Excellence In Assessment Designation Application Packet 2018

Contents

The **Excellence in Assessment (EIA)** designation recognizes exemplary colleges and universities that successfully integrate assessment practices across campus, provide evidence of student learning outcomes to stakeholders, and utilize assessment results to guide institutional decision-making and improve student performance. Institutions implementing and/or sustaining comprehensive use of assessment of institutional student learning outcomes are eligible to receive the designation.

The EIA designations focus on campus processes and use of assessment results, rather than on student performance or accomplishment. While student learning outcomes are an essential component of assessment processes, they are only one of many pieces necessary to facilitate institutional growth and improvement. The EIA designation evaluation process is directly linked to the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Transparency Framework and builds on the foundation of student learning outcomes reporting within the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). The Transparency Framework provides a structure to make evidence of student accomplishment accessible, useful, and meaningful to audiences both on and off campuses. Designees are awarded in two tiers.

- **Excellence Designees** are institutions demonstrating strong leadership and commitment to a culture of evidence-based decision-making centered on the use of campus-level assessment results. Excellence campuses may, for example, have in place widespread program assessment but are integrating their use of student learning outcomes to inform campus decision-making. Alternatively, Excellence campuses may already have completed most of the steps of assessing student learning at the campus level, but are intentionally addressing gaps in the integration of their processes.
- **Sustained Excellence Designees** are institutions who have maintained and/or evolved their integrated campus-level student learning outcomes assessment over a period of five (5) or more years. Sustained Excellence campuses have a solid foundation and track-record of integration of assessment data from across campus and of using assessment results to guide campus programs and curriculum.

Through the application process for the EIA designations, campuses will identify the strengths of the university's campus-level assessment activities as well as areas for growth and improvement. Applications are evaluated by faculty and assessment experts on eight domains regarding campus-level assessment processes:

1. the diversity of groups and individuals engaged in assessment activities;
2. student learning outcomes statements;
3. assessment plans;
4. assessment resources;
5. current assessment activities;
6. evidence of student learning;
7. use of student learning outcomes results; and
8. growth and improvement plans.

Designees receive a commemorative plaque, along with a certificate and a logo that can be used by the institution to demonstrate their achievement and commitment to student learning outcomes assessment. Designations will be publicly announced in August following each application cycle. Designations will be awarded for a 5 year period, e.g., designations awarded in 2018 will last until 2023. Campuses that wish to maintain their designation past the end of the award period should plan to reapply in the last year of the award period, e.g., campuses receiving the designation in 2018 should plan to submit a re-application in spring 2023 to avoid any gap.

2018 Application Timeline:
- Application materials for the 2018 EIA Designation available: December 2017.
- Application deadline: May 1, 2018
- Applications notified of EMBARGOED Designation results: July 31, 2018.
- Public announcement of designees: August 16, 2018
- EIA Mentoring Opportunity: Assessment Institute, October 21-23, 2018
- EIA Designee Reception: AAC&U Annual Meeting, January 2019

Why Campus-level Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes?

The ability of a campus to clearly and convincingly communicate the learning outcomes of all their graduates, regardless of program of study, is paramount to the success of our students, institutions, and larger national economic and competitive priorities. Policymakers and external stakeholders are increasingly questioning the value of higher education experiences as a whole[1], focusing on labor market outcomes to hold certain types of programs or majors up as preferred.[2] Institutions and higher education as a whole have struggled to push back on these claims, citing the complexity of evaluating student learning across varied and disparate programs in easily comparable ways.

Despite these challenges, many campuses are successfully designing and implementing campus-wide assessment systems that provide evidence of the learning of all students. These systems are horizontally and vertically integrated to encompass learning both in and outside of the classroom, and are validated by participation and evaluation of external stakeholders, including alumni, employers, and schools their students subsequently attend for additional study. By incorporating all areas of campus, not just the academic experiences that occur in the classroom, institutions are able to confidently assert the competency of their students in areas such as leadership and

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[1] See for example: USA Today College (December 10, 2015). "Is college worth it? Goldman Sachs says not so much": http://college.usatoday.com/2015/12/10/is-college-worth-it-goldman-sachs-says-not-so-much/; The New York Times TheUpshot (May 27, 2014). "Is College Worth It? Clearly, New Data Say": http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/27/upshot/is-college-worth-it-clearly-new-data-say.html?_r=0; and Money (October 5, 2015). "Why College is Still Worth It Even Though It Costs Too Much": http://time.com/money/4061150/college-degree-worth-it/.

[2] Carnevale, A.P., Cheah, B., & Hanson, A.R. (2015). *The Economic Value of College Majors*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce.

teamwork—essential outcomes for employers in today's diverse workplaces.[3,4] Building intentionally integrated, layered systems that rest on the foundational work of faculty in the classroom, campuses are able to provide deep and rich evidence of students' knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Why do we need a national designation of excellence?

