



The State University
of New York

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TO: Chief Academic Officers
FROM: Tod A. Laursen, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor
RE: COVID 19 Guidance regarding Continuity of Assessment

In the context of the current public health emergency, questions have arisen regarding expectations for assessment. The SUNY [policy](#) and [procedures](#) on Assessment establish expectations regarding assessment. For the duration of this emergency, SUNY has developed the following guidance, which is in alignment with the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.¹

The leading principle of this guidance is the expectation that institutions maintain a culture of assessment. A supporting principle is that rather than conceiving of assessment as an all-or-nothing proposition, institutions may adopt modified assessment practices.

1. Although it may seem expedient to suspend all assessment practices during this emergency, such a course of action is inadvisable. A culture of assessment is foundational to ensuring quality and continuous improvement and remains so even during times of significant challenge.
2. Notwithstanding the first point, full implementation of standardized, complex, and comprehensive assessment practices may not be practicable at this time due to the extent of the efforts necessary to ensure academic continuity.
3. In the current context, each institution must review its assessment practices to determine which are most essential and which could be temporarily adjusted or suspended. This type of review is an expectation of the broader accreditation process and is part of the Standard V criteria.
4. For the duration of this emergency, an intentionally and strategically focused approach with streamlined practices may be the most effective way to maintain a culture of assessment without overburdening the campus community. Shared governance involvement in this process is crucial to effective decisions about which practices are most essential and which could be temporarily adjusted or suspended. There should be clear direction from campus leadership in this effort.
5. All decisions about assessment practices for the duration of this emergency ought to be documented with accompanying rationale that supports these decisions, as well as the timeframe(s) for reviewing such decisions to determine when to resume established practices.
6. And lastly, just to reinforce its importance: document, document, and document.

¹ For programs with programmatic accreditation, please consult with the applicable accreditor regarding program-specific expectations.