

STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Description

The University of New Hampshire, the state's public research university, provides comprehensive, high-quality undergraduate programs and graduate programs of distinction, in keeping with its mission. Its primary purpose is learning: students collaborating with faculty in teaching, research, creative expression, and service. UNH has a national and international agenda and holds land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant charters. The university has campuses in Durham and Manchester and is in the final stages of integration of the UNH School of Law in Concord into the university. (See Standard 3 and Law School update in Appendix F.)



Students enjoy a breadth and depth of experiences across many disciplines within the arts, sciences, and career-tailored professional programs. UNH offers 10 associate degree programs on the Durham campus and 3 on the Manchester campus. Over 150 bachelor degree programs are offered across the two campuses. Over 100 graduate programs are offered: 86 master's, 33 doctoral and 16 post-baccalaureate certificates. Eleven master's and 2 post-baccalaureate certificates are offered on the Manchester campus. The MBA program and the M.S.W program are offered online as well as face-to-face. A number of courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels may be taken online or in a hybrid, combined online/face-to-face modality. All degree programs require at least one year of full-time study with associate degrees normally requiring two years, bachelor's degrees 4 years, master's degrees 1-2 years, and doctoral degrees 3 to 5 years. Post-baccalaureate certificates generally target part-time students or students already in a degree program and require a minimum of 4 courses or 12 credits. UNH attracts undergraduate students from 48 U.S. states and 37 foreign countries and graduate students from 46 U.S. states and 54 foreign countries in fulfilling its local, national and international agendae.

The university has clear guidelines for approval of new, modified or deleted programs (degrees, majors and options) embodied in the [undergraduate program](#) proposal approval protocol and the [graduate program](#) proposal approval protocol as well as periodic [review](#) of all programs. Proposal, modification, deletion, and review processes are the same for all programs for all modalities regardless of when, where, and how they are offered. Development, changes, and deletion of programs rest with the faculty for approval by the college dean, Provost and President. UNH then informs the Board of Trustees (BOT) of approvals to add, change the name of or delete a program. (Recent change in governance, see Standard 3.) Curricular changes, including substantial course modification, follow a similar format. As a matter of shared governance, the faculty senate committee on academic affairs is advisory and reports recommendations on policy to the Provost, particularly in areas that are campus-wide or involve inter-college programs. At the graduate level, the Graduate Council (faculty) advises the

Graduate Dean on proposals to add, modify or delete graduate programs. The Graduate Faculty must approve new programs and deletion of programs unless otherwise delegated to the Graduate Council prior to subsequent approvals. All approvals are conveyed to initiating departments for implementation. Questions/concerns are remanded to the initiator for resolution, when necessary, at each level prior to full approval.

The quality and consistency among programs and coherence within programs are ensured through a review process with an established [review schedule](#) (10-year cycle) and common UNH criteria. The review begins with a faculty-authored Self Study of place within the UNH mission, program philosophy, details of student and faculty achievement and culminates in a review team analysis and visit that includes outside experts in the field. Accrediting boards perform regular reviews of certification programs. Programs of study, including course expectations, are published in the UNH Course Catalogs and on [program websites](#). Graduated degrees of expectation in terms of student achievement, independent learning, skills of inquiry and critical judgment are inherent in the course descriptions at the [undergraduate level](#), moving from foundational courses (200-400-level) through intermediate (500-600 level) to advanced level (700) courses and capstone requirements. Graduate level courses are at the 800-900 level, requiring increasing sophistication in content mastery, analysis and synthesis, and acquisition of research skills. Research opportunities plus library and academic technology resources support faculty instruction and student work in these programs. (See Standard 7.) Students are assigned a major advisor who guides them through the program. Student learning is assessed by faculty throughout each program based on course objectives and university grading standards. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) is involved with many programs and departmental efforts to further capture and refine assessment of student learning. At the undergraduate level assessment of student outcomes is made for each of the four types of requirements, Discovery, writing, degree, and major requirements, and all are designed to foster intellectual and academic skills and methods of inquiry.

Career preparation is emphasized in program literature where appropriate. For example the [Accounting Option](#) in the Accounting and Finance program and the Bachelor of Science in [Communication Sciences and Disorders](#) web pages contain specific career information. The Honors Program, Hamel Center (undergraduate research), Study Abroad and undergraduate and graduate research conferences offer enrichment opportunities for students. These are viewed as High Impact Programs (HIP) by UNH and are well tracked in terms of outcomes. (See Student Outcomes section.)

UNH has a strong infrastructure of information resources and technology to support students at all degree levels and in all fields of study. Applicants receive credentials and instructions for accessing UNH's academic infrastructure via [MyUNH](#) as soon as they are admitted to UNH. First year students receive information on how to access the [IT guide](#) which orients students to the information resources available at UNH. Each school and college identifies information resources required for students and assistance available during First Year Student and Transfer orientation sessions. In-person IT support is available to students at the [Academic Technology Support Center](#) (ATSC) part of the [Dimond Academic Commons](#) which has the overarching goal of helping students to succeed academically. The [Parker Media Lab](#) offers support for students doing class projects that use rich media. From academic year 2011 to 2012, there was a 116% increase in the number of courses in which rich media projects were assigned. [IT support](#) is also available via phone and Web request. The Academic Technology Service Center offers workshops on safe computing, virus eradication, and using

PowerPoint. UNH Blackboard is a popular system for course management and delivery. In academic year 2011, over 18,000 unique students were enrolled in Blackboard-use courses, and 55% of all UNH courses used Blackboard. Since January 2012, 12,424 unique users have accessed Blackboard Learn via a mobile phone. Assistance in using [Blackboard](#) is available via the UNH Portal and Web through online videos and documentation. (See also standards 7 and 8.)

Five public [computing clusters](#) around the Durham campus are available to students. Faculty make [course-specific software](#) available in the clusters. UNH Manchester has two computer laboratories and IT support for students and faculty. Some individual academic departments also have computing clusters for their students that offer program-specific applications and technology (e.g., Education, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Biology, Art and Art History). UNH Libraries offer an array of information literacy services to courses and students.

