



# Office of Assessment & APR

**Academic Assessment Report AY 23-24  
September 2025**



**OFFICE OF  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

This report communicates themes, results, and impacts from the academic program assessment across The University of New Mexico for the 2023-2024 academic year. Key takeaways and tips for future improvement are at the top of this report, followed by results. The report describes the effects of academic assessment; perceptions of assessment leadership from colleges, schools, branches, and the Office of Assessment and Academic Program Review (OAAPR); evidence of assessment elements; and institutional participation rates.

## Assessment Overview

- Across all colleges, schools and branches, UNM exceeded the assessment participation goal this year of 60%, with 62% of all programs participating in the assessment cycle for AY 2023-2024.
  - Undergraduate degree programs had an overall participation rate of 72%, the same as last year, with a continued increase of participation of more than 20% as compared to AY 2021-2022. The OAAPR has set a goal of reaching participation rates of 75% for undergraduate programs (a 3% increase from current rates) by AY 24-25.
  - The participation rate of graduate degree programs this year (52%) dipped from last year (58%). The OAAPR has set a goal of reaching participation rates of 60% for graduate programs (an 8% increase from current rates) by AY 24-25.
  - There is a noticeable improvement in the communication of reports with leadership and committees to better connect assessment with strategic planning and curriculum, resulting in more informed decision-making. This enhanced alignment supports a pedagogical shift, where programs integrate project-based assignments that apply course content with community challenges, fostering program learning outcomes through increased community engagement and a deeper understanding of course content relevance.
- Units indicated that assessment data analysis was difficult. They can make progress in this area by considering how to design assessment and program changes that yield analyzable results and can generate actionable insights, as well as aligning data collection and definitions with university data sources through collaboration with OAAPR and Office of Institutional Analytics.

## Alignment with UNM 2040 Strategic Goals

UNM assessment activities and efforts this year align with several strategic goals outlined in UNM 2040, particularly:

- **Student Success:** Units connect data results in terms of measurement tools and benchmarks with course change proposals for curriculum improvement to continue student skill and knowledge improvement.
- **Academic Excellence:** The continued use of projects, assignments, and presentations as assessment tools enables programs to evaluate student learning in a more authentic and comprehensive way, driving academic excellence and fostering a culture of innovation and creativity. Portfolio building in graduate assessment is emerging as an alternative to exams.
- **Community Engagement:** Multiple programs include community engagement into assessment to develop life skills and address community needs while contributing to New Mexico's development.



## Message for Faculty: Assess to Improve, Innovate & Advance

As UNM continues to strive for academic excellence and innovation, it is essential to recognize the critical role that assessment plays in informing curriculum development, APR, strategic planning and accreditation. Key takeaways for faculty include:

- Assessment informs your curriculum: Use assessment data to refine course offerings, enrollment trends, monitor course sustainability and ensure alignment with program goals and SLOs.
- Continuous improvement is key: Regularly review and revise your assessment plans, APRs, and accreditation reports to ensure ongoing improvement and innovation.
- Opportunities for growth: Leverage APR, strategic initiatives and accreditation processes to identify areas for improvement, showcase program strengths, and drive innovation.
- Assessment advances teaching effectiveness: Reflect on teaching practices and make data informed decisions to maximize student learning.

## Tips for Future Improvement

To improve assessment practices, programs should focus on three key areas:

- Clearly articulate the unique characteristics of each degree path in their assessment plans. This is crucial because it helps stakeholders understand the differences between programs and allows for tailored assessment approaches. To achieve this, programs should define distinct features, goals, and outcomes for each degree path.
- Ensure goals are aligned with specific, measurable SLOs. This alignment is important because it brings clarity and focus to the assessment process, enabling effective evaluation. By developing overarching program goals and creating specific, measurable SLOs that support those goals, programs can develop a cohesive assessment strategy.
- Prioritize detailed analysis and interpretation of assessment results. This step is essential because it enables programs to identify areas for improvement and inform decision-making. By providing thorough evaluation of assessment data and benchmarks, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement, programs can drive student learning success and meet their goals. Additionally, by focusing on these areas, programs can enhance their assessment plans and ultimately achieve greater student learning success.

