

MSCHE Report Standard III Working Group

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

- 1. certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning;*
- 2. student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are:
 - a. rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies;*
 - b. qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do;*
 - c. sufficient in number;*
 - d. provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;*
 - e. reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures;**
- 3. academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion;*
- 4. sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress;*
- 5. at institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:
 - a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field;*
 - b. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives; and*
 - c. in non-US institutions that do not include general education, provides evidence that students can demonstrate general education skills;**
- 6. in institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula;*
- 7. adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and*
- 8. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student-learning opportunities.*

Standard III-1 *Certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or*

other credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning

Potential Evidence:

2019-2020 Graduate Catalog (website)
2019-2020 Undergraduate Catalog (website)
AA/AS accreditation documents (website)
BA/BS accreditation documents (website)
Graduate program accreditation documents (website)
REACH Curriculum (website)
Department Academic PLANs (available upon request, Do not currently have in evidence bank)
Program curriculum maps (available upon request, do not currently have in evidence bank)
Sample syllabi for iMU 101/102, BTG 300, and ETH 400 (Do not currently have in evidence bank)

Summary of Evidence:

Mercyhurst University provides a wide array of certificate, associate, undergraduate, and graduate programs leading to a degree or credential. The standard associate degree is two years, undergraduate degree is four years, and graduate degree is two years, but these vary slightly by program. According to the university website and undergraduate catalog, <https://www.course-catalog.com/mercyhurst/C/2020-2021/degrees-a-z> (found both on the website and the registrar's page of the HUB), Mercyhurst offers more than 50 majors, BA and BS, all designed for a four-year program (<https://mercyhurst.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs#:~:text=We%20offer%20more%20than%2050,to%20round%20out%20their%20resumes>).

Mercyhurst also offers several 4+1 programs where a student is beginning graduate work while finishing undergraduate work, allowing the student to earn both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in five years instead of six (<https://www.mercyhurst.edu/academics/4plus1programs>). In addition, Mercyhurst offers 14 Associate degree programs, generally two years, and four certificate programs (<https://mercyhurst.edu/mne/academics>).

Every program at Mercyhurst is required to have a curriculum map on file with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. These curriculum maps articulate how learning is connected, that is, where students are introduced to concepts/skills, where they develop those skills, and where they are expected to have mastered the skills. The maps also include information on how and when learning will be assessed to ensure that students are staying on track and meeting expectations. These curriculum maps for undergraduate programs often include an indication of the best times for students within a program to take courses in the REACH curriculum. While programs do not determine for students what courses they will take in that curriculum, it is designed to provide a breadth of understanding about the larger human experience in which students can situate their program. These curriculum maps will also indicate the timing for capstone experiences within undergraduate programs, which all programs are required to have, and additional elements such as internships or similar experiential learning components. Many graduate programs require a Master's thesis, which forms a type of capstone for the program and are indicated in the curriculum map as well.

Furthermore, each of these degree programs has a specific Academic PLAN developed by the programs. The Academic PLAN lays out the program requirements, the student learning outcomes, and the overall objectives of the program. In this way, courses, internships, and other individual requirements are collected into a unified program of study. Information about the courses and student learning outcomes is available through all course catalogs electronically, so that students can see the expectations of each

program before deciding to join it. Programs with discipline specific accreditation such as Chemistry or Nursing have additional parameters placed by the accrediting bodies that require both specific content and objectives be met (<https://www.mercyhurst.edu/about-mu/assessment-and-planning/accreditation>). Programs without discipline specific accreditation do an annual assessment as well as a whole program review through a five-year study to evaluate how well the program meets its goals.

The REACH curriculum is designed to enfold the individual programs into a unified education (<https://www.mercyhurst.edu/academics/reach>). It provides a liberal arts foundation across five areas of study that can be customized to the students' individual interests and needs. It begins with a freshman year experience that orients students to college level inquiry and independence as well as a foundational research and writing course. The five areas (Reason and Faith, Expression and Creativity, Analytical Thought, Contexts and Systems, Humans in Connection) can be fulfilled throughout the students' time. REACH also contains OutREACH, that begins with a service project prior to the start of iMU (Introduction to Mercyhurst) and the reflected upon within the iMU experience first year course, Beyond the Gates (BTG) service Learning in the second or third year with reflection, and Capstone Ethics (ETH 400) in the senior year that reflects back upon the entire Mercyhurst experience. All students pursuing a four-year degree have both a program capstone and this University capstone course. These elements are designed to reflect the mission and core values of the institution as well as the University level Student Learning Outcomes.

