

Rationale for and summary of key changes between the 2004 and 2026 Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Policy.

Updating of the policy was initiated by the Assessment and Outcomes Committee and revised by all members of the Joint Academic Governance Steering Committee.

Rationale for the changes: The primary impetus for making changes now is the impending mid-cycle reporting and site visit for accreditation next year as well as MSU's renewed interest in regularly reviewing our policies. The changes in the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Policy reflect 22 years of changes in our assessment practices including expansion of assessment expectations and practices to provide evidence of continuous improvement for all our programs under the umbrella of academic affairs. These changes address two of the three recommendations that we received at our 7-year accreditation review in spring of 2025 and are one piece of evidence to show our commitment to improving on those recommendations. Some of the changes have occurred slowly over the last 22 years and the policy needs to be revised to reflect those new best practices. Some changes are a more recent response to the accreditation recommendations. Changes were inclusive of faculty input, specifically from the activities of the Assessment and Outcomes Committee, Core Curriculum Committee, and the Campus Advising Assessment Team.

Summary of changes: The 2026 iteration of the policy clarifies unit responsibilities and provides more detailed and specific faculty expectations to align with current practices and emphasizes the need for faculty participation in assessment of all programs. The updated policy clarifies and expands the administrative responsibilities to outline a more robust administrative support structure. The policy updates to current best practices by establishing a practice of assessing each SLO at least every 3-years, differentiating undergraduate and graduate reporting requirements, reiterating the need for transparency by publicly posting assessment plans and report summaries, providing more explicit guidance for accredited programs, and strengthening the reminder that assessment is for continuous improvement and must not be used punitively.