Northern Illinois University

Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation

# **Annual Assessment Update Report**

# **AY 2024**

Spring 2025

Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation

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# **Academic Degree Programs**

## **Overview**

The Annual Assessment Update process supports NIU’s Academic Program Review. Its purpose is to establish an on-going process by which degree programs can collectively reflect on the achievement of student learning outcomes and foster continuous program improvement. Questions on the current AAU reporting template ask programs to address the following:

* Changes made during past year and whether there is evidence of their impact [closing the loop]
* Identification of SLOs addressed and information collected [program student learning outcomes]
* Summary of program's review and discussion of the data and conclusions drawn as a result [data collection and analysis]
* Future improvements considered based on these conclusions and a timeline for planned action [use of data for continuous improvement]

Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation (AAE) staff review each program’s Annual Assessment Update Report. Feedback focuses on reinforcing a few “things that seem to be working well” and providing a few “next steps to consider” to take implementation of its assessment plan to the next level. Feedback is based upon program’s experience, best practice in the field, and professional judgment. The focus is on providing positive, concise, and actionable feedback to guide programs moving forward.

In 2024, Generative AI (the AAE-developed “Assessment Feedback Assistant” that runs on GPT in Playlab) was used to generate a first draft of feedback. The AI was provided with the reporting template, the expected feedback format, and a list of good assessment practices to look for. AAE staff read each program’s report and edited the draft feedback to align with their own judgment of the report’s strengths and opportunities.

In the past, feedback had been distributed to chairs electronically via email. In 2024, AAE initiated the practice of face-to-face annual meetings with each department to share the feedback and facilitate a conversations about program assessment.

## **Improvement Actions Planned**

In 2025, the College of Health and Human Sciences will pilot a new annual reporting format. Rather than using the Qualtrics link to report annual activities, they will use the Assessment Summary Report template. Each year annual data will be added building to the eight-year report. This will allow the programs to see gaps in data collection, trends in data and keep collective continuous improvement actions at the forefront. This mirrors the template developed in 2024 for annual cocurricular reporting.

Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation will also promote increased involvement of faculty in assessment in 2024-2025. Setting due dates while faculty are on contract will ensure their availability to participate. To further facilitate this, the College of Education and College of Health and Human Sciences has moved the Annual Assessment Update due date to February 1 and April 1, respectively. In 2026, there will be a campus-wide due date of April 30. In addition, the 2025 Assessment of Student Learning Showcase theme will focus on faculty involvement in assessment and AAU supplementary questions will focus on faculty involvement.

## **OverallParticipation**

The university-wide participation rate of Annual Assessment Updates was 93% just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. After a two-year pause during the pandemic, participation levels were just 69% in 2022 and 81% in 2023. In 2023-2024, participation rate is nearly back to pre-pandemic levels, which 91% of expected reports received.

### Table 1. Participation by Academic Year

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Academic Year | Total Programs Expected to Submit | Number of Submissions | Submitting Alternative Reports\* | Participation Rate |
| 2018-2019 |  |  | 8 | 93% |
| 2019-2020 |  |  | *NA* | NA |
| 2020-2021 |  |  | *NA* | NA |
| NEW TEMPLATE  2021-2022 |  |  | 10 | 69% |
| 2022-2023 |  |  | 25 | 81% |
| 2023-2024 | 98 | 89 | 49 | 91% |

\*Some programs were not included in the “expected to submit” count for a given year due to submission of other reports, such as program review or assessment summary reports (previously mid-cycle status reports).

## **College Level Detail**

In 2024, AAU submission rates were better overall than in 2023. However, some college submission rates fell. The College of Business (COB) programs were exempt from AAUs this year due to having Assessment Summary Reports due in 2024-2025. College of Education (COE) submitted all (100%) of their expected reports. College of Engineering and Engineering Technology (CEET) had a submission rate of 80%, down from 100% the previous year. CEET submitted AAUs for eight programs; five programs were not expected due to program review and two programs failed to submit expected reports. The College of Health and Human Sciences (CHHS) submitted eighteen reports and two were exempt due to program review and assessment summary reports due, bringing their submission rate to 100%. The College of Law (LAW) submitted its ABA accreditation report as an alternative to the Annual Assessment Update, making its submission rate 100%. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) had a submission rate of 80%, down from 88% the previous year. CLAS submitted thirty-nine reports, six were exempt due to program reviews or assessment summary reports due, and ten were expected but not submitted. The College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) programs were all exempt due to having accreditation reports and program reviews due during 2024-2025.