Summary of compliance:

All of these pieces show that Mercyhurst has worked to create a coherent and intentional curriculum. Graduate programs, certificate programs, and certain applied associate degree programs are separate from the REACH curriculum. By interweaving the undergraduate programs and REACH curricula through the curriculum maps, students are presented with a unified education, even when they study in more than one program. The OutREACH process investigates the synthesis of the programs with both the general education curriculum and the mission and core values. OutREACH is specifically assessed three times in a student's education through a series of reflections given during iMU, BTG, and Capstone Ethics. The assessment in ETH 400 in particular connects OutREACH, programs, REACH, and the mission to the University student-learning outcome of Ethical reasoning. The course is designed to provide reflection on each component of the REACH curriculum while also drawing on students' programs of study, all within the larger framework of ethical reasoning and extensive reflection on the mission and core values. Students demonstrate the synthesis of their academic careers through a final project in that course. Places for improvement include a lack of assessment within the REACH curriculum that would help us better understand alignment between students' learning in the general education curriculum and in their programs. A revised assessment structure for the REACH curriculum is currently being built to fill this gap. REACH is applied to most Associate and Bachelor programs, but not graduate, certificate programs. Graduate and certificate program coherence is determined internally by departments that offer them. Clarification of how programs not connected to the REACH curriculum still reflect the University-wide learning outcomes may be necessary.

Standard III-2 *Student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are:*

- a. *Rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies;*
- b. *qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do;*
- c. *Sufficient in number;*
- d. *Provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;*
- e. *reviewed regularly and equitable based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures;*

Potential Evidence:

a. Rigorous and Effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies

Mission and Core Values (Website)

Syllabus Repository (HUB)

Classroom Observation Form (HUB Provost Page)

Faculty Handbook - Standards for teaching, scholarship, and service effectiveness, tenure and promotion processes (HUB)

University-Wide Learning Outcomes (HUB)

Program Assessment (OIE)

University Assessment (OIE)

IDEA learning objectives (OIE)

Celebration of scholars list of faculty led student research (Website)

Illumination (Website)

b. Qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do

Suggested Protocol for Faculty Hiring (HUB)

Job descriptions for full and part-time faculty (HR, examples on Website)

Faculty CV (Provost's office faculty Professional Files)

c. Sufficient in number

2020-2021 Scheduling guidelines

d. Provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;

Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) Programming

Faculty Handbook sabbatical standards and faculty research support and standards for excellence in scholarship

Faculty Development Days Agendas

Faculty Development Funding Request Form sample (Hafenmaier College)

e. reviewed regularly and equitable based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures;

Academic Evaluation Process (Faculty Handbook)

Classroom observation form (Provost HUB)

Tenure and promotion process descriptions (Faculty Handbook)

Summary of Evidence:

a. Rigorous and Effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies

Mercyhurst University takes great care to provide a robust educational experience driven by excellence in teaching and the Mission and Core Values of the institution. The mission highlights the student-faculty bonds, made possible through smaller classes, experiential learning, and individual attention. The Core Values connect all the components of a Mercyhurst education, encompassing both curricular and co-curricular experiences across associate, undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs. That means a Mercyhurst education involves faculty, staff, and administrators as professionals guiding students through their educational development as people who are socially merciful, globally responsible, compassionately hospitable, intellectually creative, reflectively aware, ambassadors of service. The University-wide Student Learning Outcomes of Civic Engagement and Intercultural Skills, Critical and Creative Thinking, Effective Communication, Information Literacy, Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning, and Ethical Reasoning are embedded throughout the curriculum and involve the full faculty in development and assessment of these learning outcomes. While not every program addresses every learning outcome, each program is connected to one or more.

