

# Accreditation Matters

Issue 3

Academic Assessment

**UC Blue Ash College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission**, a regional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation was granted on July 25, 1969 and the most recent reaffirmation of accreditation was in 2008-09. The next reaffirmation of accreditation is slated for 2018-19. A comprehensive evaluation visit by an HLC peer review team is scheduled for February 25 and 26, 2018.

## Higher Learning Commission Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

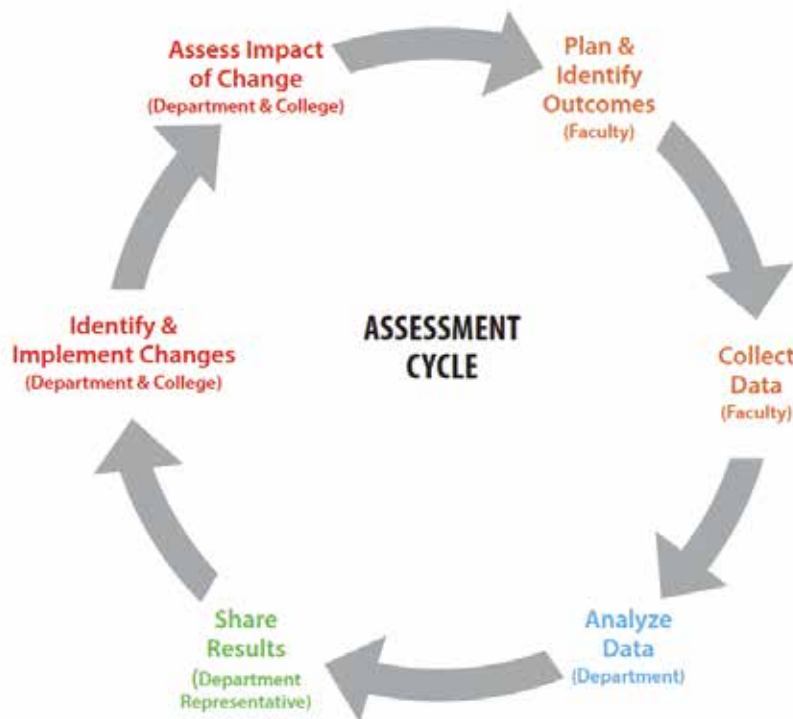
Criterion 4.B—The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

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.