In 1995 the Academic Senate established the University Writing Requirement, thus indicating a strong commitment to literacy and written communication. The requirement now includes completion of the freshman writing course (ENG 401) and 3 [writing intensive courses](#) with at least one within the major and one at the 600-level or above. The Department of English offers introductory level and upper level courses as part of a program designed to increase students' abilities to write effectively in their courses and personal lives. Numerous programs also require their majors to take additional coursework in English, for example, 500- level courses in Creative Nonfiction, Technical Writing, and Persuasive Writing. Graduate students are required to demonstrate college-level English skills prior to being accepted into a program. U.S. applicants must have a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited institution. International students must submit TOEFL scores. Thirty-three out of 46 departments offering graduate programs require students to submit GRE or GMAT scores. Many graduate programs require students to complete both oral and written presentations of original research or scholarship. UNH resources are available to students to improve writing and communication skills through the Connors Writing Center, the ESL Institute, and the Speech Language Hearing Center.

In keeping with the Mission, the university's [Academic Plan](#), expanded in 2003, preceded but is aligned with the [UNH Strategic Plan](#) (UNH in 2020). It outlines elements of discovery, engagement, resourcefulness, effectiveness, and community that will see UNH into the future. Taken together, the plans operationalize key parts of the academic program, naming and putting into action structures to actualize the plans with reasonable goals, timeframes, and resource allocations. As indicated earlier, UNH policies and protocols assure that new programming meets the standards of quality of the institution regardless of delivery modality. In some cases, special policies or assessments apply. For example, the Committee on Study Abroad maintains a specific website containing guidelines: [UNH Study Away Programs: Principles, Policies, and Procedures](#). All academic programming requirements are in keeping with the Commission's standards and policies. For example, following rigorous UNH internal approvals, the Commission recently approved two substantive program changes – integration of the UNH School of Law into the university and the offering of two distance learning programs, the Master of Business Administration and the Master of Social Work.

When programs are eliminated or requirements are changed, transparent policies are in place to ensure minimum disruptions for enrolled students. Generally speaking, the university catalog that is in effect upon enrollment constitutes the academic expectations. Given that, at the undergraduate level, when programs are changed, students are only required to follow the new

requirements if that action will not extend their time to degree. When programs are eliminated, currently enrolled students are allowed to finish their program. At the graduate level when programs are changed, students are given the option to complete the program under which they entered or complete the new requirements. When programs are eliminated, students may complete their program of study within the normal time limits for completion of the program (six years for a master's, seven or eight for PhD). Thus, programs are not fully eliminated until the last student has graduated. At the graduate level, [proposals](#) to delete an existing degree/major program must articulate plans to allow currently enrolled students the opportunity to complete the program.

Although there is little institutional dependence at our institution on resources outside the direct control of UNH, there are some leased spaces and resource vendor agreements with specific contracts. These are housed within individual units (e.g., UNHM, library). Vendor contracts requiring Systems'-level approval are held at the University System of New Hampshire (USNH) offices. Agreements associated with internships or other types of clinical experiences are developed through memoranda of understanding, or the like, and are signed by all parties, available to students, and housed in appropriate colleges or departments.

Undergraduate Degree Programs

Undergraduate degree programs are designed to give students a substantial and coherent introduction to the broad areas of human knowledge, their theories and methods of inquiry. The [UNH Discovery Program](#) assures this by requiring students to complete [inquiry-oriented courses](#) in the major areas of the liberal arts, fine arts, and sciences, thus providing an exploratory pathway to acquiring a general education. Within each major in-depth study ensues incrementally beginning with introductory courses related to the major, and culminating in a [Capstone Experience](#) emphasizing original research and/or knowledge integration within the discipline or interdisciplinary area. Elective and pre-requisite courses are a part of most majors, but are more restricted in those that result in certification by meeting requirements of accreditors. Requirements for all programs and certifications are spelled out in the University Catalog and on program websites. Students can access their degree completion status, confidentially, at any time using the UNH Webcat online service. Departmental advising helps students navigate all requirements. (See also standards 5 and 6.)

General Education

In spring 2009, the faculty senate voted in favor of instituting the [Discovery Program core curriculum](#). The change, implemented in fall 2010, reflects a shift in general education requirements designed to tailor education for the 21st century student. Since inception, there has been an increasing emphasis on development of inquiry-oriented courses within both the general education and degree program offerings. Core general education requirements retain category breadth similar to the previous general education program but with category changes in some areas that better reflect current academic needs of students and society. For example, the prior technology category was changed to “environment, technology and society,” the “fine and performing arts” category expanded to include learning of art expression, and [laboratory courses](#) are now more clearly defined. The eight categories, from which students choose [courses](#), demonstrate a balanced regard for what are traditionally referred to as the arts and

humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences: Biological Science, Physical Science, Fine and Performing Arts, Humanities, Historical Perspectives, World Cultures, Social Science, Environment, Technology and Society. Twenty credits (semester hours) in general education are required for the associate's degree, while a minimum of 40 semester hours are required for the baccalaureate degree. At least one of the science courses must include a laboratory component. Students are also required to take a quantitative reasoning course and at least one [inquiry-oriented course](#) (which must be taken in the freshman year). As noted earlier, four [writing-intensive courses](#), which must include the beginning English course (ENGL 401), and a capstone experience are required as part of the Discovery Program to be completed by all students. The Discovery Program ensures that students completing an undergraduate program demonstrate competence in written and oral communication in English through the writing intensive courses as well as the inquiry course requirement. Library and other information retrieval skills are taught in the freshman English course. Abilities in scientific and quantitative reasoning are addressed in both the quantitative reasoning and biological & physical sciences category requirements. Critical analysis, logical thinking and lifelong learning skills are key components of the Inquiry courses, while knowledge and understanding of scientific, historical, and social phenomena and appreciation of the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of humankind are addressed in the eight disciplinary breadth categories.

