In 2011, the plan received a major revision reflecting what was learned through cycles of implementing and evaluating institutional assessment activities. This 2011 Institutional Assessment & Evaluation Plan documented the continuing development of a culture of learning at St. Ambrose and instituted an annual assessment process for academic programs.

In 2013, the plan was revised to reflect an evolution in our assessment practices in the face of new internal and external demands. The plan, detailing a reinvigorated annual assessment process, demonstrated increased institutional expectations for assessment at the institution- and program-levels. It also introduced a new rubric-based assessment process to determine student attainment of the new General Education student learning outcomes.

The 2015 revision to the plan focused on evaluation, mirroring increased expectations for the evaluation of institutional and programmatic activities. The plan documented evaluation activities, such as the institutional prioritization process, the Delaware Study, and surveys administered by co-curricular offices. The plan also outlined how assessment and evaluation results informed planning and budgeting.

The 2017 revision adds a summary evaluation of assessment activities at St. Ambrose in comparison to a rubric of best practices. An updated summary is located in Appendix B.

The 2021 revision includes an update of the General Education Outcomes and assessment of the program. It also includes an update of the institutional tools used to evaluate program viability and sustainability to compliment the academic evaluation of programs.

The mission of St. Ambrose, focused on student development, demands an investigation of the extent to which learning occurs and the degree to which institutional activities contribute to that learning.

The purpose of assessment at St. Ambrose is to provide useful feedback to students, faculty, and external stakeholders to improve institutional effectiveness which contributes to student learning in fulfilling its mission, vision, & goals.

St. Ambrose University, independent, diocesan and Catholic, enables its students to develop intellectually, spiritually, ethically, socially, artistically and physically to enrich their own lives and the lives of others

St. Ambrose will be recognized as a leading Midwestern university rooted in its diocesan heritage and Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Ambrosians are committed to academic excellence, the liberal arts, social justice and service Core Mission

Catholicity, Integrity, Liberal Arts, Lifelong Learning, & Diversity

Effective assessment at St. Ambrose University…

1. Provides timely results to improve student learning and institutional effectiveness
2. Is efficient and feasible, using existing resources, data, and structures when possible
3. Meets both internal demands and external expectations
4. Synthesizes information from high-quality assessments for benchmarking
5. Is developed and sustained by faculty and staff, with support from campus leaders
6. Is continuously evaluated and improved
7. Aligns with institutional commitments to student development & integrated learning
8. Comes in many forms, but is informed by scholarship and good practice

New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability (2012)

1. Set ambitious goals
    - Learning outcomes clearly articulate what students should be able to do, achieve, demonstrate, or know upon the completion of each undergraduate degree.
    - Outcomes reflect appropriate higher education goals and are stated in a way that allows levels of achievement to be assessed against an externally informed or benchmarked level of achievement or assessed and compared with those of similar institutions.
    - Institutional practices, such as program review, are in place to ensure that curricular and co-curricular goals are aligned with intended learning outcomes.
    - The institution and its major academic and co-curricular programs can identify places in the curriculum where students encounter or are expected to achieve the stated outcomes.

2. Gather Evidence of Student Learning
    - Policies and procedures are in place that describe when, how, and how frequently learning outcomes will be assessed.
    - Assessment processes are ongoing, sustainable, and integrated into the work of faculty, administrators, and staff.
    - Results can be assessed against an externally informed or benchmarked level of achievement or compared to other institutions and programs.
    - Evidence also includes assessments of levels of engagement in academically challenging work and active learning practices.
    - Results can be used to examine differences in performance among significant subgroups of students.

3. Use Evidence to Improve Student Learning
    - Well-articulated policies and procedures are in place for using evidence to improve student learning at appropriate levels of the institution.
    - Evidence is used to make recommendations for improvement of academic and co-curricular programs.
    - There is an established process for discussing and analyzing these recommendations and moving from recommendation to action. Where feasible and appropriate, key recommendations for improvement are implemented.

