UNM

OFFICE OF
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Office of Assessment & Academic Program Review

Annual Office Assessment Report

June 2023

Table of Contents

Overview

This report documents assessment activity and results from the 2022-23 academic year for the Office of Assessment and Academic Program Review (OAAPR) at the University of New Mexico.

The OAAPR publishes this report as part of its commitment to continual service improvement. The report also helps satisfy the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) requirements for academic program review (APR) and academic and co-curricular assessment and the New Mexico Higher Education Department's requirement for general education (GE) assessment.

OAAPR highlights resulting from the past year's assessment include:

- Successfully completing an HLC site visit with no suggestions for OAAPR improvement
- Rolling out and analyzing new CARC (College Assessment & Review Committees) data review forms for each college, school, and branch to strengthen academic assessment analysis and impact
- Administering a new survey on constituent perceptions of academic program review mid-cycle experiences
- Designing and implementing semesterly GE Success workshops with CTL to focus on GE essential skills, assignment development, and metacognitive reflection for learners
- Increasing visibility and support for graduate level assessment by developing a new workshop and collaboration with the Graduate Resource Center
- Expanding co-curricular assessment outreach and support with Student Affairs, the Office of Advising Strategies, and University College

The rest of this report covers results, analysis, and improvements related to specific goals and outcomes from the OAAPR's assessment plan.

Assessment Modifications

In addition to implementing assessment improvements for APR, academic, co-curricular, and GE programs, the OAAPR also made changes to how it assesses its own work.

This year, OAAPR staff added Google Analytics functionality to the assessment website. Monitoring user activity will help the office assess and adjust the role of the website in supporting assessment activities and communications and the usefulness of its resources.

The OAAPR also created and disseminated a survey to get feedback on its new mid-cycle process for APRs.

This report concludes the OAAPR assessment plan's three-year cycle. The OAAPR will consider revisions to its assessment plan for the next three years in an annual retreat.

Specifics are to be determined, but possible focuses include:

- Ensuring outcomes do not overlap with each other
- Revising benchmarks to reflect reasonable performance indicators now that there is three years' worth of data
- Changing goals and outcomes to be more targeted and directional and revising language to better reflect office and constituent needs

Goal 1: The OAAPR will satisfy the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) assessment and APR requirements

- **Outcome 1:** Maintain an annual process that ensures appropriate progress towards stated HLC requirements
- **Outcome 2:** Continue to collect and inventory proof of the assessment and APR processes for general education, academic, and co-curricular programs.
- **Outcome 3:** Develop ongoing historical documentation that satisfies HLC requirements

Benchmark:
Conduct, analyze and reflect on office assessment & APR cycles.

- The benchmark was met for this year.

Results:
Academic Assessment:
Overall participation for AY 2021-22 declined for the second year in a row, with approximately 52.1% of all degree programs submitting assessment materials. Submissions were down 8.2% from last year, including 8.7% for undergraduate programs and 7.0% for graduate programs, and down 14.7% from the 2019-20 peak. One encouraging result was that branch campus participation was at 45.5%, up 2.6% from last year.

Among participating programs, 85% submitted complete packages of plans, reports, and the new CARC review forms, and 89% overall submitted CARC forms. As in past years, colleges, schools, and branches submitted maturity rubrics rating themselves across four areas of assessment and describing self-assessment narratives. Average ratings slightly increased for outcomes, results, and analysis and substantially increased for assessment measures, suggesting that participating programs are improving overall.

Co-Curricular Assessment:
AY 2021-22 was the first year that most participating co-curricular units submitted reports based on their assessment plans, with 8 of the 11 units providing reports and the rest submitting plans and other materials.

The most common goals involved increasing and targeting services, creating and reviewing internal processes, increasing student service usage, and increasing visibility and awareness. Programs' top areas to assess were general student support, support for specific student populations, marketing and visibility, and connections across campus. Units used a range of methods in assessment, with service usage analysis, surveys, and student data analysis being the most common metrics.

Many programs are already showing evidence of 'closing the loop' and using the assessment process to inform future services and assessment cycles. For example, they are incorporating existing data streams, adjusting the kinds of events conducted, and expanding assessment mechanisms.

