have acquired the skills and knowledge needed to be successful upon entering the workforce or graduate-level education.

The Program Assessment Report submitted in Fall 2022 for the degree program listed above was evaluated by members of the AOC. Commendations and Recommendations are below as well as ratings on each criterion in the report. In cases where AOC reviewers differed in their ratings, both ratings are provided. If additional feedback was provided in the Reviewer(s) report, it can be found in the Program Report Element box. See pages 3 and 4 for detailed explanations of the rating on each criterion. A copy of the report submitted for this review is attached for your reference.

Contact Assistant Provost Deborah Blanchard at deborahblanchard@montana.edu with questions or to schedule individual meetings to discuss or brainstorm program assessment goals further.

Commendations:

- Clear outcomes and a rubric that allows for efficient analysis of data sources. The rubric is also directly tied to an appropriate framework for the field.
- It was a good idea to pull in artifacts from 2018-2021 in order to increase the sample size for the assessment. Since this is a graduate program and undergoes biennial assessment, having the two academic years to pull student work from for assessment will aid in getting a clearer picture of the program.

Recommendations:

- More detail regarding what data indicates needs for changes to be made (4a) and clarity around how (if) data was shared with program faculty.

- I was confused by how performance thresholds based on pass rates indicate student learning. Because the rubric provided doesn't really assess the student work on a mastery level outside the pass rates, it was hard to see how the "exemplars" really demonstrated successful student learning. It is acknowledged in the report that the assessment rubric will be updated to help determine this better. That is a good outcome from this cycle of assessment.

Specific Item Ratings and Feedback:

Program Report Element	Rating
<p>Program Learning Outcomes - Student learning outcomes identify the intended knowledge, understandings, or abilities that students will acquire through the academic program. The majority of these outcomes are at a high cognitive level.</p>	<p>Outstanding Excellent Achieving Needs Development Inadequate</p>
<p>What Was Done and How Data Were Collected Sections (Assessment Plan) - The report describes the methodology about data collection and analysis. Reviewer note: A rubric for scoring was included, but it was unclear how this measured student learning. It relies on a yes/no structure that doesn't demonstrate how students are mastering content.</p>	<p>Outstanding Excellent Achieving Needs Development Inadequate</p>
<p>What was learned (Assessment Findings) -Findings describe what was learned from the assessment measures. Comparisons are made to threshold values (if they are present). Thoughtful interpretation is made to define Areas of Strength and Areas that Need Improvement based on analysis of data.</p>	<p>Outstanding Excellent Achieving Needs Development Inadequate</p>
<p>How We Responded - Sharing Results with Faculty - Results were communicated to the department, or program faculty, with a forum for faculty feedback and recommendations.</p>	<p>Outstanding Excellent Achieving Needs Development Inadequate</p>
<p>How We Responded - Changes in Response to Findings -The findings are used to inform annual action plans to improve the program. Assessment findings are appropriately used as information that drives improvement in learning, instruction, curriculum or strategic planning.</p>	<p>Outstanding Excellent Achieving Needs Development Inadequate</p>
<p>Closing the Loop - Based on assessment from previous years, program level changes that have led to program improvements have been implemented and are described. Reviewers noted: NA</p>	<p>Outstanding Excellent Achieving Needs Development Inadequate</p>

Note: AOC Reviewers do not always agree on ratings in their Review Reports, nor do they always provide explanation for their ratings. Any specific feedback notes related to Program Report Elements are provided in the boxes above. Refer to Recommendations for overall feedback.