: A focus on student learning encompasses every aspect of students' experience at an institution... [including] the breadth, depth, currency, and relevance of the learning they are offered; their education through cocurricular offerings; the effectiveness of their programs; what happens to them after they leave the institution.

A process of assessment is essential to continuous improvement and therefore a commitment to assessment should be deeply embedded in an institution's activities. Assessment applies not only to student learning and educational outcomes but to an institution's approach to improvement of institutional effectiveness. For student learning, a commitment to assessment would mean assessment at the program level that proceeds from clear goals, involves faculty

Outcome: Evaluate truth claims derived from Philosophy & Theology in order to scrutinize the relationship between faith and reason

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evaluate Philosophical arguments. (100-200-level Philosophy courses)

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theological approaches to faith. (100-200-level Theology courses)

{ ^ } š Z š can better understand the relationship between faith and reason, St. Ambrose students will evaluate how worldviews shape interpretation. (Philosophy, Theology, Catholic Studies, and Justice and Peace)

Outcome: Critically explore complex issues using knowledge and skills from the liberal arts and catholic intellectual tradition

{ So that they are prepared to make meaningful contributions to society and the world, St. Ambrose students will critically explore complex issues using knowledge and skills from the liberal arts and Catholic Intellectual Tradition. (Integrated Learning, 300-level Philosophy or Theology)

The 2011 Assessment Plan established the simplified model of student learning and assessment displayed below:

- University mission and values guide curriculum development, educational activities, and student learning outcomes.
- The General Education curriculum shapes academic and co-curricular activities offered to students.
- Participation in these activities influences student learning, as evidenced by student learning outcomes
- Evidence regarding student learning outcomes informs improvements to the curriculum and activities.

What is evaluated?	How is it evaluated?	When?
Alignment of curriculum with outcomes	EPC Program Reviews GenEd Committee Reviews	Annually
Alignment of engagement & satisfaction	EPC Program Reviews NSSE SSI, ASPS, Course evals	Annually 3-year cycle 3-year-cycle
Alignment of satisfaction & learning	Graduation Survey Outcomes survey *HEIghten*	Annually 3-year

contribute to valued outcomes of college can claim to be of higher quality in comparison with similar types of colleges and universities. Kuh, G. (2003)

Recognizing this link between student engagement and learning, St. Ambrose evaluates student engagement with academic and co-curricular activities. Increasing student engagement in these activities supports student attainment of GenEd outcomes.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) evaluates the degree to which students are engaged at St. Ambrose. This nationally-normed survey defines student engagement in terms of two features:

1. the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities
2. how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that decades of research studies show are linked to student learning

Student responses to NSSE items are combined to form 10 engagement indicators within 4 engagement themes (academic challenge, learning with peers, experiences with faculty, and campus environment). The NSSE also evaluates student participation in 6 high impact practices: learning communities, service learning, undergraduate research, study abroad, culminating senior experiences, and internships/field experiences/clinical placements. Engagement indicator scores and participation in high-impact practices are tracked over time and compared to external benchmarks.

At St. Ambrose, the NSSE has been administered on a 3-year rotation to freshmen and seniors since 2005-06. This 3-year rotation allows for status comparisons (comparisons to national norms for a single year), cross-sectional comparisons (seniors compared to freshmen in a single year), and longitudinal comparisons (seniors compared to scores from the year they were freshmen). Results from recent NSSE administrations appear on the St. Ambrose Assessment website.

The NSSE is funded from the university a8ETQq03-2 (aw 0 Tsehu (n dnd)5 (ew 033.5sh)5 -3 (io)7 (ns)]TJETQq0 0 612 792 reW* nE

The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research maintains the web-based EvaluationKIT to both deliver the End of Course Survey, and maintain results. Faculty, Department Chairs, Program Directors, Deans, and the Provost all have appropriate to the results immediate following the conclusion of the term. Batch summary reports appear on the Assessment and Institutional Research website.

