



**Faculty Senate**  
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

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To: Provost and Vice Chancellor Elisha Baker,  
University of Alaska Anchorage

Fr: Kimberly Swiantek,  
UAA Governance Office

Re: Academic Assessment Handbook

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 the Faculty Senate approved the following motion brought forward by the Academic Assessment Committee:

**Motion:** The Academic Assessment committee recommends the Faculty Senate adopt this revised Academic Assessment Handbook. It is a living document and will be reviewed and updated yearly as necessary.

Please see the attached document for more information.

If I may be of further assistance, please let me know.

**Provost**

Approved     Disapproved

Comments:

DocuSigned by:  
*Elisha "Bear" Baker*  
64565975E771405

June 23, 2014

Elisha Baker, Provost and Vice Chancellor

Date

**Chancellor**

Approved     Disapproved

Comments:

DocuSigned by:  
*Tom Case*  
59BEB02B1426410

July 22, 2014

Tom Case, Chancellor



# **Academic Assessment Handbook**

This document is created and maintained by the  
Academic Assessment Committee of the Faculty Senate.

April 2014 Revision

## **Peer Leadership in Program Improvement**

For the electronic version of this handbook and your program's most recent Academic Assessment Plan, go to  
[http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic\\_assessment\\_committee/](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic_assessment_committee/)

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## **I INTRODUCTION**

The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) of the Faculty Senate was created to provide peer leadership, support, and review of the academic assessment processes at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), with the goal of improving student learning. The AAC recognizes it is the faculty, who are best suited to plan, implement, and act upon the academic assessment of student learning outcomes. For this reason, the Committee serves a review and consultative role, supporting the faculty in their efforts to review and improve their programs. Academic assessment is a mandate of the University of Alaska Board of Regents (BOR) and the Northwest Commission on Colleges & Universities (NWCCU).

### **Peer Leadership**

As a Faculty Senate committee, the AAC is an elected, representative faculty group. The AAC constitutes the faculty arm of the shared governance of academic assessment for UAA.

The Academic Assessment Handbook is maintained by the AAC to describe UAA's process for reviewing all academic program assessments. This Handbook governs the conduct of the AAC as well as communicating the rationale thereof. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with college and departmental requirements as appropriate. The procedures and the accompanying templates have been designed to ensure the following:

- Faculty and staff are properly informed about the academic assessment processes to be followed when submitting new programs, making major revisions to existing programs, and/or making major changes to their assessment process.
- Faculty and staff are properly informed about the goals of and criteria for appropriate academic assessment.

### **Peer Support**

The AAC supports faculty through careful review of periodic submissions, timely and thoughtful feedback on those submissions, and the communication of shared expectations in academic assessment. The AAC serves as a cross-campus forum for the exchange of ideas, information and advice on methods and practices of academic assessment. It promotes systematic academic assessment university-wide with the understanding that a program's faculty are the ones best suited to plan, implement, and evaluate assessment of student learning outcomes.

In its review and feedback, the intent of the AAC is to look at the overall process of assessment discussed by each program reviewed, rather than to solely focus on the language of specific outcomes or the details of a certain tool. Are the faculty actively engaged in reviewing the intent and effectiveness of their programs? Are the faculty seeking ways to achieve programs

of excellence? Academic assessment at UAA is best served by fostering a culture that encourages broad goals and methodologies growing organically out of the teaching and assessment practices of each discipline.

Additionally, the AAC serves as a clearinghouse of academic assessment at UAA. Because of its broad perspective of academic assessment within the MAU, it is well suited to describe the “big picture” of academic assessment at UAA to external and internal constituents. The AAC is UAA’s faculty voice in responding to NWCCU, state legislature, BOR, statewide administration, and OAA questions on academic assessment.

### **A. AAC Charge**

The AAC constitutes the faculty arm of the shared governance of academic assessment for UAA. The AAC does not act as an acceptance/rejection body when reviewing Academic Assessment Plans and Program Student Learning Outcomes, but rather serves as an advisory body, offering suggestions for improvement and commendations for achievement to those programs that approach the committee for assistance or have been directed to the committee by their Dean.

The committee is charged by the Faculty Senate to:

- Develop, maintain, and implement the current UAA Academic Assessment Handbook with the primary focus of program improvement;
- Provide professional development opportunities around best practices in assessment;
- Recommend academic assessment-related actions to the appropriate bodies;
- Provide guidance for the collection and analysis of academic assessment documents;
- Field and respond to requests for information on UAA academic assessment results and achievement of Program Student Learning Outcomes;
- Review requests to modify assessment policies and procedures;
- Refer curricular and academic issues to the appropriate Faculty Senate Boards; and
- Undertake such additional tasks or responsibilities relating to academic assessment as assigned by the Faculty Senate.

### **B. OAA Partnership**

The Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) partners with the AAC, providing information and resources, including professional development opportunities for faculty and administrative

support for the AAC. All assessment related documents are to be submitted to the OAA for distribution to the AAC. Documents should be forwarded to [ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu).

## II. ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Programs are required to conduct continuous assessment based on a formal Academic Assessment Plan (see section III for more information about the Academic Assessment Plan). The goal of this assessment process is to provide evidence-based information that contributes to program improvement processes.

### A. Annual Academic Assessment Process: Departmental/Program/College Level

Annual data collected from the assessment instruments should be discussed and analyzed among department faculty and, as appropriate, recommendations made to improve the program and/or the Academic Assessment Plan for the following year. Programs report the details of their assessment activities to the colleges, which review, archive, and use the information of these reports in their further work with the programs.

