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Academic Affairs

Responsible Office:  
[Academic Affairs](#)

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Assessment

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This policy item applies to:  
Community Colleges  
State-Operated Campuses

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## Summary

This policy reaffirms the University's strong, longstanding commitment to assessment for enhancing academic and other excellence by expecting each campus to develop and implement plans for the regular assessment of institutional effectiveness, academic programs and general education that maintain academic rigor and meet or exceed rigorous external assessment standards.

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## Policy

- Trustees Resolution 2010-039 updates the University's policy on assessment by acknowledging and affirming the University's strong, longstanding commitment to assessment for enhancing academic and other excellence. Recognizing the gains made and the evolving external standards in the area of assessment, this resolution permits each campus to develop assessment plans that are consistent with its mission and goals within the context of the State University's mission and goals, while maintaining academic rigor and meeting or exceeding external standards for assessment required by federal and state law.
- A campus shall enhance quality by developing and implementing plans for the regular assessment of institutional effectiveness, academic programs and general education, such that the campus meets or exceeds the assessment standards set by the New York State Department of Education, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and, as appropriate, programmatic accreditation bodies.
- A campus's regular assessment of its registered academic programs shall include, at minimum, the assessment of student learning and external review, to the extent necessary and appropriate.
- A campus's regular assessment of its general education curriculum (or curricula) shall include the assessment of student learning in terms of the student learning outcomes associated with the SUNY General Education

## Requirement.

- The Provost of the State University of New York shall review the findings of regional and programmatic accreditation bodies related to assessment on State University of New York campuses, and shall assist campuses when needed.
  - The Provost of the State University of New York shall work with leadership, faculty and others on campuses to implement this policy, shall provide the resources necessary to ensure regular consultation and assistance, including the formation of an assessment advisory group in consultation with faculty governance, and shall report periodically to the Board of Trustees of any additional steps that may need to be taken to insure the smooth implementation of this policy.
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## Definitions

There are no definitions relevant to this policy.

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## Other Related Information

[General Education Requirement](#)

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## Procedures

[Assessment, Procedure](#)

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## Forms

There are no forms relevant to this policy.

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## Authority

The following link to FindLaw's [New York State Laws](#) is provided for users' convenience; it is not the official site for the State of New York laws.

[NYS Education Law §355](#) (Powers and duties of trustees - personnel functions.)

In case of questions, readers are advised to refer to the New York State Legislature site for the menu of [New York State Consolidated](#)

Trustees Resolution 1998-241 (December 15, 1998)

Trustees Resolution 2004-92 (June 22, 2004)

[Trustees Resolution 2010-039 \(March 23, 2010\)](#)

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## History

### *Assessment of Academic Programs*

In 1977, the Board of Trustees asked the Chancellor to develop and disseminate guidelines for a rigorous and periodic

review of authorized academic programs. Guidelines were developed that, among other things, advised campuses that their assessment could be structured as they saw fit, depending on their campus structures and the relationships between programs. For example, they could do a separate assessment of each major, or they could assess a group of related majors at one time. Since then, revised guidelines have been issued and SUNY campuses have conducted program reviews, including reviews for programmatic accreditation, on a regular cycle, and have reported on their activities in various ways to System Administration.

In 1983, the SUNY Faculty Senate's Undergraduate Programs and Policies Committee undertook the development of a Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs. In formulating the Guide, that committee attempted to identify the major factors that might be expected to influence the quality and scope of academic programs in order to develop questions that could elicit information important to a meaningful assessment, including faculty, students, curriculum, administration, and academic support services. The Guide was reissued in 1990 and again in 2001.

Because SUNY academic programs undergo periodic evaluation by SUNY, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the New York State Education Department, and programmatic accrediting bodies, the revised *Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs* suggested criteria for a comprehensive evaluation of programs, criteria that are useful and adaptable to any review.

Campuses were encouraged to coordinate program review with anticipated reviews of external evaluators and professional accrediting bodies. SUNY accepted programmatic accreditation reviews as meeting its standards, provided that the agency utilized external review teams and included student learning outcomes in its evaluation.

In 2009, policies and procedures for program review were clarified, and reporting procedures were streamlined in response to Re-Engineering SUNY and recommendations from an audit conducted by the New York State Office of the State Comptroller. In March 2010, Trustees Resolution 2010-039 reaffirmed requirements for academic program assessment, but eliminated reporting requirements, and clarified that academic program assessment applied to graduate as well as undergraduate programs and should be designed to meet or exceed external standards.

### ***Assessment of General Education***

Campus-based assessment of general education across SUNY campuses emerged out of the work of the Provost's Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, which was formed in fall 1999 in response to Board of Trustees Resolution 1998-241 regarding general education. This group's final report of November 2000 established the framework and provided direction for the SUNY Assessment Initiative. A key recommendation of the task force was the formation of a group comprised of University faculty, students, and representatives from System Administration to provide initial and ongoing review for campus-based general education assessment plans. This group, the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Group, was formed in January 2001, and charged by the SUNY Provost to develop procedures and guidelines for the development and submission of these plans, as well as a timeline for implementation. The GEAR Group developed guidelines and began reviewing campus assessment plans during the 2001-02 academic year, with the first year of campus-based general education assessment beginning in 2002-03.

Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment across SUNY campuses was developed and implemented as a result of Board of Trustees resolution 2004-92, and went into effect in fall 2006. Campus reporting requirements were amended in 2006 in response to recommendations of the Provost's Advisory Task Force on Assessment Reporting. Reporting requirements were amended again in 2009 in response to Re-Engineering SUNY and recommendations from an audit conducted by the New York State Office of the State Comptroller.

In March 2010, Trustees Resolution 2010-039 reaffirmed requirements for the assessment of general education in terms of the SUNY-GER student learning outcomes and clarified that this assessment should meet or exceed external assessment standards. In recognition of assessment progress made since 2001-02, the resolution removed general education assessment reporting requirements and the role of the GEAR Group.

Appendices

[Guidelines for the Development of SUNY-GER Courses \(with SUNY-GER Student Learning Outcomes\)](#)

[Memorandum to Presidents Vol. 10 No. 2, July 15, 2010](#)