Summaries of results are reviewed at the University, College, and Department/Program Level, in addition to the individual instructor and the PTS (Promotion, Tenure, & Stand

Research & Information Literacy	Information Literacy	3b, 11e		MISO	Info Lit Exam, End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
Diversity*		discussions with diverse others	Intercultural Competency & Diversity	EAB Campus Climate Survey	End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
Liberal Arts Perspectives					
Creative Arts	Art+Design & Music	1d			End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
Humanities	History & Art History	12, 15a	Civic Competency & Engagement		End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
Natural Sciences	Biology & Chemistry				End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
Social Sciences	Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Gender Studies	12, 15a	Civic Competency & Engagement		End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
Catholic Intellectual Tradition					
Philosophical understandings	Philosophy		Intercultural Competency & Diversity		End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
Theological approaches	Theology		Intercultural Competency & Diversity		End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
Integrated Learning					
Critical Thinking	All programs	reflective & integrative learning, 11f, higher-order learning, 17c	Critical Thinking		End of Course Surveys, GenEd Graduation Survey
** Graduation requirement beginning 2021-23 catalog*					

The following table displays the scheduled rotation of General Education assessment activities:

NSSE			Spring 2024		
SSI & ASPS	Spring 2022			Spring 2022	
HEIghten	Written Communication	Quantitative Literacy		Civic Competency & Engagement	Intercultural Competency & Diversity
Other	EAB Campus Climate, MISO	NSLVE, NCHA		NSLVE	EAB Campus Climate, MISO

Program Reviews	continuous	continuous	continuous	continuous	continuous
End of Course Surveys	continuous	continuous	continuous	continuous	continuous

Logistics of Administering, Analyzing, Reporting Results from General Education Assessments

NSSE	Spring semester	Assessment Coordinator	First years & seniors	Assessment Committee	As available	Assessment Webpage	Office of Assessment & Institutional Research
SSI & ASPS	Spring semester	Assessment Coordinator	First years, seniors, and adult students	Assessment Committee	As available	Assessment Webpage	Office of Assessment & Institutional Research
HEIghten	Throughout year	Assessment Coordinator	GenEd courses	Assessment Committee	As available	Assessment Webpage	Office of Assessment & Institutional Research
Other	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Program Reviews	Throughout year	EPC	programs with GenEd courses	GenEd Committee and EPC		GenEd & EPC Minutes	Director of GenEd, Chair of EPC
End of Course Surveys	End of each term	Evaluation-KIT	Faculty	Faculty	End of term	PTS Review	Chair of PTS Committee

To encourage the use of assessment data in guiding strategic planning, summaries of all assessment and evaluation results will be shared with the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. The results will also be shared with University stakeholders by posting summaries online and/or hosting presentations.

Beginning with the 2006 administration of NSSE, most standardized assessments have been administered to freshmen and seniors on a 3-year rotation. The diagram to the right demonstrates this 3-year rotation
As the diagram shows, this 3-year rotation allows for 4 different analyses:

Results can be used to determine the current status of first-year students (or seniors) in any given year. From this, areas of relative strength and weakness can be identified by comparing results with external benchmarks, when available.

Results can be compared between first-year students and seniors within a single year. This would provide weak evidence of institutional effectiveness. A value-added analysis would strengthen this evidence.

Results from first-year students (or seniors) in one year can be compared to results from first-year students (or seniors) in a later year. This could provide evidence for the effectiveness of any changes to the first-year curriculum/experience

Results from seniors can be compared to the same cohort of students when they were first-year students (3 years prior). This provides the most compelling evidence of institutional effectiveness.

Value-added analyses attempt to estimate the contribution of SAU to student learning outcomes, controlling for other factors such as incoming student ability. While the use of value-added scores to evaluate individual instructors has been controversial, value-added modeling will be carefully used to estimate overall institutional effectiveness whenever possible.

To maximize the usefulness of results from institutional assessment and evaluation methods, the Assessment &

In addition to the instruments used to assess General Education outcomes and evaluate satisfaction and engagement, St. Ambrose administers other institutional-level assessments, including:

This survey was first administered pre-test/post-test to 333 students in 2011-12 as part of an online alcohol prevention program.

