

2021 ANNUAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM
(Due October 15 to the dean)

The Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) is committed to a vision of assessment that leads to continuous program improvements and benefits students. Annual assessment reporting informs decision making and resource allocation aimed at improving student learning and success. It also enables the AAC to analyze assessment across the institution and to respond to UA System, Board of Regents, legislative, and Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) requests. We thank you for your continued support of and participation in this annual activity.

Starting in Spring 2021, UAA is moving to one academic assessment reporting mechanism. The below form merges and streamlines the former Annual Academic Assessment Survey and the Annual Academic Assessment Report. It also incorporates questions about how academic programs contribute to student achievement of institutional core competencies and to student success.

This annual report will be due to the dean on October 15. Programs with suspended admissions and new programs in the first year of implementation are not required to complete this form.

These reports are public documents and will be posted on the assessment website. Responses are to be narrative only, and must be ADA and FERPA compliant. Do not embed any links, including to webpages or other documents. To be FERPA compliant, do not include the names of any current or former students. Rather, use statements such as, "In AY21 four program graduates were accepted to graduate programs in the field." Programs with specialized accreditation or other external recognitions must comply with restrictions regarding what can be published, as per the accreditor or external organization. Do not include appendices. Appendices to this form will not be accepted.

The form uses narrative, text, and drop-down boxes. Narrative boxes have a character limit, which includes spaces. When using text and drop-down boxes, if you want to undo an answer, press "Control-Z" or "Command-Z."

For technical assistance with this form, email Academic Affairs (uaa.oaa@alaska.edu).

PROGRAM SECTION (Due to the dean on October 15)

After completing the Program Section, the program should email this form to the dean, with a copy to the appropriate community campus director(s) if the program is delivered on a community campus.

Submission date: 10/14/2021

Submitted by: Eric Klein, Assistant Professor, Department of Geological Sciences

Program(s) covered in this report: Geological Sciences BS

(Programs with suspended admissions and new programs in the first year of implementation are not required to complete this form.)

If you selected "Other" above, please identify. *(100 characters or less)*

College: College of Arts and Sciences

Campuses where the program(s) is delivered: Anchorage KOD KPC MSC PWSC

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): Select Specialized Accrediting Agency or N/A.

If explanation is necessary, such as only some of the certificates and degrees are covered by the specialized accreditation, briefly describe:

INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING CORE COMPETENCIES

In 2020, UAA launched a consensus-based, deliberative process to identify the key skillsets that help students achieve academic and post-graduation success. After a year-long process that included students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and employers, the UAA community identified four "core competencies" at the heart of a quality UAA education. Students develop mastery of these competencies through curricular (e.g., courses), co-curricular (e.g., internships, conferences), and extra-curricular (e.g., student clubs) learning experiences.

After the stakeholder-based process in AY20, UAA conducted a pilot project focusing on the core competency of Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility (PPCR). This decision was based on input from the 2020 Annual Academic Assessment Retreat.

Question #1 below is designed to engage program faculty in thinking about how they can or already do promote student learning in this core competency.

- 1. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility: The knowledge and skills necessary to promote personal flourishing, professional excellence, and community engagement.**
 - o What would you hope a student would say if asked where in your program or support service they had the opportunity to develop proficiency in this Core Competency? (500 characters or less)**

Students in the BS Geology program would likely say that aspects of this core competency are developed in every course in the department. However, this core

competency is likely developed the most in GEOL 310 Professional Practices, where they learn about expected behavior of a professional geoscientist and how to grow and network within the community. Also, students in GEOL 331 engage with the community by sharing their knowledge of Alaska geology at the UAA Annual Rock Core Workshop.

- **Do you have an example that could be a model for the university of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that showcases the student learning in this core competency?** Yes No

If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)

- **Do you have any ideas about where your program or the university might develop other intentionally designed opportunities for students to develop proficiency in this core competency?** Yes No

If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)

University sponsored, and approved for academic credit, internship opportunities within the community across different sectors would be a great chance to develop personal, professional, and community responsibility skills.

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

2. **Please list the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in AY21. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.**

Example: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats – Exceeded faculty expectations.

1. Identify and describe lithologies and formations in a field setting: Exceeded faculty expectations
2. Construct geologic maps, surficial maps, and geological sections: Met faculty expectations
3. Use appropriate equipment and techniques as required by professional geologists: Exceeded faculty expectations
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills through synthesis of geologic information: Exceeded faculty expectations
5. Critically evaluate their own and others work for accuracy, fairness, clarity and scientific style. Exceeded faculty expectations
6. Produce professional quality reports using their own and other's data. Met faculty expectations

3. Describe your assessment process in AY21 for these program student learning outcomes, including the collection of data, analysis of data, and faculty (and other, e.g., advisory board) conversations around the findings. (750 characters or less)

The department evaluates SLOs through the assignment of a cumulative letter grade based on assessment of student performance in three key courses, as per the Geological Sciences Educational Effectiveness Assessment Plan adopted in October 2008 (accounting for modified course numbers). These are:

- GEOL A310 Professional Practices in Geology (early requirement in degree program) - Spring 2021
- GEOL A480 Geologic Field Methods (senior level required course) - Spring 2021 and
- GEOL A482 Geologic Field Investigations (capstone field mapping course) - Not offered in AY 20-21.

4. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program? (750 characters or less)

The assessed SLOs and outcomes (letter grades) for AY 2020-2021 are as follows:

- i. Identify and describe lithologies and formations in a field setting: A-
- ii. Construct geologic maps, surficial maps, and geological sections: B+
- iii. Use appropriate equipment and techniques as required by professional geologists: B+
- iv. Demonstrate critical thinking skills through synthesis of geologic information: A -
- v. Critically evaluate their own and others work for accuracy, fairness, clarity and scientific style: A-
- vi. Produce professional quality reports using their own and other's data: B

These results mark a general improvement over AY 2018-2019, particularly in the skill areas of describing lithologies and formations in a field setting.

5. Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please describe the recommended action, what improvement in student learning the program hopes to see with this change, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (750 Characters or less)

The faculty haven't made any explicit recommendations based on the AY 20-21 results. We continue to experience instability in areas of our required BS GELS curriculum, specifically geophysics. In AY 20-21, we also had to pivot our courses to remote education in response to the pandemic. As a result, all faculty used their time to develop online appropriate content for their courses and stay healthy. Additionally, the assessment data collected in AY 20-21 didn't indicate major deficiencies in program learning outcomes requiring immediate attention. However, we made some teaching

method changes to 100 and 200-level courses: increasing content related to structural geology, geologic cross-sections & stratigraphy, and sedimentary rock forms.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND ASSESSING IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

6. In the past academic year, how did your program use the results of previous assessment cycles to make changes intended to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please check all that apply.

- Course curriculum changes
- Course prerequisite changes
- Changes in teaching methods
- Changes in advising
- Degree requirement changes
- Degree course sequencing
- Course enrollment changes (e.g., course capacity, grading structure [pass/fail, A-F])
- Changes in program policies/procedures
- Changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)
- College-wide initiatives (e.g., High Impact Practices)
- Faculty, staff, student development
- Other
- No changes were implemented in AY21.

If you checked "Other" above, please describe. (100 characters or less)

7. Do you have any information about how well these or other past improvements are working? Are they achieving their intended goals? Please include any data or assessment results that help you demonstrate this. (750 characters or less)

No, we don't know if this is working yet as these changes were just implemented last year and this Fall. We won't know if changes made a difference until students take upper level classes next academic year.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND THE CLOSING OF EQUITY GAPS

Programs are not required to respond to question #8 below for their report due on October 15, 2021. Question #8 will be required for the next round and moving forward.

- 8. Respond to at least one of the following metrics. Student success depends on many aspects of a student’s experience. On the academic program level, it can relate to correct placement, course sequencing, standardized pre-requisites, the intentional use of high impact practices, proactive advising, course scheduling practices, etc. UAA is using the following two metrics in its cyclical Program Review process, as well as in its reaffirmation of accreditation process. These data are included in the most recent IR-Reports Program Review dashboard. Please review these data for your program, note any equity gaps, and describe steps you are taking or plan to take to close those gaps.**

Metric	Definition	Rationale
JUNIOR GRADUATION RATE - BACCALAUREATE	The percentage of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree within four years of first reaching junior class status (60 credits). <i>Data source: RPTP end-of-term freeze files. Disaggregate as per accreditation.</i>	Junior graduation rate (after 60 credits) can reflect a department's success in helping students complete their degrees. Within their first 60 credits, students typically focus on completing GERs and often switch majors. Tracking how long it takes students to complete their degrees after 60 credits, when many students have likely committed to a specific major, can provide actionable information for departments.
COURSE PASS RATES BY COURSE LEVEL (Undergraduate lower-division, undergraduate upper-division, and graduate).	The percentage of students who receive a passing grade (A, B, C, P) for all undergraduate students and (A, B, P) for graduate students in a course offered by a program compared to the same rate calculated for all courses at that level. Based on a 5-year trend. Included in the denominator for undergraduate courses are the grades D, F, W, I, NP, NB. Included in the denominator for graduate level are the grades C, D, F, W, I, NP, NB. Discipline acts as a proxy for a program. <i>Data source: RPTP end-of-term freeze files. Disaggregate as per accreditation.</i>	Low pass rates are one critical way to identify courses that are barriers to student success and degree completion. Failing key courses correlates with low retention and more major switching. Mitigation strategies can be internal or external to the course itself, including, among other things, the use of high-impact pedagogical practices, appropriate placement, course sequencing, tutoring, and other means to ensure student success within a particular course. This metric and the disaggregation of the data can inform planning, decision making, and the allocation of resources to programs and services designed to mitigate gaps in achievement and equity.

9. **Do you have any examples of post-graduate success you want to highlight? For example, major scholarships, the percent of students who pass licensure examinations, the percent of students accepted to graduate programs, the percent in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field. (750 characters or less)**

In Spring 2021, a senior used his geoscience skills (e.g., from his Hydrogeology course) to get a coveted internship with the USGS Alaska Hydrology Division. Recent graduates attended an advanced sequence stratigraphy field seminar in summer of 2021 in Utah with students from many different Universities; they said they were by far the best-prepared. Another conducted her BS research in the department 4 years ago. She is now finishing her PhD at University of Texas at Austin, and is applying to faculty positions. She also received one of the highly competitive NSF Graduate Research Fellowships.

DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)

After completing the Dean Section and signing it, the dean should email this form to the program, and copy uaa_ooo@alaska.edu for posting. If the program is delivered on one or more community campus, the dean should consult with the appropriate community campus director(s) on the response and copy the appropriate community campus director(s) when emailing the response to the program.

1. **Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? Is there a particular area the program should focus on?**

The Department assessed mostly upper division courses; the guidance here is to include assessment of entry level courses in the next assessment.

It is recommended that all programs review their Program Assessment Plan to ensure clear inclusion of the new UAA Core Competencies and in particular to address the closing of any equity gaps in the program.

2. **Is there something the program is doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, including the closing of equity gaps, that might serve as a model for other programs? If yes, please explain. You may skip this question. (750 characters or less)**

This program provides great field experiences for students; this should be publicized more as a means of attracting students to the program and to UAA.

Dean's signature: *Jenny McNulty*

Date: December 14, 2021