## OAAPR Insights

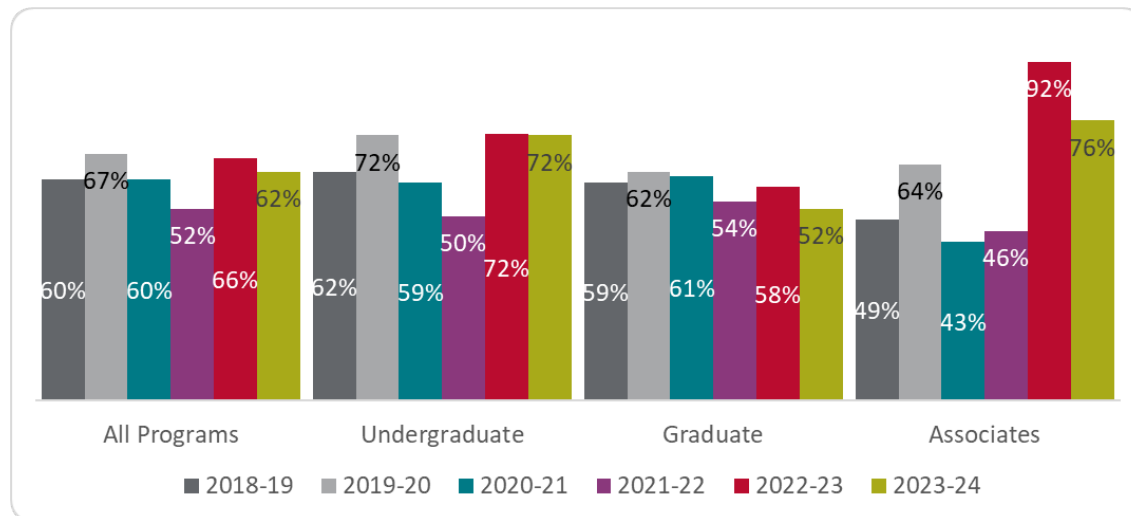
With another annual assessment cycle complete, this institutional report provides an opportunity for reflection and for programs to learn from one another. UNM Albuquerque and branch campuses reached the highest submission rate in four years. This is great progress. At the same time, the Office of Assessment and Academic Program Review (OAAPR) analysis of academic program assessment indicates that the majority of programs are assessing improvement that has long since been achieved. Overall, UNM assessment can be improved through the introduction of new measures, practices, and goals. Therefore, in AY 25-26, a year's break from assessment data collection, called the Recharge and Reset Year, will enable academic programs to recharge and refresh. It is a great opportunity to consider merging curriculum and

assessment committees, and the overall structures built for institutional assessment within units. Please see <https://assessment.unm.edu/academic-assessment/recharge-reset.html> for more information.

Graduate-level assessment poses unique challenges, with many programs continuing to opt for summative metrics. In addition, programs at this level have continually reported assessment challenges due to smaller student populations and a lack of tracking mechanisms annually for students' learning improvement. However, some programs have found innovative solutions to address these challenges. For example, one unit implemented a mentorship program to teach students higher-level skills, paired with in-class assessments using specifically designed assignments. Other programs have successfully engaged faculty in data review and discussion, identifying student needs and working together to close gaps across courses. The OAAPR is researching ways to address and renew the graduate-level institutional assessment process.

## Assessment Participation

Graph 1. Overall academic assessment participation by year, location, and degree level from AY 2020 to 2024.



Academic assessment participation continued with a similar pattern of participation as compared to the last few years, with 62% overall participation. Undergraduate degrees had an overall consistent participation of 72% (same as 2022-2023 and pre-pandemic 2019-2020), while graduate degrees had a rate of 52%, down 6% from last year and below the average 58% from AY 20-24. Associate degrees (solely based on UNM Valencia) increased participation in the last couple of years with a rate of 76% participation.

For the 2023-2024 cycle, OAAPR observed a consistent pattern of engagement with academic degree assessment, building on previous intentional efforts to collaborate with units. This year OAAPR targeted outreach with units that specifically requested support and increased communications and Provost Committee on Assessment (PCA) discussions about assessment participation, including the design of curriculum mapping and rubric building. Key initiatives included revising assessment plans, documenting assessment progress in APRs, and participating in retreats and faculty meetings where explicit

connections between curriculum and assessment were introduced and discussed. One school started to institutionalize assessment discussions in monthly undergraduate and graduate chair councils, ensuring ongoing dialogue. Another school mapped academic degree assessment goals and tools with program accreditor requirements and evidence to create a matrix of curriculum and assessment interactions. The Provost's Office 2022-2023 endorsement of a merger of assessment and curriculum committees (with not all colleges and schools having moved to adoption) further reinforced the link between curriculum design and assessment insights, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. These strategic initiatives sustained high assessment participation, driving enhanced curriculum alignment and student success.

