Morthland College

Educational Programs Manual
Academic Assessment Manual
2017– 2018 Academic Year

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I. INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT

At Morthland College, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of excellence, both on how we conduct our courses and in the graduates we produce. Assessment is a fundamental part of maintaining that excellence. Assessment is the means by which an institution gauges its own effectiveness in carrying out its mission. It allows us to identify weak areas and explore ways to improve, as well as to identify and address potential problems before they become serious. It also provides a consistent means of accountability for faculty and administration, so that we maintain our high standards.

This manual will detail the assessment processes used by the Morthland College Division of Academic Affairs.

GOALS OF ASSESSMENT

The goals of the academic assessment process are as follows:
- To evaluate the effectiveness of our academic process at the course, program, and institutional level
- To evaluate the effectiveness of our faculty
- To ensure a consistent standard of excellence for our academic programs
- To identify areas of potential growth and improvement

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment at Morthland College takes many forms, including, but not limited to, the following:
- Pre/Post-Test Data
- Quizzes/Exams/Essays/Assignments
- Overall Course Grades
- Student and Faculty Surveys
- Senior Thesis Defenses/Reviews
- Committee Reviews
- Interviews with Students and Faculty

II. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Morthland College maintains a Curriculum Committee who is responsible for commissioning, developing, reviewing, approving, and updating Master Course Outlines for all courses. Additionally, the committee collects, reviews, and approves Syllabi for all courses.

The committee is composed of both faculty and administration. All faculty who are currently teaching, the remaining Department Chairs, and the Dean of Academic Affairs all serve on this committee.

The Curriculum Committee meets each semester primarily via email. The minutes of these meetings are archived.

MASTER COURSE OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL

<u>Master Course Outline Development</u>
As each semester's schedule is developed and finalized, the chair of the Curriculum Committee will commission the development of Master Course Outlines (MCOs) for any courses being offered for the first time. A faculty member with expertise and credentials in the material will be designated as course champion and asked to develop an MCO.

All MCOs use the standard format approved by the MCO committee. The MCO contains four sections:

- Section I contains the basic course information: course number, title, catalog description, prerequisites, credit hours, etc. If the course is already in the catalog, these will be pre-filled by the Curriculum Committee chair; if it is a completely new course, the course champion will create these in conjunction with the Department Chair and Committee chair. Section II also includes identifying codes used for transfer and assessment purposes. These will be determined by the Department chair, with input from the course champion.
- Section II contains textbook and online support information. The textbook citation should be given in APA format.

- Section III details the course requirements. The course champion should identify Student Learning Outcomes, Major Course Topics, Primary Methods of Instruction, and assignment guides.
    b. Section IV contains the Tentative Course Calendar. Because the MCO is a higher order document, it is not necessary to specify class meetings or weeks. The Major Course Topics (from section III) should be listed, along with the learning materials (textbook, website, etc.), the SLO numbers, and number of semester hours dedicated to that topic.
        - At Morthland College, a credit hour represents 15 hours of instruction. Consequently, the MCO for a three-hour course should reflect 45 hours of content. A four-hour course should reflect 60 hours; a two-hour class, 30; etc.
        - Intermittent lines may be used to specify assignments, exams, and other activities.

Once the course champion has completed Sections I-VII, the MCO should be returned to the Department chair. The chair will work with the course champion and the Dean of Academic Affairs to complete the MCO's Appendices. In these Appendices, the course SLOs are compared to program, institutional, state, and federal standards. There are three Appendices.

    c. Appendix A contains a summary of course activity, showing the dates of the review process.
    d. Appendix B compares the course SLOs to the Illinois Articulation Initiative Standards
    e. Appendix C comprises the course SLOs to Morthland College's internal standards. SLOs are mapped against institutional and programmatic learning outcomes.

Master Course Outline Review

Once the MCO has been completed, the Department Chair will complete a Chair's Review. The Department Chair will also arrange for a Peer review from a member of the department.

Once these reviews are completed, the MCO and both reviews will be sent to the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Dean will then complete a Dean's review. These reviews will be archived in Dropbox.