One of the main goals of the EIA program is to create a national recognition for campuses that are successfully integrating assessment practices across campus to provide evidence of student learning outcomes that are representative of *all* students who attend their institution. There is currently no such recognition, which hinders our efforts in at least three areas.

First, if we can't identify more than a handful of institutions that have become known for their assessment work, we limit the models available for campuses to consider. There is not one right way to implement a broad and deep assessment plan on all campuses, but rather many right ways. Not only does this limit our examples, it limits our ability to celebrate the work being done on campuses that contributes to student success. Assessment done well is integrated throughout the work of many campus faculty and staff; by offering a national recognition of those institutions doing exemplary work, the EIA designations create an opportunity to reward and celebrate those efforts.

Second, because we can't universally identify campuses who are engaged in good assessment practice, we can't connect individual institutions with other institutions who may be similarly situated to help foster learning and sharing of what works and what doesn't. By explicitly recognizing that there are many models for effective assessment of student learning, the EIA designations serve as both celebration of the work these campuses have accomplished as well as guideposts for other campuses looking to improve their own evaluation of student learning. The EIA designations are open to all regionally accredited institutions and the goal is to identify a plethora of examples from across sectors and levels to share broadly. By actively seeking to identify those institutions who are doing this work, we will create a larger network of examples for other campuses to explore.

Third, the lack of a common, national recognition program for campus assessment limits our ability to engage with external stakeholders and hold up concrete examples of the good assessment work our campuses are engaged in. We are continually questioned about the value of higher education for our students, but lack a nationally recognized and respected means to rebut the claims that we are disorganized and muddled. While still respecting the diversity of what good assessment looks like in practice, the EIA designations provide a signal for external audiences to look to.

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[3] Hart Research Associates. (2015). *Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U).

[4] Deming, D.J. (2015). *The Growing Importance of Social Skills in the Labor Market..*Cambridge, MA: Harvard University and NBER.

We already do program-level assessment; what does campus-level assessment add?

Campus-level assessment is often thought of as an accountability or accreditation concern that is somewhat removed from the work of faculty teaching in specific programs or classes.[5] Faculty may be disinvested from the administration of a campus-wide assessment instrument, at best seeing it as a benign requirement to appease external cries for accountability. The EIA program, however, understands that campus-level assessment builds from a foundation of faculty assessment of student learning, as an integrated component designed to serve as a "tip of the iceberg" indicator for the depth and breadth of student learning happening on our campuses (see Figure 1).

Campus-level assessment does not necessarily consist of using an identical or standardized assessment instrument administered to all students, but represents a broader and deeper approach to assessment that is integrated across departments and programs. An ideal campus-wide assessment plan would consist of aligned outcomes at the student-, course-, program-/major-, and degree-levels. What that looks like for any given campus may be varied and diverse, and recognizing the multiple paths to demonstrating student learning outcomes is the goal of the EIA designations.

In this view, assessment activities occur at multiple levels where each level is related to and either builds from or supports the levels below and above it, creating a scaffold of evidence across all students. The nature and setting of assessment activities at each level may or may not be different depending on the program and institution. For example, assessment of campus-level learning outcomes may occur within the context and setting of an individual capstone course or it may occur in a separate, proctored exam.

The results of assessment at each level, however, need to be comparable across all students so results can be interpreted and used to identify the need for, and guide the implementation of, program and curricular improvements. Just as all students in an Accounting program need to pass a licensure exam to ensure that they have all learned the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform as a Certified Public Accountant, all students at an institution should be assessed with approaches that provide results comparable to each other to ensure all students have learned the core knowledge, skills, and abilities the institution has identified as necessary to earn a degree.

