

## Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

### Testing Center

**Department:** Academic Support

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**Northwestern Mission.** Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to the acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our regions, state, and nation.

The **Testing Center** at Northwestern State University (NSU) exists to provide a variety of testing options for students at NSU and the surrounding communities. We strive to assist individuals in achieving their academic and professional goals by offering the most advanced options in a quiet and secure environment. The Testing Center adheres to the National College Testing Associations (NCTA) standards and guidelines to provide quality services to NSU and the surrounding communities.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the Testing Center is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) is collected and returned to the unit head.
- (2) The unit head will analyze the data to determine whether the staff has met the measurable outcomes.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed in an open forum with the staff and unit head's supervisor.
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff.
- (5) The unit head, with the assistance of staff, will determine if changes are required to meet the measurable outcomes of assessment tools for the next assessment period.

## Service Outcome (SO):

**SO 1.** Students will be able to identify the Testing Center as a place to take exams and one that encourages student success through the services provided, which will increase the number of proctored exams given each semester.

**Measure 1.1 (Direct)** Provide information/handouts to each department and students at Freshman Connection regarding the services offered through the Testing Center. The number of students using the lab will be tracked through the Testing Center's calendar and sign-in sheets each quarter.

## Findings:

2022-2023: Target was met.

2023-2024: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. The testing center offered and administered Accuplacer tests daily for in-person and online students. We participated in all four sessions of Freshman Connection on the main campus. We reallocated to Russell Hall, near check-in. The results showed growing interest from incoming first-year students regarding what services are available to them in the testing center. They asked questions about placement exams along with other services we offer at the center. We also participated in Freshman Connector's Campus Quest and educated students on services offered by the center.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023, the testing staff made changes in AC 2023-2024 to provide the best service to faculty and students and drive the cycle of improvement. The staff relocated to Russell Hall for each Freshman Connection. We begin testing mid-morning, bringing a total of 14 testers for Freshman Connection, which is more than the previous year. The number represents the total number of testers taking the test in the morning session. There were several students that stopped by and asked questions about the testing center and placement exams. Students scheduled appointments with the testing center for a later date since they did not want to take the test while at Freshman Connection. This event is fast paced, and many sessions are happening at the same time as testing is offered. Students who tested and did not meet the required score were offered study guides and tips to help them prepare for next time. We participated in Demon Quest, which brings incoming first-year students into our testing center. This is a terrific opportunity to provide handouts and information about what services are available to the testing center. Students had the chance to ask questions and learn more about the services offered by the testing center. In addition, the testing center obtained a pop-up floor banner with, QR code. When scanned, it takes students to the testing center's website. This is a reliable resource for all students to learn more about the center.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met. We educated students through events, informed email, phone, and in person about the services of the testing center. The pop-up floor banner is a great resource for reaching our technology-savvy students. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to understand the different services of the testing center such as proctoring, national tests, certifications, and scheduling. The testing center recertified proctors so that they would be able to administer the Accuplacer when traveling. In addition, we worked with the international department on campus to coordinate online vouchers for students to take the Accuplacer in other countries. This is another way to provide exceptional service to the student.

**Decision.** In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the analysis of AC 2023-2024 results, the testing center will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The testing center will participate in all Freshman Connection events on the main campus, relocating to Russell Hall to make it convenient for the students. We will strive to increase numbers by reaching out to recruiting to update the form for the next Freshman Connection. The form needs to be quick and easy for the student to complete, requesting which session of freshman connection they will be attending. We will offer Accuplacer later in the afternoon in hopes of attracting more testers. We will offer Accuplacer daily at our main campus and off-sites. Online Accuplacer will be an option for students who want to take it at their convenience. The population (of international students) is becoming aware of the Accuplacer, and we received several requests for testing with this group of potential students. We will collaborate with the director of the international department on campus to create vouchers for interested students who need to take the test at their location. The testing center will update testing information in the university catalog. The center will meet with members of Academic Services and Watson Library to start a social media presence. This will allow the most current events to be shared on this platform. The testing center offers many services not only for students, but for our surrounding communities. The testing center will welcome new instructors and inform them of the services offered. The testing center will continuously improve the website, making it easy for students to reach us. We will remind all proctors to renew their certifications to administer the Accuplacer. We will reach out to recruiting in hopes of administering group Accuplacer testing at local high schools.