### B. Annual Academic Assessment Survey: Institutional Level

Assessment coordinators for each program must complete the Annual Academic Assessment Survey based on the program's assessment activities completed each year. The Annual Academic Assessment Survey gathers general information about a program's assessment activities and enables the AAC to report on the status of assessment activities at UAA for institutional, accreditation and BOR needs and purposes.

The AAC allows programs that are assessed using the same assessment plan to complete only one survey, for example, the Anthropology BA and BS. Requests should be submitted to the AAC at [ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu).

The survey is open annually April 1-June 15 and can be accessed on the AAC's website at [http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic\\_assessment\\_committee/annual\\_surveys.cfm](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic_assessment_committee/annual_surveys.cfm)

Annual Academic Assessment Survey (required for all programs)	
Survey dates	April 1-June 15
Survey access	<a href="http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic_assessment_committee/index.cfm">http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic_assessment_committee/index.cfm</a>

### **C. Annual Academic Assessment Report: Institutional Level**

The results of the Annual Academic Assessment Survey are used to create institutional and college level reports. These reports are posted on the AAC's website.

## **III. THE ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PLAN**

An Academic Assessment Plan identifies a program's student learning outcomes and assessment strategies. It includes the program's mission statement, Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs), measures and overall assessment process. The required categories for Academic Assessment Plans are detailed in the Academic Assessment Plan template, which can be found on the AAC's website. Programs are not required to use the template, as long as the plan addresses the required categories.

The AAC stands available to act as a mentor in the preparation, implementation, and modification of the Academic Assessment Plans from any program. Programs seeking guidance on their Academic Assessment Plans can contact the AAC at [ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu) or contact the Chair of the AAC, whose contact information can be found on the AAC website.

### **A. Academic Assessment Plan Requirements**

All programs are required to have an Academic Assessment Plan on file. All changes to Academic Assessment Plans, major and minor, must be submitted to the AAC at [ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu). The process and document requirements for Academic Assessment Plans are outlined in the following sections.

Major revisions to Academic Assessment Plans include additions, deletions, or changes that have a substantive effect on the intent or content of the Academic Assessment Plan. Most changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) are considered major.

Minor revisions to Academic Assessment Plans include non-substantive changes that do not significantly affect the intent or content of the Academic Assessment Plan.

Programs who are unsure whether their Academic Assessment Plan changes are major or minor can email the AAC at [ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu).

### **B. Review Process for New & Revised Academic Assessment Plans**

#### **New Academic Assessment Plans and major revisions to Academic Assessment Plans**

New Academic Assessment Plans and major revisions to Academic Assessment Plans must be approved on the Academic Assessment Plan Action Form by the program, the college curriculum or assessment committee, and the Dean/Director of the college before being submitted to the AAC. For document requirements see Table 1.

After all required documents have been submitted to the AAC at [ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu), the AAC will contact the faculty initiator to schedule the review (please see Table 1 for required documents). For the review to occur, faculty initiators or a qualified faculty representative for the program proposal must be present at, or phone or link in to, the AAC meeting. Proposals without such representation will be held for a later meeting. After the review, the AAC will send an informational item to the Faculty Senate and post the Academic Assessment Plan to the website.

### **Minor revisions to Academic Assessment Plans**

Minor revisions to Academic Assessment Plans should be approved at the program level and then submitted to the AAC at [ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu). For required documents see Table 1.

Minor revisions to Academic Assessment Plans do not require AAC review. After all required documents have been submitted to the AAC, the revised assessment plan will be posted to the AAC's website, and the program and dean's office will be notified.

### **C. Document Requirements for New & Revised Academic Assessment Plans**

The following table details the document requirements for submissions of new or revised Academic Assessment Plans.

Table 1. Document Requirements

Status	Academic Assessment Documents Required	Submission Date to <a href="mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu">ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu</a>
New Program or Major Revision to Existing Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic Assessment Plan (if revised, submit track changes version and clean copy)</li> <li>•Academic Assessment Plan Action Form</li> <li>•Catalog copy with PSLO's</li> </ul>	Must be submitted when the program is submitted to the academic boards (see the Curriculum Handbook, pg. 4)
Major Revision of Academic Assessment Plan (including revisions to PSLO's)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic Assessment Plan (track changes version and clean copy)</li> <li>•Academic Assessment Plan Action Form</li> <li>•Catalog copy with PSLO's (if changing PSLO's)</li> </ul>	As determined by program (To ensure PSLOs are in the UAA Catalog for the following year, programs must submit PSLO revisions to <a href="mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu">ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu</a> by March 1. Submissions received after March 1 will still be accepted but may not be reflected in the following year's catalog).



Status	Academic Assessment Documents Required	Submission Date to ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu
Minor Revision of Academic Assessment Plan	•Academic Assessment Plan (track changes version and clean copy)	As determined by program

## IV. RESOURCES

- Current forms and templates can be found on the AACs website at: [http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic\\_assessment\\_committee](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic_assessment_committee)
- Access to the Annual Academic Assessment Survey and copies of Annual Academic Assessment Reports can be found on the AAC's website at: [http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic\\_assessment\\_committee/annual\\_surveys.cfm](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/academic_assessment_committee/annual_surveys.cfm)
- The AAC can be contacted at [ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayaac@uaa.alaska.edu) or by contacting the Chair of the AAC, whose contact information can be found on the AAC website.