

To: Provost Mark Kornbluh
From: Dr. Cathy Barrette, WSU Director of Assessment
Re: AY2020-2021 Assessment Practices Review Results
Date: September 13, 2021

Executive Summary:

To build good assessment practices, recognize programs' work, and provide support, the University Assessment Council conducts an annual review of a 10% sample of assessment plans (see details below). The council uses the results to provide feedback to programs and recognize their work, to inform its own priorities and activities in the coming academic year, and as evidence for the Higher Learning Commission's criterion 4B (*the ongoing assessment of student learning reflects good practice*).

The 2021 review showed a smaller percentage of reviewed programs submitting complete assessment plans, which lowered their scores for overall good assessment practices. Results also indicated equal or higher quality assessment practices in four of nine categories compared to 2020, with a decrease in the remaining categories.

The University Assessment Council identified several actions to take in response to these results. Primary among them is to offer university- and college-level "coffee hours" to raise awareness of expectations and resources and to provide opportunities for questions from programs. In addition, the council will develop an infographic for assessment coordinators as a simple visual explanation of responsibilities and resources and create more interactive online training options to complement the resources currently on the Assessment website.

Full report

Goals of this review:

1. Recognize programs' good assessment practices.
2. Provide feedback to programs regarding best practices in program assessment. This feedback is intended to help programs develop an understanding of assessment practices and get the most benefit from their assessment efforts.
3. Model the use of a feedback rubric for individuals and assessment committees at the college, school, division, or department levels, who in turn can use the rubric to improve their own assessment plans or provide feedback to others.
4. Gather evidence of the current state of assessment on campus that can inform the University Assessment Council's and the WSU Director of Assessment's support of program assessment efforts across campus.

5. Provide evidence to the Higher Learning Commission that Wayne State has the processes, structures, and support in place to enable and sustain data-informed continuous improvement of student learning.

Process and Rating Scale:

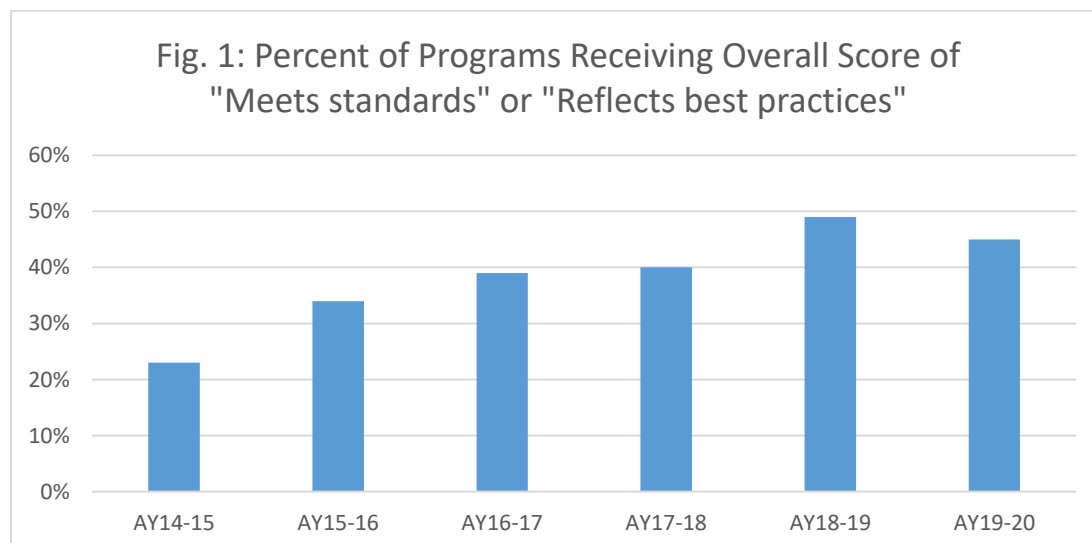
For AY20-21, a 10% sample of all assessment plans (n=35) were downloaded in July 2021. Programs at the midpoint of their APR cycle were included in the sample; others were randomly selected from among programs not previously reviewed. Fourteen University Assessment Council representatives and faculty and staff volunteers served as reviewers. Reviewers completed training and norming sessions and then reviewed their assigned assessment plans using the WSU [Assessment Practices Feedback Rubric](#) to score the selected assessment plans.