These changes will improve the student's ability to be aware of our services, different tests and certifications offered, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**Measure 1.2 (Direct)** Extend the Testing Center's hours of operations to accommodate more testers. The unit goal is to increase the proctored exams given each semester by 10%.

**Findings:**

2022-2023: Target was not met.

2023-2024: Target was not met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2022-2023, the target was not met. The testing center stayed open late during busy times and proctored some exams on Saturdays. There were 5059 proctored exams for AC 2022-2023, which was a slight decrease from the previous year.

Based on the analysis of AC 2022-2023, the testing center implemented the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. First, the testing center stayed open later to accommodate late arrivals and last-minute walk-in testers. Next, if a tester needed to test on Saturday, we offered early morning testing during busy times of the year. For Fall 2023, the number of proctored exams was 2748 which increased from Fall 2022. For Spring 2024, we proctored 2352 exams compared to 2505 last Spring. Overall, the total number of exams given was 5100. This did not result in an increase of 10%; however, showed a slight increase from the previous year. Pearson testing decreased while our NSU proctored exams increased in the testing center. This decrease is attributed to the decline in real estate certification since the housing market is not as active as in previous years due to rising costs and interest rates. We administered CLEP exams to nearby high school students in a group setting and numbers were comparable to previous year. Also, the departmental senior exams increased from the previous semester.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was not met. The testing center had extended hours, but the overall 10% increase did not occur. The enrollment for the university decreased, which is a contributing factor as well. We open on certain Saturdays. We participated in the Literary Rally reaching out to over 2300 additional students. Literary Rally is for high school students and the testing center worked hand in hand with the director of the rally to provide proctoring services for the testers. In addition, we participated in N-Side View for both semesters. We administered Accuplacer testing and the Advance Standing test for math and English along with foreign language. These events provided an opportunity for the testing center to be directly involved with potential students coming to NSU.

**Decision.** In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the testing center will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. During heavy times, we will utilize an additional proctor from Academic Services to assist. If we can add another proctor, this will allow us to schedule more students and use the fishbowl in the library, adding an additional 12 computers per hour. We will be directly involved and participate in the Literary Rally, N-Side View, Campus Quest, and additional events on campus. We will encourage and collaborate with the director of recruiting to have an Accuplacer Day to recruit potential students to our university. The director of testing will collaborate with departments to encourage the use of our center for senior exams. We will add additional times for Pearson testing. The center will reach out to nearby high schools and encourage CLEP testing. These changes will improve the student's ability to interact with testing staff, have more flexibility to schedule tests, and ask questions about services, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**SO 2.** Increase the number of instructors using the lab for class use.

**Measure 2.1 (Direct),** The number of instructors using the lab will increase by 15% per semester as tracked by the Testing Center's calendar and sign-in sheets for the class.

**Findings:**

2022-2023: Target was met.

2023-2024: Target was not met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. The testing center sent reminders to professors to utilize our testing center. The center welcomed new professors to the university and introduced the center as a great resource for them. There were 20 whole classes that took advantage of the testing center.

Based on the analysis of AC 2022-2023 results, the staff implemented changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. We worked with professors on how to schedule their whole class tests with us. We scheduled four class exams for Fall 2023, which was down from the previous Fall. In addition, we scheduled nine whole class exams for Spring 2024. Overall, there were 13 whole class appointments for AC 2023-2024.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was not met. Professors took advantage of having their whole class come to the testing center for their exams. With that being said, the professors allowed extended testing dates so the student could test more than one day. This affected the whole class proctoring outcome since they did not come and test as a group. We had more testers however, not as a group test. In addition, some professors did not utilize the group testing since they gave some of their tests in the classroom since they had smaller groups of students taking their class.

**Decision.** In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023 -2024 results, the testing center will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to increase whole class proctoring and drive the cycle of improvement. The center will reach out to the new professors and say that the testing center is a valuable resource for students. Communication will be sent to all professors to encourage the use of the testing center. We will remind professors that we can accommodate group settings for more than one day. If the professors want to extend the test dates for a group setting, we will be able to take care of this for them, relieving them of coming to campus to test their class. We will advise them to utilize the center throughout the semester. These changes will improve the professor's ability to schedule their whole class tests, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**Measure 2.2 (Direct)** Promote the Testing Center/Proctoring Lab to professors on campus to increase the total number of testers by 10%.