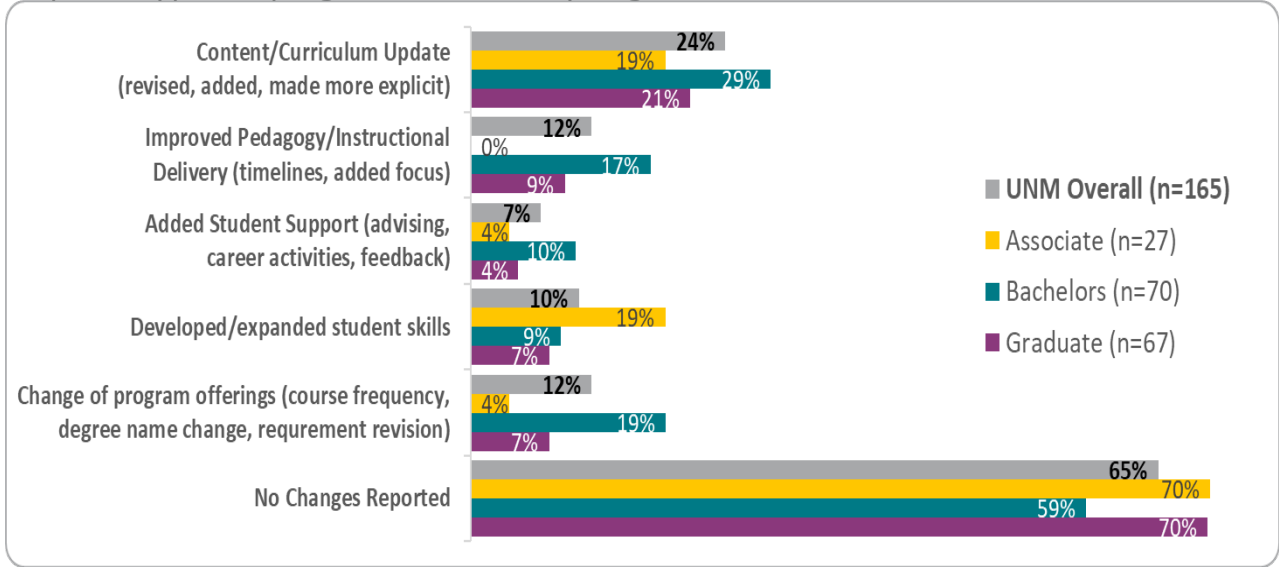
## Results

The following data comes from ten college, schools, and branches: Anderson School of Management, College of Arts & Sciences, College of Education & Human Sciences, College of Fine Arts, College of Population Health, College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences, Honors College, School of Engineering, School of Medicine, and Valencia Branch. Three branches are minimally represented as they are currently implementing a new assessment model.

### Impact of Assessment

#### *Program Revisions*

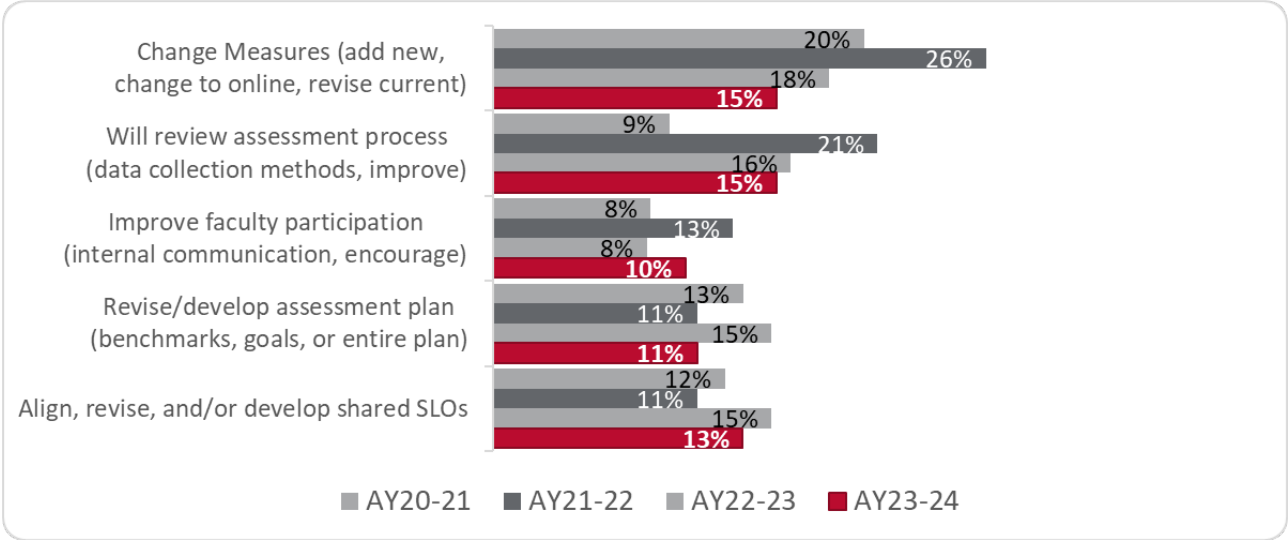
Graph 2. Types of program revisions by degree levels.