One of the first places to look, then, for the teaching effectiveness of Mercyhurst faculty is the syllabus repository. Every term, all faculty syllabi are gathered and made available to faculty, staff and administrators through the HUB. The syllabi map out the structures of the course and often indicate the connection of the course material to both the program and University-wide Student Learning Outcomes. The syllabus repository is used by departments in the hiring of adjuncts. Looking to the syllabus for a course needing to be covered indicates for the department what specific skills they need to look for in an adjunct or part-time member and also provides a new hire or adjunct insight into departmental expectations. It is further used by departments to provide guidance for adjuncts, part-time faculty, and new hires on how to approach a pre-existing course. This is particularly important for departments that use multiple adjuncts to teach the same course in order to provide consistency across the courses. Departments also use the syllabus repository to review courses to make sure they are in compliance with both University policies and accreditation standards for programs with additional, discipline specific accreditation. On a case-by-case basis, the syllabus repository may be used if a question or issue arises in a course in order to determine a resolution to a specific issue.

The syllabus repository provides additional aid in course and program development across disciplines. For example, faculty in the Anthropology/Archeology department use the syllabus repository to find similar courses across disciplines to make sure that the same texts are not being used. Using the same texts across courses limits the student's engagement with ideas, and so the syllabus repository provides a way for faculty to more fully enrich the classroom experience by providing diverse voices. Anthropology/Archeology also uses the repository to see that the work expectations for their courses are commensurate with similar courses in other departments. This also provides various departments ways to identify what courses are being offered and with what specific content in order to see if there is a course their department could offer that would fill a gap in students' education. While the course catalog lists all courses being taught, the syllabus repository provides more detailed information on the content of the courses and information about when it has most recently been taught. The details available in the repository also allow departments to determine if a course being offered in another department could be reasonably substituted for a course in their major. Students are directed to the

repository by their advisors in order for them to make informed choices about course selection or if they need to provide a syllabus for a graduate school application.

The syllabus repository also contributes to assessment of programs by providing an official record of courses taught and their specific content, allowing department chairs to determine if courses are being taught that reflect the departmental student learning outcomes and Academic PLANs. The English department, for example, notes that when the department considers curriculum revision or assessment review, the syllabus repository is a valuable aid to examine how individual courses contribute to department goals. The syllabus repository provides examples of the content of courses and is used in finding, preparing, and supporting faculty as well as curriculum development and assessment. The syllabus repository is also helpful for student services staff members to align approaches toward program and/or University-wide learning outcomes and collaborate effectively with faculty members through various activities including providing guest presentations and crafting experiential learning opportunities.

When one steps back from the specifics of the courses to the faculty themselves, Mercyhurst provides a multitude of tools to develop, evaluate, and support the teaching effectiveness of its faculty. The Faculty Handbook, in section IV A and B, outlines the requirements for and expectations of full-time, part-time, adjunct, concurrent, and emeritus faculty. Section V details the policies with regard to faculty including tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty appointments, performance criteria, faculty evaluation, faculty searches and hires, and tenure and promotion criteria. According to the faculty handbook,

Full-time, untenured faculty will be observed in the classroom at least two times per year. First-year faculty will be observed three times, two of which must take place in the fall semester. The third may take place during the Spring Semester of the first year. The department chair must complete two of the three observations; the associate dean should conduct the third observation.

Beginning with the second year, tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty with fewer than seven years will be observed a minimum of one time each year by the department chair and one time each year by the college associate dean. Tenured faculty should be observed in the classroom at minimum in all promotion and triennial evaluation years. Department chairs should be observed by the college associate dean or college dean; associate deans should be observed by the provost or his/her designee.

The number and frequency of observations for part-time faculty and adjunct faculty will be left to the discretion of department chairs and associate deans.

For all formal observations, the observer will provide the faculty member with a written post-observation report and offer an opportunity to discuss the report and, if the faculty member chooses, to provide a written response which will be attached to the report. When the report is complete and any response attached, the faculty member and the observer sign the report. The observer keeps one copy on file, submits one copy of the report to the faculty member, and submits one copy of the report to the Office of the Provost for inclusion in the faculty member's professional file.