## Findings:

2022-2023: Target was not met.

2023-2024: Target was not met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2022-2023, the target was not met. Professors took full advantage of the testing center services and advised students to make an appointment for their test with us. There were 4105 proctored exams, which was an increase from the previous year; however, not an overall 10% increase.

Based on analysis of AC 2022-2023 results, the testing center made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The center reviewed their website to update any information and forms. Collaboration between students, faculty and departments proved beneficial in numbers. The testing center proctored 4197 students for AC 2023-2024, which is an increase from the previous year. There were more students that visited the testing center for proctoring needs, however, it did not increase by 10%. Even though enrollment was down, the testing center did show an increase in numbers from the previous year.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was not met. Fall 2023 showed the number of students increased coming into the testing center compared to the previous fall. The enrollment for the university declined, thus having an impact on the number of students that test in Spring 2024. Obstacles that prevented students from coming into the testing center include having to work, illness, and economic impact. Inflation plays a contributing factor. We do not charge a proctor fee to NSU students; however, everyday expenses can prevent students from trying to come in and test. Given obstacles played a part in reaching the goal of 10% increase. The testing center increased in numbers overall, just not by 10%.

**Decision.** In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the staff will implement the following changes to AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. Communication between NSU students, faculty, and staff is crucial to delivering exceptional service, and several efforts will be made to increase communication with stakeholders.

1. The testing center will assist student students with their testing needs in terms of scheduling, rescheduling, and accommodating their test time.
2. We will send reminders to testers about their testing time to help them keep their appointments.
3. We will collaborate with professors who need a proctor for their students.
4. We will remind professors that NSU Testing Center is a free service to NSU students for their proctored exams. Third-party proctoring services charge a proctor fee to take exams through their service.
5. The Testing Center will collaborate with Watson Library to a create social media presence that allows the most up-to-date information for students. This will help reach all students to ensure we are reaching as many students as possible.

Additionally, we will allow walk-ins and assist our students with their proctoring needs. By making sure everyone is informed with the latest testing center information and increasing testing capacity, testing numbers will rise, pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

**SO 3.** Decrease the number of Co-requisite Course Placement.

**Measure 3.1 (Indirect)** Survey students who utilize the Testing Center to determine their thoughts on the facility, the testing process, and what they consider to be useful in helping them prepare for the exam. The target is for respondents to respond favorably concerning the facility and services and make recommendations for improvement.

### **Findings:**

2022-2023: Target was met.

2023-2024: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2022-2023, the survey was conducted and met. Surveys were sent out for Fall and Spring and received positive feedback from students.

Based on the analysis, in AC 2022-2023 results, the testing center made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. When a tester took an exam at the center, emails were sent out asking them to complete the survey to give feedback on how to improve their testing experience. We encouraged surveys and award prizes through a random drawing in return for feedback.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met. Students responded to our surveys which made an impact on the students and the testing center. It gave students a voice about the center's recommendations for improvement. The students gave positive feedback for ease of scheduling, professionalism and communication. The negative feedback was for room temperature and headphones. The noise level comes from students passing by the testing center outside which is addressed as it occurs. For AC 2023-2024, the center purchased sandwich board signs for the outside, which improved noise control. The testing center has an open floorplan and students enter in and out which can be distracting during peak season. We also provided hallway signage asking the students to quiet their cell phones and noise when entering the testing center. We provided earbuds to help eliminate the noise. We strive to be as professional as possible and want to make sure each tester is comfortable when testing. Students have enough anxiety taking tests; we do not want to add to their stress level.

**Decision.** In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024, the testing center will implement the following changes to AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. We will encourage students to complete the survey during the fall and spring semesters. These surveys give students the chance to voice their concerns regarding the testing environment in areas of space, timing, availability, noise, security, and comfort to better serve them. We will place the sandwich board signs outside the testing center so this will help eliminate outside noise such as students walking by the

center. We will ask the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for new headphones for the testing center to help with the noise.

There are some areas that we cannot control, however, we will work on student satisfaction. The testing center's signs in the hallways will remind students to enter quietly. The goal is to have a drawing every semester to help promote the survey. We will offer earplugs to each tester to eliminate some noise. The goal is to promote satisfaction and help each student reach their educational goals; thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**SO 4.** Faculty will identify the Testing Center as compliant with the NCTA's standard testing operations and one that handles exams with academic integrity.

