



Summary: UW-Madison's Excellence in Assessment (EIA) Designation Application

EIA Participation and Campus Assessment Groups

UW-Madison's Excellence in Assessment (EIA) designation application was developed and prepared by a number of individuals and groups across campus including the Office of the Provost, Academic Planning and Institutional Research and the University Council for Academic Affairs and Assessment (UCAAA). More than 20 campus-wide, assessment-related groups and committees are recognized in the application for supporting the university's mission to integrate assessment practices across campus, provide evidence of student learning outcomes, and use assessment results to guide academic program development, institutional decision-making and improve student performance.

UW-Madison Assessment Framework

At UW-Madison, the Wisconsin Experience is paired with the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) to serve as the overarching framework for academic and co-curricular programs.

The Wisconsin Experience is the idea that UW-Madison aims to develop students' ability to engage in the world, to be creative problem solvers, to integrate empirical analysis and passion, to seek out and create new knowledge and technologies, and to adapt to new situations. The ELOs prove to be an excellent fit for the learning outcomes that had been expressed, either explicitly or implicitly, by UW-Madison faculty and staff in a range of disparate and governance documents. The ELO adoption process also included extensive engagement with governance groups.

Student Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes have been requested for all undergraduate degree/major programs since the 1990s, formally required since the 2003 assessment plan, and collected centrally since the adoption of the 2015 assessment plan. In keeping with the 2015 assessment plan, undergraduate programs, in particular, were asked to map their learning outcomes to the ELOs. An online reporting system was established (Learning Goals Reporting Tool (LGRT)) to collect the learning outcomes. As of January 2016, 383 of 401 undergraduate and graduate programs had submitted learning outcomes, with more than 150 of the undergraduate programs having mapped their learning outcomes to the ELOs. In 2017, all program learning outcomes will be posted publicly in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs.

Campus-level Assessment Plan

In January 2015, the UCAAA and the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC) formally endorsed the [2015 Plan for Assessing Student Learning](#). The plan calls for centralization of the assessment program in the Office of the Provost. Each degree/major program is required to articulate student learning outcomes, identify where in the curriculum the learning takes place, and develop an assessment plan that aligns with these learning outcomes. Each academic program is required to engage in at least one assessment activity each year, report findings and develop improvement plans, as needed. Priority will be given to direct measure assessments at least once in every three-year cycle of activity. This information will be collected systematically in a central repository.

Campus-level Assessment Resources, Activities and Use of Evidence

UW-Madison regularly provides campus-level assessment information to the university community and external stakeholders. Assessment information and results are shared through websites, memos, workshops, meetings and public reporting activities. We are enhancing our digital infrastructure to improve and integrate campus-level assessment information gathering and reporting.

UW-Madison makes use of assessment and evaluative information to drive large-scale projects and academic program improvement. Examples of large-scale projects include the [Madison Initiative for Undergraduates](#) (2009-2014) and the [REACH project](#). The Madison Initiative for Undergraduates (MIU) was designed to improve instruction, to enrich large lecture-based instruction, expand high-impact practices, and improve academic advising. Through UW-Madison's [Educational Innovation \(EI\) Initiative](#), the REACH project aims to transform large, introductory, lecture-based courses into sustainable, active learning environments that increase students' engagement in their own learning. Both campus-level projects use evidence-based practices and assessment to achieve improved student learning.

Improvement Plans

Going forward, UW-Madison's first priority is to more intentionally communicate with students, as well as external audiences, about student learning and the student experience. To further this effort, campus has initiated a campus-wide reinvigoration of the Wisconsin Experience and ELO framework. This work will help to ensure broader alignment and understanding between students' academic and co-curricular experiences. Finally, UW-Madison will continue to support campus-level, academic program and course-level assessment activities by strengthening its digital infrastructure to better align academic and assessment policies and practices, and provide better data and analytic support for student learning assessment.

For more information, please contact the EIA designation application co-authors:

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