The rubric identifies a four-point scale of assessment planning quality: **Reflects best practices (3)**, **Meets standards (2)**, and **Needs development (1)** and **Not submitted (0)**.

Results:

Among the AY19-20 reviewed plans, 45% received an overall score of “Meets standards” or “Reflects best practices”, which is four percentage points below the previous year’s rate. (See Figure 1.) The percentages in Figure 1 are affected by (1) programs’ completion of assessment documentation, (2) the quality of individual assessment plan items (e.g., mission statements, learning outcomes), and (3) greater weight assigned to key items (e.g., results, action plans).

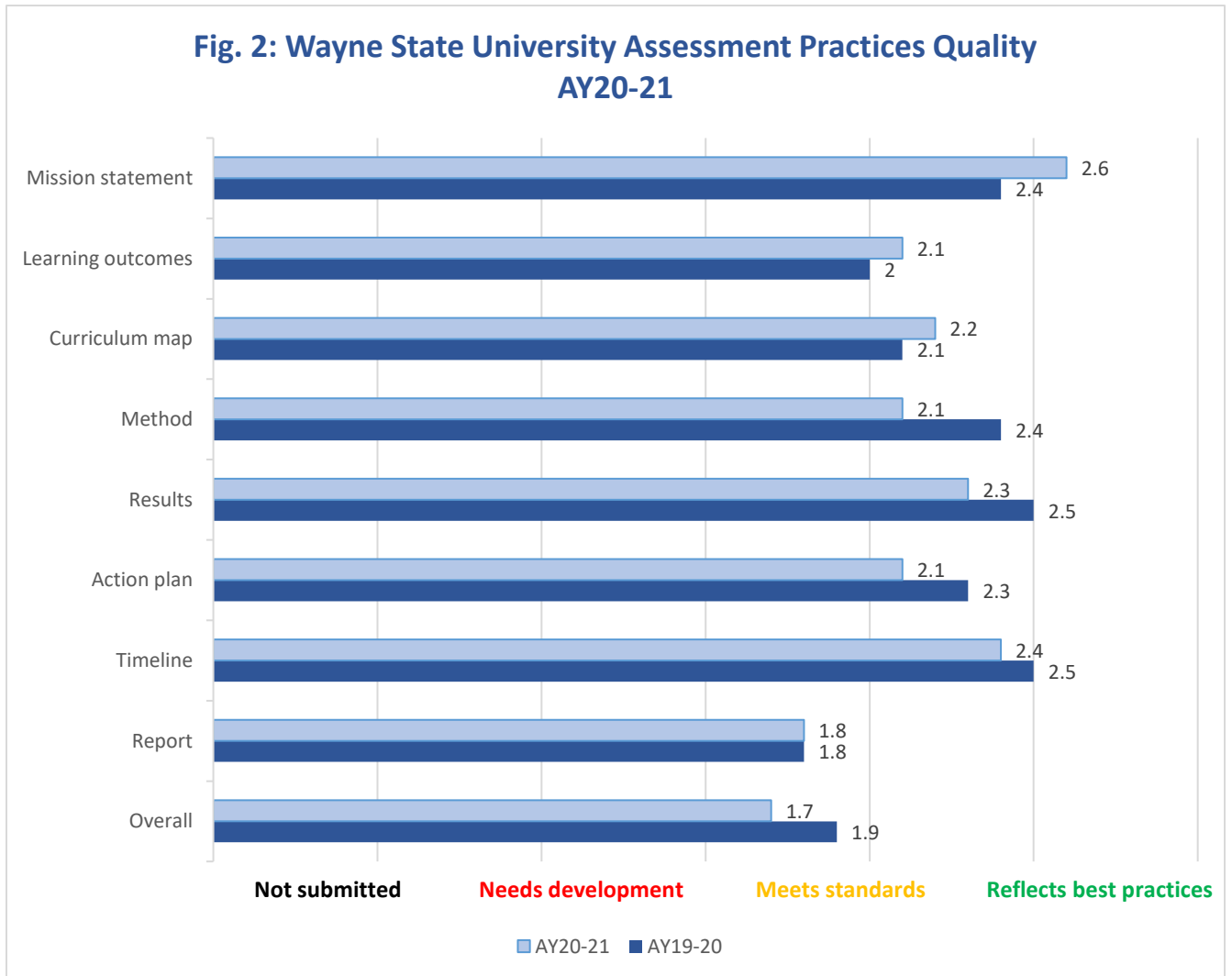
The decrease in programs’ submission rates for results (-18%), action plans (-16%), and timelines (-13%) was a substantial factor in the lower overall scores.