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[5] Kuh, G. D., Jankowski, N., Ikenberry, S. O., & Kinzie, J. (2014). *Knowing What Students Know and Can Do: The Current State of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment in US Colleges and Universities*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).
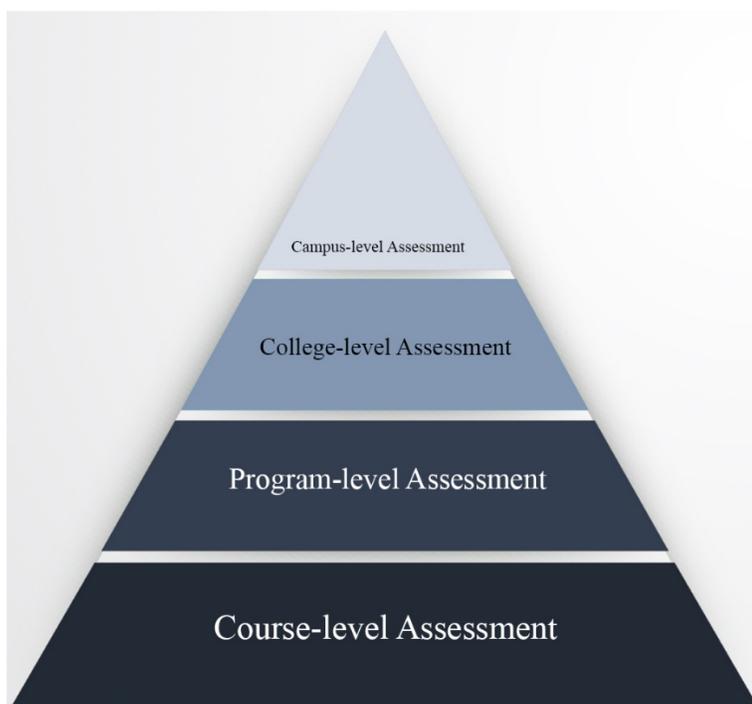
Figure 1: Pyramid of Integrated Campus-wide Assessment.

Ideally, scaffolding of learning outcomes occurs across courses and programs such that the assessment work from an individual course can link to and inform the assessment work of a program. This scaffolding allows for fewer assessment activities to occur at higher levels of the pyramid than at lower levels—the evidence built from beneath serves to support the evidence provided at the top. This explains, in part, why a single representative sample of campus-level assessment outcomes is one way to reliably represent the learning of all students on campus.
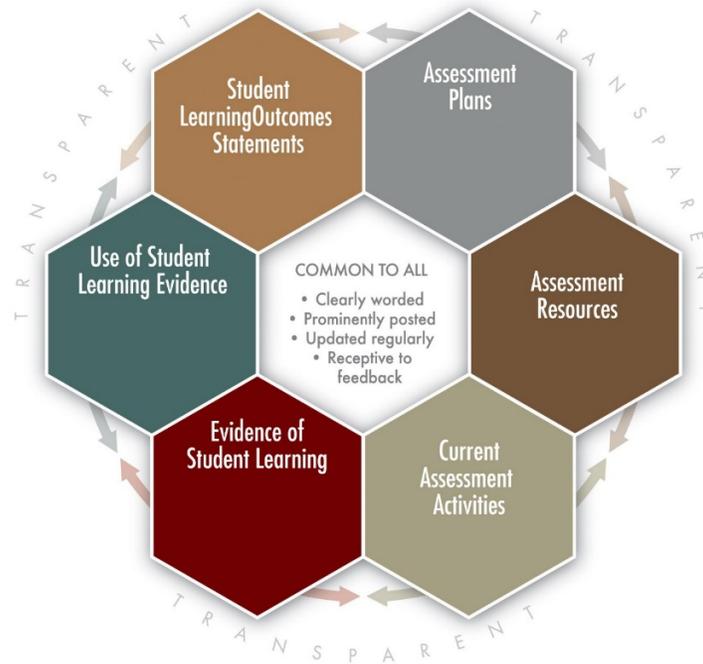
How does the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment's Transparency Framework fit in?

Even those campuses that are engaged in intentionally aligned assessment of student learning struggle to tell their stories to the variety of stakeholders to which they are accountable. While most campuses now make a practice of publicly stating what their learning outcomes are, they generally share assessment findings internally, and frequently only to faculty or assessment committees. Rarely are assessment plans or rationales shared with students or alumni, much less with external stakeholders such as employers, transfer institutions or pgorams who accept students for continued study, state legislators, or the public.[6] Put another way, campuses talk about assessment to themselves when they talk about it at all.

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[6] Kuh, G. D., Jankowski, N., Ikenberry, S. O., & Kinzie, J. (2014). *Knowing What Students Know and Can Do: The Current State of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment in US Colleges and Universities*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) created the Transparency Framework "to help institutions evaluate the extent to which they are making evidence of student accomplishment readily accessible and potentially useful and meaningful to various audiences."[7] Based on a national review of campus assessment websites, the Transparency Framework consists of six components centered around a set of common underlying principles (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Transparency Framework

Conclusion

As increased attention has been paid to campus-level assessment results as an indicator for campus accountability, pressure on campuses to simply report results to meet external demands has intensified. In some cases, this pressure has led to decoupling the campus-level assessment activities from those that support and give credence to their results. Even campuses who are engaged in strong student learning outcomes assessment struggle to tell their stories to stakeholders both on and off campus. The purpose of the EIA designations is to recognize the work of those campuses that are engaging in the full breadth and depth of vertically and horizontally integrated student learning outcomes assessment, ensuring that all systems are linked and cross-validated. These campuses deserve recognition of their accomplishments and by identifying them, the EIA designations also highlight them as exemplars for other campuses to explore.