The American College Health Association's NCHA was first administered to 308 students in 2011 to assess health habits, behaviors, and perceptions. Results from the 2014, 2015, and 2016 administrations appear on the assessment website

The MISO was first administered to students, faculty, and staff in 2014 to measure their view of library and computing services. Results from the 2014 administration appear on the assessment website

Beginning in 2010, the division of Student Affairs has published an annual Year in Review documenting highlights, outcomes, and strategimdm111 0 0 11 72.025 547.42 Tmdn12011d sg services. Re(s)O(gBT0 (t)-s)-6 (he (1)7 (T

Annual Assessment Process

In August of each academic year, the University Assessment Coordinator sends department chairs a link to the online annual assessment form along with a list of major and degree programs that will participate in the annual assessment process. As the sample template shows, the annual assessment form allows programs to document:

1. Basic program information
    a. Name of the department where the program is housed
    b. Name of the major or degree program
    c. Name of the Chair of the Department or Program Director
    d. Name of an individual within the program who is willing to serve as the assessment contact
    e. Date of the program's next EPC program review
    f. Name of the program's external accrediting body, if applicable
2. Program assessment plan
    a. Student learning outcomes
    b. Assessment tools and methods used to assess each outcome
    c. Methods used to ensure the quality of assessment tools and methods used
    d. Identification of who will be assessed using each tool or method
    e. Logistics
    f. A schedule of when each assessment tool will be administered next
    g. (optional) Criteria for determining if assessment results met faculty expectations
3. Program curriculum map (visualizing how curricular requirements align with student learning outcomes)
4. Results from program assessment activities

The form also contains a rubric displaying institutional expectations for assessment along with space for the Assessment & Evaluation Committee to provide feedback to faculty.

Department chairs are able to update or modify information on the assessment form at any time. Likewise, members of the Assessment & Evaluation Committee are able to add comments and provide feedback on any program's annual assessment form at any time.

The sections that follow explain our institutional expectations for assessment in greater detail.

Expectations for the Annual Assessment Process

Every degree or major program at St. Ambrose is expected to participate fully in the annual assessment process. This expectation is supported and enforced by the Educational Policies Committee during each program's annual review process.

While each academic program is free to choose the most appropriate, useful, and effective methods for assessing their student learning outcomes, the following expectations for assessment allow for an evaluation of our assessment activities.

Expectations for Assessment Models

All academic programs are expected to document assessment models that are logical, feasible, and will yield useful information. Assessment models should assess not only the level of mastery attained by students nearing the end of the program, but the growth in student performance throughout the program.

Assessment models should also assess the degree to which program activities (courses, faculty, student opportunities) contribute to student learning. One way of documenting this contribution is through the creation of a curriculum map. The minimum expectation is that programs display how each course in the program contributes to each student learning outcome in the program. Some programs develop more detailed curriculum maps that also show how courses contribute to the progression of student performance in each outcome. The online annual assessment form displays a template programs may use in developing their curriculum maps.

Assessment models are also expected to demonstrate how all faculty contribute to the assessment process.

Expectations for Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Beginning in 1995, all academic departments at St. Ambrose have been expected to explicitly state student learning outcomes. Departments were supported in meeting this expectation through assistance from the University Assessment Coordinator (in consultation or through workshops such as the 2006 and 2013 workshops on developing high-quality outcomes).

In reviewing these outcomes, it became apparent that while departments had outcomes, not all academic programs had documented SLOs. Many departments documented a single set of outcomes even though the department may have housed multiple major or degree programs.

Beginning in 2013-14, the annual assessment process was updated to require high-quality SLOs for all major and degree programs. Student learning outcomes are high quality if they are:

1. Clearly stated (not only understood by experts in the discipline)
2. Student-focused (not stated in terms of what the course instructor attempts to do)
3. Specific (not vague)
4. Statements of knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes expected for students (not statements about processes)
5. Appropriate for the level of the program (not too simple or complex for the undergraduate or graduate program)

Programs are encouraged to review SLOs developed by professional organizations or similar programs at other universities. To assist in determining if outcomes are appropriate for the level of the program, faculty have been encouraged to consult the Degree Qualifications Profile developed by the Lumina Foundation.

