



Assessment and Program Review at the Heart of a Successful Accreditation

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The Presenters

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Poll

What is your primary role at your institution?

Where are you in your institutional accreditation cycle?

About Walsh University

4-year Private, not-for-profit Catholic Institution of Higher Education

- Founded by the Brothers of Christian Instruction in 1960

Located in North Canton, Ohio

2,192 students (Census, Fall 2024)

Liberal arts curriculum

51+ undergraduate majors

7 graduate degree programs (to include Doctor of Professional Practice degrees)

WALSH UNIVERSITY

Session Topics

Our Accreditation Journey

Optimization of the Annual Program Assessment Process

Implementation of a Cyclical Program Review Process

Professional Development Initiatives to Promote Engagement in Program Assessment

At the completion of this session, you will be able to:



Identify practical insights and strategies for leveraging enhanced assessment processes



Discover the importance of optimizing assessment and program review processes in preparation for comprehensive accreditation reports including the role of collaboration, formalized plans, and enhanced communication



Recognize the benefits of regular professional development opportunities aimed at promoting deeper engagement with assessment initiatives and institutional analytics



Our Accreditation Journey

From a Monitoring Report to a Successful Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Fall 2009

- Following the 10-year visit, Walsh had to provide a monitoring report for Assessment and General Education

Fall 2019

- Walsh successfully completed the year 10 accreditation review on the Open Pathway

Fall 2023

- Walsh successfully completed the Year 4 Assurance review.

2016-19

- The UPAC Leadership focuses on a collaborative leadership model, assessment mentorship, and effective assessment practices

2020-2023

- Walsh's accreditation committee updates the assurance report
- UPAC emphasizes continuous improvement and professional development initiatives on assessment

2024-27

- Preparations for the Quality Initiative

Institutional Accreditation Requirements

HLC Criterion 4.B

The institution engages in **ongoing assessment of student learning** as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.



The institution **has effective processes** for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.



The institution **uses** the information gained from assessment to **improve** student learning.



The institution's processes and methodologies to **assess student learning** reflect good practice, including the **substantial participation of faculty**, instructional and other relevant staff members.



Optimization of Annual Program Assessment Process



We needed to change our
assessment culture to:

Emphasize Collaboration

Improve Assessment
Processes

Increase Communication

Provide Professional
Development

Collaborative Leadership in Assessment



AVP of
Institutional
Effectiveness
&
Assessment

UPAC Chair

UPAC Vice-
Chair

**25 UPAC Committee
Members**
*(representatives of academic
and co-curricular programs)*

Collaborative Processes



Facilitated regular reviews of assessment plans



Critiqued assessment plans at monthly meetings



Established a peer review and mentoring process



Provided feedback for continuous improvement

Enhanced Assessment Processes

Walsh University is committed to continuous improvement of student learning through a comprehensive process for assessment of student learning. In 2008 all undergraduate and graduate programs developed student learning outcomes (SLOs) and created curriculum maps. In 2017-18 the University Program Assessment Committee (UPAC) led the development of revised or new assessment plans for [academic](#) and [co-curricular programs](#). This large-scale [peer-reviewed process](#) engaged established programs in reexamining their SLOs, updating or drafting mission statements for their units, and [revising their existing assessment plans](#); new programs created their first assessment plans. Assessment cycles are included in the [assessment plans](#) to ensure regular updates.



The assessment committee

- Adopted a new assessment plan template
- Designed a peer-review process for the review of new assessment plans

Plans include an assessment cycle

- To ensure regular updates of assessment plans

Improvement-Oriented Assessment

ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022-2023



Program: *[List all programs assessed in this report]*
 Date:
 Prepared by:
 Academic Year Assessed:

SLO # _____: The Graduates of the _____ program will:				
Methodology	Criteria for Success/ Benchmark	Term Assessed	Actual Level of Achievement <i>[Use the Data table below to calculate the composite score for the entire SLO]</i>	Departmental Actions Resulting from the Analysis of Data
			Composite Score: <i>[Enter overall student score for this SLO]</i>	
			Total number of artifacts assessed: <i>[Enter total number of artifacts assessed for this SLO]</i>	
<i>[Describe the method(s) used for assessment]</i> <i>Important Notes:</i> - <i>List two or more appropriate methods for this SLO</i> - <i>at least one of the methods is direct</i>	<i>[Enter your program's benchmark score for this SLO here. Use the conversion tool to convert the results to Walsh's 3-point scale, if necessary]</i>		<i>[Describe the student level of achievement here. You can use the data table below to calculate the student achievement score(s)]</i>	<i>According to Banta (1999), "Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning."</i> <i>Based on your program's assessment, what action items can be identified regarding the following categories (as appropriate):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Action Items • Curriculum Action Items • Pedagogical Action Items • Assessment Process Action Items

4.B.2 Updates since 2019: New assessment plan review rubric, updated sample actions for the improvement of student learning.

Walsh uses assessment data to improve student learning. To emphasize action items, UPAC added prompts to the assessment report template encouraging programs to apply assessment-driven information in making programmatic, curricular, or pedagogical changes; or to alter the assessment process itself. Program directors report on action items from the assessment reports in their annual and comprehensive program reviews (see 4.A.1). This integrated line of reporting actions better aligns the annual assessment and program review with budgeting and strategic planning and replaces the Institutional Support Report referenced in Walsh's 2014 [Monitoring Report](#).

Sample assessment reports and sample program review reports document actions to improve student learning:

- In response to programmatic changes adversely affecting students in the Corporate Communication track, the [communication program](#) aims to redesign the COM 420 capstone course, incorporating a research refresher.
- To transition the service-learning experience from a group activity to individual student experiences with a designated community member is the action item identified by the [exercise program](#).
- The [honors program](#) will make curricular changes to include the HON 120 research course for late-entry Track II students and add a research methods class at the beginning of the thesis project.
- After identifying areas for improvement during the assessment of SLO1 in 2019 and 2020, the [graduate business program](#) incrementally redesigned MBA 623 in 2020 and 2021 to include active research, data collection, calculations, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of business models related to accounting data and financial statements.
- The [theology program](#) responded to actions from the 2020-21 assessment report by making curricular changes, including creating two new foundation courses and diversifying offerings. These changes also facilitate better integration with the themes in the new General Education curriculum.
- Actions identified by the [service-learning program](#) include asking faculty to use a universal reflection prompt that encourages students to think about their experience more intentionally and providing faculty with examples from successful courses.

Integration of Strategic Goals

YEAR 4 ASSURANCE UPDATE

4.B.1 Updates since 2019: Revised General Education SLOs, new sample assessment and program review plans, new sample assessment reports, sample syllabi used the new syllabus template.

Walsh University is committed to continuous improvement of student learning through a comprehensive process for assessment of student learning. In 2008 all undergraduate and graduate programs developed student learning outcomes (SLOs) and created curriculum maps. In 2017-18 the University Program Assessment Committee (UPAC) led the development of revised or new assessment plans for academic and co-curricular programs. This large-scale peer-reviewed process engaged established programs in reexamining their SLOs, updating or drafting mission statements for their units, and revising their existing assessment plans; new programs created their first assessment plans. Assessment cycles are included in the assessment plans to ensure regular updates.

Walsh launched a new general education curriculum in fall 2022. The university posits the general education program's student learning outcomes as foundational for developing undergraduate student competencies:

supports these efforts. Additionally, the university offers academic support, mentoring, and professional development through the new Center for Academic and Professional Enrichment (CAPE). The purpose of CAPE is to foster a lifelong learning environment designed to promote faculty and staff excellence in scholarship, teaching, leadership and professional skills training to support continuous improvements and institutional effectiveness in all aspects of campus life. New faculty members participate in a year-long



Course Number: Course Title
Spring/Summer/Fall A/B 20XX
X Hours

[Instructions are shown in blue font. Remove instructions before publishing syllabus]

Instructor Information

Instructor:
Email:
Phone:
Office Hours/Virtual Office Hours:

Course Description

[Add text with the course description from the Walsh University Catalog here. Text should be pasted and formatted using the "Body Text" style in the Microsoft Word ribbon.]