**Measure 4.1** Be certified Testing Center through the National College Testing Association.

**Findings:**

2022-2023: Target was met.

2023-2024: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. NSU Testing Center renewed their membership and NCTA provided feedback to centers to improve in various areas of testing.

Based on the AC 2022-2023 results, NSU Testing Center continued to be a member of the NCTA. We took advantage of any workshops and conferences offered and drive the cycle of improvement.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met. We renewed our membership to be a certificated test center, which impacts students, the university, and our surrounding communities by being able to offer various tests and certifications. We did not attend in-person conferences due to budget restraints but took advantage of online workshops.

**Decision.** In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024, NSU testing Center has recertified their membership to NCTA and will do so for AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. This certification will allow the NSU Testing Center to be recognized at the national level. It will allow the staff to attend workshops and conferences. In addition, the testing center proctors will take the new NCTA certification to further demonstrate the best practices in the testing industry. Lastly, we will install surveillance equipment, which will help us stand out as a certified testing center for NCTA. It will meet the new guidelines for ETS as well. This will allow us to give tests that include Praxis, GRE, and TOEFL.

These changes will improve the testing center's ability to provide services and continue to push the cycle of improvement forward.



**Measure 4.2** Abide by the instructions provided by the instructors and report any incidences that go against them thereby receiving favorable responses in the satisfactions survey.

**Findings:**

2022-2023: Target was met.

2023-2024: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. Surveys were sent to faculty for fall and spring semesters asking them to complete the survey.

Based on the analysis for AC 2022-2023 results, the testing center made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The testing center collaborated with instructors on the importance of completing surveys so that improvements can be made. As a result of these changes, AC 2023-2024 were met. Surveys were completed by faculty. Positive feedback included the ease of scheduling exams and the professionalism that staff showed to them and their students. There were a few negative comments in reference to the headphones but overall, 90% positive feedback was given.

**Decision.** In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024, the testing center will work closely with instructors for AC 2024-2025 across NSU's campuses to implement security measures to ensure the highest level of test integrity. This will drive the cycle of improvement. We will remind faculty to complete surveys once they use the testing center. The testing center will send out several reminders. The center will use signs to help eliminate outside noise. The center will push harder to get surveys completed which has a direct impact on students and faculty thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

## **Comprehensive summary of key evidence of seeking improvements based on analysis of results.**

- The testing center participated in Campus Quest, N-Side View, and Credit Connection for incoming first-year students.
- The testing center participated in all sessions of Freshman Connection.
- Face-to-face and online Accuplacer exams were made available to students needing placement.
- The testing center accepted walk-ins during targeted extended hours of testing.
- Pop-up floor banners were brought to recruiting events.
- Signs (outside and in the hallways) were utilized to eliminate noise.
- Recertification of Accuplacer proctors was completed.
- The testing center encouraged whole class proctoring.
- The testing center's website and forms were updated to allow for simpler forms.
- The relationship with all instructors and students improved through surveys.
- The testing center recertified membership with the National College Testing Association which brought NSU recognition at the National level.
- Student learning and service outcome data were collected from information obtained on sign-in sheets and the testing center's calendar.

## **Plan of action moving forward.**

- The testing center will reach out to new and returning faculty, staff, and students to encourage use of the center for their proctoring needs through means of events, email, messenger, social media, and the university website. We will provide the most updated information, links, etc.
- The testing center will participate in Literary Rally, N-Side View, Freshman Connection, and Freshmen Campus Quest.
- The testing center will work with the international department to create vouchers for students who live outside the United States.
- The testing center will host extended hours, including Saturdays, during midterms and finals to accommodate more testers.
- The testing center will reach out to the new faculty over teacher preparation to scheduled Praxis exam on some Saturdays.
- The testing center will offer Accuplacer testing daily during hours of operation.
- The testing center will promote testing via a new social media platform with departments within the Watson Library.

- The testing center will work with recruiting to establish “Accuplacer Day” during the school year. All proctors will re-certify their certificate to administer the test.
- The testing center will provide exceptional service to the students by evaluating the surveys taken by students about their testing experience and implementing suggestions when possible.
- New instructors will be welcomed by testing center and introduced to services that are available.
- Membership to the National College Testing Association will be renewed.
- Proctors will take the NCTA certification test.
- New Surveillance equipment will be installed.
- ETS will be contacted about new headphones for the center.