The University has a standardized classroom observation form available through the Provost's page on the University Hub. This form looks specifically for examples of student engagement, effective communication with students, effective teaching styles and strategies, and content. These observations are then discussed between the faculty member and their department chair for formative evaluation, providing suggestions for improvement. While rigor is hard to determine via a single classroom observation, the handbook requires multiple observations, and often these are of the same class in different semesters. Many observers first request the course syllabus prior to the observation, which allows the observer to get some context of the class that they are viewing in the overall goals of the course. Effective teaching is gauged by student interaction, use of different pedagogies and technologies to deliver the material, and the ability of the instructor to effectively communicate the material during the observation. This is done best by the department chair who will have greater expertise in the field than a dean or provost might. While only a snapshot of what the instructor does over the course of a semester, the classroom observation is used by many departments in conjunction with assessment data and student feedback to get a more holistic view of the instructor. The forms are also used to discuss course content as it aligns with the syllabus topics in order to guarantee substantive content coverage and discuss pedagogical practices to ensure effective instructional delivery, and provide formative feedback in regard to teaching effectiveness. Thus, the classroom observations become an important tool for formative discussions and faculty mentoring in order to achieve the high level of teaching effectiveness expected of all faculty at Mercyhurst. These observations then become a part of the larger faculty evaluation process, completed every year for untenured faculty and every three years for tenured faculty. They are the backbone of both assessing and maintaining effectiveness in the classroom. In the Spring 2020 the move to remote learning prevented some classroom observations from being completed. In Fall 2020 these observations have resumed, in person where possible, and through Zoom when it was not possible to be in person.

In part V.D.4, the Faculty Handbook describes the process for Faculty Academic Evaluation. All faculty have Teaching Effectiveness as their primary area of evaluation. Faculty then have the option to choose their secondary evaluation to be in scholarship, service, or both. The faculty member conducts a self-evaluation, which is then provided to the chair and associate dean. Both the chair and associate dean write separate evaluations based on the self-evaluation, any course observations, and any additional information they may have. When that is all completed, it is shared with the faculty member, reviewed by the college dean, and then sent to the Provost's office to be included in the faculty member's professional file.

Faculty on the tenure-track are reviewed by the Provost's office and a faculty led Rank and Tenure committee. Nontenure-track faculty are reviewed by their departments, deans, and the Provost's office. These reviews for promotion and/or tenure include a portfolio by the faculty member, a current CV, all teaching observations and annual evaluations, student evaluation reports, colleague and student interviews, and letters of recommendation by the chair and dean/associate dean. The faculty handbook identifies teaching effectiveness, scholarship and professionalism, and University/community service in section V.C.5.C as,

Teaching Effectiveness

- Candidate's Professional File
- Classroom Observations
- Annual Faculty Evaluation Reports

- Other (e.g., additional letters)
- IDEA-SRI and/or SIRII Evaluations (from aggregate data provided by the rank and tenure committee and/or individual reports available in the candidate's professional file)
- Colleague Interviews
- Student Interviews
- Candidate's Portfolio
- Recommendation letters from the department chair, associate dean, and/or dean
- Other (e.g., additional letters)

Scholarship and Professionalism

- Candidate's Professional File
- Annual Faculty Evaluation Reports
- Other (e.g., additional letters)
- Colleague Interviews
- Student Interviews
- Candidate's Portfolio
- Recommendation letters from the department chair, associate dean and/or dean
- Other (e.g., additional letters)

University/Community Service

- Candidate's Professional File
- Annual Faculty Evaluation Reports
- Other (e.g., additional letters)
- Colleague Interviews
- Student Interviews
- Candidate's Portfolio
- Recommendation letters from the department chair, associate dean and/or dean
- Other (e.g., additional letters)

Pre-tenure review is conducted separately by the Provost's office and the Rank and Tenure Committee. A letter of recommendation is provided to the faculty member and they have individual meetings with Rank and Tenure and the Provost's office for a discussion of the faculty member's progress in teaching effectiveness, scholarship, and service. The pre-tenure review process is described in detail in the Faculty Handbook in section VI.A.4 of the Faculty Handbook.

Because of the service-oriented component of Mercyhurst's mission and core values, the curriculum is not limited to faculty teaching. Staff and administrators are a part of the whole educational program in both curricular and co-curricular ways. The Human Resources office maintains job descriptions and hiring standards for faculty, staff, and administrators that are developed and evaluated by the heads of various programs around campus in accordance with the mission of the institution. In particular, staff and administrators are often facilitators for the Introduction to Mercyhurst (iMU) course required of all incoming first year students. This course is organized by and run through the office of the Associate Provost for Academic Services and Support. Facilitators are selected for their ability to be good mentors for students.

