

# NAU's Degree Program Expectations: Academic Unit Requirements

## Degree Program Requirements

All degree programs at NAU are required to demonstrate evidence of the achievement of the following expectations as part of their Academic Program Review or Specialized Accreditation:

### 1. Degree Program Purpose Statement

The purpose statement identifies the overall goals or aims of the degree program, as collectively understood by the faculty members teaching in the degree program. The degree program purpose statement summarizes the following in a manner that differentiates it from other academic programs offered at NAU:

- The scope of the program,
- The content studied, skills developed and so on,
- The learning experiences provided, and
- The future opportunities for which it prepares students.

Graduate degree programs also address the population that is best suited for the graduate program.

### 2. Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes

Degree program student learning outcomes define the scope (breadth and depth) of what students will know, be able to do, etc., upon completion of the degree program. Degree program student learning outcomes:

- Are explicit;
- Are learning-centered (focus on what students learn rather than on what faculty teach);
- Align with the degree program purpose;
- Are appropriate to the level of the degree offered (Master's degree outcomes would be more rigorous and comprehensive than Bachelor's degree outcomes, etc.); and
- If a degree program has emphases, the outcomes capture the learning associated with both the common and unique curricular requirements of the degree.

### 3. Coherent Curriculum Design and Degree Program Curriculum Matrix

Curriculum has coherent course sequencing and structure designed to achieve the intended student learning outcomes in a manner that both students and faculty can articulate the rationale behind the sequencing and structure of the degree program.

- A basic curriculum matrix visually demonstrates the courses covering each intended degree program student learning outcome.
- A written description of how the courses and their sequence relate to students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

### 4. Systematic Assessment of Intended Student Learning Outcomes

Information about student learning is collected and analyzed by program faculty to determine the extent students achieve degree program student learning outcomes. Minimally, all broad learning outcomes are assessed toward or at the end of the student's program of study at least once between program reviews. The following evidence is documented in relation to the assessment of each broad learning outcome:

- **Assessment Planning, Design & Data/Information Collection.** The academic unit systematically obtains information about student's performance of learning outcomes using valid assignment(s), performance indicator (s), or measurement tool(s) or approach(es) selected or developed by the faculty members in the program.
- **Analysis of Data & Discussion of Findings:** Analysis and findings articulate the discoveries and findings for each broad learning outcome.

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### 5. Continual Improvement: Use of Assessment Findings of Student Learning

Assessment findings are evaluated and used by program faculty for decision making and continual improvement of student learning in an on-going, systematic fashion.

- Based on assessment findings, interpretation and discussion the following actions are documented for each broad learning outcome:
  - Application of changes/ improvements to the curriculum, *and/or*
  - Improvement of the assessment, *and/or*
  - Results of student learning strengths are publicized (website, etc.).
- Additional improvements documented in Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports.

### 6. Strategic Course Design:

- All syllabi align with the January 2016 syllabus template.
- Class section syllabi align with the "Approved," "Common," or "Master" Syllabus.
- Courses with Liberal Studies and/or Diversity Designations align with course design designation requirements.
- Each syllabus provides learning opportunities and assignments designed to achieve the course's purpose and learning outcomes.

## Minor and Certificate Requirements

All Minors and Certificates at NAU must have the following:

1. Purpose Statement
2. Student Learning Outcomes

## Annual Reporting Requirements

All academic units at NAU are to develop and submit Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports to the Office of Curriculum, Learning Design & Academic Assessment (OCLDAA) for review by the College Curriculum & Assessment Committees before Spring Break of each academic year. The report includes the following three parts located in the template (link):

1. Curriculum & Assessment Plan;
2. Table of the efforts achieved for the current academic year; and
3. Table of the efforts that will be pursued, by whom and by when, for the coming academic year.

When an academic unit or degree program is engaged in Academic Program Review or Specialized Accreditation, the unit or program will submit its Self-Study or its Action Plan in lieu of an annual report.

As stated in the April 2016 policy for Program Level Assessment Reporting for Programs engaged in Educator Preparation, programs associated with CAEP accreditation will complete a Biennial Curriculum & Assessment Report during the fall semester of even years, including a section regarding the Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program (Section 5) and a section for developing a Multi-Year Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan (Section 6).

Academic units who conduct annual reports for their Specialized Accreditations can submit their annual reports to the OCLDAA in lieu of submitting an annual report in NAU's template, so long as the programs respond to any additional questions from OCLDAA.