AY 2021-22 marked the completion of the first three-year pilot cycle (2019-22) for General Education Assessment. The OAAPR received 616 artifacts from 665 students representing the skills of Communication, Information and Digital Literacy, Personal and Social Responsibility, and Quantitative Reasoning. This total is a decline from the last cycle for these skills and will need to be monitored.
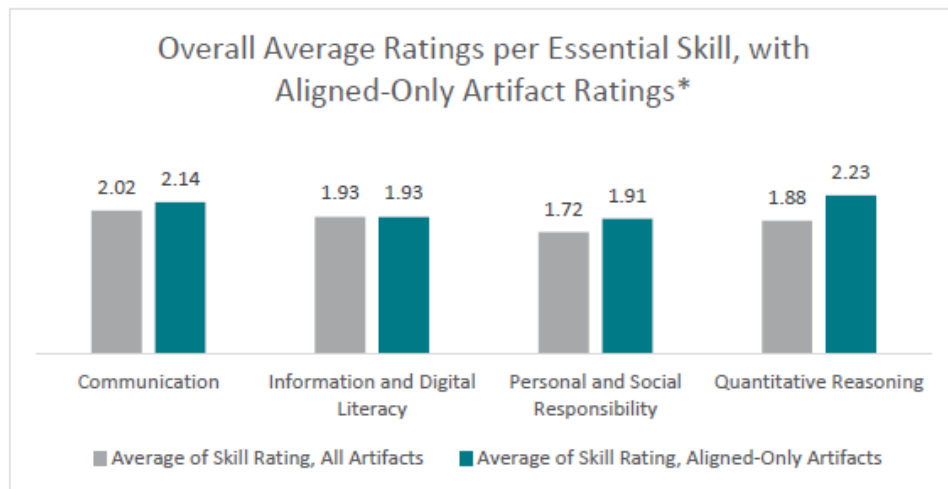
Overall ratings were higher among artifacts that were aligned to the selected essential skills and rubric dimensions as seen in the graph above. Of the submitted artifacts, 83% were aligned to the selected skill.
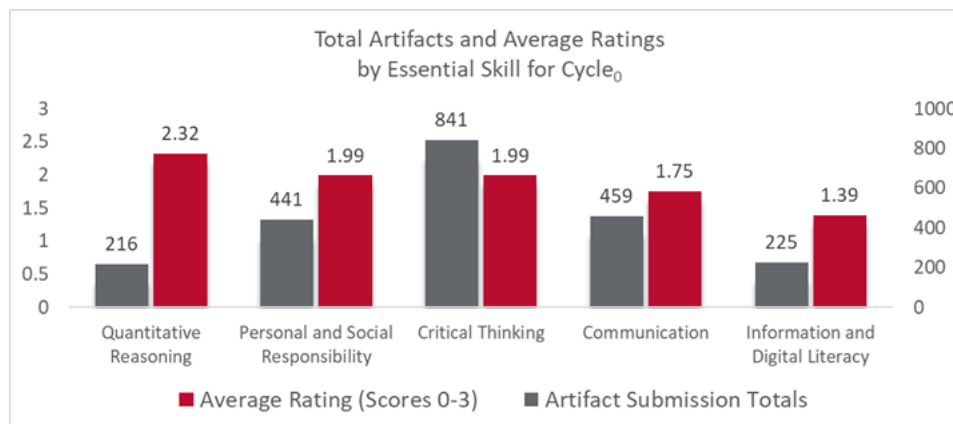
Results were combined across the three-year pilot cycle to get an overall picture of GE skill performance at UNM and are displayed in the graph above. Overall, the pilot cycle rated 2,182 artifacts across five essential skills. Quantitative Reasoning had the highest ratings, and Information and Digital Literacy had the lowest.

Submission totals are not expected to be equal as NMHED did not map all seven content areas to every essential skill. All seven areas were mapped to Critical Thinking, five to Personal and Social Responsibility and Communications, and two to Quantitative Reasoning and Information and Digital Literacy.