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[7] National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. (2011). *Transparency Framework.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University. Retrieved from: http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/TransparencyFramework.htm

Campus applications consist of the following components submitted electronically:

1. **A letter from senior campus leadership** (e.g., President/Chancellor) stating why the campus decided to pursue the Excellence in Assessment Designation. The letter is the introduction to your campus application and should be no more than two pages. The letter should provide an overview of your institution's submission for the EIA designation, including any highlights you wish to emphasize in your application. The letter is not scored as part of the application.

2. **A completed campus contacts form** (see form provided as part of this packet).

3. **An annotated list of individuals and groups engaged in assessment activities across campus**, such as assessment councils or committees at the campus, college, or department level, with brief descriptions of the charge of each group as it relates to assessment. These individuals and groups are not required to participate in the creation of the application, but rather are intended to help reviewers better understand the structure of assessment processes on the applicant campus. This list can also serve as a reference document within the narrative so that applicants do not have to explain the function of each group in the content of their applications.

4. **Application narrative** between 2,000 and (no more than) 3,000 words. Tables or figures included in the process narrative count toward the 3,000 word limit. Word count does not include Items 1 through 3 above.
   a. The application narrative should be written to an audience of higher education peers who are not familiar with the applying institution's context or assessment processes and approaches. For this reason, institutions should include an introduction to the context and assessment approach outlined within the narrative. Basic familiarity with higher education assessment, accreditation, and accountability concepts can be assumed.
   b. Applications should address the eight domains described below in more depth in the Narrative Components section. Criteria 2-7 are the six components of the NILOA Transparency Framework as viewed from the perspective of campus-level/campus-side assessment of student learning outcomes.
      1. Groups and Individuals Engaged in Assessment Activities
      2. Student Learning Outcomes Statements
      3. Campus-level Assessment Plan
      4. Campus-level Assessment Resources
      5. Current Campus-level Assessment Activities
      6. Evidence of Campus-level Student Learning
      7. Use of Campus-level Student Learning
      8. Reflection and Growth/Improvement Plan
   c. It is not a requirement that each domain be given equal space; campuses should decide the best use and formatting of their application information.

7

d. You may include links to additional information online and/or provide appendices as references within your narrative if you feel that the information contained within the narrative cannot be succinctly summarized or described. Reviewers will be asked to read material at web links or appendices only as noted in the Application Narrative Components. Reviewers will be required to visit no more than three links in any section.

e. Applicants should make every attempt to include all pertinent information in their narrative. Do not attach forms, templates, reports, or screenshots of information in lieu of describing the process for and functions of integrated assessment activities on your campus.

f. Institutions should provide a coherent narrative addressing each of the criteria domains, clearly labeled, in their application. The overall purpose is to write a narrative of the assessment process to those not familiar with the institution or its culture. The guiding questions are strongly linked with the scoring rubric, assisting institutions in addressing the breadth and depth of their assessment activities in their response, however, every institution is not required to respond explicitly and separately to each question.

Application materials should be submitted electronically as a single document. Application items should be submitted via email to mailto:EIA@collegeportraits.org by May 1, 2018. Applications sent to other email addresses will not be considered; please submit your application to the correct email address.

This form allows us to collect contact information for key people who should be notified in case of questions regarding your campus application or with information regarding any public announcements that may result should your application receive an Excellence in Assessment Designation.

Primary Campus Application Contact: Answer questions about the content of your application should reviewers need additional clarification or request additional evidence or information. The primary campus application contact will be notified of the results of your application, including any feedback from reviewers, by email and postal mail late July.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing
Address: _____

_____

_____

Senior Leader: Provide contact information for the senior leader who submitted the letter to accompany your campus application. The senior leader will be notified of the results of your application, including any feedback from reviewers, by email and postal mail late July.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Email Address:
Administrative/Executive Assistant Name: _____

Administrative/Executive Assistant Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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Media/Public Relations/University Communications Contact: Contact regarding coordination of any press releases or other public announcements in which your institution may be mentioned should your application for an Excellence in Assessment Designation be successful. Communications with this person will begin in July only if your campus is awarded a Designation.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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The Excellence in Assessment (EIA) program recognizes colleges and universities that successfully integrate assessment practices across campus, provide evidence of student learning outcomes, and use assessment results to guide institutional decision-making and improve student performance.

Each EIA application consists of a narrative response (see Application Components Overview for details on length and formatting) addressing the criteria listed below. Institutions should provide a coherent narrative addressing each of the criteria domains, clearly labeled, in their application. *The overall purpose is to write a coherent narrative of the assessment process to those not familiar with the institution or its culture*. The guiding questions are strongly linked with the scoring rubric, assisting institutions in addressing the breadth and depth of their assessment activities in their response, however, every institution is not required to respond explicitly and separately to each question. The scoring rubric available from the EIA website is used by reviewers to determine which applicants are eligible for the EIA designation. Campuses are strongly encouraged to engage in self-assessment using the EIA scoring rubric prior to submitting their application.