Rubric for Program Assessment Report Elements

	Outstanding	Excellent	Achieving	Needs Development	Inadequate
<p>Program Learning Outcomes - Student learning outcomes identify the intended knowledge, understandings, or abilities that students will acquire through the academic program. The majority of these outcomes are at a high cognitive level.</p>	Outcomes are stated with clarity and specificity including precise verbs and rich descriptions of the content/skill/or attitudinal domain.	Outcomes generally contain precise verbs and rich description of the content/skill/or attitudinal domain.	Outcomes are present, but with imprecise verbs (e.g. know, understand), vague description of content/skill/or attitudinal domain.	Outcomes are included that describe course level evaluation. No program level outcomes are included that explicitly describe what students know, understand, or are able to do.	Outcomes are absent. Program learning outcomes section describes program goals and objectives rather than student learning outcomes.
<p>What Was Done and How Data Were Collected Sections (Assessment Plan) - The report describes the methodology about data collection and analysis.</p>	The data collection process is clearly explained and is appropriate to the specification of desired results (e.g. representative sampling, two or more trained raters for performance assessment). Measures are appropriate as evidenced by tools (i.e. rubrics) that clearly align with learning outcomes.	Enough information is provided to understand the data collection process, such as a description of the sample, testing protocol, and rater review. However, there is insufficient information in some aspects of the data collection and analysis.	At a superficial level, it appears that content assessed by the measures matches the outcomes, but no explanation is provided	Limited information is provided about data collection such as who and how many took the assessment, but not enough to properly evaluate the process.	A discussion of assessment measures and plan is absent or vague.
<p>What was learned (Assessment Findings) - Findings describe what was learned from the assessment measures. Comparisons are made to threshold values (if they are present). Thoughtful interpretation is made to define Areas of Strength and Areas that Need Improvement based on analysis of data.</p>	Results are present, and they directly relate to data collected. Interpretations of results seem to be reasonable given the outcomes, desired results of outcomes, and methodology.	Results are present, and they directly relate to the outcomes and desired results for outcomes, but presentation is difficult to follow. Interpretations of results seem to be reasonable inferences given outcomes, desired results of outcomes, and methodology.	Results are present, but it is unclear how they relate to the outcomes or desired result from for the outcome. Interpretation attempted but the interpretation does not refer back to the outcomes or desired results of outcomes. Or the interpretations are clearly not supported by the methodology and/or results.	Findings from assessment measures are summarized and clearly reported by outcome. However, there is no interpretation of results.	No findings from assessment measures are reported.

Rubric for Program Assessment Report Elements (cont.)

	Outstanding	Excellent	Achieving	Needs Development	Inadequate
<p>How We Responded - Sharing Results with Faculty - Results were communicated to the department, or program faculty, with a forum for faculty feedback and recommendations.</p>	<p>Information provided to all faculty in a forum that allowed for discussion of results. Mode and details of communication clear. In addition, information shared with others such as advisory committees and other stakeholders, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Information provided to all faculty that allowed for discussion of results. Mode and details of communication clear.</p>	<p>Information provided to all faculty but no evidence of discussion.</p>	<p>Information provided to a limited number of faculty or communication process unclear.</p>	<p>No evidence of communication</p>
<p>How We Responded - Changes in Response to Findings -The findings are used to inform annual action plans to improve the program. Assessment findings are appropriately used as information that drives improvement in learning, instruction, curriculum or strategic planning.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome(s) for change is identified and changes are described and justified based on the findings, or no changes are warranted based on the findings so far. Action plan for assessing this change is included.</p>	<p>Changes are described and justified based on the findings, or no changes are warranted based on the findings so far. Action plan is present, but not specific</p>	<p>Changes are described and justified based on the findings, or no changes are warranted based on the findings so far.</p>	<p>Changes, in the form of action plans, are described but not justified by findings or linked to learning outcomes.</p>	<p>No action plans based on findings are reported.</p>
<p>Closing the Loop - Based on assessment from previous years, program level changes that have led to program improvements have been implemented and are described.</p>	<p>Strong evidence, from direct measures, supporting learning improvements due to program modifications. This program responded to previous assessment results, made curricular and/or pedagogical modifications., re-assessed, and found that student learning improved.</p>	<p>Evidence, from direct measures, suggesting learning improvements due to program modifications. This program responded to previous assessment results, made curricular, and/or pedagogical modifications, re-assessed and found that student learning improved.</p>	<p>Examples of improvements (or plans to improve) documented and directly related to findings of assessment. Improvements lack specificity.</p>	<p>Examples of improvements documented but the link between them and the assessment findings is not clear.</p>	<p>No mention of any improvements based on past assessments.</p>

Annual Program Assessment Report

Undergraduate Assessment reports are to be submitted annually by program/s. The report deadline is October 15th.

