

ACE Recertification Protocols

Responding to faculty questions and concerns, the UCC ACE subcommittee has worked collaboratively with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to streamline and clarify the assessment and recertification processes. This document clarifies practices, but it does not change the fundamental principles of ACE.

Evaluating the progress students make toward achieving learning outcomes is a fundamental role of faculty, and it is a responsibility that has grown since ACE was implemented in fall 2009. Not only are instructors expected to assess learning in ACE courses, departments must submit reports for biennial undergraduate program assessment and provide materials in support of institutional reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. Additionally, many programs are involved in professional accreditation. This document aligns these efforts by asking universal questions for ACE, undergraduate program assessment and HLC reaccreditation.

What is required for ACE recertification?

ACE courses are taught by individual instructors, but the hosting department is responsible for making a good-faith effort to ensure that these courses are taught in compliance with the certification agreement. Departments and instructors can modify course plans as long as the changes are consistent with the broad outline of the ACE-certification agreement. Specifically, each hosting department/unit of an ACE-certified course is responsible for:

- Assigning ACE-certified courses to instructors who agree to teach the course in accordance with the department plan for meeting the ACE Outcome(s) for which the course is certified.
- Seeing that syllabi for ACE-certified courses clearly state the appropriate ACE Outcome(s), the opportunities the course will give students to acquire the knowledge or skills necessary to achieve the Learning Outcome(s), and the graded assignments which the instructor(s) will use to assess the students' achievement of the Outcome(s).
- Collecting from instructors of ACE-certified courses a reasonable sample of students' products (related to achievement of the appropriate ACE Learning Outcome(s)) and instructor assessments of those products. The collection of products should be in accordance with the assessment plan indicated on the ACE Certification Request Form.
 - ACE assessment must be based on instructor or department evaluations of student work.
 - UCC ACE does not define what constitutes a reasonable sample of student work. Student work must be collected each time the course is taught.
 - It is not necessary to include samples from every course section as long as the department takes steps to ensure that the sampled sections adequately represent the full set of course sections.
 - If a course is certified for two ACE Learning Outcomes, each must be represented by student work samples and separate recertification materials.
 - Faculty are expected to archive a sample of the work they use for assessment purposes. Student work can be stored in the department or in the Content Collection area of Bb.
 - Starting with the recertification reports that are submitted in Fall 2014, faculty are not required to submit samples of student work with their recertification report. Rather, UCC ACE will request samples of student work for a random subset of recertification requests (10% to 20% for each outcome). ACE recertification in such cases will be contingent on compliance with this request.

What criteria does UCC ACE use in its review?

The UCC ACE subcommittee does not try to judge the success of a course in meeting the Learning Outcome(s). It helps ensure that the hosting department/unit and the instructor(s) followed through with their responsibilities as outlined in the ACE Course Certification Request Form. UCC ACE assesses the fit of the course to the Outcome(s) and confirms that the host department is assessing the success of the course and making modifications as needed.

To align assessment activities for faculty and departments the University-wide Assessment Committee approved a template asking identical questions to be used for ACE, undergraduate program assessment and institutional accreditation. The questions listed below reflect an effort to streamline assessment processes and help faculty focus their efforts on improving student learning in their courses. Instructors will respond to these questions to report their assessment activities beginning with reports that are due in the Fall 2014.

The UCC ACE committee reviews responses to the following questions. Note that the UCC ACE committee does not expect answers that are long; rather, it seeks information that is specific to the course, assignments and specified outcome(s). Examples help communicate the student work that was examined. The UCC ACE committee generally expects to see a specific response for each course that is submitted for recertification.

1. Does the course provide students with opportunities to develop the knowledge/skills necessary for successful achievement of the Learning Outcome(s)?
 - Assessment of these criteria will be based on the combination of the ACE Recertification Request Form and the sample syllabus submitted with the request. Student work does not need to be submitted; however, the department is responsible for making student work samples available to UCC ACE upon request to help explain the assessment activities. If work samples are not available when requested, the ACE certification will be removed from the course.
2. Does the course provide students with opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the Learning Outcome(s)?
 - What student work was collected from the course? (Provide a description of the assignments used that goes beyond “tests and quizzes” that gives the committee details about what work was analyzed.)
 - How did the department/program analyze the student work? (e.g., Use of a rubric? How were samples selected to analyze? Who participated in the analysis?)
3. Has the hosting department/unit used assessment data to improve the course?
 - What did the department/program analysis reveal? Discuss the findings and implications of the analysis as it relates specifically to the outcome.
 - How were these findings shared to the department/program? (e.g., Did you meet as a department to discuss the findings?)
 - How will the department/program use the findings to improve student learning of the ACE learning outcome?
 - What assessment questions related to the ACE learning outcome would the department/program like to investigate in the future?