Any recommended changes will be forwarded to the Course Champion.

<u>Master Course Outline Approval</u>

Once the MCO has been revised and returned to the Committee chair, it will be submitted to the entire committee for review and approval. This will be done via email.

A period of 24-48 hours will be allowed for discussion by the whole committee. If any serious issues arise, the course champion will be given the opportunity to address those issues, and the MCO will be submitted again.

If there are no serious issues, at the close of the discussion period, the chair will call for a vote to approve the MCO. MCOs may be approved by a simple majority of committee members.

The email threads containing these votes will be archived by the Committee chair.

<u>MCO Revision Process</u>

Each semester that a course is offered, the MCO will be reviewed and any necessary formatting/policy updates will be made. Because these reviews will not affect the content of the course, it is not necessary to submit them to committee review.

The academic content of each MCO will be reviewed at least once every two years. At this time, a qualified faculty member will recommend any changes that need to be made. These changes will be submitted to the same review process as a new MCO – reviews by three committee members and approval by the whole committee.

If an issue is discovered between regular review cycles, immediate reviews can be called for at any time at the discretion of the Dean or Provost.

SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL

When an instructor is assigned a course, a copy of the Master Course Outline for that course will be sent to the faculty member. The instructor will complete the syllabus and return it to the Department Chair for review.

It may happen that faculty may wish to make changes to the course content and/or structure as set out in the original MCO. These changes may come about when assessment results influence subsequent offerings, when a course is taught by a faculty member other than the original MCO author, or when situations develop through the semester.

Faculty have the freedom to make changes to their syllabus; however, if those changes represent significant changes to either the course content or structure, the changes need to be discussed with the Department Chair, who may in turn consult with the Dean of Academic Affairs. Once approval has been given, the syllabus may be changed.

Completed syllabi need to be approved by the Department Chair and the Curriculum Committee Chair no later than two weeks before the start of classes.

III. COURSE ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT PLANNING

Assessment Plan

Each semester, instructors must submit an Assessment Plan for each course before the start of classes. The Assessment Plan should be completed using the Assessment Plan Template. The Assessment Plan should include all Student Learning Outcomes, and should indicate the means of assessment for each one.

At minimum, each SLO should be included on the course Pre/Post-Test, and the question numbers should be recorded on the Assessment Plan. The Assessment Plan should also include other forms of assessment as appropriate (see below).

Pre/Post-Test

The Pre/Post-Test is the first step in course assessment. Because the Pre-Test and the Post-Test are the same document, it should be written based on expectations of what the students will know at the end of the semester. Given on the first day of class, it establishes a baseline of what students know and do not know about the subject. Given again at the end of the semester, it should indicate improvement.

Individual instructors may use their own discretion in creating their Pre/Post-tests. It is understood that certain types of questions work better for certain subjects than other types. Pre/Post-tests may use any combination of multiple choice, matching, fill in the blanks, short answer, or essay questions that the instructor deems appropriate.

Where grading is entirely objective, an answer key should be supplied.

Where grading contains a subjective element, such as in grading an essay, a numerical rubric should be supplied indicating the criteria used in scoring.

Exams/Quizzes/Assignments

While Pre/Post-Testing is an essential part of assessment, it is only the first step. Ultimately, the students' performance in other graded work tells us a great deal about whether or not the Student Learning Outcomes are being met. These things should also be included in the Assessment Plan.

For example, if you know that SLOs 1, 3, and 6 will be tested by Exam 1, include that in your Assessment Plan on each of those SLOs where it asks for "Plan for Post-Test Measure." Along with the data from your actual Post-Test, the results of that exam will show how students perform on this SLO. Try to be as specific as possible on this (i.e., if you can correlate specific questions with specific SLOs, as on the pre-test, do so.)

The Assessment Plan should include anything that the instructor believes will be relevant to evaluating the students' grasp of the Student Learning Outcomes at the end of the semester.

Other Assessment Activities

The Assessment Plan represents the instructor's expectation for Assessment opportunities during the semester. If additional opportunities become apparent, the assessment plan can be revised with permission of the Department Chair.