Academic Program Review:

For AY 22-23, UNM completed 7 full reviews and 8 mid-cycle reviews and received 8 action plans from AY 21-22 reviews. The following documents are required as part of the APR process: Academic

Program Self-Study Report, Review Team Report, Action Plan, and Unit Response Report. Current mid-cycle documentation includes the Key Indicator Packet and Mid-Cycle Check-In Form. These documents are archived and inventoried in the APR public repository.

The following themes emerged from review team reports:

- Advisement: Faculty are increasingly overburdened with advising responsibilities; some current advisors are providing misinformation regarding pre-requisites; course sequencing, frequency, and consistency of course offerings is hindering timely degree progress; advisors may not be able to explain the differences and similarities between programs to properly guide students on their educational pathways.
- Interdisciplinary Programming & Collaborations: There is a need for oversight and advisory committees at college and faculty levels to foster support and effectiveness, navigate obstacles, and assess needs and capacities.
- Tenure & Promotion: There is a demand for programs to have clear and transparent policies on promotions for both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty. Reviewers suggested that current promotions should include other kinds of service such as interdisciplinary services and community engagement, even if outside a home department. Leadership also needs to address barriers slowing progress to meeting promotional requirements, e.g., administrative duties and other non-professional services.

Analysis:
Academic Assessment:
CARC form analysis showed that about half of programs reported changes to programs or assessment and that programs are using multiple measures for over half of student learning outcomes (SLOs). New data visualizations this year enabled comparisons among associate's, bachelor's, and graduate degrees, given in more detail in the academic assessment report.

The 89% completion rate for the new CARC forms is encouraging given that it was the first year of use. While some programs found the CARC forms useful, others found them effortful or did not fill them out correctly.

Analyzing the self-assessment narratives confirmed that many colleges, schools, and branches see their assessment processes as improving and that they are making changes to programs and assessment by simplifying, creating, and improving SLOs, updating measures, and aligning assessment components.

Several units cited staffing shortages and turnover as contributing to delays in assessment, which combined with increased workload to decrease assessment participation and buy-in. Additionally, a few units expressed a need for greater support for their CARCs from leadership.

OAAPR staff also reviewed the feedback they provided to a subset of programs. Common characteristics included intended future revisions to programs and/or assessment, substantive reflection on assessment processes, faculty involvement or lack of involvement in assessment, use of multiple measures to assess the same SLO, shifts away from summative assessment and towards formative measures, and efforts to create new plans and/or reports.

Areas for improvement included overly detailed or underdeveloped SLOs, too many or too few SLOs per program, assessment occurring at only one point in a program, assessment based on GPA or course grades, and an absence of responses to benchmarks being met or not met.

Finally, the overall decline in assessment participation is cause for concern, as it is difficult to satisfy HLC requirements if only about half of programs are conducting and communicating assessment activities. Reasons for this decline are likely varied and may include pandemic recovery and turnover. The OAAPR aims to support programming to achieve AY 2019-20's peak participation rate of 66.8% again.

Co-Curricular Assessment:
OAAPR analysis of co-curricular assessment plans and reports found that co-curricular units identified priorities for improvement in their goals, outcomes, strategies, benchmarks, and data sources, but these priorities were not always evidenced or aligned across all components.

Overall, programs had a strong sense of how they could improve program offerings based on assessment results and change their assessment processes based on their needs and experiences. Continued work on reporting and alignment will be vital, as will onboarding and plan creation for units who are still getting involved in co-curricular assessment.

General Education Assessment:
GE had a wide range of findings, many of which continue from previous years. Many variables required for analysis were not being completed for every submission, necessitating their requirement in the submission form. Analysis of qualitative comments from raters showed instances of subjectivity and rater bias, prompting the need to address these factors in training.

The decline in artifact submissions suggests that the OAAPR should continue to communicate actively with those responsible for submission. Communicating the value of assignment and rubric alignment is also important, as artifacts from assignments not aligned with the essential skills were harder to rate and had lower average scores. Targeting TAs was proposed, as they create many assignments but may be unaware their artifacts are being submitted for assessment.