The Major or Concentration

All students declare a major area of study by the end of the sophomore year. Coursework in the major constitutes at least one third of the student's undergraduate studies. Procedures for [establishing new majors](#) require that the department or program proposing the major specify learning objectives, substance and sequence of courses, methods of delivery and student evaluation, information resources, programmatic need, and demonstration of resource support. As noted earlier, majors are structured to give students increasing complexity of knowledge and skills throughout their program of study. Modes of inquiry and knowledge acquisition within the discipline are addressed in upper division courses. Programs designed to provide professional training specify clinical expectations for fieldwork as appropriate to the major.

Graduate Degree Programs

The [mission](#) of the Graduate School is to provide innovative, responsive and accessible master's, doctoral and certificate programs of the highest quality in line with the university's "Blueprint for the Future, UNH in 2020." The Graduate School and, in particular, doctoral education distinguishes UNH as a research university. Master's degree programs, both research and professional, further enhance the university's public land-grant, sea-grant and space grant mission. The Graduate School provides leadership to support the scholarly and creative efforts of the faculty and students, advances the principles of ethical conduct of research and scholarship, articulates and champions an institutional perspective on graduate education, promotes interdisciplinary scholarship and ensures that its graduates are prepared to become leaders in the 21st Century. The Graduate School is led by the Dean who is advised by the Graduate Council, an elected representation of the graduate faculty. Representatives of the Graduate Student Senate also serve on the Graduate Council. Proposals for graduate programs require foundation, goals, and identified resources for graduate-level study including rationale, objectives, course of study,

required technological and physical resources, assessment of students' content mastery, research and research skill expectations, and adequacy of faculty and resources to implement the program. In terms of resources, it is not unusual for graduate students in science to work directly with a faculty mentor in a specialized, technology-rich laboratory. Likewise, professional graduate programs typically have special arrangements for field-based internships (e.g., Education, Social Work, Occupational Therapy). The process for the development of new graduate programs is clearly outlined in Graduate School and university guidelines and published on the Graduate School and Provost websites. In all cases, the level of expectation exceeds that of undergraduate programs. Once approved, program expectations are posted online in the Graduate Catalog and on individual program websites

The regular membership of the [Graduate Faculty](#) consists of faculty (on tenure, clinical, extension, or research tracks) who are qualified according to criteria established by the graduate faculties of their respective departments or programs. Departmental and program criteria are specific as to professional qualifications (usually the doctoral degree or equivalent), scholarly achievements expected, minimum faculty rank (assistant professor or higher), and functions to be performed by the individual. Associate membership on the Graduate Faculty, without voting privileges, may be granted to those individuals who have a formal faculty appointment at the university (tenure/tenure track, research, clinical, extension, emeriti, lecturer, adjunct, and affiliate), possess the requisite credentials, perform a graduate faculty function, and yet are not members of the regular Graduate Faculty.

Admission to the Graduate School is both limited and competitive and is based solely upon academic qualifications and potential of the individual to successfully complete program requirements as specified on the graduate school and program webpages. All graduate programs specify the graduate-level courses that students must complete as part of the [program requirements](#). In all instances, scholarly activities must be documented to reflect creative and intellectual advancement beyond the undergraduate level. In some instances, UNH offers accelerated programs that blend undergraduate and graduate programs. All graduate programs define the requirements beyond course completion that include a concluding comprehensive, and/or experience.

Graduate curricula are commensurate with program purposes. Research-oriented doctoral programs provide experiences that prepare students for scholarly careers and hold the expectation that students develop the capacity to become independent researchers. Particularly at the doctoral level, individual and small-group mentoring promotes this achievement. A number of professional preparation graduate degree programs offer blended research and practice. In those instances, where the program incorporates both elements (e.g., Nursing, Communication Science and Disorders, Engineering, Education, Social Work), objectives are clearly defined as are course requirements, research expectations, and professional practice competencies. These programs generally have a theory/research-based practice orientation.

Each graduate program evaluates student knowledge and skill levels within its courses and defines a concluding experience that documents the competencies, skills, and knowledge expected upon completion of an advanced degree program. All program completers must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0. Graduate-level course credit is not awarded for grades below B-.

Integrity In The Award Of Academic Credit

The university's program approval processes (cited earlier) explicitly address the issues of length, content and level of proposed programs. In addition, any substantive changes to programs are required to be reviewed, using the same criteria as used for initial program approval and submitted to NEASC for approval. The university requires at least 64 credits at the associate's level, at least 128 credits at the baccalaureate level, and at least 30 at the master's level. Both the program approval and the periodic review processes assess a program's ability to offer its required and elective courses often enough to allow students to graduate within an appropriate timeframe. Undergraduate graduation rates are strong relative to peer institutions. (See Standard 6). In some graduate programs the scheduling of course offerings is limited. These programs rely on effective advising to guide students to the proper courses required for degree completion in a timely manner.

UNH takes its responsibility for oversight and awarding of credit seriously. Courses are approved by faculty through the various college Curriculum and Academic Planning Committees before administrative approvals are sought. Alternative delivery methods (for example online learning and the compressed "J-term" format) are monitored appropriately. Tenure-track Faculty who teach these courses are selected through national searches for individuals with particular subject-matter areas of expertise. Non-tenure-track appointed faculty are typically hired precisely for their expertise in specific course content. Faculty development opportunities are available through a variety of grant opportunities and regular offerings such as the summer institutes in instructional technology and workshops given by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Student progress, evaluation and credit are all recorded by the Registrar's office. Both students and advisors have access to these records through Blackboard/Webcat services.

