BEST PRACTICES IN ASSESSMENT – DEPARTMENT LEVEL
What are the elements that ensure excellent assessment and a smooth program review process?

This document reviews the overall, big picture departmental process around assessment. Our "Getting It Done" document is an excellent companion for handling the details of assessment within your department.

Acronyms:
CPR – Comprehensive Program Review, completed every 4 years
APR – Annual Program Review, completed every year between CPRs
SLOs – Course level outcomes
PLOs – Program level outcomes (degrees and certificates)
ILOs – Institutional learning outcomes

*This document refers to questions that must be addressed in a department's **CPR**. The Assessment Coordinators provide support for CPR via video trainings as well as one-on-one meetings with department chairs in their CPR year.*

- ## Overall department-level planning *[CPR Q1, Planning]*
  1. Create plan in CPR year
     - A. Access the most recent planning document here
     - B. Ensure the completed plan is accessible to all department faculty (OneDrive, Dropbox, etc.)
     - C. Read and follow the Instructions and Guidelines tab
     - D. Fill in the SLO tab with the **next** semester/year each outcome will be assessed
     - E. Feel free to add columns to the plan as needed, and add any helpful details (or simply use the notes column)
     - F. Notes column should be used to indicate which courses/SLOs:
       - are not offered and may be deactivated
       - are part of multidisciplinary programs and require coordination with other departments *[CPR Q5]*
       - are mapped to PLOs, and should therefore be prioritized
       - will incorporate ILO assessment *[CPR Q6]*
         - a. See Canvas shell "ILO Resources" or webpage for details
         - b. All departments must contribute to ILO assessment on a regular basis **(accreditation requirement)**
         - c. ILO assessment is done via the common rubrics and/or surveys
           - i. Aim to use surveys a minimum of once/semester
           - ii. Aim to use common rubrics a minimum of once/year
       - will include disaggregation of data in the assessment
         - a. Refers to comparisons of sections taught in different ways
         - b. Details are up to the department, choose well! (What do you need to know? Are faculty concerned about face-to-face vs. online learning? Dual enrollment learning? Day vs. evening sections?)
         - c. All departments must do some comparisons on a regular basis **(accreditation requirement)**
         - d. Refer to Level 2 training on the webpage
     - G. Fill in the PLO tab with the **next** semester/year each outcome will be assessed
       - Plan so that a combination of your recent assessments plus your future plan will allow you to assess your programs within 2 years (by year 2 of the next 4-year program review cycle)
       - All departments with degrees and certificates must publish the final program assessment on the Learning Assessment Committee's webpage **(accreditation requirement)**
       - Ensure the SLO plan tab prioritizes assessment of SLOs mapped to PLOs (refer to Find a Program and Outcome Mapping on the webpage)
  2. Follow up on plan in APR years – update notes column and address any changes made to the plan

- **Essential meetings** *[CPR Q2, Process]*
    1. If the department is new to assessment, discuss how to organize, for example:
        A. Watch [training](#) videos together and plan for data entry
            - Level 1 and Best Practices training are essential for all faculty
            - Additional training used as needed (Level 2, ILO, etc.)
            - Each department is responsible for its own data entry
            - Data may be entered by individual faculty or pooled for a chosen lead to enter into currIQunet Meta
        B. Choose a lead for each course to help organize (may establish dedicated leads or rotate leads)
    2. Aim for 1-2 meetings per semester where department assessment is discussed broadly
        A. Assessment coordinators recommend a department meeting at the beginning of the semester to discuss planning, and again at the end of the semester to discuss results
        B. What has the department learned from recent assessments of SLOs? *[CPR Q3]*
        C. What has the department learned from recent assessments of PLOs? *[CPR Q4]*
        D. Do assessment results demonstrate a need to request resources? *[CPR Resource Requests]*
        E. Will there be any curriculum modifications as a result of assessment?
            - May include changes to the Course Outline of Record (COR)
            - May include changes to details such as assignments, without a need to update the COR
            - Include this information in subsequent program reviews
        F. Discuss how the department will incorporate best practices into individual assessments
        G. Planning and discussing specific assessments
            - Each faculty member may take part in a few meetings each semester/year with other faculty teaching the same or similar courses
            - Assessment coordinators recommend faculty groups meet at the beginning of the semester to plan, and again at the end to discuss and reflect
            - This is a deeper level of planning and includes faculty collaborating on assessment methods, rubrics, and post-assessment discussions sharing results, brainstorming action plans, etc.
            - Discuss implementing action plans, then reassess and reflect
            - Want a list of steps? Check out the "[Getting It Done](#)" document

- **Long-term success with assessment requires making it a high department priority**
    1. When assessment is a routine part of the faculty experience, it will best serve the purpose of benefiting student learning
        A. Center assessment efforts on what's best for students – focus on continuous improvement
        B. We are also accountable to the accrediting commission
    2. When interviewing new faculty, both p/t and f/t, ask questions about their experience with assessment, and make it clear that outcomes assessment is part of routine faculty duties
        A. Ask the applicant to describe their experience with assessment
        B. Give the applicant an SLO that broadly applies to department classes, and ask how they would assess it
        C. Support new faculty by engaging them in the assessment process