The collected artifacts came from 61% female students, which is comparable to UNM's 59% female student population. The student classifications were concerning, as 8% of artifacts came from freshmen and 40% from sophomores, compared with 23% from juniors and 20% from seniors. GE courses are typically considered to be freshmen- and sophomore-level (i.e., 1000- and 2000-level), so considering this representation as it relates to assessment will be important. Participating GE courses were 46% face-to-face, 43% online, and 11% hybrid. 76% of artifacts came from 1000-level courses, while the remaining 24% were from 2000-level courses. 72% of artifacts came from small (<25 students) classes, 25% from medium (25-100 students) classes, and 3% from large (>100 students) classes.

Academic Program Review:
Some documents have not been uploaded to the APR repository in recent years due to the required review and signature of leadership. OAAPR strives to find a solution to maintain proper documentation while working to improve the turnaround time of leadership's response to individual Action Plans.

This year, Individual, Family, & Community Education (IFCE) conducted a single review of four academic programs (Family & Child Studies, Educational Psychology, Counselor Education, and Nutrition). University College adapted the APR process to encompass their Academic Communities, Pre-Professional Health, and ROTC programs as part of their review process. These changes, while laborious and challenging, were also rewarding as these units strive to unify and align their goals to be more inclusive and collaborative with their resources. The OAAPR supported these reviews through planning, adapting the self-study report prompts, forming review teams, and ensuring all stakeholders participated in meetings with the review teams.

A new survey was administered to all program chairs and department administrators who participated in an APR mid-cycle. Challenges identified include scheduling and gathering all participants for meetings and collecting data that relied on other departments to compile and share in a timely manner. Survey results are shared under Goal 2.

Continuous Improvement:
Academic Assessment:
Based on last year's assessment and reporting, OAAPR staff updated onboarding trainings and fully implemented CARC data review forms to help summarize and visualize assessment information.

Other academic assessment improvements from this year include:

- Creating new visualizations for reports to enable comparisons among degree levels as well as overall totals
- Piloting the design and completion of individual college/school/branch-level assessment reports to provide additional information to these units
- Revising the academic assessment feedback sheet to improve usability and align it with the plan and report templates
- Combining and revising the documents used for inventorying assessment participation and tracking assessment feedback to improve usability and enable more comparisons
- Increasing visibility and support for graduate level assessment by developing a new workshop and collaboration with the GRC

Going forward, the OAAPR will seek to:

- Assess the usefulness of the new individual college/school/branch-level reports
- Monitor and improve CARC form processes and experiences
- Increase academic assessment participation overall

Co-Curricular Assessment:
Co-curricular assessment improvements from this year include:

- Revising the co-curricular assessment feedback sheet to improve usability

Going forward, the OAAPR will seek to:

- Continue designing customized support for co-curricular assessment planning and reporting
- Support co-curricular units in increasing connections across campus by increasing meetings and opportunities for dialogue among units

General Education Assessment:
Based on last year's assessment results, OAAPR staff created additional workshops to support GE assessment in partnership with the Center for Teaching & Learning, and an OAAPR graduate student worker created a collection of sample assignments from GE courses to support instructors in aligning assignments with the GE essential skills.

GE assessment improvements from this year include:

- Creating a reusable template for the annual GE infographic to facilitate communication and summarization of GE results
- Requiring more fields within the submission form to ensure capture of relevant variables
- Including questions on instructor sampling methods and assignment alignment to aid raters
- Conducting an environmental scan of GE practices at peer and New Mexican institutions to inform GE assessment going forward

Going forward, the OAAPR will seek to:

- Include more extensive training on rater bias and how to avoid it
- Make the GE process more visible to our TA population

Academic Program Review:
Based on last year's assessment and reporting, the APR Specialist created a planning worksheet, template, and guide for programs, developed a guide on what to expect for reviewers, included discussion on reviewers reflecting UNM's student populations to the orientation, and revised the exit meeting slide presentation to move away from deficit-based language.

