

Morningside College Academic Assessment Guidelines

Statement of Purpose

The Morningside College mission emphasizes the importance of life-long learning as a central component of the Morningside Experience. Through assessment, the College community engages in a reflective learning process for the purpose of improving institutional effectiveness and demonstrates its desire to provide quality programs and services.

Colleges do not exist to provide instruction but to produce learning. The most critical component of an college's assessment program is academic assessment. At Morningside College academic assessment is defined as the systematic and ongoing process used by faculty and students to gather, analyze and use information to improve student learning. (See "*A Glossary of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Terms*" for additional definitions.)

Assessment Principles

1. Assessment will be guided by the Morningside College mission and vision statements.
2. The purpose of academic assessment is to improve educational experiences of Morningside College students.
3. Assessment of student learning and development will be a collaborative process involving faculty, students and staff. It should provide academic programs, and the academic community as a whole, with opportunities to investigate and reflect upon important questions about student learning.
4. Responsibility for the assessment of student learning experiences rest with the faculty.
5. Each academic program will maintain a three-year assessment plan and report on assessment results on an annual basis.
6. Assessment results should be used to support curricular, planning, and budgeting decision making processes.
7. While student learning outcomes assessment is an important component of the assessment program, input and process assessments must also be considered if assessment is to have a formative effect. This relationship is illustrated in the conceptual Input-Environment/Experience-Outcome (IEO) included at the end of this document.

8. To effectively improve student learning, information gathered through the assessment process must be combined with knowledge of pedagogy and human learning theory.
9. Morningside's assessment plan shall be evaluated on an annual basis and a report provided to the Dean of the College/VPAA.
10. Assessment results will not be used for faculty or staff evaluation.

Assessment Ethics

1. Treat information collected through assessment activities confidentially. No information should be released publicly in such a way as to permit identification of individuals. In general, information based on samples/cells of three or less students should not be reported.
2. Accurately report assessment results including strengths and areas for improvement as well as limitations of the assessment methodology.
3. Use sound methodology.
4. Explain the purpose of assessment activities to participants and how results will be used.
5. Honor all promises of reports, feedback and rewards.
6. To the extent possible, participation in assessment activities should be voluntary.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the primary groups and individuals involved in academic assessment are outlined below. Figure 1 provides a graphical depiction of the relationships between these groups.

Faculty

- Involved in all steps of the assessment process
- Articulate purpose and definition of academic assessment
- Identify learning objectives/outcomes
- Create assessment plans
- Select and design assessment tools
- Analyze and interpret results
- Communicate results
- Provide feedback to participants

- Develop curricular, planning, and budgeting recommendations based on assessment results and findings
- Role for individual will vary

Curriculum Policies Committee (CPC)

- Set, review and modify institutional academic assessment guidelines, procedures and forms
- Coordinate and oversee assessment at the institutional level with specific emphasis on the general education portion of the curriculum
- Provide faculty with feedback on assessment efforts
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the College's assessment plan
- Suggest faculty development activities that will advance the effectiveness of assessment
- Reports to the faculty

Students

- Participate in the development of assessment plans
- Participate in analyzing and interpreting assessment results
- Participate to their best ability in actual assessment activities

Department Chairs

- Oversees assessment activities within academic major(s)
- Insures that the department's purpose statement is aligned with Morningside College's mission and vision statements
- Completes assessment plan and report forms and submits them to the OAIR
- Provides resource support for academic assessment efforts and improvement actions based on assessment results
- Reports to DOC/VPAA