In AY 23-24, 65% of the programs did not report any program changes overall, with Associates and Graduate degrees exceeding the overall mark. When reported, the most common changes for any degree level were content and curriculum updates (i.e., revisions, additions, clarifications), decreasing to 24% from 37% in AY21-22 and 33% in AY22-23. Undergraduate degrees have marked a considerable increase in improved pedagogy/instruction changes (17%) and change in program offerings (19%), indicating a conscious effort to connect assessment and curriculum development.

### Assessment Changes

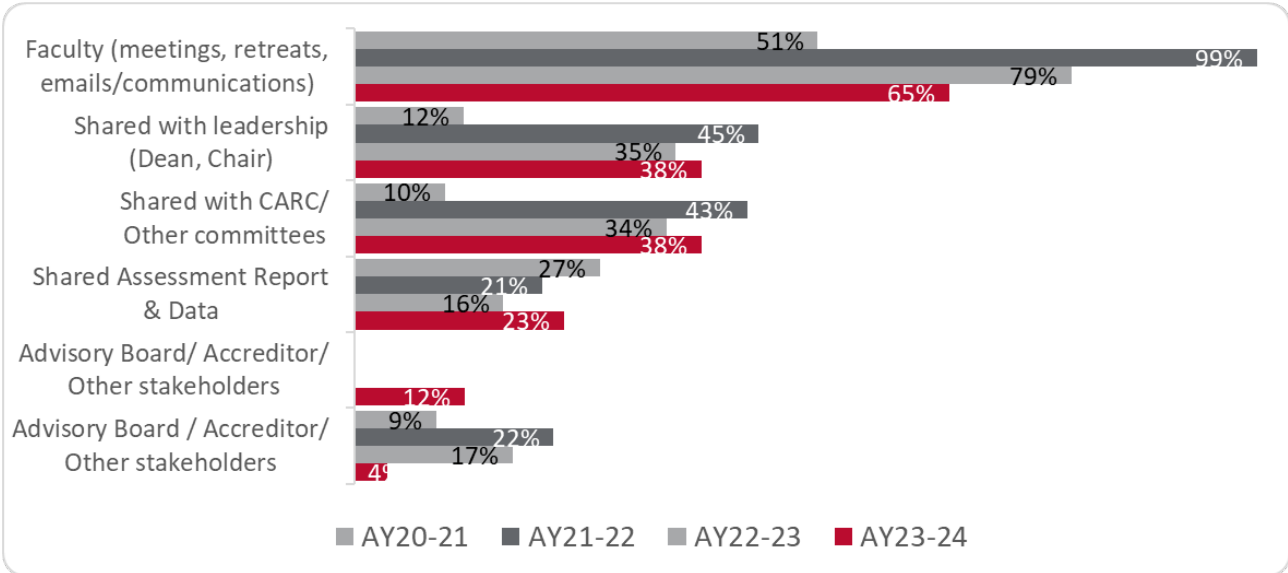
Graph 3. Types of assessment changes and frequencies from AY 2020 to 2024.



Changes in measures and process reviews were the most common assessment revisions made over time, with a decrease of changes in both categories in AY 23-24. Improving faculty participation was reported less, while revising or developing assessment plans and aligning, revising, and/or developing shared SLOs was reported more.