Evaluation of student achievement is the responsibility of the faculty. Criteria for the awarding of credit are stated in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs and within individual course syllabi. Expectations of student achievement and the grading policy for each course are determined by course instructors within the guidelines of the institutional and degree program policies as stated in the catalog. These course criteria and grading policies are typically included in course syllabi. (See discussion of variance among syllabi in appraisal section.) A cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 in University of New Hampshire courses is the minimum acceptable level for undergraduate work and for graduation. A 3.0 cumulative grade-point average is required for all graduate degrees. In addition, some majors require a grade-point average greater than 2.0 in certain courses or combinations of courses. The Academic Standards and Advising Committee (ASAC) examines the records of students periodically and may place academically deficient or potentially deficient students on warning, or may exclude, suspend, or dismiss those who are academically deficient. At the graduate level, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School performs this function.

Academic credit is awarded based on the policies noted above that were developed by faculty and administrators over time. These same policies apply to credits earned in study abroad, internships, independent study, and service learning. College preparatory courses do not qualify for academic credit except in the case of approved college credits earned prior to admission as stated in [UNH Transfer Credits Admissions Policy](#). Advanced placement policies are also stated. Experiential learning is generally not eligible for transfer credit unless embedded in an approved course. These academic policies are also stated in the Student Handbook.

In order to assure compliance with NEASC and federal policy regarding the definition of "credit hour," the Faculty Senate, in consultation with relevant constituencies, passed a motion on February 27, 2012 to clarify the policy on the award of credit:

The University of New Hampshire is in compliance with the federal definition of credit hour. For each credit hour, the university requires, at a minimum, the equivalent of three hours of student academic work each week. Academic work includes, but is not limited to, direct faculty instruction, e-learning, recitation, laboratory work, studio work, field work, performance, internships, and practica. Additional academic activities include, but are not limited to, readings, reflections, essays, reports, inquiry, problem solving, rehearsal, collaborations, theses, and electronic interactions. Student work reflects intended learning outcomes and is verified through evidence of student achievement. (Faculty Senate minutes, 2/27/12) This policy is now in place.

The course approval and program review processes provide the mechanisms to ensure compliance with this policy. In accordance with program completion policies, all students are certified for graduation by advisor, major department, college and university. To ensure consistency over time, a course approval process, ultimately requiring approval by college deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, is in place for new courses, including the number of credits assigned. Faculty must include learning outcomes in their new-course submissions and are encouraged to include specific grading schemes in their syllabi for all students to see from the beginning of each class.

UNH is committed to an open, fair, and honest academic experience for both students and faculty. Newly matriculated undergraduate are apprised of the academic honesty policy. (See Standard 11.) Information about what constitutes cheating and plagiarism is given to entering students and printed each year in the [Student Rules, Rights & Responsibilities](#) handbook. The UNH libraries offer an extensive primer on proper citations, intellectual property rights, etc. Faculty are asked to reference the policy on Academic Honesty directly on their syllabi. They are also encouraged to use the “Safe Assignment” feature on Blackboard, designed to uncover suspected instances of plagiarism. The faculty member is the first line of consequence with the student in an alleged case of cheating, followed by the Associate Dean and then the Provost.

UNH offers courses for abbreviated time periods during [January Term](#) and [Summer Session](#). An increasing percentage of these courses, as well as a number of “regular” semester courses are being offered in online or hybrid formats. There has been a parallel increase in in-house training sessions offered to faculty in how to design and implement such courses. At this point, UNH is committed to supporting its own faculty in enhancing the presence of “[e-UNH](#),” rather than purchasing online courses from other institutions or vendors. The same standards apply to these concentrated and online courses as to more traditional courses in terms of course proposal, content, and student evaluation.

The standard UNH course evaluation is used for all UNH courses including those in January Term and Summer Session. Students and faculty are surveyed after the course ends regarding access to assistance, course materials, and technologies used in the course. Both are also given the opportunity to comment and provide feedback. Debriefing sessions are held after each January Term with faculty, instructional designers, and IT support staff in order to learn about faculty experiences teaching abbreviated courses and ways to improve support services for faculty and students. Students taking abbreviated courses have access to all UNH information resources available to students who take more traditional courses. (Also see Standard 7.) “Tips

for Success” outlines the challenges for students taking abbreviated courses and offers students tips for ensuring they are academically successful. The same faculty teach both these abbreviated course sections and more traditional sections of the same courses. For all online and hybrid formats, orientations are held for faculty that include Q&A sessions with faculty who have previously taught abbreviated courses. As noted, specific training to introduce faculty to online teaching is also available to faculty ([Fundamentals of Online Instruction](#)). In addition, faculty teaching online in January Term and Summer Session are assigned an instructional designer to work with them to transition their course to the online environment.

All UNH course proposals, implementation, and evaluation, regardless of time frame or teaching modality, are required to follow a single set of policies for the explicit purpose of maintaining a common high standard for subject matter inclusion and student achievement. The same information resources are available to all students, including email, Library resources, MyUNH, and IT tools such as Blackboard. All students have full access to faculty through online communication, telephone communication, and face-to-face appointments. Additionally, all courses offered to non-matriculated students are coordinated through the schools and colleges and are regular offerings within the academic departments in their housing schools and colleges, taught by UNH faculty. Therefore, the educational objectives are the same for online and compressed-format courses as they are for traditional UNH students. UNH adheres to federal regulations regarding issuing credentials for students enrolled in courses. This includes an identity management system which ensures creation of a unique student ID and username. The student acquires his or her credentials via a secure application which requires entering personally identifying information: UNH student ID, birthdate, and middle name. The student must set a strong password, set a private security question, and indicate that he or she will follow the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) for Information Resources at the time of acquiring his or her credentials.