## ***College of Business***

During the 2023-2024 reporting period, College of Business programs were not expected to submit AAUs because they had Assessment Summary Report and Assessment Plans due in September 2024.

### Table 2. Participation in College of Business

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **College of Business** | **Total Programs Expected to Submit** | **Number of Submissions** | **Submitting Alternative Reports\*** | **Participation Rate** |
| 2021-2022 | 13 | 9 | 0 | 69% |
| 2022-2023 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 60% |
| 2023-2024 | 0 | 0 | 13 | NA |

## ***College of Education***

All College of Education programs submitted reports. Some were traditional AAUs and others were accreditation-aligned annual reports. AAE did not provide review or feedback of the latter. Among the programs submitting traditional AAUs, four of the thirteen submitted reports (31%) clearly indicated that they had made or planned to changes based upon assessment evidence. In terms of feedback given, the most commonly cited strengths were assessment methods (69%), use of data (46%), student learning outcomes (31%). Assessment methods (85%) and data presentation/analysis (77%) were the most commonly suggested next things to work on. It was clear in only 10% of reports that changes had been implemented in response to data. In some cases (as was true across colleges), changes were made that were not clearly linked to the assessment findings and in other cases (as was true across colleges), the need for or specific plan for improvement were still awaiting determination.

### Table 3. Participation in College of Education

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **College of Education** | **Total Programs Expected to Submit** | **Number of Submissions** | **Submitting Alternative Reports**\* | **Participation Rate** |
| 2021-2022 | 22 | 22 | 0 | 100% |
| 2022-2023 | 4 | 4 | 24 | 100% |
| 2023-2024 | 31 | 31 | 0 | 100% |

## ***College of Engineering and Engineering Technology***

The submission rate for the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology was 80%, down from 100% the previous year. This was due to missing reports from two programs. Five of the eight submitted reports (63%) clearly indicated that they had made or planned to changes based upon assessment evidence. The most frequently cited areas of strength were data presentation/use (75%), student learning outcomes (63%), and use of data for continuous improvement (50%). Most frequently suggested areas for future action were including student voice (50%), assessment methods (38%), faculty engagement (38%), and diversity, equity and inclusion (38%).

### Table 4. Participation in College of Engineering and Engineering Technology

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **College of Engineering and Engineering Technology** | **Total Programs Expected to Submit** | **Number of Submissions** | **Submitting Alternative Reports\*** | **Participation Rate** |
| 2021-2022 | 13 | 4 | 0 | 31% |
| 2022-2023 | 15 | 15 | 0 | 100% |
| 2023-2024 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 80% |

## ***College of Health and Human Sciences***

All programs from the College of Health and Human Sciences submitted reports. Fifteen of the twenty submitted reports (75%) clearly indicated that they had made or planned to changes based upon assessment evidence. The most frequently cited areas of strength were assessment methods (75%) and use of data for continuous improvement (75%), and faculty engagement (35%). Most frequently suggested areas for future action were assessment methods (85%), student learning outcomes (45%), and diversity, equity and inclusion (35%).

### Table 5. Participation in College of Health and Human Sciences

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **College Health and Human Sciences** | **Total Programs Expected to Submit** | **Number of Submissions** | **Submitting Alternative Reports\*** | **Participation Rate** |
| 2021-2022 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 100% |
| 2022-2023 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 100% |
| 2023-2024 | 18 | 18 | 2 | 100% |

## ***College of Law***

The College of Law submitted their ABA accreditation self-study as an alternative to the Annual Assessment Update.

### Table 6. Participation in College of Law

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **College of Law** | **Total Programs Expected to Submit** | **Number of Submissions** | **Submitting Alternative Reports\*** | **Participation Rate** |
| 2021-2022 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 100% |
| 2022-2023 | 1 | 0 | 1 | NA |
| 2023-2024 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 100% |

## ***College of Liberal Arts and Sciences***

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences posted a submission rate of 80%, down from 88% the previous year due to ten missing reports.

### Table 7. Participation in College ofLiberal Arts and Sciences

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences** | **Total Programs Expected to Submit** | **Number of Submissions** | **Submitting Alternative Reports\*** | **Participation Rate** |
| 2021-2022 | 56 | 49 | 0 | 87.5% |
| 2022-2023 | 51 | 45 | 8 | 88% |
| 2023-2024 | 49 | 39 | 6 | 80% |

In terms of substance, eighteen of the thirty-nine submitted reports (46%) clearly indicated that they had made or planned to changes based upon assessment evidence. The most frequently cited areas of strength were assessment methods (59%), student learning outcomes (38%), and use of data for continuous improvement (33%). Most frequently suggested areas for future action were diversity, equity and inclusion (38%) and assessment methods (33%). Data presentation and analysis was nearly equally cited as a strength (28%) and an area for future action (26%).