### Communication

Graph 4. Methods and frequencies of communicating assessment results from AY 2020 to 2024.



Most programs communicate their analysis and results to their faculty through regular faculty meetings, annual retreats, or email. This year, a notable increase in communication with leadership and

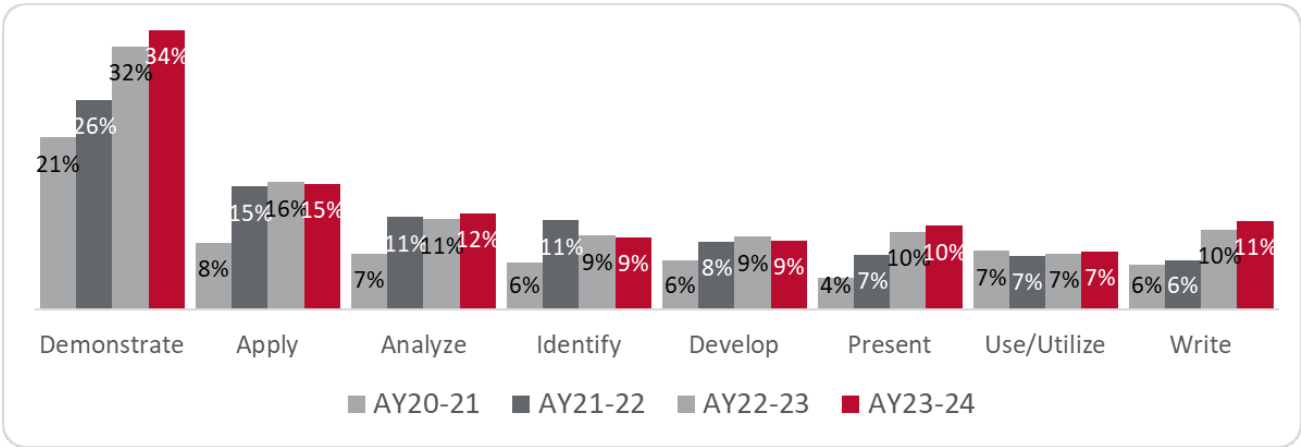
CARC/other committees was observed as compared to last year, with some programs addressing assessment results by including assessment in multiple committees.

### Reported Assessment Elements

Across the 165-degree programs submitted assessment reports, 834 Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) were reported. These SLOs assessed 124 unique behaviors.

### SLO Verb Frequency

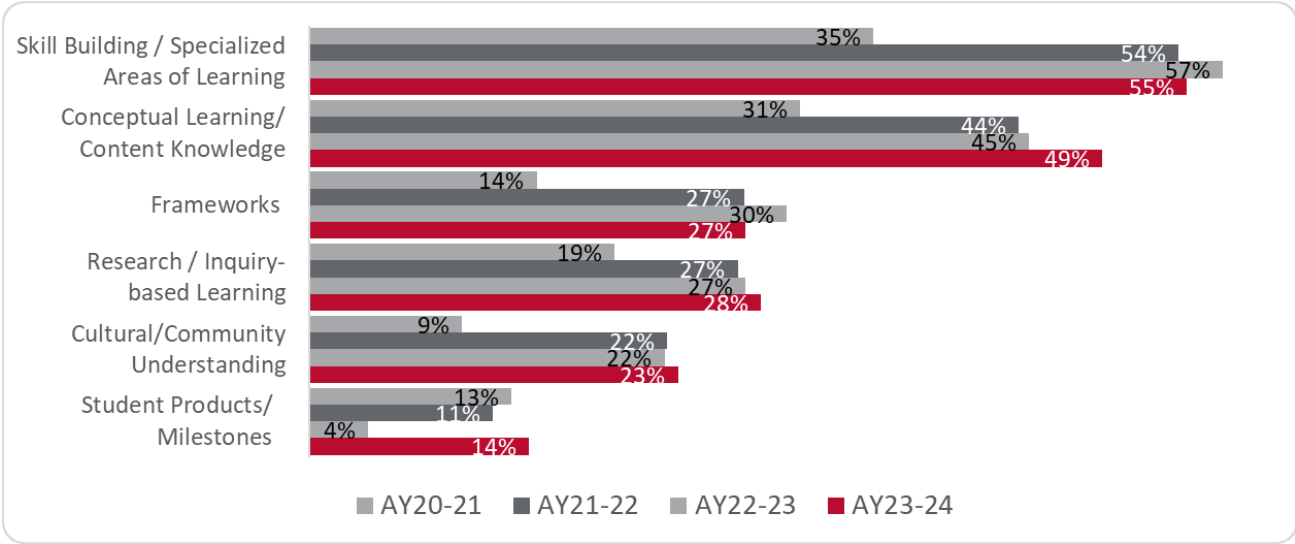
Graph 5. Overall number of SLO verb frequency from AY 2020 to 2024.