Other improvements from this year include:

- Creating a quick links sheet for peer institution's data sites to increase ease of information access
- Incorporating new Office of Institutional Analytics data on graduate persistence and graduation rates into APR data packets to provide additional information
- Working with programs to create more flexibility for reviewers' hotel accommodations and cost sharing
- Ensuring that programs are offered the option for confidential meetings for faculty and staff with reviewers
- Realigning the APR calendar to 4 APRs per semester to ensure a sustainable workload
- Reducing hard copies of self-studies to save space and paper

Going forward, the OAAPR will seek to:

- Prepare and acclimate new leadership to the APR process as well as to the mid-cycle process
- Align the Key Indicators Packet to more current available data
- Experiment with a more formalized structure for the APR mid-cycle meeting

Communication:

The OAAPR communicates assessment results with campus partners and stakeholders in-person and via email, phone, Zoom, its website, individualized feedback, institutional reports, a quarterly newsletter, workshops, surveys, and established committees. Additional communication with academic programs occurs through the APR self-study and review processes.

Goal 2: The OAAPR will provide relevant support to programs undergoing assessment and academic program review

- **Outcome 1:** OAAPR staff will provide assessment and APR stakeholders with support services to complete their assessment/APR processes

Benchmark:

80% of the OAAPR office survey respondents will state that office services aided their APR/assessment/data processes.

- The benchmark was met this year with 100% of respondents stating that office services were helpful, which is up from 80% last year.

Results:

The OAAPR had 97 unique contacts from 90 visits, which is down from 114 contacts last year. 46% of contacts were initiated externally and 54% were initiated by the OAAPR in contrast with 68% and 32% respectively from last year. 27% of contacts were related to assessment, 45% to APR, and 11% to APR data support.

The OAAPR facilitated 6 workshops with 19 attendees for 28 contact hours, a decline from 13 workshops and over 70 registrants from last year that was partly due to staffing shortages for some of the year. The OAAPR also hosted 1 co-curricular training and co-led 4 workshops with the Center for Teaching & Learning for a total of 19 contact hours.

For APRs, the office provided 8 orientations, 10 data packet meetings, and 8 mid-cycle meetings.

The OAAPR conducted its annual survey among the subset of contacts who were individuals with valid UNM emails and not also part of the APR mid-cycle survey. The survey had a response rate of

28% (22/79), up from 25% last year, although this year's sample was smaller. 100% of respondents rated the OAAPR's support services as helpful. Respondents requested the following in terms of support and improvements:

- Holding assessment planning workshops with a follow-up individual appointment
- An overview video or orientation for faculty new to the APR process
- Support for departmental procedures on proposals and qualifying exams for graduate students
- Support for data not provided by the OIA that programs cannot produce themselves
- Providing data for academic programs that do not grant degrees
- Providing annual data to departments whether they have an APR or not
- Training advisement staff on how to manage student data so departments have it as needed throughout the year

In addition, a survey was conducted with chairs and department administrators who underwent an APR mid-cycle review since its inception. It had a 40% (9/23) response rate. All respondents found at least one section of the Key Indicator Packet helpful:

- 78% for graduation rates by demographics
- 89% for enrollment data by degree
- 89% for course fail rates in the program
- 33% for departmental faculty ranks
- 33% for research grants, awards, and productivity
- 11% for the program assessment inventory

100% found the form and meeting useful. Recommendations from the survey were:

- Include more faculty either in the meeting or provide information at a faculty meeting
- Incorporate 2-3 standard questions prior to meeting for department to prepare ahead of time
- Provide actionable points and follow-up milestones
- Include more current data sources for graduation rates & course failures

The OAAPR APR Reviewer Survey received 13 responses after sending it to 24 reviewers. Results include:

1. *The Review Yielded Useful Observations:* 54% strongly agree, 30% agree, 15% neutral (decrease from last year)
2. *The Review Was a Meaningful Experience:* 92% strongly agree, 1 not answered (decrease from last year)
3. *I Was Prepared for the Review:* 92% strongly agree, 8% agree (same as last year)

Analysis:

Survey responses were broadly positive, and the benchmark was exceeded, suggesting that the OAAPR is moving in a positive direction. However, it is also important to consider how to reach people who did not engage with these assessment instruments or processes.

Many survey comments mentioned data needs or gaps that are out of the OAAPR's scope to provide as an assessment office. These speak to the need for coordinated efforts at the institutional level towards creating data, making it accessible, and defining scope and services for various departments.

Lower participation in support services and workshops suggests a need to strategize on promoting them to a broader audience and identifying barriers to this participation. As noted above, TAs are a potentially untapped audience, especially for GE assessment.