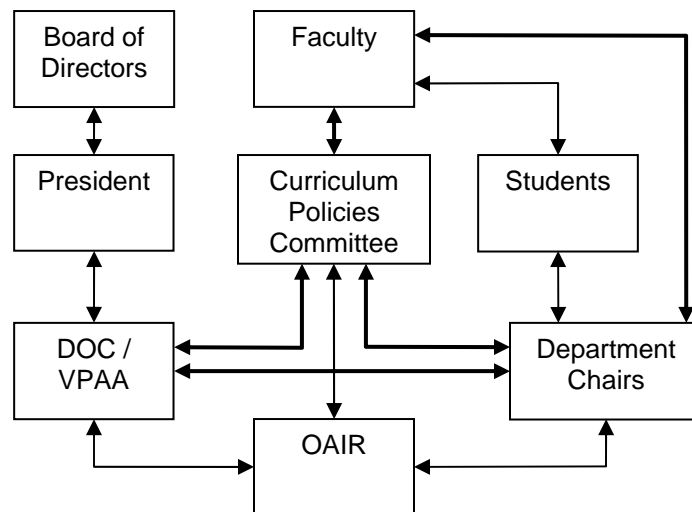
Office of Assessment & Institutional Research (OAIR)

- Serve as a resource for departments/units engaged in the development and implementation of assessment plans
- Provide administrative support for the various assessment programs
- Coordinate the collection and reporting of assessment data to the campus community
- Facilitate the development of a campus-wide culture of assessment
- Provide programs with disaggregated information collected through assessment activities carried out at the institutional level
- Assist CPC with annual evaluation of Morningside's assessment plan
- Maintain a central collection of academic assessment plans and results
- Maintain the Academic Assessment Guidelines, forms and information sources
- Reports to DOC/VPA

Dean of College/Vice President of Academic Affairs (DOC/VPAA)

- Oversee ongoing operation of the assessment program
- Promote the use of assessment results for improvement
- Provide resource support for academic assessment efforts and improvement actions based on assessment results
- Review and approve academic program assessment plans and result reports
- Review and approve annual report on Morningside's assessment plan
- Recognize and award exemplary assessment efforts and use of assessment results
- Reports to President

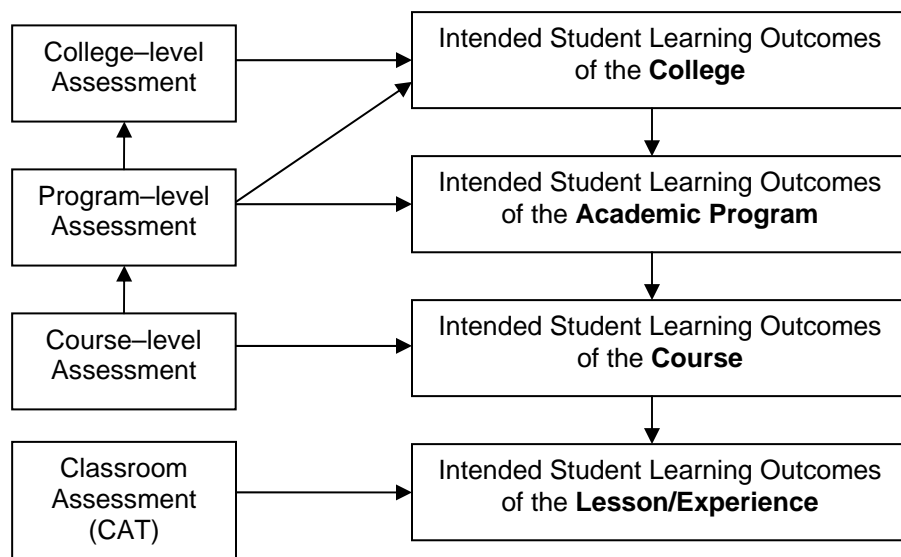
Figure 1. Organizational Structure for Academic Assessment



Levels of Assessment

Academic assessment occurs at a variety of levels within the Morningside curriculum and is related to the level of the student learning outcomes the assessment is intended to address. The relationship between the levels of academic assessment and student learning outcomes is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Relationship between Levels of Intended Student Learning Outcomes and Academic Assessment



Institutional Assessment

Morningside College engages in a number of assessment activities at the institutional level. These include entry, environment/experience, and outcomes assessments. The focus of the institutional assessment activities is based on the Morningside mission, vision, goal and eight student learning outcomes. Due to the existence of the eight Morningside student learning outcomes, general education assessment can be considered to be institutional in scope.