The top 8 student behaviors reported were predominantly and consistently used through multiple years to document student learning and instructional expectations. This year OAAPR saw a significant increase in the use of "demonstrate" as a standalone behavior, rising to 34% (up from 22% last year). The OAAPR would like to balance the use of "demonstrate" with a broader range of behaviors, encouraging a more diverse and comprehensive approach to evaluating student learning in future assessment plans.

For this year the overall number of SLO verb frequency decreased relative to the previous year (AY 23-24= 834 vs. AY 22-23= 855). This decrease has been confirmed by programs revising (sometimes entirely redesigning) SLOs through combining multiple SLOs from a previous year into a more concise single SLO. In these cases, the consolidation strategy was well considered and helped to streamline and clarify SLO descriptions.

Graph 6. Overall frequency of content type in SLOs from AY 2020 to 2024.

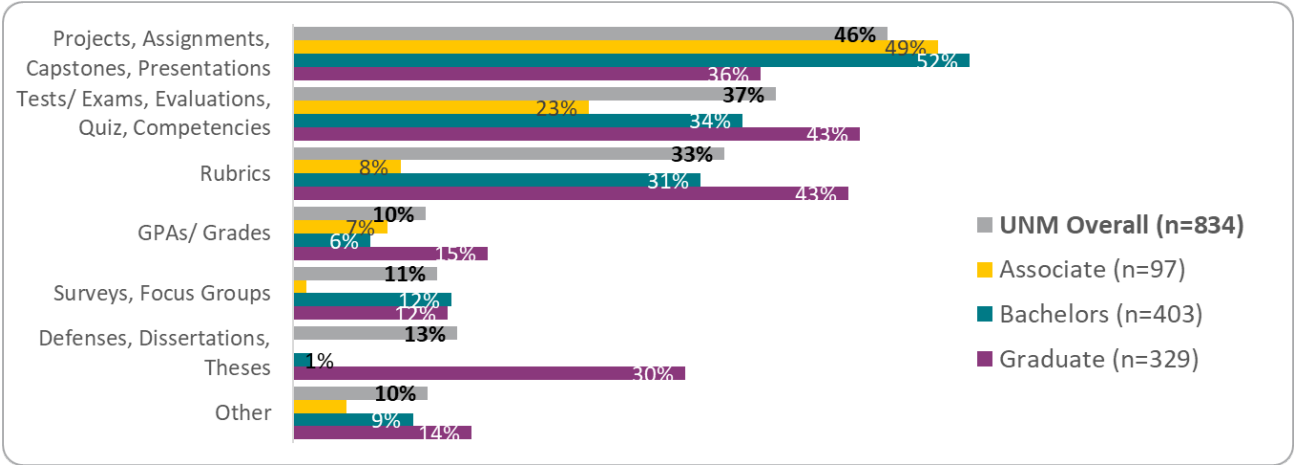


A consistent pattern with over half of the submitted SLOs focused on skill building and specialized areas of learning (i.e., gathering data, reflections, discussions, writing) since 2021. SLOs also focused on conceptual learning, content knowledge, and research or inquiry-based learning, with a salient increase this year in concept knowledge as related to discipline (49% in 2023-2024 vs. 44% in the previous last two years), with Associate degrees using 66% content knowledge as compared to Bachelor's degrees and Graduate degrees with similar 48% of use of such skill.

Student product/milestones saw a marked increase this year, rising by 14% after a 4% decline last year, thereby regaining parity with the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 levels. This growth reflects a continued emphasis on developing completion skills that began in 2020. Research and inquiry-based learning also showed steady progress, consistent with the trends observed in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. Community and cultural understanding more than doubled since AY20-21, indicating a marked shift towards integrating broader social and cultural competencies into SLOs.

### SLO Measures

Graph 7. Frequencies and types of measures used for SLOs for AY 2023-2024.