The OAAPR questions if the 40% mid-cycle survey response rate is due to survey fatigue or if the non-respondents are indifferent to the usefulness of the materials and meetings. Another survey may need to be conducted in the future to gain more insight. Based on the current feedback, the OAAPR will continue to engage in this process to support program chairs in preparation for their next APR.

The APR Reviewer Survey also has seen a greater decrease in participation. Of those that completed the survey, they found our institution's process to be thorough and well organized. Reviewers shared their compliments on the efforts of the chair, the APR Specialist, and supporting staff in the development of the self-study report, meetings, and other materials to help them fully evaluate a program and offer recommendations. Some reviewers also commented that the site visit or exit meeting may need to be extended.

Continuous Improvement:
Based on last year's assessment and reporting, the OAAPR team discussed expanding the APR survey to include mid-cycles and determined that a separate mid-cycle survey would be appropriate.

Other improvement activities from this year include:

- Revising the office survey by reducing Likert scales to Yes/No/Unsure and adding targeted language for open-ended questions to simplify and decrease respondent fatigue
- Revising the assessment website to improve backend and frontend navigation, remove redundant content, and reduce the number of pages
- Renaming assessment repository files to improve browsing and searchability
- Continuing to update and create workshops as needed to ensure relevant support for assessment

Going forward, the OAAPR will seek to:

- Add workshop slides to website to provide an additional means of sharing assessment information and best practices
- Increase overall contacts and participation in workshops
- Focus on TA assessment education and participation to include this group
- Continue to monitor APR review team comments, especially regarding meeting times
- Support programs in utilizing MyReports to obtain additional data

Communication:
Same as Goal 1.

Goal 3: The OAAPR will increase its visibility and presence

- **Outcome 1:** Increase the OAAPR's presence on local, regional, and national levels

Benchmark:
The OAAPR will present on assessment/APR/data processes, improvements, and/or best practices on a local, regional, or national level annually.

- The benchmark was met for this year.

Results:
OAAPR staff attended 14 conferences, webinars, and workshops and presented at 3 conferences and panels along with UNM graduate students, staff, and faculty. Highlights include co-hosting the annual Art & Science of Data Day with the Office of Institutional Analytics and presenting at the New Mexico Higher Education Assessment & Retention (NMHEAR) conference.

OAAPR staff participate in UNM's Council for Undergraduate Early Success, Provost's Committee on Assessment, Student Affairs Assessment, and more broadly in the Association of Institutional Researchers. In addition, two team members are pursuing degrees in related areas to further their education and ability to support the office.

The OAAPR continues to meet with new leadership regarding assessment and APR issues and publish quarterly newsletters sent to all UNM faculty and staff. This year the office staff increased their engagement with HSC and SOM leadership through the Biochemistry APR. In addition, staff onboarded new leadership from HSC, SOM, CAS, OGS, and OVPR.

Analysis:

The OAAPR is continually looking for opportunities to promote its services and create partnerships across campus. Now that the office is fully staffed, we will be better able to focus on expanding our visibility. As leadership changes both at the institutional, college/school, and program level, the OAAPR seeks to appropriately engage and educate leadership regarding their roles through an APR and annual assessment process. Our office plans to identify various avenues to streamline integration and have a more formalized method to support new leadership.

In general, current methods of assessing this outcome are not providing actionable results, and the OAAPR is finding that visibility is also inherent to its other goals. This goal and outcome will be reconsidered in the next round of assessment planning.

Continuous Improvement:

Improvements in visibility and presence from the last year include:

- A new workshop on graduate academic assessment brought in new attendees and a collaboration with CTL
- Co-curricular leadership transitions supported new planning and assessment visions
- 4 new GE workshops were created with TAs being expressly invited
- Graduate student employees participated in a panel regarding GE assessment experience
- The APR mid-cycle meetings increased contact with program leadership and staff

Going forward, the OAAPR will seek to:

- Design a new TA newsletter to highlight assessment resources and workshops
- Connect with chairs at UNM's Chairs School and participate in New Faculty Orientation to improve onboarding and visibility
- Meet with new college/school/branch leadership to orient them to the OAAPR's mission and their role in supporting assessment and APR processes

Communication:

Same as Goal 1.