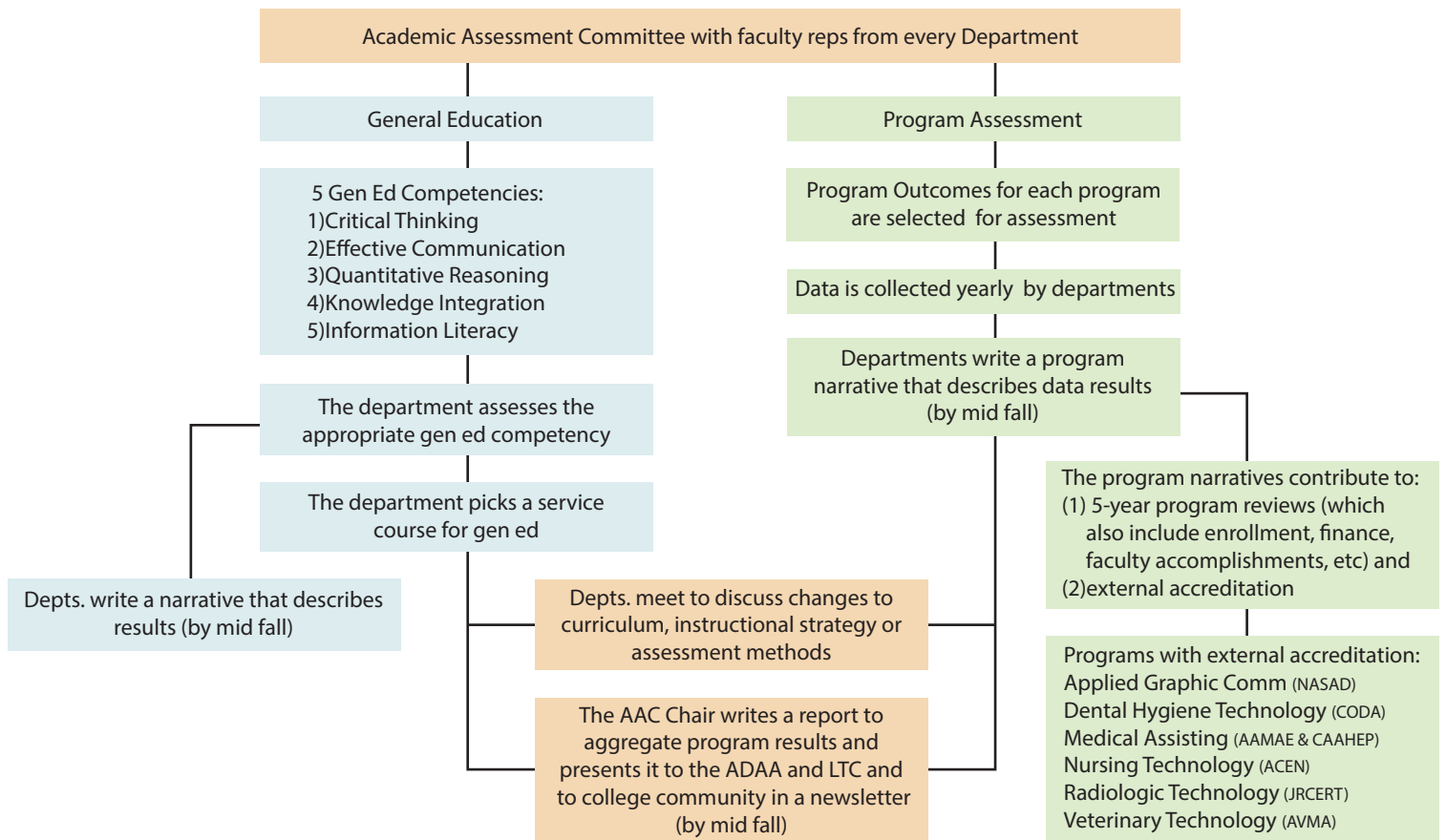
## Academic Assessment at UC Blue Ash

At UCBA we engage in assessment to improve as educators and to discover what is working in students' experiences. Assessment is a continual process of reflection, revision, and reassessment with a goal of ensuring the curriculum continues to meet student needs. This recursive process begins with the identification of an authentic question about student learning. Data is gathered that can be analyzed to answer the question. The analyzed data is used to make informed decisions about curriculum and pedagogy. Finally, assessment results are shared with a variety of stakeholders. See the Assessment Cycle, figure 1. Broadly speaking, there are four types of assessment at UCBA: developmental education, general education, programs that transition to Clifton, and programs with terminal degrees. This section provides an overview of how each of these areas are assessed. See Flow Chart, figure 2.

# Contributing to the Assessment Cycle (Figure 1)



# Understanding the UCBA Assessment (Figure 2)



## Development Education Assessment

Developmental education at UCBA is assessed through collaborative efforts of faculty in English & Communication and Math, Physics, & Computer Science, the departments charged with providing developmental courses to prepare students for college-level work. Each department has developed an assessment plan to track student learning and preparation for college-level courses. These assessment reports, which are discussed in the departments for the purposes of continuous programmatic development and improvement, are submitted to the Academic Assessment Committee annually.

## General Education Assessment

General education at the University of Cincinnati includes five areas: critical thinking, effective communication, knowledge integration, social responsibility, and information literacy. Departments offering courses that address one or more of these General Education Undergraduate Core Competencies designate a course that teaches to the competency. Then they identify an assessment activity to evaluate how well students are meeting that competency. The most common general education competency assessed at the college is critical thinking. The University's definition of critical thinking is "analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from multiple perspectives." Each discipline has its own way of implementing this broad definition to fit within the discipline's expectations for critical thinking. This variation leads to a variety of assessment activities used for assessing critical thinking such as oral presentations, projects, specific questions embedded in exams or tests, and/or writing assignments. The variety of assignments exemplify how each discipline applies its specific definition of critical thinking in their work with students. The assessment reports provide a rich tapestry of evidence showing how well students are able to apply critical thinking across disciplines.

## Transition Program Assessment

Programs that transition to Clifton have a short window for assessment as many students often transition to Clifton before finishing their course work at UCBA. Programs such as Business, Communication, and Psychology need to identify the program outcomes they can assess while students are enrolled at the College. They then identify courses and assignments they can use to evaluate student progress towards meeting the program outcomes. Business and Psychology use standardized multiple choice questions to determine if their students are meeting SLOs although each program has a different approach in how they collect and analyze the data. Psychology only assesses sections taught by full time faculty while Business has an "assessment week." Each of these processes provides the departments with information they need to make informed curricular decisions to strengthen the program.

## Career Program Assessment

Programs with terminal degrees such as radiologic technology, medical assisting, applied graphic communication, dental hygiene, nursing, veterinarian technology are accredited by outside accrediting organizations such as the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology, National Association of Schools of Art and Design, Medical Assistants Endowment (CRB-AAMAE) and Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), Commission on Dental Accreditation, the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, and The American Veterinary Medical Association's Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities. Each of these organizations has specific criteria that programs must meet in order to receive accreditation. For instance, they are required to collect and publically report "Student Right to Know" information such as program pass rates, licensure rates, and job placement rates. This information is available to students on the UCBA website. They regularly collect and record data on student clinical skills, techniques, instrument knowledge/usage in accordance to accreditor requirements. In nursing, for example, they use National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) performance feedback to adjust teaching to focus on nursing concepts that need improvement. The professional programs at UCBA are doing an excellent job of preparing their students for their licensure exams with most students passing on their first attempt.