The above graph shows the frequency of measures used for this year. In AY 23-24, SLOs tended to be measured via:

- Projects, assignments, capstones, and presentations – this category also includes



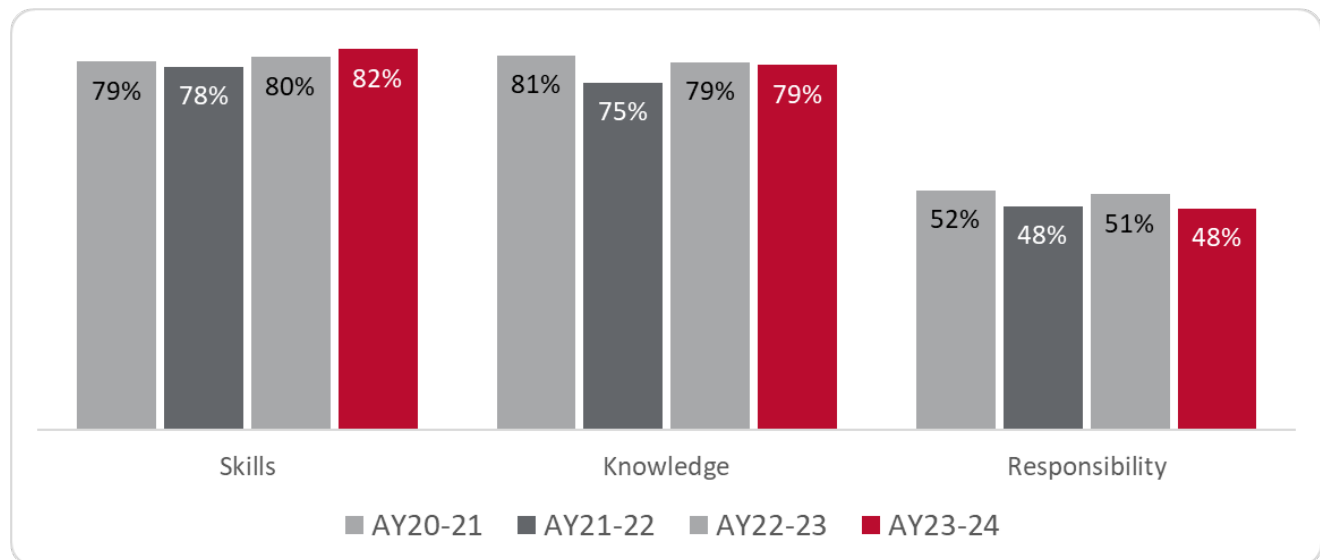
portfolios, publications, and internships, showing an overall use of 46%, with Bachelor's degrees relying on this more than Associates and Graduate degrees.

- Tests, exams, evaluations, quizzes, and competencies – these include both written and oral forms of evaluation and annual reviews. This category increased in usage in Graduate degrees this year as compared to other degrees but was consistent in use as compared to other years.
- Rubrics – this category has increased in usage by Graduate degrees as compared with other degrees. Rubrics usage has also increased annually since 2020.
- GPAs/Grades- this category has increased in usage by Graduate degrees as compared with other degrees. However, this category has decreased overall since 2020. Many programs have revised their measures used to evaluate SLOs. Associate and Bachelor's Plans and reports this year conveyed a discernible trend in which units are moving away from overly broad measures such as GPAs and course grades and toward more specific instruments attuned to measuring specific dimensions of program SLOs such as projects and assignments.

Though defenses, dissertations, and theses make up 11% of the 2024 measures, the OAAPR noted that many graduate programs measured their multiple SLOs only at the end of a student's time in the program, with an increase of rubric use to measure SLOs for this year.

### UNM Learning Goals

Graph 8. UNM learning goals under "skills," "knowledge," and "responsibility" by degree level from AY 2020 to 2024.



The *UNM Learning Goals* of "Skills" and "Knowledge" continued this year to be included in SLOs at high frequency. The learning goal of "Responsibility" continues the similar trend from last years to be less integrated in SLOs.

### College, School, and Branch Maturity Rubric Narrative Assessment Themes *Strengths*

Every year, each college, school and branch completes a maturity rubric and narrative to evaluate their assessment maturity. Many units noted general improvements in assessment practices and increased "buy-in" from participants in the assessment process. Several reports noted that feedback from the Office of Assessment has been useful and has contributed to these improvements. Implementing changes through refining SLOs, developing strategies for

analyzing assessment data, and revising assessment plans to better align assessment data collection and reporting with SLOs emerged as common themes.