Criteria for reviewing entries will address eight domains, Criteria 2-7 are the six components of the NILOA Transparency Framework as viewed from the perspective of campus-level/campus-wide assessment of student learning outcomes.

1. Groups and Individuals Engaged in Assessment Activities
2. Student Learning Outcomes Statements
3. Campus-level Assessment Plan
4. Campus-level Assessment Resources
5. Current Campus-level Assessment Activities
6. Evidence of Campus-level Student Learning
7. Use of Campus-level Student Learning
8. Reflection and Growth/Improvement Plan

Each domain is described in additional detail below. The guiding questions are intended to foster discussion and thoughtful dialogue among the campus application team to ascertain both the existence and quality of campus assessment processes. For instance, if a policy is in place that requires programs to report annually, but those reports are rarely read or incorporated in other campus decision-making processes, it is the expectation of the EIA program that the campus will identify concrete plans for making their processes more engaged and meaningful in their Reflection and Growth/Improvement Plan.

In reflecting on the first year of the EIA designation, reviewers and sponsors noted several points where applicants appeared to struggle in compiling their application narrative. Some of these areas were due to lack of clarity in the application guidelines, which we've attempted to rectify. Some areas, similarly, were due to misalignment between the evidence we asked institutions to provide and the evidence our reviewers said would be most useful to evaluate a campus. We've likewise made adjustments to these guidelines to address those areas, as well as revised the scoring rubric to clarify the essential elements of each component. The following additional guidance is offered to applicants for the 2018 Designations in hopes of helping them craft successful narratives.

Reviewers noted that many institutions seemed to struggle with presenting a cohesive and concise narrative regarding their campus-level assessment process. The difficulty came from making an active shift away from simply listing processes and/or activities to focusing on explaining why the processes in place on their campus mattered for their specific setting or students. Providing appropriate background context for assessment practices is important for the reviewers and others to understand why the institution engages with and approaches assessment in the manner it does. Many campuses defaulted to providing lists of various disconnected activities without connecting or aligning the activities into a cohesive narrative and describing or explaining the relationships between the various parts. Applicants are strongly encouraged to approach the narrative as a representation of the collective whole of assessment activities, one that is placed within a specific institutional context, and to provide that context explicitly within their narrative when necessary. It is not enough to say that an institution is engaged in a particular assessment practice without articulating why **that** practice is important within **that** context.

The 2016 guidelines included an expectation for a large and diverse campus application team to engage in the self-study process that we feel is best to aid campuses in preparing their EIA designation application narrative. Unfortunately, we placed too much emphasis on representation within an application team without addressing our true intent: that a broad and diverse group of campus committees and individuals are actively and substantively engaged in on-going assessment activities.

The application guidelines were altered in 2017 to make it clear that while an ideal campus assessment plan will be inclusive of a broad and diverse set of constituents, it is not a requirement that all of those parties engage directly in creating the campus application narrative. However, we would encourage the team charged with crafting the campus application narrative to be inclusive of various audiences in some substantive way. This expectation is an intentional effort to address a barrier to integrated approaches to assessment—that only one office or a few individuals are in charge of and responsible for supporting the entire campus enterprise. The majority of EIA applicants revealed in their narrative that they struggled to engage various groups in their campus-

level assessment processes in a consistent and connected manner. For instance, either student affairs were not involved in assessment at a campus-level or they had a separate approach not connected with the academic side of the house that was made clear in the application process. Further, few campuses reported actively engaging adjunct or part-time faculty, students, alumni, receiving institutions, and employers in their assessment work. These areas were subsequently identified in the Reflection and Growth/ Improvement Plans. Many applicants stated intentions to make better connections with diverse groups moving forward, using the application process as a means to think collectively as a campus about strategies to better address areas of disconnect.

Finally, we heard from many other campuses that reported they used the EIA evaluation rubric and application materials as a means to examine institutional readiness to apply for a Designation or to review current campus-level assessment processes.[8] This is an important and meaningful use of the EIA designation materials and one that can help identify priorities or current needs within an assessment process. Indeed, one of the primary goals of the EIA Designations is to help foster meaningful communication and discussion on campuses regarding the creation of scaffolded and horizontally integrated assessment practices in order to create more cohesive learning environments for all our students.

Campus-level assessment should be an integrated process, involving decision-makers from all areas of campus. The expectation for EIA designations is that groups will exist on campus charged, in whole or in part, with contributing to, participating in, overseeing, and/or making use of campus assessment data and reports. While a single position or office may be identified as the one responsible for completing campus-level assessment administration and collection of results, it is insufficient for a single position or office to be the sole custodian and consumer of this information. As such, institutions are expected to provide an annotated list of the various groups on campus engaged with assessment activities.

