

Mineral Area College Assessment Plan

(Revised September 12, 2016)

Mission Statement

The mission of Mineral Area College is to serve the community, to provide students a quality, affordable education and to offer opportunities for professional and personal development in a safe, professional environment.

Vision Statement

Mineral Area College will be recognized as an innovative educational institution and will:

- Encourage and support individuals, businesses and organizations to meet their educational needs.
- Serve as a resource for community and cultural enrichment.
- Attract, develop, and retain dedicated, diverse and professional employees.
- Recruit, develop and retain a diverse student population by providing an accessible, quality and affordable education.
- Provide staff, faculty and students with appropriate resources for programs and services.
- Strengthen relationships with school districts and community agencies.

Value Statements

- We are committed to respecting and caring for one another by being professional, fair and honest.
- The development of our teaching and learning environment is a responsibility we share.
- Our students can expect excellence, opportunity and encouragement so they may succeed.
- Our curriculum and program offerings will effectively serve our communities' educational and training needs.

Philosophical Approach to Assessment

Mineral Area College is an AQIP institution committed to planning for student success, focusing on Student Learning Outcomes and continuing quality improvement initiatives. Pursuant to policies prescribed by the Higher Learning Commission, MAC strives to meet Core Component 4.B which states "The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members" (The Higher Learning Commission, 2014).

Furthermore, the college focuses on attainment of the Higher Learning Commission's core component 4.A which states "The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps)" (The Higher Learning Commission, 2014).

For its own policy, the college advocates authentic assessment that drives course-level, programmatic, and institutional improvements. The following espouses the tenets of MAC's assessment initiative.

- Assessment is focused on Student Learning Outcomes. Mineral Area College is committed to providing students with a quality education, and part of reaching that goal is to set "clear goals for student achievement" (New Leadership Alliance 2012, p. 4). According to Ebersole (2008), Higher education assessment involves a process that is more focused on formative assessments identifying what the student is learning throughout a course or program (p. 7-8). Huba and Freed (2000) indicate that "assessment is a learner-centered movement which encourages us to focus on the student learning component of our teaching as it takes place within the entire system of our institution and within the smaller systems of our academic programs and courses" (p. 7).
- Assessment is continuous. We are striving to promote a campus-wide culture of assessment. Senge (2000) asserts that an effective assessment campus-wide initiative

includes a plan that involves coherence, relevance, and sustainability. For instance, the curriculum within a given department should be purposeful with clear standards, common goals, and meaningful evaluation. The courses should support the college's mission and be appropriate and sustainable for the institution. Assessment findings should be used to modify and improve curriculum as a part of a continuous cycle of improvement (p. 440).

- Assessment is a collaborative process; faculty work with each other and appropriate administrators to develop meaningful assessments for their courses. Ebersole (2008) explains that the primary assessment model emerging for most institutions of higher education involves assessing students at the “course, program, and instructional level” with absolute buy in from faculty with the expressed purpose of improving student learning (p. 6). In order to be successful with assessment, Mineral Area College strives to make the process “ongoing, sustainable, and integrated into the work of faculty, administrators, and staff” (New Leadership Alliance, 2012, p. 7).
- Assessment is different from grading. Although students still work to obtain grades, assessment focuses on Student Learning Outcomes rather than actual grades. Chase (1999) explains that “Effective assessment is not merely a scheme for sorting students for grading purposes; it has an important link to instruction” (p. 10). Ebersole (2008) paraphrases the Council for Higher Education Accreditation when noting that “the goal of assessment at any level is to ensure and improve student learning” (p. 3).
- Assessment findings are used only to improve student learning. The New Leadership Alliance (2012) affirms that “the purpose of gathering evidence of student learning is to use it to ensure quality in student learning and to improve it” (p. 7). Findings are not a direct measure of a faculty member's teaching ability or the quality of a course. Instructors use the findings to assess the students' mastery of the Student Learning Outcomes. Reeves (2009) explains that formative assessment is designed to “give meaningful feedback to students and teachers to improve professional practices and student achievement” (p. 91). The goal, according to Banta & Blaich (2011), is to make changes based on the findings collected (p. 25).