SEMESTER ASSESSMENT REPORT

At the end of the semester, the instructor will prepare an Assessment Report for each course and section. The body of the report should contain all the following information:

- Overall class Pre-Test score
- Class Pre-Test score for each SLO
- Overall class Post-Test score
- Class Post-Test score for each SLO
- The difference between Pre and Post-Test Data
- Any explanatory information about the results that the instructor thinks is relevant
  - The expectation is that there will be **at least** a 20% improvement in the class average for each SLO (for example, a class post-test average of 65% would be acceptable if the pre-test average were below 45%).
  - Any SLO not meeting this threshold will require an explanation.
- Suggestions for improving the course (these could cover any aspect of the course, whether included directly in assessment data or not)

In addition, the report should include the following appendices:
- Assessment Plan, updated with assessment results.
- A copy of the Pre/Post-Test and key
- Copies of other assessment protocols used in the class with grading rubrics/keys
- Any other relevant data

Final Student Grades

It is expected that final student grades should provide an indication of how well students achieved the expected Student Learning Outcomes. Final grade reports for each class will be prepared, archived, and reviewed for Assessment purposes.

Student Surveys

At the end of each semester, students will be asked to provide feedback on the effectiveness of their instructor and the quality of the course by completing the Course/Faculty Evaluation. These surveys are anonymous to encourage students to provide honest feedback.

These surveys provide both qualitative and quantitative data for each course, allowing administration to judge faculty effectiveness, both individually and aggregately (by course, instructor, and department), in order to identify general areas to target for improvement.

Additionally, these evaluations will comprise one piece of the annual faculty evaluations. Low scores do not automatically trigger punitive measures. However, faculty receiving consistently low evaluations, with averages 3.5 or below, for at least two courses (not necessarily in the same semester) will be asked to meet with their department chair to discuss ways of improving their performance.

Faculty Surveys

At the end of each semester, faculty will be asked to evaluate their own performances by completing a self-evaluation. These evaluations will help faculty to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, explain any issues they may have had during the semester, and offer suggestions on how the college can help them improve as an instructor.

Once the student survey responses have been compiled, faculty will have the opportunity to write a short response to their evaluations for each course. This response should contain any information the instructor feels is relevant to an understanding of the student evaluations.

These evaluations and responses will go into the Faculty Portfolios and be referenced during annual evaluations. Additionally, this will provide data for Institutional Research and Planning.

IV. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

SEMESTER PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

Each semester, Department Chairs will review the course assessment results from the Assessment Reports, Student Surveys, Final Grades, and Faculty Self-Evaluations and produce a 1-2 page report.

This report should summarize the assessment data, explain any discrepancies (missing information, unacceptably low scores, etc.), and identify potential areas of improvement. In particular, this report should identify any areas where the scores were particularly low for a course or instructor and outline the steps being taken to improve.

This report should be completed no more than two weeks after the end of the semester, and should be submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

SENIOR THESIS/CAPSTONE PROJECT

In their final year, all students complete a senior project. For Biblical Studies and Classics majors, this is an extended research paper. For Business Administration majors, it is a business plan. This project is intended to represent the Capstone of their educational experience at Morthland College and to demonstrate their mastery of the program outcomes.

When the project is completed, the student will defend their project before a panel of professors. Besides voting Pass/Fail, each member of the panel will fill out a rubric "grading" the student's project against the program outcomes.

The rubrics from each panel member will be compiled to produce a composite score for each SLO and an overall. When there are multiple students graduating together, an overall composite will be calculated.

FACULTY OBSERVATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Each semester, all faculty will be observed in the classroom at least once by their Department Chair. These observations will be judged based on a set rubric. The completed observation form will be placed in the Faculty Portfolio and will be referenced during the annual Faculty Evaluation.

On an annual basis, the faculty of each department will be evaluated by the Department Chair. These evaluations will be filed in the Faculty Portfolio.

ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT FROM CHAIR

In August, each Department Chair will review Semester Program Assessment Reports, Senior Thesis/Capstone Results, Faculty Evaluations, and any other relevant assessment data. The results of his review will be compiled in an overall Annual Program Assessment Report on the effectiveness of the department.

The annual department report should take into consideration both quantitative data and qualitative data. It should include an overview of departmental strengths and weaknesses and a list of suggestions for improvement.

This report will be submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

V. PROGRAM REVIEW

PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Program Review Committee consists of the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Department Chairs. This committee meets a minimum of four times per year. The Program Review Committee is chaired by the chair of the Curriculum Committee.

The Program Review Committee will

- Review and approve the work of the Curriculum Committee
- Compile the annual Program Review report
- Coordinate the two-year program review cycle (ensures that each program is reviewed at least once every two years)
- Conduct ongoing review of programs as needed

TWO-YEAR PROGRAM REVIEW PROCEDURE

All academic programs are reviewed once every two years. Our current schedule is as follows:
- 2018-2019 – Biblical Studies, General Education Core, Biological Sciences
- 2019-2020 – Business Administration, Classics, CIS

The procedure is as follows:

The Program Review Committee will meet early in the Fall Semester to commission reviews of the scheduled programs.

The Department Chair will review the program, taking into consideration the program goals, core classes, course sequences, course offerings, and enrollment. The Chair should consider assessment outcomes at the course and program level, as well as formal (surveys) and informal (anecdotes and discussion) feedback from faculty and students.

The Chair should identify any necessary changes to the Program, and make a recommendation to the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Program Review Committee. Once vetted by the Program Review Committee, these recommendations will be forwarded to the Council for Institutional Research and Planning. From there they will pass through the Council's initiative-review and approval process.

Once the initiatives are approved, the Chair will implement the recommended changes, incorporating the changes in all relevant documentation, including the Academic Catalog (which must be approved by the Board of Trustees) and Student Advising materials.

VI. INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT ANNUAL REPORT

In August, the Dean of Academic Affairs (or designated subordinate) will review the Semester and Annual Assessment Reports from the Department Chairs and produce an Institutional Academic Assessment Annual Report.

This report should summarize the overall results of all Academic Assessment at the Course and Program Levels. It should provide an explanation of any areas where the results were unacceptably low, and it should make recommendations for ways to improve.

VII. COUNCIL OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

COUNCIL REPORTING

Prior to each meeting of the Council, the Dean of Academic Affairs (or his designated subordinate) will review all relevant Educational Programs and Faculty assessment

data and provide a report to the Council of Institutional Research and Planning. This report will be used in updating Morthland College's Strategic Plan

VIII. STUDENT PROGRESS REVIEW AND ADVISING

STUDENT PROGRESS COMMITTEE

The SPC is responsible for monitoring the satisfactory academic progress of students and arranging for interventions when students are struggling. The SPC meets at least monthly during the academic term. When needed, the committee may meet more regularly.

The Student Progress Committee (SPC) is comprised of a representative from each academic department. The chair of the SPC is one of the Department Chairs.

Three times a semester (Week 6, Midterm, and Week 12), the chair of the SPC compiles progress reports for each student based on grade and attendance records provided by individual faculty. These reports are sent to the students and reviewed by the Committee. If any student appears to be having academic difficulty, a recommendation for intervention is made.

This recommendation is followed up on by the student's department chair, the Dean of Academic Affairs, and the Dean of Student Services. Possible intervention strategies can include arranging meetings between students and faculty, requiring visits to the tutor lab, or assigning a mentor to help the student.

While the Committee reviews all students' records on a regular basis, special attention is given to students on Academic Probation, students who were provisionally admitted, and student athletes.

STUDENT ADVISING

All Morthland College students are assigned an academic advisor. This advisor will meet with each student a minimum of twice each semester. One of these meetings will focus on the next semester's schedule. At the other meeting, the student's transcript and degree plan will be reviewed, with special attention paid to the student's progress towards graduation.

These meetings will be documented in student files, and each advisor will prepare a brief report each semester. These reports will help to assess departmental needs regarding course offerings and faculty, as well as providing an additional level of assessment of student learning.