NB: This review follows a full year of remote teaching and learning due to the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, the review date returned to normal (i.e., July, without the three-month extension given in AY 19-20). As such, completion rates are not directly comparable from last year to this year.

Figure 2 (below) presents the results for individual items (paired with the overall scores); they exclusively reflect the quality of individual items that programs submitted. Missing items are excluded to isolate quality measures from completion rates. Figure 2 also compares University performance in AY20-21 to AY19-20.

Individual item scores were equal or higher in four of nine scoring categories (see Figure 2) and showed a decrease in the remaining five categories.



Reviewer comments identified areas for improvement in key items:

- Methods:** Programs need to provide more description of the methods to show whether/how they systematically elicit relevant data, select direct rather than indirect methods, avoid course grades, and differentiate between assessments of program outcomes (e.g., employment, progress to degree) and learning outcomes.

- **Results:** Programs summarize results, but also need to interpret them (e.g., Do the results meet the program’s target? Are there any data quality concerns?). Results for at least two outcomes must be submitted, but many programs only carried out one assessment and thus need to be encouraged to complete assessments for a second learning outcome.
- **Action plans:** Responsibility for implementing the action plan is vague or omitted; individuals or groups who need to take actions should be specified. Programs identify actions that are unrelated to their assessment results; actions should link directly and be a response to the results.
- **Overall:** Programs need to submit results, action plans, and timelines to have higher overall scores.

Action Plan:

The University Assessment Council met in August 2021 to discuss actions to take in response to these results. Primary among them is to offer university- and college-level “coffee hours” to raise awareness of expectations and resources and to provide opportunities for questions from programs. The council’s representatives from Education piloted a successful model in Winter 2021 that includes virtual options and multiple invitations to assessment coordinators and other faculty and staff with a role in program assessment.

In addition, the council will develop an infographic for assessment coordinators as a simple visual explanation of responsibilities and resources in an effort to make assessment terminology more familiar and accessible to faculty and staff members. Finally, we plan to create more interactive online training options to complement the resources currently on the Assessment website (<https://wayne.edu/assessment>).

Stakeholder Engagement:

Each program will receive a report with a graph similar to Figure 2 that compares the quality of its assessment practices to all 35 reviewed plans. In addition, programs receive reviewer comments providing explanations and guidance for improving their assessment practices.

Individual meetings to discuss the review, answer questions, and offer support will be held with each program in Fall 2021. Attendees include program representatives, their University Assessment Council representative(s), and the WSU Director of Assessment.

This university-level report is shared with the University Assessment Council and other volunteer reviewers, and will be submitted in Planning as one element of my office’s assessment plan. These results will also be included in WSU Assessment’s AY20-21 annual report and posted publically at <https://wayne.edu/assessment/progress>.

The university-level report will additionally be submitted to the Higher Learning Commission for our next required review.