Course Prerequisites

[list prerequisites or write "None"]

Course Modality

[select one; remove the other choice]
Online instruction
Hybrid instruction

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOS)

[If you do not have these, ask the Department Chair in charge of the program. Outcomes should be formatted as the "List Paragraph" style in the Microsoft Word ribbon.]

- PSLO 1:
- PSLO 2:
- PSLO 3:
- PSLO 4:
- PSLO 5:
- PSLO 6:



Professional Development
Initiatives to Promote Engagement
in Program Assessment



4.B.3 Updates since 2019: Collaborative leadership in assessment, the assessment committee offers peer development on assessment during UPAC meetings; regularly scheduled faculty development offerings in assessment are offered for all faculty and staff members.

Walsh's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice and include a substantial number of faculty and staff members. In 2022-23, thirty-five faculty and staff members were engaged in the ongoing assessment of academic and co-curricular programs. Serving as assessment coordinators, they organized the program assessment process in their areas, culminating in annual assessment reports. At the same time, twenty-six of the thirty-five assessment coordinators served on Walsh's University Program Assessment Committee (UPAC). UPAC oversees program assessment broadly for the university, including reviewing and approving new and revised assessment plans. UPAC also facilitates peer collaboration, offers assessment mentoring, and arranges workshops for all faculty and staff members. In addition, several programs organize assessment days, like the annual [assessment day](#) organized by the DeVille School of Business. The academic advising director shared the program's [assessment practices](#) during the Fall Summit.

Walsh emphasizes professional development for faculty and staff involved in assessment. UPAC has revised its structure to promote [collaborative leadership](#) and peer-development in assessment. Until 2016, first the assessment director, then the dean and now the associate vice president of institutional effectiveness and assessment led UPAC. Amended [UPAC bylaws](#) now elect faculty leaders annually as chair and vice chair to collaborate with the associate vice president of institutional effectiveness and assessment. Further, the assessment committee conducts assessment workshops throughout the year.

As part of its Quality Initiative (QI), Walsh adopted a project on *Student Success through Formative Feedback*. The QI's goal was to enhance the quality of undergraduate academic achievement and retention through formative feedback and assessment in the classroom and through tutoring, peer mentoring, and advising. The [QI report](#) produced positive results: students in courses with formative assessment showed a lower incidence of withdrawal from the course or grades below "C." Following HLC's [positive review](#), UPAC presented a [fall 2018 workshop](#) to all faculty on the QI and on [formative feedback](#), promoting integration of formative feedback strategies across the entire Walsh curriculum. A [follow-up workshop](#) occurred in spring 2019. Assessment was paused in 2019-2020 in response to the pandemic. When assessment resumed in 2020-21, UPAC leaders organized [peer development](#) sessions followed by regularly scheduled assessment events:

- [2021 Assessment Summit](#)
- [2022 Assessment May Days Workshop](#)
- [2022-23 Assessment Kick-Off](#)
- [2022 Assessment Fall Summit](#)
- [2023 Assessment Spring Summit](#)

UPAC members also engaged in the [scholarship of assessment](#) and gave presentations at regional and national conferences.

Collaboration and Engagement



Implementation of a Cyclical Program Review Process

Program Review



4.A The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.



5.C The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement

5.C.2 Updates since 2019: Program review process

Walsh University has established a vigorous annual program assessment process. Until 2016 the Institutional Support Report (referenced in Walsh's 2014 Monitoring Report) documented actions from the assessment process but had limited impact regarding growth opportunities for academic programs or links to strategic planning and budgeting. Walsh has since built a new systematic program review process and subsequently refined it. The current program review process includes program assessment actions and aligns with budgeting and strategic planning.