Mercyhurst faculty are also deeply involved in the assessment of academics. Program assessment takes place through departments, with many departments having a faculty member designated as assessment coordinator. Program assessment takes place annually through the Assessment Institute under the

direction of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Using Microsoft Forms, OIE provides an Annual Assessment Report form that departments fill out collectively, identifying what SLO the department has chosen to assess that year, the method of assessment, and the outcome of that assessment. That report is followed up by an Action Plan to address the results of the assessment. Each department/program has an Academic PLAN and curriculum map that identifies the mission of the department, the student learning outcomes to achieve that mission, and the method of assessment of those learning outcomes. These documents provide the standards of assessment for each department and are used each year for framing departmental assessment. Every five years, departments engage in self-studies. Again, OIE provides guidelines, but self-studies are written entirely within each department. The self-study once again identifies the mission of the department, the faculty and student profile, the resources available to support the goals and learning outcomes of the department, an overview of assessment over the five-year period, and initiatives for the next five years.

University Assessment is also done by faculty. At the annual Assessment Institute, faculty join different discussion groups for each of the University-wide Student Learning Outcomes. Because these learning outcomes are meant to address the entire curriculum, each group has representation from across the University's programs. They discuss the ways the SLOs are found in different components of the curriculum, from REACH, to OutREACH, to individual programs and brainstorm the best ways both to integrate the SLOs into all parts of the curriculum and assess them. In addition, the University recently adopted a new course evaluation instrument, IDEA. IDEA has 13 Global Learning Objectives, which have been mapped onto the University-wide SLOs.

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories) (Depends on discipline/content)
2. Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures (Civic Engagement and Intercultural Skills)
3. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions) (Critical and Creative Thinking)
4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course (Depends on discipline/content)
5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team (Not specifically addressed in MU SLOs; Effective Communication or Intercultural Skills)
6. Developing creative capabilities (inventing; designing; writing; performing in art, music, drama, etc.) (Critical and Creative Thinking)
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.) (Critical and Creative Thinking and/or Civic Engagement and Intercultural Skills)
8. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing (Effective Communication and Information Literacy)
9. Learning how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth (Effective Communication and Information Literacy)
10. Developing ethical reasoning and/or ethical decision making (Ethical Reasoning)
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view (Critical and Creative Thinking)
12. Learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good (Civic Engagement and Intercultural Skills)
13. Learning appropriate methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting numerical information (Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning)

While IDEA is used for evaluation of almost every class and the University-wide SLOs are not assessed for every class, it is a useful way to see the connections between all parts of the curriculum in both the assessment and evaluation process. In Spring 2020 IDEA surveys were not run. In Fall 2020 they have been used again for almost every course. Certain programs such as Physician Assistant Studies have specific accreditation requirements that IDEA does not meet. In these cases, the programs have an alternative faculty evaluation tool (for example Qualtrics) the functions similarly to IDEA for both formative and summative evaluation of faculty. University-wide learning outcomes are also assessed in undergraduate programs through departmental capstone courses. Every department is required to have a capstone course for its undergraduate programs. In 2019, capstone forms were used to ensure that departments were assessing institutional-level outcomes in their capstones.

Finally, with regard to the scholarly inquiry and service of the faculty, both of these are expectations of the institution. While teaching is always the primary concern of faculty, the Faculty Handbook lays out expectations for scholarship and service for all full-time faculty (see above). As with teaching effectiveness, scholarly activity and service are evaluated annually through the academic evaluation process and more rigorously in the pre-tenure review process for tenure track faculty. While all faculty engage in scholarship and service, the handbook provides specific expectations for tenure track faculty. This is evaluated by chairs, associate deans, deans, the Provost's office, and the Rank and Tenure committee. Evidence of faculty scholarship is further found with the annual Celebration of Scholars that lists the achievements of the faculty in scholarly activity. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2019 Celebration of Scholars was published on the university website (<https://www.mercyhurst.edu/celebration-of-scholars>). It includes: 1) publication of books, book chapters, and monographs, 2) juried exhibitions, invitationals, and performances, 3) peer reviewed publications, 4) funded grants and contracts, 5) conference presentations and invited addresses, and 5) a sample of additional scholarly engagement of the faculty within their disciplines. In addition to the faculty's own research, they guide a significant amount of undergraduate and graduate research. This is highlighted in the annual Illumination event for undergraduate research.

b. Qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do

Human Resources policies and the Faculty Handbook outline qualifications for all roles across the institution. These qualifications are also included in all job postings. The hiring process includes ascertaining that all hires in the academic unit are qualified for their positions. Job descriptions are required for all new positions, and the Curriculum Vitae is put on file as part of the official hiring process. In the case of faculty positions, the hiring protocol specifically relies on the existing departmental experts to help vet the qualifications of faculty in their discipline. The Faculty Hiring Protocol is a formal document available through the Provost's office and provided to any department before conducting a search to organize the job call and search itself. Use of the protocol is monitored at all points in the hiring process, including at the dean and Provost level. This method is used for full, part-time, and adjunct faculty. While the search for adjunct faculty is not as rigorous a process as for full or even part-time faculty, departments still control the process in determining that adjuncts chosen meet the needs and requirements of the program. In the case of music, for example, many adjuncts are used in order to provide expertise in specific instruments. In the case of the graduate program in Intelligence Studies, many adjuncts are used who are professionals in the field rather than academics, because of the real-world experience they are able to provide to the students. Likewise, with the exception of iMU, staff and administrators who teach courses in specific departments must also meet qualification

standards set by the department. In Catholic Studies, for example, the Vice President of Mission and the University Chaplain both teach courses for the program. They hold degrees appropriate for the level of courses they teach as determined by the Department of Religious Studies.

c. Sufficient in number

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Provost's office determine the ratio of faculty needed in order to cover all necessary courses in both specific programs and REACH courses. The details on these calculations were not available to the Working Group. The Provost's Office has a set of confidential data that speaks to sufficiency of faculty in all university programs. This information is a synthesis of data – not only the numbers of adjunct faculty and overloads taught, but also the bigger picture of faculty load issues, program- and course-level enrollments, number of advisees per faculty, and other indicators. There are programs whose faculty regularly teach overloads because they do not have enough full-time faculty available and adjuncts are difficult to find. This information is confidential and therefore must be addressed at the Provost's office level. Within individual departments, they can determine the number of faculty needed (full-time, part-time, and adjunct) based on the scheduling guidelines provided by the Provost's office each year, the number and variety of courses needed based on the curriculum map, the particular expertise required that may not be available through full-time faculty, the university enrollment, and the needs of students for REACH level courses to maintain progress toward graduation. Departments that offer both graduate and undergraduate programs and/or in-person and online courses and programs have additional calculations to determine sufficiency in the number of faculty.

d. Provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;

Mercyhurst University provides a variety of opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation. One of the primary resources is the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). During regular years, the CTE provides weekly "Lunch and Learn" sessions on various topics of interest in teaching. These sessions are usually a brief tutorial and then discussion. The CTE has also worked in cooperation with the Faculty Development Committee of the Faculty Senate to provide a venue for faculty to share their scholarship with each other. This process allows faculty across disciplines to make connections in their work and find ways to collaborate in their research. More recently, the CTE has taken on a very active role in providing support for faculty during the challenges of teaching in a pandemic. Since spring of 2020, the director of the CTE has provided a series of webinars and workshops on classroom planning, management, and technology. A regular newsletter alerts faculty to upcoming events, and the CTE has made use of Teams to provide a collection of resources for faculty, including books and articles as well as training videos. Since July, the CTE has provided more than 50 webinars and workshops for faculty. They have also produced at least 25 training videos since July on use of technology in and for the class. The most recent count shows these videos have been viewed 1128 times. This fall, the CTE also partnered with the Evelyn Lincoln Institute for Ethics and Society to create a faculty development series on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in the classroom.

Additional opportunities and resources for professional development include Faculty Development Days, held just before the start of classes in the fall. Faculty Development Days are a joint project of the Provost's office and the Faculty Development Committee of the Faculty Senate. A series of workshops are held on topics such as use of technology in the classroom, building discussion, syllabus and course development, and other topics of interest for teachers.