Academic Year Assessed: 2021-2022

College: Nursing

Department: Nursing

Submitted by: Susan Raph, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Graduate Assessment reports are to be submitted annually by program/s. The report deadline is October 15th.

Program(s) Assessed:

List all majors (including each option), minors, and certificates that are included in this assessment:

Nursing Education Graduate Certificate

Have you reviewed the most recent Annual Program Assessment Report submitted and Assessment and Outcomes Committee feedback?

YES

1. Assessment Plan, Schedule and Data Source.

a) Please provide a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed, and by what criteria (data).

ASSESSMENT PLANNING CHART					
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Data Source*
Learners will be able to develop a variety of evidenced-based teaching strategies based on educational theory.	X			X	NRSG 501 - Teaching Plan
Learners will articulate the elements for an effective academic or clinical curriculum		X			NRSG 503 - Model Curriculum
Learners will employ evidence-based strategies to evaluate learner knowledge, skills, and attitudes.			X		NRSG 504 – Mock Exam

b) What are the threshold values for which you demonstrate student achievement?

Threshold Values		
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME	Threshold Value	Data Source
Learners will be able to develop a variety of evidenced-based teaching strategies based on educational theory.	The threshold value for this outcome is for 80% of assessed students to achieve a B (80%) or better on the assignment.	All NRSG 501 Teaching Plan assignment D2L grades reviewed

Learners will articulate the elements for an effective academic or clinical curriculum	The threshold value for this outcome is for 80% of assessed students to achieve a B (80%) or better on the assignment.	All NRSG 503 <i>Model Curriculum</i> assignment D2L grades reviewed
Learners will employ evidence-based strategies to evaluate learner knowledge, skills, and attitudes.	The threshold value for this outcome is for 80% of assessed students to achieve a B (80%) or better on the assignment.	All NRSG 504 <i>Mock Exam</i> assignment D2L grades reviewed

2. What Was Done

a) Was the completed assessment consistent with the program's assessment plan?

Yes, and expanded to include all course offerings between 2018 and 2021 to provide larger sample size.

No

b) If no, please explain.

c) How were data collected and analyzed? (Please include method of collection and sample size).

The MRJCON Academic Programs office accessed the D2L courses for NRSG 501 for all course offerings from 2018 through 2021 to retrieve the data source, which consisted of the course exemplar assignment (NRSG 501 *Teaching Plan*), associated grading criteria, and student performance scores. The data was tallied and forwarded to the two independent faculty reviewers. The raw data are reflected in the table below.

Raw Data:

NRSG 501	Year	Scoring	% passed (threshold >80%)
	2018	N= 3; all scored 94% or higher	3/3 ~ 100%
	2020	N= 11; 10 scored 98% or higher; 1 scored 85%.	12/12 passed ~ 100%
	2021	N = 7; all scored 96% or higher	7/7 passed ~ 100%

The faculty reviewed the student performance data and assessed the quality of the exemplar/assignment and grading criteria using the established *MRJCON Teaching and Learning Assessment Rubric* (see below).

d) Please provide a rubric that demonstrates how your data was evaluated.

As part of the MRJCON's overall Master Evaluation Plan (MEP) designed to map CCNE accreditation standards, a *Program Assessment Plan* has been established. The plan includes the use of Program Learning Outcomes and associated key exemplars which are assessed on a scheduled three-year rotation for threshold attainment. Quality indicators of usefulness, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy have been adapted from the *Framework for Evaluation in Public Health* (CDC, 1999) and are used by two independent faculty reviewers

to assess student learning exemplars. Recommendations for improvement made by the independent faculty are sent to the respective MRJCON academic committee (Undergraduate and graduate academic affairs committees) for review, potential revision as needed, and approval. If course changes are needed, the whole assembly of MRJCON faculty will review, comment, and provide final approval. Once approved, the next assessment cycle ensues. Below is the established *Teaching / Learning Assessment Rubric* used by the faculty reviewers.

Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
Overall Assessment Finding: Was the performance threshold met?			
Utility: Does this exemplar add value to the assessment process?			
Feasibility: Does this exemplar increase the assessment effectiveness and efficiency?			
Propriety: Is this exemplar proper, fair, legal, right, and just in the assessment process?			
Accuracy: Does this exemplar increase the dependability and truthfulness of the assessment findings and support the interpretations and judgment about quality?			
If NO is identified for one or more of above, which of the following recommendations are suggested for improvement? (Check all that apply).			
a. Gather additional data to verify or refute the findings			
b. Identify potential curriculum changes to address the problem			
c. Change the acceptable performance threshold.			
d. Choose a different assignment to assess the outcome			
e. Evaluate the exemplar/artifact rubric to assure outcomes meet student skill level			
f. Use Bloom's Taxonomy to consider stronger learning outcomes			
g. Other, describe:			

3. What Was Learned

a) Based on the analysis of the data, and compared to the threshold values established, what was learned from the assessment?

Analysis of the data and feedback from the faculty reviewers (Galloway and Raph) indicated all students met and exceeded the performance threshold. 100% of students exceeded the 80% threshold.

b) What areas of strength in the program were identified?

Assessment of the quality of the learning exemplar indicates it was found to add value to the assessment process (*utility*), to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the assessment

process (*feasibility*), and to be dependable in the interpretation and judgment of assessing student outcomes (*accuracy*).

c) What areas were identified that need improvement?

The assessment also revealed a need to improve the *propriety* or fair use of the exemplar. Specifically, the reviewers recommended assessment rubric item “e” - to evaluate and consider using a clearly delineated grading rubric that reflects criteria to assess integration of evidence-based teaching and learning principles and incorporates leveling of learning performance to better inform students on the performance expectations for the exemplar.

4. How we responded

a) Describe how “What Was Learned” was communicated to the department, or program faculty.

The MRJCON Graduate Academic Affairs Committee, which consists of graduate teaching faculty from all campuses, oversees all graduate program assessment processes and is tasked with regular review of all courses every three years. The assessment findings for the Nursing Education Certificate are included in this review process. GAAC is adjusting the NRSG 501 Master Resource Outline (MRO). Changes to key elements of the course (course learning outcomes, content, or other course requirements) will be voted upon by the whole faculty spring semester 2023.

b) How are the results of this assessment informing changes to enhance student learning in the program?

The results of the assessment have informed the faculty of record and overseeing Graduate Academic Affairs Committee of quality improvement opportunities that will provide students with a clear understanding of the learning expectations for students and enhance the overall quality of the teaching/learning effort.

c) If information outside of this assessment is informing programmatic change, please describe that.

The Nursing Education Certificate is designed to meet the eligibility requirements for national certification of nurse educators (National League of Nursing). Regular review and monitoring of national trends in nursing education also inform any course or programmatic changes.

a) Closing the Loop

In reviewing last year’s report, what changes proposed were implemented and will be measured in future assessment reports?

The prior program assessment report was a zero-year plan. The plan was implemented and reported as initially proposed. Adjustments to the future scheduling of the Program Learning Outcome assessments reflect accurate alignment with the course scheduling.

b) Have you seen a change in student learning based on other program adjustments made in the past? Please describe the adjustments made and subsequent changes in

student learning. The zero-year plan established clear Program Learning Outcome statements, key exemplars (data sources), and initial thresholds. These changes provided the foundation for meaningful program assessment of teaching and learning for AY 21-22.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, May 15). *A Framework for Program Evaluation*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/>