Program Review

Systematic Program Review

- Combination between annual and comprehensive reviews

Comprehensive Reviews (5-year cycle)

- Provide a reflective narrative in response to institutional analytics and to program review prompts

Annual Reviews (during off-years)

- Programs respond to a "Question of the Year" and
- Incorporate action items from the assessment report

YEAR 4 ASSURANCE UPDATE

4.A.1 Updates since 2019: updates to the program review policy, updated program review cycle new annual response form, and program reports for 2020-2023

Walsh first implemented a [systematic review of all programs](#) in 2016-17 with an initial program prioritization based on Robert Dickeson's model. Prior to these systematic reviews of all academic programs, only programs with external accreditors underwent regular reviews. Walsh's current program review is a cyclical process during which a set of programs undergoes a comprehensive review each year, while other programs complete an annual review during which each program director or chair responds to institutional priorities—the "Questions of the Year"—and incorporates actions from the annual program assessment in their report, thus aligning the process with budgeting and strategic planning. The reports of the undergraduate [business](#) and [chemistry](#) programs and the graduate programs in [nursing](#) serve as examples of annual reports.

Annual program reviews culminate in a comprehensive five-year review, which combines annual reports, statements of the program's contribution to the institutional mission, its quality, aggregated data, and an opportunity analysis. The five-year report also includes actions based on annual assessments, as shown in the sample comprehensive reports for the undergraduate program in [theology](#) and the graduate program in [physical therapy](#). The [comprehensive program review cycle](#) started in 2018-19, and it was paused during the pandemic. As a result, the first full round of comprehensive reviews will be completed in 2023-24, which is one year later than originally scheduled.

The Program Review Committee conducts rubric evaluations of each program report. At the completion of the program review process, the associate vice president of institutional effectiveness and assessment compiles the annual and comprehensive reports of Walsh's academic programs along with the committee's reviews and recommendations into a combined report for the university's senior administration and the Board of Directors (BOD). The comprehensive program review process was paused in [2020-21](#), and all academic programs were asked to submit annual program reports. The comprehensive reviews resumed in the following year and were included in the [2021-22](#) and [2022-23](#) reports.

<p>Chemistry, Biochemistry (UG)</p>	<p>The Chemistry program is engaged in a number of strategies to increase enrollment and retention. These include outreach events for high school students, high school visits, the submission of several grant proposals, the use of grant awards to purchase new instruments, curricular adjustments to allow more flexibility for students, and course redesign to align with Quality Matters standards. In addition, the program has begun to work on a proposal for specialty accreditation.</p> <p>The program's updated assessment plan was approved in 2022. The faculty made curriculum changes that include the creation of tracks within the major. The faculty incorporate a variety of teaching practices in their courses that include active learning, reflective activities, and design thinking. Curriculum changes include the offering of hybrid courses. The program is encouraged to track the impact of the curriculum changes on enrollment. The goals of pursuing specialty accreditation should be discussed with the VPAA.</p>
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4.A Example: The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews...

PROGRAM REVIEW, ASSESSMENT, STRATEGIC PLANNING, AND BUDGETING ARE LINKED

The following is a list of changes that programs made in response to the feedback they received from program review committee:

- Behavioral and Health Science modified their program and consolidated several tracks.
- The Science programs consolidated several tracks and added pre-engineering 3+2 programs to boost enrollment.
- The Counseling and Human Development program conducted a complete curriculum revision and made a staff analysis in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. In response to this analysis, several new faculty positions were added to this rapidly growing program to meet the specialty accreditor's demands for maintaining a faculty-student ratio of 12:1.
- In response to program review feedback, the Occupational Therapy program developed a new Post-Professional Doctorate for which it received HLC approval. The Occupational Therapy program is in the process of implementing this new degree program.

4.A Example: ... and acts upon the findings.

Questions & Discussion

A decorative background on the right side of the slide featuring a cluster of 3D-style question marks in various shades of gray and white, some appearing to float or be scattered.

Contact Us



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