**Guidance on Annual Assessment Projects for Unaffiliated Minors and Certificates**

**Policy from the University Assessment Committee**

**UAC Approved 5/29/19**

**Who:** “Unaffiliated” minors and certificate programs are defined as ones that have no parent program through which assessment of their curriculum and learning outcomes is taking place. For instance, minors or certificates that are **not** a subset of a major or another degree program.

# Examples: Arabic Minor, Latin American Studies Minor, Medieval Studies Minor,

# Catholic Studies Minor.

**When:**

Unaffiliated minors and certificates, along with all other academic programs at SeattleU, assess their learning outcomes on a **5-year cycle**. Prior to beginning your assessment practice, the faculty involved in a minor or certificate program should conduct a process of **curriculum mapping** (i.e. a faculty-led review of the courses and their related goals) in order to ensure that you have clear outcomes. Thereafter, one outcome should be assessed per year, leading to a report and updated Assessment Plan.

Example of Process:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Year 4** | **Year 5** |
| **Curriculum Mapping/Learning Outcomes Established** |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Learning Outcome 1 Assessed** |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Learning Outcome 2 Assessed** |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Learning Outcome 3 Assessed** |  |
|  |  |  |  | **Learning Outcome 4 Assessed** |

Curriculum maps can be updated as needed, particularly when assessment projects/reports indicate a need for faculty to reconsider their goals and/or courses. If a program has fewer than 5 outcomes, it may choose to focus on curriculum map review as its key assessment activity during one of the years of its 5-year cycle. In this case, the program should still update their Assessment Coordinator and the University Assessment Committee regarding this plan for assessment activities.

**Why:** **The primary purpose of assessment is to support informed improvements in the curriculum to assure the achievement of student learning outcomes**. The University Assessment Committee, a sub-committee of the Academic Assembly, annually reviews assessment activities on campus to make sure as an institution we are following the assessment standards set by our accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). NWCCU standard 2.C.5 states: “Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.”

These standards apply to any academic program for which a student would receive Title IV federal funds (loans) to attend. If your minor or certificate doesn’t accept that type of tuition financing, please speak with your Assessment Coordinator.

**How:** The only essential criteria for annual assessment projects at the minor or certificate level are:

1. Some form of student work or student feedback needs to be reviewed.
2. The annual assessment project work should connect to the minor or certificate’s stated learning outcomes.

Please choose one of the below options or work with your Assessment Coordinator to develop another assessment project related to your minor or certificate’s specific learning outcomes.

Option A: Faculty norming session, consisting of faculty reviewing anonymized paper sets/exams to establish consensus on minimal and aspirational standards. The paper or exam should directly link to the stated learning outcome scheduled to be assessed that year. Notes and action plans from this norming session will need to be submitted to the Assessment Coordinator by the October 15th deadline.

Option B: Student focus group producing notes with identified themes on the strengths and weaknesses of their experience with achieving the learning outcomes through curriculum. Notes and action plans from the focus group will need to be submitted to the Assessment Coordinator by the October 15th deadline.

Option C: Review of student discussion threads on Canvas, or reflection based assignments by faculty. Notes and action plans from this review group will need to be submitted to the Assessment Coordinator by the October 15th deadline.

**Questions? Email the UAC at universityassessment@seattleu.edu.**