## ***College of Visual and Performing Arts***

No AAUs were submitted by the College of Visual and Performing Arts this year due to all programs being scheduled for program review and assessment summary reports during 2024-2025.

### Table 8. Participation in Visual and Performing Arts

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **College of Visual and Performing Arts** | **Total Programs Expected to Submit** | **Number of Submissions** | **Submitting Alternative Reports\*** | **Participation Rate** |
| 2021-2022 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 12.5% |
| 2022-2023 | 12 | 2 | 4 | 17% |
| 2023-2024 | 0 | 0 | 18 | NA |

## **Programs Weigh In: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment Practices**

This year, a section was added to the end of the reporting template to capture programs’ assessment practices that may support equity and inclusion of the diverse student body. Those submitting the Annual Assessment Update were asked to rate how much each of the following policies or practices has been implemented in the program. Ratings were on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is “not at all” and 100 is “very much.” The full text of each item are as follows:

* **Student voice** - Solicited student input/participation at one or more points in the program assessment process
* **Reducing bias** - Evaluated program assessments methods, tools, or instruments for bias
* **Increasing inclusive content** - Increased inclusive content in program assessments (i.e., content reflects or is responsive to the identities and experiences of all students)
* **Authentic assessment** – Made clear connections to things relevant to students (life experiences, interests, career, future lives, other coursework)
* **Multiple methods** - More than one type of assessment method/assignment type was used to assess student learning
* **Student choice** - Students were allowed some choice in how to demonstrate their learning (e.g., choice modality/media to demonstrating learning, choice of topic)

Overall, most respondents indicated that their program had at least somewhat addressed each of these areas. For each practice, listed 3% or fewer said they have not done anything in each of these areas. On the other hand, each practice was fully implemented by 28% or more. For each practice, a majority of respondents indicated that the practice was implemented to some degree (see Chart 9).

### Table 9. Implementation of Each Practice, Grouped Scores

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Student voice (N = 69)** | **Reducing bias (N = 62)** | **Increasing inclusive content (N = 63)** | **Authentic assessment (N = 75)** | **Multiple methods (N = 74)** | **Student choice (N = 64)** |
| **0** (not at all implemented) | 1% | 3% | 2% | 3% | 0% | 2% |
| **1-50** (less than halfway) | 26% | 29% | 16% | 16% | 19% | 30% |
| **51-99** (more than halfway) | 38% | 37% | 51% | 45% | 35% | 41% |
| **100** (very much implemented) | 35% | 31% | 32% | 36% | 46% | 28% |

Another way to look at implementation, is to examine the average score for each practice. Average scores (79%) provided by those responding indicated that programs most thoroughly implemented multiple methods and authentic assessment. This is not surprising because the University Assessment Panel has long championed these practices and included them on feedback given to programs. However, the other practices were also widely implemented, with between 67% and 71% implementation rates (Chart 1). We should also not be surprised by that finding due to the university prioritizing and providing support for implementing practices that support diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

### Chart1. Implementation of Each Practice, Average Scores

Note: Scale 0-100, where 0 is “not at all” and 100 is “very much.”

## **Annual Meetings with Departments/Programs**

As mentioned above, this year we held our first (mostly) in-person meetings with chairs and directors to discuss the feedback on their Annual Assessment Updates as well as orient them to the assessment reporting cycle and share assessment resources. Seventy-one percent of chairs/directors who responded (N = 21) rated the overall value of the meeting as excellent. Eighty-six percent indicated that the goals of the meeting were communicated and achieved.

During the meeting, we shared a chart that shared the program review/program assessment cycle timeline for their program(s). All respondents indicated that after the meeting the program review/program assessment timeline was extremely (42%) or somewhat (58%) clear. We also shared, discussed, and answered questions about the Annual Assessment Update feedback for their program(s). Fifty-eight percent indicated that the feedback was “very useful,” 32% “moderately useful.”