Too often, those responsible for campus-level assessment are disconnected from other levels of campus assessment. The purpose of the EIA designation is to both serve as a tool to help institutions identify the practices and policies on their campuses that can be improved to help integrate assessment activities across campus and to recognize those campuses who have succeeded in such integration.

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[8] Robinson C., Demeter, E., Frederick, J. G., & Sanders, C. (2017). *When the call comes, keep calm and assess on: Using the EIA designation rubric as a self-study for improvemen*t. (NILOA Assessment in Practice). Retrieved from: http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/AssessmentInPractice_EIA_UNC.pdf.

Ideally, in order to demonstrate the level of institutional understanding of and commitment to integrated campus assessment, an EIA application should include evidence of substantive participation in campus assessment activities by individuals that represent a variety of roles across and off campus:

- Senior campus administrative leadership, e.g., President's or Chancellor's cabinet members;
- Personnel responsible for the oversight of campus and program assessment activities;
- Personnel responsible for the oversight of campus and program external accreditation activities;
- Faculty, both tenure/tenure-track and adjunct, from a variety of campus departments and/or representing faculty governing bodies;
- Non-instructional staff responsible for student support, such as academic and career advisors, other student service personnel, and the library;
- Students from a variety of majors and years, and/or representing student governing bodies;
- Representatives from the community or other external stakeholders in student outcomes, e.g.,:
  - Alumni from a variety of majors and years, and/or representing a broad/institutional alumni group;
  - Employers and/or business representatives from the community;
  - Institutions who commonly accept students who have completed coursework at the applying institution, such as transfer partners, graduate schools or programs; and/or
  - Members of institutional oversight or governing bodies.

Applications should include an annotated list of individuals and groups who engage substantively with assessment on a regular basis. Participants should be listed with their name and title and groups may or may not include a list of regular participants along with a sentence or two indicating the role of the individual or group in campus assessment activities. These individuals and groups are not required to participate in the creation of the EIA application, but rather are intended to help reviewers better understand the structure of assessment processes on the applicant campus. This list can also serve as a reference document within the narrative so that applicants do not have to explain the function of each group in the content of their applications.

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) created the Transparency Framework "to help institutions evaluate the extent to which they are making evidence of student accomplishment readily accessible and potentially useful and meaningful to various audiences."[9] Based on a national review of campus assessment websites, the Transparency Framework consists of six components centered around a set of common underlying principles.

Student Learning Outcome Statements

Student learning outcome statements clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education. For the purposes of the EIA designation, applicants should provide evidence that student learning outcome statements at the campus-level are integrated with student learning outcome statements from the co-curricular, college-, program-, and course-level.

Guiding questions:
- Does the institution have clearly stated campus-level student learning outcomes?
- Are learning outcomes intentionally linked or scaffolded into program- and course-level student learning outcome statements? Co-curricular?
- Are student learning outcomes externally validated or aligned with external definitions of student learning outcomes?
- Are student learning outcomes statements prominently posted and communicated to students?
- Are assessments of student work in courses, programs, and co-curricular activities clearly linked to campus-level learning outcomes?

Institutions are **strongly encouraged** to include one or more links to webpages listing their institutional student learning outcomes within their narrative. Links should be embedded in the narrative so that they contribute to the flow of evidence being presented, rather than simply listed under a section.

Campus-level Assessment Plan

Campus-level plans for gathering evidence of student learning might include institution-wide approaches that convey how student learning will be assessed, the data collection tools and approaches that will be used, and the timeline for implementation. Campus-level plans may build on the work from program-level and unit-level plans, but should represent some level of common assessment activities designed to provide evidence of the learning of students across campus. For the purposes of the EIA designation, applicants should provide evidence that the assessment plans across campus are intentionally integrated or scaffolded.

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[9] National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. (2011). *Transparency Framework*. Urbana, IL: University Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA). Retrieved from: http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/TransparencyFramework.htm

Guiding questions:
- Does the institution have a comprehensive assessment plan at the institution-level?
- Does the plan include at least some common assessment activities designed to provide evidence of student learning across campus?
- Is the institution-level assessment plan aligned or integrated with, or scaffolded from program-level and unit-level assessment plans?
- What feedback and stakeholder involvement is there in reviewing and implementing the institution-level assessment plan?
- How are stakeholders from programs and departments—including student affairs professionals and students—involved in the development and on-going review of the plan and results?

Institutions **may** include one or more links to webpages describing their campus-level assessment plan to external audiences within their narrative. Links should be embedded in the narrative so that they contribute to the flow of evidence being presented, rather than simply listed under a section. Reviewers will visit links provided in this section if they feel doing so would aid their ability to evaluate the integration of the campus-level assessment plan with program-level assessment plans.