In keeping with the expectations established for all degree-granting programs, regardless of the mode of delivery, non-degree programs are held to the same standards. In the same vein, students who transfer into UNH from other institutions must meet our standards for admission. Non-degree post baccalaureate certificates are offered through the Graduate School following guidelines published on the Graduate School website. Certificate proposals, which include previously approved courses, are reviewed and approved regarding coherence and academic quality through the same procedures as degree programs. Transfer students and students who are accepted from other institutions by prior arrangement are subject to specific policies. The [Transfer Credit Policy](#), available in the Admissions area of the UNH website, states that credits from accredited institutions with a grade of C or better may be accepted for undergraduate credit (not computed in GPA). The policy specifically addresses criteria for the level of the course and placement examinations. [UNH Manchester](#) has articulation agreements with New Hampshire Technical Institute, Nashua Community College, and the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences for [course transfer](#). Students who are candidates for a [bachelor's degree](#) must attain the last one quarter of total credits for the degree in residence unless granted permission by the Academic Standards and Advising Committee to transfer part of this work from other accredited institutions. "Residence" means being enrolled in University of New Hampshire (including UNH Manchester) courses after admission to and matriculation in a degree program. Advisors sign off on degree completion and ensure that students have met all academic requirements that encompass stated learning outcomes. Advisors evaluate transcripts and course descriptions to determine equivalence. Any transfer credits counted toward graduation course credit requirements must be formally accepted by the registrar. Intermediate and advanced

course work is handled in the major and is not affected by credits transferred in from another institution.

At the graduate level, the [transfer](#) credit policy states that students may request that a maximum of two courses, for up to 8 semester credit hours of resident courses completed on the campus of an accredited institution authorized to grant graduate degrees, be transferred to count toward their graduate program. The graduate advisor, per course content and transcript analyses, including a grade of “B” or better, may recommend such transfer to be approved by the graduate school.

Assessment Of Student Learning

Faculty advisors work with their students to ensure that they have completed requirements for the major. Course grades are based on a variety of assessments derived from course objectives. A large assortment of these assessments and the bases for the assessments have been captured in the Academic Assessment Inventory (AAI). The Inventory is organized by degree program. Student outcome assessments in pivotal courses were chosen and entered into the inventory by program directors. (See Appendix B Part I.) Departmental program reviews require inclusion of student outcomes. In addition, the UNH Discovery Program has an [ongoing assessment](#) of student participation and outcomes in [ENGL 401](#) (writing), [INQ 444](#) Seminar and [University Dialogue](#), and the Capstone Experience for each major. The Discovery Committee [reviews all syllabi](#) for these core requirements, ensuring that [student outcomes](#) are spelled out and appropriately assessed.

UNH is committed to understanding what and how students learn and to using assessment results for improvement. Supporting structures are in place to assure involvement of faculty and capture of data for continuous improvement. At the course level, the [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#) (CETL) works with professors to address and implement a [teaching strategy](#) that assists students’ learning of course material, using [cognitive principles](#). CETL also provides a [mid-course assessment](#) process for professors to gain mid-course data to improve or shift their teaching. In a good example of focusing on student outcomes, the [introductory biology course](#) has incorporated a discovery-oriented approach to student mastery of basic concepts. At the program level, evidence of student learning is collected through the AAI, as noted above, in departmental reviews, in a capstone experience inventory, and through faculty and student participation in the University Dialogue. At the institutional level, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) was administered as a cross-sectional study of first-year and seniors in AY 2008-09 and AY2011-12 to compare critical thinking, analysis, and writing performance of students entering UNH to those graduating from UNH. (See Appraisal.)

UNH is a High Research Activity institution that also carries the land- grant mission of giving back to the community. Students are expected to become thoughtful problem-solvers and communicators as they accrue educative experiences and move toward graduate study or the workplace. Required inquiry-based courses and the Discovery Program, in general, have established expected outcomes that support acquisition of those skills through coursework and other experiences.

The Academic Assessment Inventory (AAI) provides the repository for capturing and displaying to the UNH community the variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and direct and indirect measures used to understand students’ experiences and learning outcomes. Exhibits range from student paintings that demonstrate mastery of elementary principles to objective tests

sampling students' mathematical problem-solving ability or algorithm application. Essays, portfolios, and dissertations reveal students' ability to put theory and research into practice. (See Appendix B Part I.) Choosing and gathering these exhibits has forced its own kind of evaluation by faculty of student learning.

Appraisal

As part of our appraisal, we selected 22 majors that represent the gamut of degree level, arts and sciences, delivery mode, and campus (Durham and Manchester). This sample and a subsample were used to determine compliance with expectations for various levels of study, policy publication, explicit course objectives and student outcomes, instructional modes, credit hour compliance, and faculty expertise (which is discussed in Standard 5). Data are based on catalog and website descriptions, syllabi, and faculty vitae.

Graduation documents affirm that UNH confers Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees in December and May. Policies concerning degree program quality, integrity, oversight, training of students and faculty in technological and other resources, assurance of English language proficiency of students, program monitoring for currency, overall compliance with academic protocols, and assessment of student outcomes are well established.

All programs at UNH are subject to the same approval and review procedures, regardless of delivery mode or venue. Items regarding effectiveness of online delivery are currently being added to student course evaluations. Faculty also evaluate their online course offerings, retrospectively and in focus groups, and view this as a helpful process. Online programming is fairly new at UNH. Student feedback is encouraging as evidenced by generally positive student course evaluations, as is the case for our online MBA program. (See Appendix F, Distance Learning Programs.) The MBA is the first online program at UNH and will graduate its first group of students in 2014.

UNH is small enough that oversight of admissions, student progress, awarding of transfer credits, and other areas concerning academic achievement or concern drills down to the monitoring of individual students with the help of their advisor. Policies are effective or transcended because transcripts are monitored by the admissions office, registrar, college, and graduate school. It is not atypical for a dean or associate dean to call an advisor (or vice versa) about a student who is doing poorly before formal notice is issued.