When asked about their likelihood to us the tools we introduced chairs and directors to during the meetings, consultations, the AAE website and orientations to reports were the most popular. Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they were extremely likely and 38% indicated they were somewhat likely to avail themselves of the opportunity for a consultation or to visit the website for resources. Respondents were a little less likely to take advantage of workshops offered by AAE. Thirty-eight percent of respondents were extremely likely and 29% were somewhat likely to attend a workshop. However, only 10% were extremely likely and 29% somewhat likely to participate in a book study. Respondents seemed most divided about using artificial intelligence tools AAE has developed to support assessment planning. While only 19% reported being extremely likely to use AI tools for assessment work, 43% were somewhat likely; 24% were extremely unlikely to use AI tools.

### Table 10. How likely are you to use these support services offered by AAE?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Extremely likely | Somewhat likely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Extremely unlikely |
| AI tools | 19% | **43%** | 14% | 0% | **24%** |
| Consultations | **48%** | **38%** | 5% | 0% | 10% |
| Orientations | **24%** | **52%** | 14% | 0% | 10% |
| AAE Website | **48%** | **38%** | 14% | 0% | 0% |
| Book Study | 10% | **29%** | **29%** | 19% | 14% |
| Workshops | **38%** | **29%** | 24% | 0% | 10% |

Note: The two greatest response categories for each row are highlighted for emphasis.

In open-ended questions, respondents shared feedback about what they found most valuable about the meetings, what could be improved in the future, and any other suggestions or comments they wished to offer. Respondents most often mentioned that they valued meeting and having time with AAE team members, which allowed them to put a human face on a bureaucratic process and have a contact person for future questions. They also mentioned that they valued getting all the involved parties in the same room for dialog, explanation of the feedback process, sharing of perspectives, and getting an overview of potential goals and plans for the next academic year. Another thing, respondents appreciated was that the meeting provided an opportunity for learning about AAE staff responsibilities, examples of things other departments are doing, and an introduction to the AI tools to support assessment work.

Suggestions for improvement most often centered on timing of the meeting, content of the meeting, and resources to provide. Some suggestions related to the timing of meetings included allocating more time for the meeting, holding individual meetings with program coordinators (rather having all of them at a single meeting in larger departments), holding meetings during fall or spring when folks are on contract instead of summer, and making sure new department chairs have enough time to get oriented to the job before attending the meeting. Suggestions related to the content of meetings include and providing chairs/directors with a clearer sense of the topic of the meeting ahead of time and providing a recap of previous feedback (especially for new chairs). Resource suggestions included providing a landing page for chairs that contains all training material and topics, providing more examples of model program assessments, and providing definitions of assessment terms.

## **Appendices Explanation**

The following appendices are to demonstrate the types of questions answered by the programs (Appendix A) along with the feedback form used by AAE (Appendix B). Appendix C describes the programs that received reporting exemptions (e.g. being due for program review or assessment summary report, meaning their annual information is incorporated into another report).

## **Appendix A**

## **Academic Programs Reporting Option (submitted via Qualtrics)**

### **2022-2023 Annual Assessment Update (with guiding prompts)**

The purpose of the Annual Assessment Update (AAU) is to ensure that degree programs regularly make use of an effective assessment plan to collect and use data for continuous improvement of student learning. The AAU provides opportunities for reflection and discussion among department faculty about these data/information collected on student learning outcomes during the previous year. The AAU report can also serve as a source of information for other reports such as mid-status assessment reports and accreditation reports.

**Please note:** Save your work before closing the window or navigating to another site. To save your work, use the "Next Page/Save My Work" button at the bottom of the page to navigate to the next page and automatically save your work. Use the back arrow to return to previous pages to edit or continue working on them.

At the end of the survey, you will have an option to download a PDF copy of your completed report for your records.

College

* College of Business
* College of Education
* College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
* College of Health and Human Sciences
* College of Law
* College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
* College of Visual and Performing Arts

Report completed by

* Department
* Degree program(s) being reported on
* Name
* Title
* Email

**What improvements or enhancements has your program implemented to support student learning over the past year? Did these actions have the desired impact?**

Improvements or enhancements may include any alterations to the program curriculum, instruction, and assessment to monitor and improve student learning.

Impacts may include improvements in performance on relevant assessments or positive student feedback regarding the improvements or enhancements.

**What student learning outcome(s) (SLOs) did the program address in 2022-2023? (SLOs from the program’s assessment plan can found here.) What information about student learning was collected relative to these SLOs?**

Information about student learning may include direct measures of student learning (e.g., course assignments, performances/exhibitions, clinical/field evaluations) and indirect measures of student learning (e.g., survey, interview, or focus group responses).