Campus-level Assessment Resources

Assessment resources encompass information or training provided to faculty, students, and staff to help them understand, develop, implement, communicate, and use campus-level evidence of student learning. Ideally, there is a centralized location where faculty and staff can locate resources on assessment best practices, including information on campus-level assessment activities and how they are integrated with program, unit, and course assessment activities. Policy and procedures for evaluating faculty and staff include formal or official supports and/or recognition of efforts made to improve or advance assessment practices, either individually, within a program, or at the institution level.

Guiding questions:
- Does the institution have a centralized location where faculty, students, and staff can access assessment resources?
- Are there regular faculty and staff development activities designed to promote best practices in understanding, developing, implementing, communicating and using campus-level evidence of student learning?
- Do faculty and staff use the resources provided?
- How are campus policies and procedures regarding faculty and staff review processes structured to provide support or recognition for faculty and staff working to improve or advance their assessment practices?

Institutions are **strongly encouraged** to include one or more links to webpages showing resources available to faculty and staff within their narrative. Links should be embedded in the narrative so that they contribute to the flow of evidence being presented, rather than simply listed under a section.

Current Campus-level Assessment Activities

Current assessment activities include information on the full range of projects and activities recently completed or currently underway to gauge campus-level student learning, make improvements, or respond to accountability interests. Information on current campus-level assessment activities is easily accessible to various audiences both on- and off-campus, including information on how campus-level assessment activities integrate with program and course assessment activities. Information about current assessment activities includes schedules for when activities occur and when results are generally made available to campus stakeholders.

When new campus-level assessment activities are under consideration or being implemented, information regarding the decision process for determining the addition or change to previous practice is provided.

Guiding questions:
- How does the institution share information with a variety of on-campus and off-campus stakeholders about current campus-level assessment activities?
- Is information on current assessment activities communicated in an easily accessible format and understandable to a variety of audiences both on and off campus?
- When new campus-level assessment activities are under consideration or being implemented, how is information regarding the decision process shared? Who participates in the decision process?

Institutions are **strongly encouraged** to include one or more links to webpages they use to share information on campus-level assessment activities with on- and off-campus audiences within their narrative. Links should be embedded in the narrative so that they contribute to the flow of evidence being presented, rather than simply listed under a section. Reviewers will visit links provided in this section if they feel doing so would aid their ability to evaluate clarity and appropriateness of communications related to current campus-level assessment activities and their purposes.

Campus-level Evidence of Student Learning

Evidence of student learning includes results of campus-level assessment activities. This may include evidence of indirect (e.g. surveys) and direct (e.g. portfolio) student learning as well as institutional performance indicators (e.g. licensure pass rate). This section should focus on how the institution connects the dots between the multiple layers of assessment activities occurring on

their campus. Documentation should specifically address how data and results from multiple assessment activities align or overlap to provide an integrated picture of student learning across campus.

Guiding questions:
- What measures are used by the institution at various levels to provide a complete picture of student learning on campus?
- How are institution-level results of student assessment shared with programs, units, and departments on campus? How is access to results determined?
- What mechanisms are in place to facilitate conversations across or among various groups collecting evidence of student learning?
- Who is engaged in the process of collecting, reviewing, monitoring and compiling evidence of student learning?

Institutions are **strongly encouraged** to include one or more links to webpages they use to share outcomes from campus-level assessment activities with on- and off-campus audiences within their narrative. Links should be embedded in the narrative so that they contribute to the flow of evidence being presented, rather than simply listed under a section. Reviewers will visit links provided in this section if they feel doing so would aid their ability to evaluate the clarity and appropriateness of communications related to campus-level assessment outcomes.

Use of Campus-level Student Learning Evidence

This component represents the extent to which campus-level evidence of student learning is used to identify areas where changes in policies and practices may lead to improvement, inform institutional decision-making, problem identification, planning, goal setting, faculty development, course revision, program review, and accountability or accreditation self-study. Institutions should use evidence from multiple levels to guide campus and curricular decision-making as well as to monitor and evaluate the results of those decisions. The assessment cycle should allow for sufficient time between the introduction of changes or new programs for implementation to stabilize and results to be known with some certainty (e.g., poor initial results should not automatically result in abandonment; conversely, positive initial results should not automatically result in widespread adoption without further verification and discussion).

Guiding questions:
- What evidence does the institution provide to stakeholders both inside and outside the institution that their campus-level assessment activities are incorporated in institutional decision-making?
- What spaces on campus exist for various stakeholders to come together to make sense of and determine what to do, if anything, with assessment results from multiple levels within the institution?