The institutional assessment program relies on information gathered centrally through the Office of Assessment & Institutional Research and locally through the academic programs and specific offices. The goal of centralizing some of the assessment efforts is to avoid redundancy, reduce overall workload, and to capitalize on available information sources. The Academic Assessment Plan includes a table showing the annual cycle of institution-wide assessment data collection activities.

Academic Program Assessment

Each academic program has a purpose and a set of student learning outcomes. Some of the outcomes are related to the program's link to the eight Morningside student-learning outcomes; others are based on specific learning outcomes unique to the academic program. Programs may also be concerned about collecting information

about students at the point of entry into the program as well as the experiences and activities of students while they are in the program.

Course Assessment

Faculty may engage in course level assessment for a number of reasons. Assessment plans developed at the institutional or program level may include assessments that are embedded within a particular course. Course level assessment activities, such as course-embedded assessments, may serve a dual role if components are also used as part of the faculty member's process for assigning student grades. Capstone courses, for example, are often designed to include assessments used both in determining student grades for the course and for providing information for an institutional or program assessment plan. An instructor may also engage in course assessment as part of a course improvement effort or research project.

At Morningside College, courses included within the Distribution and Flags are required to engage in course-embedded assessment activities and sends a results report to the CPC. This information will be used both to determine the extent to which students are achieving the student learning outcomes associated within the distribution. It is also likely that the information will also be used within the institutional plan for assessing student achievement of the eight Morningside learning outcomes.

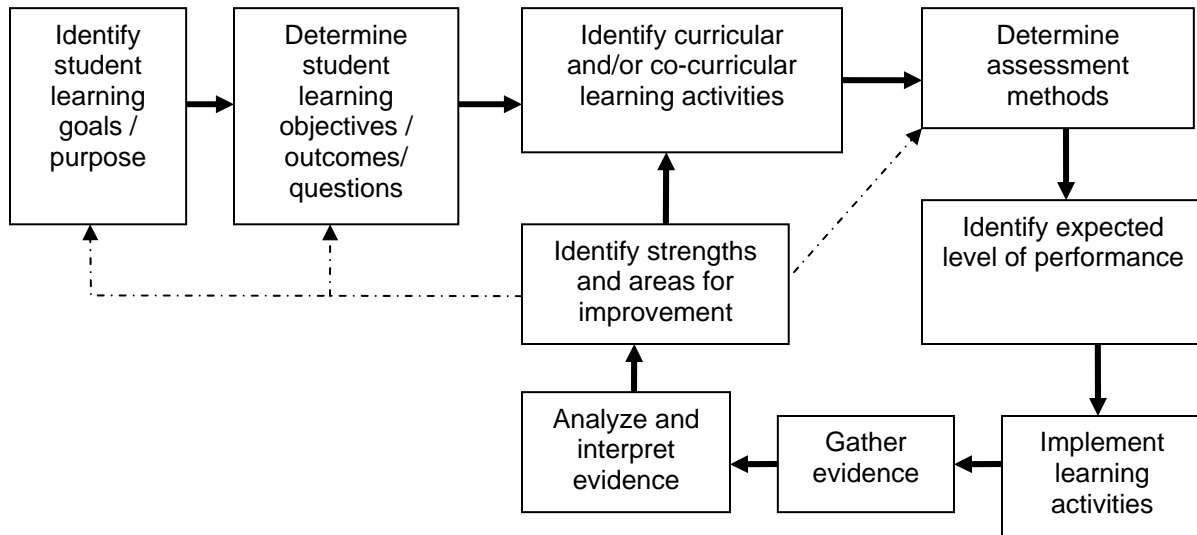
Classroom Assessment

Classroom assessment techniques (CATs) are voluntarily used by faculty as part of an instructional improvement process and for monitoring student learning. In general, it is difficult to utilize information gathered through the use of CATs at the program or institutional level. However, widespread use of CAT-generated information for instructional improvement should be considered evidence of an institution's learner-centered focus. It also indicates concern about the continued improvement of instructional methods and engagement in scholarly research.

Academic Assessment Process

The academic assessment process is consistent across the levels. Figure 3 provides a model of the process.

Figure 3. Academic Assessment Process Model



**Morningside College
Conceptual IEO Model**
(Includes non-academic outcomes)

