



INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

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University of New England  
University Assessment Committee (UAC)  
c/o Jennifer Mandel, Ph.D.

Re: Response to the 2021-2022 University Assessment Report

Dear Dr. Mandel,

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide a formal response to the UAC *Report on the Status of Assessment and Quality of Educational Effectiveness* at the University of New England (UNE) for academic year 2021-2022. The UAC's findings were delivered to a well-attended University wide meeting on November 15, 2022, which included a robust discussion between the university community and committee members. It is clear from the report, and from the strong engagement with findings of the report and recommendations of the committee at the University wide meeting, that the culture and practice of assessment is well embedded at UNE.

The 2021-2022 assessment report is comprehensive and well-constructed. It is clear there is strong ongoing engagement of academic and co-curricular divisions in reporting assessment of student learning for their units. The quantification and synthesis of data which the UAC provides is impressive, and your report details ongoing outcomes effectiveness endeavors across the University. The annual report additionally weaves insights and recommendations from prior years into current work, thereby illustrating the continuous and iterative nature of the outcomes assessment process.

The UAC's recommendations are clear, and I believe will serve to advance the culture and practice of assessment across the University, as well as address lingering challenges post pandemic. Below are my responses to the final recommendations presented in your report.

Recommendation 1. *Support more student-facing and -supporting co-curricular units to engage in assessing student learning and programmatic effectiveness, and reporting on their results through the university-wide annual assessment cycle.* I was impressed at the level of reporting of co-curricular units considering the challenges that were faced over the last year such as staffing shortages and increased need and requests for student services. I support this recommendation to continue to provide support and guidance for the co-curricular units to assess their effectiveness and report their results.

Recommendation 2. *Offer more assessment-related professional development opportunities to the university community.* I support this recommendation and commend CETL and the UAC for their successful efforts this past year in increasing professional development offerings across the University in this area and encourage that to continue this academic year.

Recommendation 3. *Add more resources to the UAC's assessment resources web page for academic and co-curricular areas to assist with enhancing data collection and analysis approaches, including a resource on establishing student learning outcomes' benchmarks.* I agree with this recommendation. Additional resources available in an easily accessible location should enhance the assessment process across the University.

Recommendation 4. *Explore either adopting alternative methods co-curricular areas can use to report their effectiveness data to the UAC or retooling the annual student support services assessment report form to include questions that better reflect co-curricular areas' methods of assessing their effectiveness.* I agree with this recommendation and encourage the UAC and the co-curricular units to review tools and approaches used by student facing support services at universities across the nation to determine best practices.

The appendix provides further detail addressing the processes for outcomes assessment and educational effectiveness across the five colleges and select divisions of the University. These summaries highlight that one approach does not uniformly 'work for all' as units are highly variable in their orientation (e.g. hold specialized accreditation, are non-accredited, are co-curricular). The appendix narratives show how that colleges and divisions have each developed their own tailored approaches to ensure robust procedures for data collection and analysis. Numerous programs additionally engage in national benchmarking through disciplinary examinations and standards and use the outcomes of these assessments for educational/curricular improvement.

I want to thank the UAC for your leadership in promoting an inclusive and rigorous learning outcomes assessment process at UNE. Your commitment to this work is apparent, as is its impact on the institutional mission of promoting student success and preparing graduates to thrive in a rapidly changing world. I look forward to working with you and colleagues throughout the university to continue advancing this very important endeavor.

Sincerely,



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