- How are institution-level assessment results made available in ways that integrate with results from other levels of assessment activities?
- How are the uses of assessment results shared with various audiences?
- Who participates in the monitoring and evaluation of decisions to ensure they bring about the desired change(s)?

Institutions are **strongly encouraged** to include one or more links to webpages describing how assessment results are used on their campus within their narrative. Links should be embedded in the narrative so that they contribute to the flow of evidence being presented, rather than simply listed under a section. Reviewers will visit links provided in this section if they feel doing so would aid their ability to evaluate the extent to which assessment results are acted upon and further monitored and evaluated by the campus.

Even institutions that excel at using assessment results to inform and guide their campus decision making have room for improvement. Through the process of completing the sections above, institutions will undoubtedly uncover areas for improvement on their own campus. The final narrative component of the EIA application should focus on revelations made by your campus application team in the process of completing your application, reflecting on the overall quality and robustness of your campus assessment system and use of assessment data, and the identification of concrete steps you plan to take in the next three years to grow or improve your institutional use or integration of campus assessment results. (Note that institutions that successfully receive the EIA designation and choose to reapply at the end of their initial designation period will be expected to reflect on the success of their efforts in their reapplication.)

Guiding questions:
- What were the biggest surprises or revelations made by your campus application team in completing your EIA application?
- Was there anything you expected to find but didn't?
- Where are your campus's greatest strengths in your assessment program?
- What are some of your largest or most important challenges?
- How are you planning to grow or improve your institutional use or integration of campus assessment results or data use?
- What concrete steps will your campus engage in to accomplish your plans?
- What resources will you use to help you achieve your plans?

A panel of assessment experts from around the country will review and score each institutional application. At least two reviewers read each submission. Reviewers use the scoring rubric available on the EIA website to evaluate submissions.

The rubric scoring is based off of evidence provided in the institutional application narrative. Applications are reviewed holistically prior to scoring by expert reviewers. The minimum score for consideration of being awarded an EIA designation is 72, however meeting the minimum overall score does not guarantee receipt of a designation. Reviewer recommendations will be taken into consideration and the final decision will be made in consultation with the reviewers and staff of the sponsoring groups and associations.

Total possible points: 149
Minimum overall score necessary for consideration: 72

Following individual scoring of the rubric, reviewers will collectively discuss the application and make an overall recommendation for whether the campus should receive an Excellence in Assessment Designation. Campuses who are recommended for a Designation will then be considered by the reviewers for the Sustained designation based on whether evidence was provided that the campus has been engaged in meaningful campus-wide assessment practices for at least the last five years. In other words, Sustained designations are determined holistically after all other criteria have been rated.

Each application is reviewed on the basis of its own merits and is not considered in comparison to other applications received or reviewed. There is neither a minimum nor a maximum number of EIA Designations that may be made in a given year.

The EIA evaluation rubric is available in an Excel file from the EIA website.

Eligibility to Apply

Campuses applying for an EIA designation must be degree-granting, regionally accredited institutions. Schools within colleges are not eligible to apply.

Application Submission Deadlines for 2018 designation
- Submission of completed EIA Application: May 1, 2018
- Applicants Notified of EMBARGOED Designation Results: July 31, 2018
- Public Announcement of Designees: August 16, 2018

2018 Application Process & Key Dates

There is one EIA application cycle annually.

1. Compile and submit a completed EIA Application by May 1. The component definitions and guiding questions for the EIA designation review criteria have been adapted to an application review rubric, is also available here:
http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/eiadesignation.html. Institutions are encouraged to engage in self-assessment using the application review rubric prior to submitting their application.
   - Applications should be submitted electronically to **EIA@collegeportraits.org**.
   - Application materials will be viewed by staff of the sponsoring groups and associations and shared with EIA application reviewers identified by the sponsoring groups and associations for the purpose of completing the application evaluation. Institutions will be identified by name to EIA application reviewers, though reviewers will be restricted from identifying which institutions they review or the details or results of their review with anyone but staff of the sponsoring groups and associations.
2. Notification of EIA Designation to Campuses by July 31. All applicants will be notified of the results of their designation application individually by email to their campus senior leader and primary application contact person.
   - Feedback from application reviewers will be shared with all applicants, regardless of designation status, though individual reviewers will not be identified.
   - Institutions will be asked not to publicly announce their designation status until the official announcement date, though feedback from the application reviewers can be shared with members of the campus. Institutions may release EMBARGOED notification of their status to media up to 5 days before the public announcement.
3. Official Announcement of EIA Designation Recipients by Sponsoring Groups & Associations by August 16. An official press release announcement will be made by the sponsoring groups and associations to announce recipients of the EIA designation. Only institutions who successfully received the designation will be listed in the announcement. Plaques and certificates will be awarded at the AAC&U Annual Meeting, held annually in January.