SUCCESSMENT

CONCORD UNIVERSITY'S
ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

The goal of this newsletter is to promote better awareness and understanding of assessment, and to keep Concord faculty, staff, and students informed on important and relevant information related to assessment and accountability.

What's Happening in Assessment

Annual & 5-Year Program Reports Submitted

We are pleased to report that nearly all academic programs have submitted their 2024–2025 Annual Assessment Reports and 5-Year Program Reviews, with only four reports outstanding. Thank you to all faculty and departments for your continued commitment to documenting student learning, reflecting on outcomes, and supporting continuous improvement through evidence-based practices.

The University Assessment Committee is currently in the process of reviewing submitted reports. Feedback will be shared with programs in the coming weeks to support further refinement and planning.

Reminder: Program Assessment Plans Due April 30

Looking ahead, all academic programs will be expected to submit a Program Assessment Plan to the Director of University Assessment by April 30, 2026.

A Program Assessment Plan Template is available on the University Assessment webpage. This template provides a clear and structured framework for organizing:

- Program learning goals and outcomes
- Assessment methods (direct and indirect)
- Data collection timelines
- Planned use of results for continuous improvement

By planning ahead, programs can streamline future annual reporting, ensure more systematic data collection, and reduce the burden of compiling reports each year. The plan also encourages faculty collaboration and helps build a sustainable culture of data-informed decision making.

Programs do not need to submit this plan annually. Instead, plans should only be revisited and resubmitted during the program's 5-Year Review cycle, and only if changes are made to learning outcomes, assessment tools, or methods.

A CTL session is planned for Spring 2026 to walk faculty through the assessment plan expectations, how to use the template effectively, and how this connects to accreditation, curriculum review, and student success efforts.

Navigating the Assessment Landscape: Trends Shaping Higher Education in 2025

The landscape of higher education assessment continues to evolve rapidly, influenced by global megatrends such as artificial intelligence, competency-based learning, and integration of technology. Faculty and assessment leaders should consider emerging trends as they improve their practices for the coming academic year.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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One major trend is the shift from compliance-oriented assessment toward improvement focused assessment. According to Carbonaro (2025), institutions are moving beyond simply documenting what has been done to asking what evidence demonstrates student learning and how that evidence informs instructional improvement. This aligns with broader quality assessment frameworks that emphasize meaningful dialogue about data rather than checklist compliance (Carbonaro, 2025).

Another trend involves expanded types of evidence that capture learning across curricular and co-curricular areas. Innovative assessment practices are allowing institutions to combine traditional performance measures with authentic student work that reflects real world application (Carbonaro, 2025). For example, portfolios, project-based assessments, and integrative capstone projects are increasingly used to document comprehensive learning outcomes.

Finally, global education trend reports highlight the importance of adaptability in assessment design, particularly as digital technologies and AI reshape what and how students learn (OECD, 2025). Understanding how these shifts impact assessment allows faculty to design experiences that are both rigorous and aligned with evolving student expectations and workforce needs.

References
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Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2025). Trends shaping education 2025. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/trends-shaping-education-2025_ee6587fd-en.html#:~:text=The%202025%20edition%20of%20this,background%20and%20socio%2Deconomic%20status.

AI and Assessment: Balancing Innovation and Integrity

Artificial intelligence (AI) remains at the forefront of discussion in higher education, especially regarding its impact on assessment design and integrity. Rather than banning AI outright, many institutions are embracing thoughtful integration that supports student learning while safeguarding the validity of assessments.

A recent overview of generative AI's influence on higher education highlights the complexity of assessing learning in this context. Weng and colleagues (2024) note that assessment approaches now fall into three broad categories: traditional methods, innovative/refocused assessments, and those that incorporate AI as part of learning design. These approaches aim to ensure assessments accurately reflect student capabilities in an AI rich environment (Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 2024).

At the program and course level, institutions are redesigning assessments to prioritize higher order thinking and real-world problem solving, making AI less likely to produce acceptable answers without student engagement (UCD, 2025). This includes performance-based tasks, oral examinations, and multimodal submissions that require students to explain and defend their reasoning.

Equally important is the broader conversation about overassessment, where institutions risk increasing assessment volume in reaction to AI, potentially causing burnout without improving learning.

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learning. A recent report warns that adding more assessments simply to "future proof" against AI can be counterproductive if not intentionally aligned with learning goals (Rowsell, 2025). Together, these developments emphasize that effective assessment in the age of AI is not about restricting technology, but about designing learning experiences that highlight authentic demonstration of student understanding.

References
Australasian Journal of Educational Technology. (2024). Assessment and learning outcomes for generative AI in higher education: A scoping review on current research status and trends. https://aace.org/review/assessment-vs-ai/
Rowsell, J. (2025, June 27). Universities 'at risk of overassessing' in response to AI. Times Higher Education. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/global/2025/06/27/universities-risk-overassessing-response-ai
University College Dublin. (2025). Generative AI and assessment design. University College Dublin Teaching & Learning Resources. https://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/generativeai/genaiassessmentdesign/

Best Practices for Meaningful Assessment: Formative Feedback and Evidence Based Design

High quality assessment practice continues to emphasize formative feedback and the intentional use of assessment data to improve learning. Research suggests that when formative assessments are integrated seamlessly into instruction, they provide real time feedback that informs both teaching and student understanding (Overdeck, 2025).

To maximize the impact of formative assessment:
- Embed formative tasks directly into course activities (e.g., low stakes quizzes, concept maps, and peer review) that align with stated learning outcomes.
- Provide timely and targeted feedback that helps students understand how to improve, not just what needs improvement.
- Use formative results as data to adapt instruction for the class or individual learners.

In addition to formative practices, institutions are exploring innovative assessment models that align with strategic goals and student success metrics. Watermark identifies practices like connecting assessment to engagement, supporting diverse learner needs, and using integrated data to inform instructional decisions (Watermark Insights, 2024).

Another emerging best practice is creating assessment literacy for faculty, enabling educators to interpret results, engage in data discussions, and refine assessment tasks collaboratively. Faculty development initiatives, and workshops, help interpret data use and promote a culture where assessment is a tool for improvement, not compliance (HLC, 2025).

References (APA):
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Overdeck, J. (2025, March 18). Spotlight on evidence: Investing in formative assessment to improve teaching & learning. Overdeck Foundation. https://overdeck.org/news-and-resources/article/spotlight-on-evidence-investing-in-formative-assessment-to-improve-teaching-learning/
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