Units highlighted changes and revisions in assessment plans that led to improvements through establishing more clearly outlined and measurable SLOs that strongly aligned with learning goals articulated by the University. Many units observed a continuing trend over time of building a strong culture of assessment, which was frequently attributed to increased engagement with the assessment process and understanding of its importance.

There were examples of graduate assessment plans that followed an integrative approach to assessment by identifying a diverse set of assessment measures that combine evaluations tools and benchmarks for course-based assessment in foundational courses, lab performance and clinical skill evaluations during clinical experiences.

Evidence showed efforts among programs to carefully consider SLOs with the aim of creating stronger alignment between outcomes, measures, and benchmarks. This type of revision leads to more descriptive and attuned assessment insights. The OAAPR greatly appreciates and encourages this sort of reflexive engagement in the assessment planning process.

There is often a tendency among programs to use *all* students in a course as the data sample without confirming that every student belongs to the program. This can lead to programs measuring students who cross-develop with other majors. For degree program assessment purposes, students who are solely majors and/or are pursuing a degree in a program (Undergraduate/Graduate) should be the focus for assessment sampling, rather than all students enrolled in courses where they may come from different degree programs.

## Challenges

One of the challenges programs face in assessment planning is differentiating between multiple degree paths. Some programs submitted identical plans, SLOs, measures, and benchmarks for distinct degree tracks, such as BA and BS programs. Additionally, programs often struggle to distinguish between program goals and student learning outcomes (SLOs), sometimes using identical descriptions for these distinct categories.

Another challenge programs encounter is providing meaningful analysis and interpretation of assessment results. While programs reported results in the data collection and analysis sections of their reports, some focused primarily on describing collection processes rather than sharing insights and takeaways from the results. This year, maturity rubric analysis indicated high ratings, showing an increase as compared to previous years. Maturity rubric is a comprehensive self-reporting tool that captures where and how each college, school and branch rates their annual assessment practices. The analysis of the responses collected in Maturity Rubrics from CARC leaders revealed three main takeaways that have emerged as themes. These takeaways are crucial in understanding the opportunities and challenges of degree programs and informing future improvements:

- **Curricular Alignment or Development:** The findings suggest that there is a need to ensure that the curriculum is aligned with the program's learning outcomes and that the courses are structured in a way that allows students to achieve these outcomes. The findings also suggest that programs are making connections

between assessment and accreditation, APR and curriculum alignment (to drive program development). These findings, emerging as themes from units' self-reported assessment processes, align with a current institutional initiative at UNM, where curriculum and assessment committees are converging to explore intersections, share annual assessment results, and inform curriculum development, practices, and revisions. This synergy identifies the importance of curriculum mapping as a visual tool for understanding the dynamic relationship between curriculum and assessment.

- **Difficulty with Analysis:** Many programs struggled to collect, analyze, and interpret data effectively, which made it challenging to assess student learning outcomes. This difficulty with data analysis can have significant implications for the program's ability to evaluate its effectiveness and make data-driven decisions.
- **Portfolio as a Tool for Measurement in Graduate Programs:** The findings suggest that electronic portfolios can be an effective way to assess student learning outcomes, particularly in programs that focus on critical thinking, reflection, creativity and problem-solving. The overall increase of high assessment maturity ratings this year from CARC units confirms degree programs are engaging in a culture of assessment that is driven by data and curriculum considerations. OAAPR is pleased to see that units indicate openness to support.

OAAPR will continue to assist units and programs by providing training and support for faculty and staff. The following themes for workshops are identified based on the responses stated in the maturity rubric:

- To strengthen curriculum alignment, OAAPR will offer for its first time a 2025 Curriculum Mapping institute as an opportunity to review and revise the curriculum. Additionally, OAAPR will be offering a "Building a Cohesive Curriculum: Strategies for Accreditation and Academic Program Review"
- To enrich data analysis and increase awareness of institutional data, OAAPR will be offering a "Meaningful Analysis" workshop in AY 25-26.
- To consider inclusion of Portfolios for assessment, OAAPR will offer a "Enhancing/Showcasing Graduate Education: Portfolios as a Complement to Coursework and Thesis"