Assessment Committee Role and Scope

The Assessment Committee, keeping with the college's mission to provide students a quality education, is charged with the task of reviewing all standards of student evaluation. The Committee's work will address AQIP Category One: Helping Students Learn, AQIP Category Two: Meeting Student and Stakeholder Needs, and AQIP Category Five: Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship.

The committee's responsibilities include:

- The administration and evaluation of the ACT, PPE, MoGEA, Compass, and HiSET exams.
- The approval of minimum department standards for placement in math, composition, and reading classes.
- The approval of changes in testing fees.
- The dissemination of analyses of test data to faculty, administration, and other interested parties.
- The establishment of review procedures and cycles for program level outcomes.
- The creation and measurement of course-level Student Learning Outcomes.
- The establishment of review procedures and cycles for course-level Student Learning Outcomes.

Membership on this committee is comprised of the Assessment Director(s), selected full-time faculty, the Deans of Student Services, Career and Technical Education, Arts and Sciences, and two student representatives. Peer review panels will be formed periodically to review data.

Institutional Assessment

- All degree-seeking students at Mineral Area College are given placement tests prior to or at the time of enrollment. They take either the ACT Examination or the Compass Test Battery.
- The ACT is designed to measure student academic skills in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning and is the preferred placement exam, and is administered on MAC's campus six times a year.
- The Compass Test Battery is designed to measure student academic skills in English, Mathematics, and Reading. The Compass is administered twice a day Monday through Friday, with the exception of Thursdays, which has a one test session.
- The Compass test is an untimed examination taken on computer in MAC's Assessment Center, as well as other satellite locations. Students do not need computer skills to take the test; it is extremely user-friendly.
- All candidates for the AA, AAT or AGS degrees from Mineral Area College are required to take the ETS Proficiency Profile and Essay examination.
- All graduates of the AAT program are required to pass all subject areas of the MoGEA in order to receive their degree. It is offered monthly through MAC's Assessment Center.
- All candidates for graduation from the Career and Technical Division receiving either a certificate, an AS, or an AAS degree must take both the ACT WorkKeys Career Readiness Assessment and a Technical Skills Assessment in their career specialty area.
- The results of these tests are made available each spring to the Assessment Committee, the divisional deans, and department chairs for review. Customized reports are also available from the Director of Assessment. Data can be provided for individual students, classes, programs, departments and/or divisions.

Program-Level Assessment

- Programs are defined as units of study within the institution, such as degrees including the AA, AAT, AGS, AS, and AAS. Further delineation occurs in the Career and Technical Division where students are able to obtain degrees within specific majors, such as an AAS in Child Development, Business Management, or Criminal Justice.
- As a part of reviewing its programs, each divisional dean reviews both course-level Student Learning Outcomes and appropriate institutional data. The dean, department chair, and faculty meet to analyze institutional trends, enrollment patterns, and Student Learning Outcomes.
- As a result of this formal review process, departments and individual faculty respond to patterns identified and make adjustments in instruction and policy to address opportunities for improvement.

Course-Level Assessment

- In order to closely monitor student success, standardization of course-level assessment, using the accountability management system Taskstream, was implemented in fall 2013.
- Instructors develop 3-5 Student Learning Outcomes for each course they teach.
- Courses with multiple sections taught by multiple instructors are assigned a lead instructor by the department. The multiple instructors collaborate to develop Student Learning Outcomes for that course.
- Student Learning Outcomes are mapped to the Missouri State Level goals to ensure that Mineral Area College is meeting state standards.
- Outcomes specifically outline student expectations in a course, while allowing faculty instructional freedom.
- Instructors create measures for each Student Learning Outcome. Measures may be either direct, such as an exam or student artifact, or indirect, such as field experience or an internship.
- Departments define an acceptable target of student proficiency. Certain programs, like nursing and teacher education, have mandated acceptable targets established by the program's accreditation standards.
- Departments create and implement an annual plan for assessment that outlines both the courses being added and courses in data collection.
- Departments will meet at the end of the academic year to evaluate findings and determine an appropriate action plan based on findings collected.
- The assessment committee will assemble a peer-review panel consisting of select members of the committee, faculty from the appropriate course's department, and faculty from other departments to examine the findings and action plans after the three year cycle. Departments will then take appropriate action based on data reviewed.

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