Expectations for the Quantity, Quality, Type, and Frequency of Assessment

Because assessment instruments differ in quality and scope, a strict number of instruments needed to adequately assess program SLOs cannot be mandated across all academic programs. Programs are encouraged to assess each SLO using as many instruments as they need to confidently (reliably) make inferences about student achievement. At a minimum, programs are expected to assess each outcome using results from at least two instruments.

To ensure inferences made from assessment data are valid, programs are expected to work to document and evaluate the quality of the instruments they use to assess each SLO. This evaluation of instrument quality requires a great deal of time and resources. Therefore, whenever possible, information from test developers or external researchers would be sourced as evidence of assessment quality. When this information is not available (for internally developed assessments), programs should work to develop plans to collect evidence of the quality of their chosen assessment instruments.

When using internally-developed measures, programs are expected to take some basic steps to ensure inferences made from these assessments are valid:

1. Consult with other faculty within the program to ensure instruments align with the intended outcomes (each measure actually assesses something relevant to the outcome).
2. When student performance is evaluated across different courses or instructors, faculty should work to locate or develop a common rubric to ensure consistency in ratings.
3. When feasible, programs should use multiple faculty to evaluate (a sample of) student work 4. When possible, programs should use an externally-benchmarked instrument

Assessments are often dichotomized in many ways (direct/indirect; formative/summative; objective/subjective; criterion-/normreferenced; formal/informal; performance/written; standardized/classroom; selected-/constructed-response; internal/external), with claims made that certain types of assessment are inherently superior to other types. Programs are encouraged to remain flexible in choosing assessment procedures/instruments.

The following guidelines are intended to assist programs in choosing assessments that best measure student performance:

1. Assessment instruments with documented evidence of quality are preferred to those with little/no available evidence of quality.
2. Externally-benchmarked assessments (such as the ETS Major Field Tests) should be used when possible to allow comparisons of student performance to external norms or criteria.
3.

SLO (and do not include many other irrelevant factors). This could be the case if a course uses standards-based assessment and grading.

Most program-level SLOs are statements of expectations for students who complete the program. Therefore, assessing student learning outcomes once v near the end of the program v could determine the level at which students attained each outcome.

Even though students may not be able to meet intended outcomes until graduation, it is important to continually monitor student progress. Therefore, programs are encouraged to assess student learning outcomes multiple times š Z Œ } µ P Z } µ š • š µ v š [• Œ Œ X W Œ } P Œ u • } µ o • • • • š µ v š • š • o] v developmental level (at a midpoint of the program), and mastery level (close to program completion) to help gauge program effectiveness. Additionally, programs should strive to assess the satisfaction, performance, and status of their alumni.

Expectations for Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Programs are encouraged to document and report assessment results in a format that best serves the needs of the program. At a minimum, programs are expected to report participation rates alongside the results. Programs should also provide a brief explanation of how assessment results compare to expectations of faculty in the program.

Programs are expected to report results from the assessment of at least one SLO every year. Over the course of five years, programs are expected to report results from the assessment of all their SLOs. Throughout the academic year, the University Assessment Coordinator hosts workshops to train faculty in the assessment process. Workshops are provided to specific programs on demand, as a requirement of EPC program review, annually to chairs and directors, as well as new faculty orientations.

Assessment Expectations for Program Reviews

In addition to the annual assessment process, academic program assessment activities are evaluated during the formal program review process conducted by the Educational Policies Committee. Each summer, EPC members retreat to

7. Proposals to improve SLOs or curricular requirements
8. A description of how the program evaluates and improves its assessment efforts
9. A description of how the program informs stakeholders of what and how well students are learning

During the 2015-16 academic year, EPC worked to evaluate and improve the program review process in comparison to best practices and HLC

Appendix A: General Education Sections of Course Summary Sheet