Inspection of sample syllabi indicates variance in instructional methods by class section within programs, as one might expect. Methodology is most often implied rather than explicitly stated, with the exception of professionally accredited programs that tend to be more specific about instructional objectives and teaching approaches. Students have been proactive in making requests of faculty regarding both syllabi and instruction. The Student Senate has requested, and the Faculty Senate has approved, a motion requesting all faculty to include a notification statement if the course meets Inquiry, Discovery, or Writing Intensive Program course requirements. Recently, there has been a motion requiring all faculty to post their courses on Blackboard. Student learning objectives and grading standards, consistent with university definitions, are included in course syllabi or on Blackboard but vary in level of detail. The Animal Sciences Equipment and Facilities syllabus, for example, has specific course objectives, expected student outcomes, and mode of instruction, while the Organic Chemistry II syllabus lists topics, provides "study tips," a content outline, and refers students to the more detailed postings on Blackboard. (See Appendix E.) There are no general templates for course syllabi at UNH, although some departments have them. Submission of student outcome assessments to the

AAI, which is now required for all degree programs, is a major step toward regularizing inclusion of specified student outcomes in all programs with the intent of local review for continuous improvement.

UNH provides a reliable, robust academic technology infrastructure that integrates tools used in UNH face-to-face and online courses through Blackboard. The Blackboard environment offers students and faculty simple, consistent access to the academic tools they use for teaching and learning. Assistance in using the technology tools is available. Students prefer courses that integrate technology and feel that their ability to access and utilize technological resources at UNH is good to excellent. Ninety-eight percent of UNH students surveyed in 2011 (Educational Center for Academic Research 2011 Student Technology Survey -- [ECAR](#)) rated their Internet skills as Fairly Skilled, Very Skilled, or Expert. Over 90% gave a similar rating to their ability to evaluate Internet sites and use technologic presentation programs.

Academic program reviews, by department, are carried out for all programs on a ten-year cycle (recently changed from seven years to better coincide with professional accreditation reviews) with a five-year interim report. [Procedures for program review](#) (recently revised) are available for undergraduate and graduate programs on the Provost's Office website. Inspection of reviews and conversations with deans indicate that the review protocol is followed; evaluation by deans prompts interaction with departments that includes future planning for program changes, faculty hires, etc.; and final review reports are archived in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. As noted earlier in this section, due to changes in some college and departmental structures, plus departmental conduction of the 2012 focused review required by the Provost (See below.), interruptions in the review cycle have occurred. The program review schedule is now slated to go back "on track" with renewed attention to NEASC review criteria and more streamlined templates to allow for data-driven decision-making. The 2012 "focused review" was required for all units, in the face of financial exigencies. The focus was on relationship to the UNH Mission, indicators of quality and success, and capacity. During the process, units voluntarily engaged in redundancy reduction and program consolidation. The result was that no deep vertical cuts were made in academic programming. Fiscal improvement this year has resulted in restoring full-time faculty lines that were temporarily frozen so that programs can move forward. A potential crisis was averted, and UNH continues to sustain our current academic programs while moving forward new initiatives such as eUNH, University of Choice, and a focus on STEM disciplines.

Existing policies are followed in regard to protecting students when programs are changed or deleted. In the Undergraduate Catalog, under a discussion of Degree Requirements, appear these sentences: "Modifications tend to occur in major programs during the period of students' undergraduate careers. Students are expected to conform to these changes insofar as they do not represent substantive alterations in their course of study." The UNH System's handbook explicitly requires that the impact on students be considered and planned for when proposing to terminate a program. Since the vast majority of UNH students graduate within the usual undergraduate and graduate timeframes, these policies appear to be well implemented.

To appraise the content and clarity of undergraduate academic program descriptions, we reviewed our representative sample of about 20% of all majors, relying on the undergraduate catalog and department websites for data. Review criteria included clear statements of program prerequisites, requirements/credit hours; provision of in-depth study; provision of study at both intermediate and advanced levels; and availability of electives. All programs sampled met the criteria. (See [Compliance Rating Chart](#)). Program descriptions include sequencing of

introductory, required, and elective courses to introduce and build upon foundational knowledge. In keeping with the integrity and character of each program, there are areas of variability regarding prerequisites and the degree to which course sequences and elective choices are prescribed. Compliance review also shows that the catalog entry for each program gives an explanation of learning goals and career goals. Some programs emphasize career goals over student learning outcomes. Some departmental websites are difficult to navigate, do not state the required number of credits for the major “up front,” or do not provide degree-completion checklists that are helpful to students.

Approval of new undergraduate majors at UNH requires a rigorous process that starts with program faculty and includes review by departmental and college curriculum committees and approvals by college deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. As indicated above, departmental program reviews provide continuous evaluation of the overall effectiveness of curriculum and program delivery within all majors. Departments certify undergraduate students’ completion of major requirements as part of the graduation certification. Exceptions to major requirements require college-level approved petitions. All students complete at least one major before graduation. These policies are followed and documented in student records.

Review of the on-line Graduate Catalog, the Graduate School website, and individual program websites indicates that each program describes admission requirements and degree requirements. There is variability in the individual programs in terms of stated mission, experiences, and learning outcomes as would be expected. Common formatting, and detail-level requirements of program information via program website templates within and across colleges, is currently under discussion.

Proposals for new graduate programs must specify a program rationale, goals and objectives including student outcomes, and delivery modalities. The [New Program Proposal](#) protocol also requires a comparative analysis of proposed curriculum with at least 3 other institutions in the public sector; program design, including role of faculty in program governance; plans for student recruitment; admissions standards; enrollment projections and impact; sources of student support; an analysis of library holding; and all degree requirements. A program budget using a university standard format to assess financial impact, revenues and expenses, is required. This includes staff resources, facility resources, and faculty. Proposals reviewed met criteria. As noted in the Graduate School bylaws, membership on the Graduate Faculty is not “automatic” at UNH: “Prospective members shall be nominated for membership in the Graduate Faculty by their department chairperson or equivalent administrator, upon the recommendation of their department's Graduate Faculty.” Review and appointment is conducted by the Graduate Dean. Approximately 83% of the UNH tenured/tenure track faculty are members of the Graduate Faculty. Approximately 85% of the research track faculty are also members of the Graduate Faculty. Research faculty appointments are generally in departments that offer doctoral and/or research-focused master’s programs. Approximately 27% of the clinical track faculty are members of the Graduate Faculty.

