Office of Academic Assessment
www.usm.maine.edu/assessment

An Overview of the Ongoing Tests, Surveys, and Assessment Projects

**Basic Skills Assessment:** Tests administered to entry-level students for the purpose of placement into appropriate level coursework.

*Accuplacer-Math Placement Test*
*The Accuplacer-Arithmetic and Elementary Algebra tests are administered to incoming students who have SAT-Math scores below 550. These scores are entered into MaineStreet and used for placing students in the most appropriate introductory math course (i.e. remedial math, college-readiness math, or an introductory college-level math course), as a student begins their degree program.*

*Accuplacer-College Math Test*
*The Accuplacer-College Math test is administered to only those students who wish to begin their degree program by enrolling in a higher-level math course (i.e. Pre-Calculus, or a Calculus course). The test score reveals whether students have adequate college algebra skills (pre-requisite) for the MAT 140 or 152 course.*

**Competencies-Based Assessment Tests:** Tests administered to current students, alumni students, and community members seeking certification or course credit.

*National/Certification Tests*
*A variety of national and certification exams are administered by the Office of Academic Assessment by request of the national testing agencies and national certification boards (i.e. Miller Analogies Test, LSAT, MPRE, NCBE, etc). See the assessment website for the types of tests, and registration procedures.*

*CLEP or DANTES Tests*
*In collaboration with the Office of Prior Learning Assessment, the Office of Academic Assessment administers subject-area CLEP exams for those students who want to obtain credit for previous knowledge, in addition to the DANTES exams for those seeking credit for military experience. See the PLA website for registration details.*

*Miscellaneous Tests*
*A variety of course or certification exams are administered by the Office of Academic Assessment by request of out-of-state agencies for Maine residents who are in distance-education programs.*
**USM Electronic Course Evaluations**  The standard course evaluation is now administered electronically (by the Office of Academic Assessment) to all currently-enrolled students at the end of each course.

*Electronic Course Evaluation (ECE) Reports*

All course evaluation results are distributed to faculty electronically and the data are archived after each semester. Department Chairs and designated personnel can access the ECE software to view their departmental results at any time. Additional compilations of the evaluation data can be obtained by request. See the Course Evaluations page on the assessment website for viewing the Departmental and College Reports.

**Institutional Assessment:** The surveys listed below are ongoing campus-wide assessment instruments conducted on a particular schedule, see description and timeline listed under each survey tool. Please see the assessment website for the full assessment reports.

*National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*

The NSSE survey is administered to first-year and senior-year students in the spring semester. The survey measures how engaged students are in their college-level activities regarding the national benchmarks; i.e. level of academic work, student-faculty interaction, active learning experiences, high-impact activities, and supportive campus environment. USM participates in this national survey, every other year (even-numbered years).

*Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)*

The FSSE survey is administered to all faculty in the spring semester. This national survey parallels the NSSE survey, but measures the perceptions of faculty regarding student engagement in college-level activities, in addition to, their own engagement on this campus. USM participates in this national survey, every other year (even-numbered years).

*USM Graduating Senior Survey*

All senior students who apply for graduation are emailed an (in-house) online senior survey in April to obtain their feedback about their USM undergraduate experience. The survey is administered on odd-numbered spring semesters.

*USM Alumni Survey*

The USM alumni students are sent an (in-house) alumni survey within 1-2 years after their graduation, to obtain information on what they are currently doing; i.e. survey items focusing on three areas: are they working in their field of interest, did they further their education, and did their degree help them in their career path. This survey is administered on odd-numbered years during the summer months.

*USM Student Preference Survey*

The (in-house) online preference survey is administered to continuing students during the fall semester for the purpose of obtaining the student’s current satisfaction level with their course schedules, the times and locations of their courses, and their recent experiences about getting the courses they need for their program.
**USM Advising Survey**

The (in-house) online Advising Survey was administered during the summer 2015 to all continuing students to obtain their views about the academic advising they have received to date. Results are being used for improvement efforts.

**USM Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP)**

The ASLP form is an (in-house) inventory designed to document the ongoing assessment progress of each academic program (for institutional accreditation purposes). The forms are reviewed by the Assessment Committee, and used to provide any educational or technical assistance to departments who need assistance in developing and/or implementing their assessment plans. This assessment tool is administered at the end of each academic year (May) to Department Chairs via email.

**Departmental Assessment:** Indirect assessment methods used to assist academic departments with their assessment process, to help them prepare for their program review process, and/or to evaluate their curriculum and course prerequisites.

**Departmental Alumni Surveys, External Surveys, or Current Student Surveys**

The Office of Academic Assessment offers technical assistance to the departments/programs who are currently undergoing the program review process by helping them create and distribute assessment instruments, data collection and analysis, and prepare assessment reports. Assessment projects include student surveys, departmental alumni surveys, and surveys for external partners.

**Focus Groups for Departmental Assessment:** The Office of Academic Assessment will conduct focus groups for departments who want to collect specific feedback from students.

**Tracking and Assessment Studies/Course Assessments:** The projects listed below involve tracking students to determine course performance and retention, results are often used to assess the effectiveness of a particular course/program.

**Academic Alert Program**

Data are collected on students who have received an alert notice due to poor course performance; i.e. student final course grades and grade point averages are examined each semester, and retention rates.

**Accuplacer-Math Placement Program**

Students who were required to take the Accuplacer-Math Placement Test are tracked to determine if they enrolled in the appropriate math course and examine their math course performance, as well as reviewing SAT-Math scores.

**ENG 100 Course Assessment Project**

The College Writing course is required for all students, and several versions of the course have been delivered in previous years. The course is reviewed periodically by examining course grade performance and the SAT-Writing scores.
*LAC 188 Course Assessment Project

Students who enroll in this College and Career Success Course are often conditionally-admitted students, and are tracked to review their course performance and follow-up grades and retention.

*General Education (CORE Curriculum) Course Assessment Projects

*The incoming cohorts of freshmen students who enroll in a required EYE course in the fall semester are tracked for the purpose of examining EYE course performance, and to examine subsequent grade point averages and retention. In addition, students who enroll in the Russell Scholars Program courses and Honors Program courses (in lieu of EYE courses) are also tracked and grades examined (as part of the general education assessment).

*Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment Test (an ETS Pilot) was administered in the Spring 2015 to a sample of students primarily to examine the Core Curriculum learning outcomes, and provide baseline data. A decision will be made during the fall 2015 semester to determine if this standardized exam will be administered again to another sample of current students.

**Assessment for Community Engagement:** The USM campus is moving toward obtaining the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. Assessment plans are being developed during the upcoming academic year (2015-16).

**Community Engagement Surveys**

Three assessment surveys were administered during the spring 2015, to collect baseline data on USM’s community engagement activities...i.e. Faculty Involvement Survey, Survey for Students taking Service Learning Courses, and a Departmental Survey about Community Engagement in the Curriculum. See assessment website for the completed survey reports.

**First-Year Assessment Studies:** Under the Title 3 Grant, a number of freshmen initiatives are currently planned; two particular programs are listed below and assessment methods.

**First-Year Surveys (New Initiatives)**

*Assessment of the Strengths Program: freshmen year survey administered during the 2014-15 year to collect information from those who participated in the Strengths Program. The findings are being used to improve the program for the upcoming year.

*Assessment of Living Learning Community: residential students will be surveyed at the end of the fall 2015 semester to obtain their perceptions after their first semester experience.

*To access any of the assessment reports, please go to the academic assessment website: www.usm.maine.edu/assessment. If you have any questions about the contents of this summary report, please contact Susan King, Director of Academic Assessment, susank@maine.edu, 207-780-4681.