**Please summarize the program's review and discussion of the data collected for each SLO identified (in the previous question)? What are some conclusions the program faculty drew based on this review?**

**What future improvements have been considered based on your program's conclusions regarding student learning? Please indicate a timeline for planned actions.**

Improvements or enhancements may include any alterations to the program curriculum (e.g., revising a course, change in course sequence), instruction (e.g., change in modality, teaching learning practices), and assessment practices (e.g., allowing student choice in demonstration of learning).

Below are boxes to upload up to five (optional) additional materials you wish to submit with your reports (e.g. assessment tools such as rubrics, scoring guides, survey items).

You do **not** need to use any or all of these. However, please be aware that only one document can be submitted per submission box.

Attach first document here (optional)

Only **one** document may be uploaded in this space (if you choose more than one document here, the last one selected will be the one uploaded).

Attach second document here (optional)

Only **one** document may be uploaded in this space (if you choose more than one document here, the last one selected will be the one uploaded).

Attach third document here (optional)

Only **one** document may be uploaded in this space (if you choose more than one document here, the last one selected will be the one uploaded).

Attach fourth document here (optional)

Only **one** document may be uploaded in this space (if you choose more than one document here, the last one selected will be the one uploaded).

Attach fifth document here (optional)

Only **one** document may be uploaded in this space (if you choose more than one document here, the last one selected will be the one uploaded).

Are there any current challenges or concerns about the program's assessment efforts that AAE staff can help you with?

* Yes (please briefly describe)
* No

## **Appendix B**

## **Academic Degree Programs**

## **2023-2024 Annual Assessment Update Feedback (Sent to programs)**

The Annual Assessment Update (AAU) provides opportunities for reflection and discussion among department faculty about (a) evidence of student learning outcomes during the preceding year and (b) how well the program/department's assessment practices are serving your needs. Please take into consideration the feedback below (from an outsider's perspective) in addition to feedback from your program's stakeholders (e.g., faculty, staff, students, alumni, employers) when making decisions about assessment practices going forward.

* **College**
* **Department/School**
* **Program**

**Things that seem to be working well.** 1-3 things that align with good practices in assessment and/or contribute to an effective assessment system.

**Next steps to consider.** 1-3 things that we suggest program administration/faculty consider doing in order to enhance the effectiveness of the program's  assessment practice.

If you want to make your assessment system more meaningful, useful, equitable, and inclusive, here are more good practices in assessment to consider.

## **Appendix C**

## **Programs Granted Exemptions in 2024**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Program Name** | **Reason for Exemption** |
| ***College of Business*** | ***College of Business*** |
| Accountancy, M.A.C. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Accounting Science, M.A.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Business Administration, B.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Business Administration, M.B.A. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Data Analytics, M.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Digital Marketing, M.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Finance, B.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Finance, M.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Management Information Systems, M.I.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Management, B.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Marketing, B.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Operations and Information Management, B.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Accountancy, M.A.C. | Assessment Summary Report |
| ***College of Education*** | ***College of Education*** |
| Curriculum and Instruction, Ed.D. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Curriculum and Instruction, M.S.Ed. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Counseling, M.S.Ed. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Counselor Education and Supervision, Ph.D. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Higher Education and Student Affairs, M.S.Ed. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Higher Education, Ed.D. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Athletic Training, M.S. | Program Review |
| ***College of Engineering & Engineering Technology*** | ***College of Engineering & Engineering Technology*** |
| Biomedical Engineering, B.S. | Program Review |
| Electrical Engineering, M.S. | Program Review |
| Electrical Engineering, Ph.D. | Program Review |
| Industrial and Systems Engineering, M.S. | Program Review |
| Industrial and Systems Engineering, Ph.D. | Program Review |
| ***College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*** | ***College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*** |
| Economics, B.A./B.S. | Program Review |
| Economics, M.A. | Program Review |
| Economics, Ph.D. | Program Review |
| Political Science, B.A./B.S. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Political Science, M.A. | Assessment Summary Report |
| Political Science, Ph.D. | Assessment Summary Report |
| **Program Name** | **Reason for Exemption** |
| ***College of Visual & Performing Arts*** | ***College of Visual & Performing Arts*** |
| Art and Design Education, B.S.Ed. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Art and Design Education, M.S. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Art and Design Education, Ph.D. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Art and Design, M.F.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Art History and Visual Studies, B.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Art Studio and Design, B.F.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Art, B.A./B.S. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Art, M.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Dance Performance, B.F.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Music, B.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Music, B.M. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Music, M.M. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Music, P.C. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Theatre Arts, B.F.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Theatre Arts, M.F.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |
| Theatre Studies, B.A. | Program Review & Assessment Summary Report |