General education has a new focus at UNH since the last comprehensive visit. The Faculty Senate revised UNH’s core general education curriculum by implementing the Discovery Program. The Discovery orientation of courses and the articulation of learner outcomes represent a significant shift in how UNH delivers the core curriculum which was previously a smorgasbord of course choices with nothing in common. The core curriculum will be reviewed in AY 2015-16, but interim data indicate that students feel that they have been able to meet Discovery expectations through the designated courses. The [Summary Report for 2012](#)

showed an increase in students' perceived satisfaction/mastery of Discovery principles from the 2010 to 2011 administrations of a Likert-scaled questionnaire. In 2011, positive responses to Discovery expectations ranged from 76% to 96%. The Discovery Program continues to use learner outcomes to shape and inform assessment plans and analyses with assistance from CETL.

Admission to the undergraduate programs requires a strong high school academic record including core subjects and foreign language, test requirements (SAT or ACT), and special criteria for certain programs. Undergraduate admission yield was lower than usual this year. (See Standard 6 for a discussion of this issue.) Requirements for admission to graduate programs vary by program but generally include a strong undergraduate record, a personal essay, letters of reference attesting to academic ability and other qualities, and, in some cases, minimum test scores. Admission to the Graduate School requires a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. Guidelines are in place for programs to submit credentials of an applicant who does not hold a bachelor's degree but has completed equivalent experience. Credentials of these applicants are reviewed by the Student Affairs Committee of the Graduate Council. The new review procedure for "equivalent experience" applicants began in 2011, and only one name has been submitted. Minimum English requirements are specified by the Graduate School for admission of non-native speakers of English. Entrance tests (GRE, GMAT) are specified by the program. Roughly 60% of applicants to the Graduate School are admitted with an average UGPA of 3.40. One to two percent of enrolled students each semester receive grades below B-. The yield of admitted graduate students actually attending UNH is 54-55%, a figure that has been stable over the last five years. (See [Graduate School Review](#).)

In terms of student retention, a cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 in University of New Hampshire courses is the minimum acceptable level for undergraduate work and for graduation. Notice of weak achievement is promptly provided to students who can also track their grades, securely, online. Undergraduate graduation rates have been remarkably stable, on average, since 1991 with a range of 68-79% and a mean of 73%. (See tables in Standard 6.) At the graduate level, students must retain a "B" average. Those receiving grades below "B-" in 9 or more credits, including undergraduate courses taken while a graduate student, are dismissed from the Graduate School. Students are notified if they receive a grade lower than a B-. Over the last 5 years, 84% of admitted master's students graduated. Forty-three percent of admitted doctoral students graduated over the same time period. Rules for completing degrees, such as conditions of admission and number of opportunities to pass examinations, are clearly articulated and recorded by the Graduate School so that compliance is assured or noncompliance incurs action.

The University Catalog and bylaws indicate adherence to Commission policies for minimum credit hours, timely offerings, administrative authority, admissions, registration and retention of students, and public posting of information. Compressed delivery modes such as the January Term or "J-term" (extended from 3 to 4 weeks by the Faculty Senate in 2011), summer sessions, and online courses that fall outside of the usual semester-long offerings pose challenges for ensuring parity with traditional venues, so special evaluation of the success of these formats, as is true with online courses, is ongoing. At UNH, academic standards, including review criteria, are the same for all programs and courses, regardless of delivery mode. Syllabi for compressed delivery courses clarify expected outcomes and assignments, commensurate with the same course taught in traditional formats, but they specify a truncated timeframe for completion of assignments. Enrollments in January Term increased 156% from 2010 to 2012 (365 enrollments in 2010 to 933 enrollments in 2012). More than 100 UNH faculty have taught January Term courses with many having taught multiple times. It is now a popular option.

Support for faculty to develop and teach courses in abbreviated timeframes is available, and service departments are proactive in contacting faculty regarding available services such as instructional design and IT support (especially important for online offerings). The associate deans in the schools and colleges, the Registrar, and UNH IT Academic Technology staff are proactive in making students aware of the challenges facing them when taking abbreviated courses. The associate deans are working with the eUNH Director to ensure better coordination of messaging to students regarding the rigor of abbreviated courses.

Because Continuing Education is not a separate division within UNH, the courses and programs are completely integrated into the academic departments in the colleges. Continuing Education students are granted access to all the resources that matriculated UNH students have. Continuing Education student enrollments have decreased by 52% from Summer 2003 to Summer 2011 (1875 students to 893). This decrease among continuing education students is a trend among our peers as well. eUNH now holds a membership subscription to Eduventures to assist with online advertising which may help future continuing education students in finding and choosing programs and courses. Graduate School packaging and advertising of 12-20 credit certificate programs may also attract more continuing education students. Systematic attraction of these students is another area that will require attention if it becomes a strategic focus at UNH. In this same vein, as indicated earlier in this document, there is a strong interest in increasing the number of fully online or hybrid courses and programs at UNH. Student demand is high, faculty are interested, and in-house capacity is available and building.

UNH is well aware of local and federal concerns regarding academic rigor commensurate with credit hours awarded. As indicated in the Description section, our credit hour expectations have not changed over time, but our policy was re-drafted to clarify expectations inherent in the federal credit hour policy. To test UNH's compliance with the federal credit hour policy, and expanding the original generic sample, we reviewed 79 syllabi from 13 different departments to see if they reflected the UNH credit hour definition. This was a daunting task that required some interpolation of assignments followed by verification from department chairs and some individual instructors. For example, "How long are the geography field trips?" "What is the average studio time spent by an Art student?" For this small study, all courses met the minimum credit hour requirements, and most exceeded them. (See [Credit Hours Review](#).) [Transfer of credits](#) from other institutions into UNH or from within UNH into a degree program faithfully follow the admissions policy and are overseen by that office for new students and by college admissions committees for enrolled students.

Admission and retention rates are one measure of student outcomes. Others include pass rates for professional licensure examinations, Collegiate Learning Assessment ([CLA Report](#)) data, data gathered for reports on individual programs such as Discovery, data from program reviews, and student assessments in individual courses. At UNH, expected student outcomes are stated, at least in general terms, in the University Catalog and on departmental websites by program. The degree of detail and the format vary greatly. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CETL), with support from the Davis Foundation, is leading the way in working with faculty in many programs to incorporate cognitively-based teaching strategies into their courses in order to achieve desired student outcomes. Interventions are dependent upon clear goals directly related to expected performance. As CETL reports: "We fully expected that the cognitively-based interventions that we incorporated into the courses of participating faculty would have educationally significant impact on student learning outcomes. We were somewhat surprised, at least initially, by how large these impacts were in most of the courses involved in the project."

One CETL study, for example, compares student success on graded assignments for those in face-to-face versus online versions of the same course over two course administrations. ([Course Comparison Study](#)) In the sociology statistics course, it was found that students in the online course did less well on their assignments than their counterparts and found it easier to disengage. Recommendations for improved instruction were made based on the data. In another study, specific cognition-based interventions improved student online quiz grades in the large-enrollment Discovery course, Science and the Nature of Stress. ([Course Improvement Study](#))

Studies of the UNH high impact programs (HIP) [Honors](#), Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research, Study Abroad, and Discovery give some indication of how well students are taking advantage of these enrichment opportunities. Enrollment within the undergraduate student body continues to increase for HIPs overall, and for study abroad and Discovery inquiry courses as indicated in data for the graduating classes of 2012 and 2013, below. A full study of these HIP enrollments is due in 2015-16. Data below are excerpted from [HIP program report a](#) (2012) and [HIP program report b](#) (2013).

HIP Enrollments for Graduating Classes 2012 and 2013				
Experience	2012		2013	
	N	%	N	%
Completed high impact experience	837	37.74	913	38.54
Completed a study abroad experience	485	21.87	598	25.24
Completed honors and or research experience	352	15.87	315	13.30
Completed 2 or more high impact experiences	196	8.8	248	10.46
Completed an inquiry course (Discovery)	266*	12	1361	57.45

*Freshman and sophomores only because it was a new requirement in 2010.

The Academic Assessment Inventory (AAI), which now contains over 1,000 entries from about 40% of the UNH degree programs, is designed to capture assessments of expected student outcomes. Most items are student artifacts from evaluative assignments such as tests, essays, portfolios, and such administered by course instructors in each academic major. Generally these assessments represent student achievement in pivotal courses within a degree program (entry-level, mid-level, and upper-level or capstone experience). These data have been collected over the last couple of years and also include certification information and assessment studies where relevant. The AAI is a work in progress that will require increased participation (100% within the next five years), analysis of patterns and periodic summation, but we view it as a good start that has required faculty to think about and discuss the outcome expectations for their students and how they are assessed. (See Appendix B Student Achievement and Success.)

At a more global level, The [Executive Summary of UNH Results of 2008-09 & 2011-12 CLA Administrations](#) indicates that UNH provides a “value added” education for our students. The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) is an online, written examination that measures critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills. It is also designed to measure an institution’s “value-added” contribution to a student’s learning. Based on two administrations of the CLA (2008-2009; 2011-2012), UNH students performed at or above expectation on the critical thinking dimensions tapped by this tool. UNH plans to continue to administer the CLA (cross-sectional approach) every several years. Analyses of the 2008 freshmen and 2012 senior data from CLA administrations resulted in an improvement in percentile rankings, from 54th to 79th percentile rank on the Performance Task, and from 26th to 51st percentile rank for the Analytic

Writing Task. These statistics are “on average,” as noted in the report because the individuals who completed the examination as freshmen are not precisely the same individuals who completed the examination as seniors. Note that UNH’s 2009 seniors' and 2008 freshmen's CLA scores, compared to other institutions were, on average, *above expected*.

Finally, UNH pass rates on professional licensure examination are generally above the national average. (See Form S3.) Further discussion of licensure pass rates and student learning outcomes can be found in Appendix B, Part I, institutional claims for student achievement and success.

Projections

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) will continue to collect and analyze student outcome assessments through the Academic Assessment Inventory (AAI) with a goal of receiving entries from 50% or more of all degree programs by 2015 and 100% within the next five years.

Based on current practices of some colleges, the Provost’s Council will continue discussion of the consistency of academic program information and display structures on program websites. A decision of how to proceed will be reached by May, 2014.

The Office of the Provost and Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and college deans will assist departments in submitting accurate and timely program reviews. Submission templates will be developed and piloted in 2014-15.

Institutional Effectiveness

The university insures quality, integrity, and effectiveness of its academic programs through ongoing and cyclical assessment activities. All student grades are monitored each semester for compliance with academic achievement standards. Advisors are apprised of students whose performance is sub-par so that students can be properly advised of their status and requirements for program completion. Faculty effectiveness in delivering programs is monitored annually by college deans. All academic programs are reviewed every 10 years by college deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A five-year interim report is also required. Review criteria include centrality to UNH mission, integrity of curriculum, timely course offerings, enrollments, student course evaluations, faculty credentials, assessment of student outcomes, and review by outside experts. New program approvals require compliance with proposal guidelines and are ultimately approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. All proposed programs that constitute a substantive change are submitted to NEASC for prior approval (e.g., programs delivered largely or entirely online). Finally, policy protocols are updated on a regular basis to assure currency. For example, the program review guidelines have been recently revised to include streamlined data collection and assessment of student outcomes. The student course evaluation items are in revision and will include items regarding online course delivery and focused feedback sought for individual courses.

[STANDARD FOUR DATA FIRST FORMS](#)