The university also provides faculty with opportunities for scholarship development. Each of the four colleges has a system for application of faculty development funds. In the Zurn College, for example, these applications are sent to the Dean who allocates the funds across all departments in the college on a first come first served basis. In the Hafenmaier College, these applications are sent to a committee that includes the dean, associate dean, and one representative each from humanities, arts, and social sciences. Caps are placed on the funds in order to ensure that there are sufficient funds for at least partial support of any faculty member who seeks it. These funds are used to attend conferences and workshops. They have also been used to send faculty to events for professional development or research. Section V.G. of the Faculty Handbook outlines the process of application for sabbaticals. These are granted through the Provost's office. Section V.E. of the Faculty Handbook outlines the University policies regarding faculty research, including extramurally funded research and University funded research.

e. reviewed regularly and equitable based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures;

As explained earlier in this section, faculty are regularly evaluated using the same primary tools and criteria. This review comes in the form of student evaluations through the IDEA instrument, which is administered for almost every class, the annual or tri-annual Academic Evaluation process as explained in section V.D. of the Faculty Handbook, classroom observations, and the tenure and promotion process, as laid out in section VI of the faculty handbook. The Rank and Tenure Committee is made up of five tenured faculty who are elected by the faculty for three-year terms. Review of tenure-track faculty is conducted independently by the Rank and Tenure committee and the Provost's office. Nontenure-track faculty are reviewed for promotion through the Provost's office alone. Annual or tri-annual Academic Evaluation is conducted at the department and college level through department chairs, deans, and associate deans.

Summary of compliance:

As is shown by the preceding evidence, Mercyhurst places a high value on not only teaching effectiveness but also teaching excellence. From the hiring process that vets candidates for both credentials and fit with the institution's mission and core values to the multiple resources for formative evaluation and professional development, Mercyhurst is dedicated to excellence in teaching. However, no measure has been done to determine the impact the hiring protocol has had on the level of qualifications of the faculty hired, and this may be something for the University to develop. The summative review of full-time faculty through the Provost's Office and Rank and Tenure Committee is confidential and therefore not available to the committee for review. However, the curriculum maps and assessment protocols created by departments are available through OIE and demonstrate the effectiveness of faculty teaching and their qualifications for the subjects they teach. One place further review and assessment may be needed is with iMU. While early on an application form was used to select facilitators, that application is no longer being used. The working group was unable to get further information about the criteria for selection of facilitators.

While assessment of programs proceeds annually and on a larger five-year cycle guided by OIE, assessment of University-wide learning outcomes is less complete. According to the University Assessment Coordinator, for the 2020-2021 academic year, the capstone forms will be used to flesh out REACH assessment plans, through which the University-wide learning outcomes are assessed. That does

not, however, connect graduate, certificate, and Bachelor and Associate programs exempt from REACH to the University-wide learning outcomes. OIE is currently conducting a review of our assessments this academic year, and the capstone forms will factor into that discussion. Further, using IDEA to evaluate faculty qualifications and rigor is limited in a variety of ways. In Spring 2020 IDEA was not run for any classes because of the rapid move to remote learning due to the pandemic. In Fall 2020 IDEA is once again being run, but the University has yet to discuss how results from the particular circumstances of a University-wide shift in teaching structures to accommodate Covid 19 protocols will affect those results. Moreover, the IDEA tool has only been in regular use for two years and therefore supervisors and Rank and Tenure lack sufficient familiarity with the tool to be able to use it effectively for either formative or summative purposes. It is also not universally used, and programs that must use a different tool for accreditation purposes (for example Physician Assistant Studies) have not been able to make the results available to the Rank and Tenure committee for appropriate evaluation. The committee must rely on the interpretation of supervisors from department chairs to deans to Provost.

Finally, in regard to support for faculty in scholarship and service, the amount of funds available and used for faculty development are determined by the number of faculty in each college. The colleges maintain their own records on what percentage of these funds are used. Details are available through the deans' offices. The Provost's Office maintains the information on the number of sabbaticals applied for and received annually, and what criteria are used to determine the number of sabbaticals available each year. At the end of their sabbatical, faculty provide a summary report of their accomplishments, which is also maintained in the Provost's Office. These resources are available to faculty, and faculty regularly apply for them. The number of faculty who take advantage of these opportunities varies within each college, and no formal assessment report of the limitations of faculty support are available. Departmental five-year studies, however, do indicate gaps in support for faculty scholarship from limited funding to lack of access to key library resources. While support is certainly available, it is also limited. Looking forward, the use of class observation and IDEA as well as opportunities for faculty scholarship from Spring 2020 through Spring 2021 will require careful assessment for both the formative and summative impacts of changes made to accommodate Covid 19 protocols.

Standard III-3 *Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion;*

Potential Evidence:

- Website/webpages (*Academics – catalog, programs of study; Admissions and Aid – admission events; Catalogs (Programs of study; Degree requirements; Course descriptions)*)
- The Hub (*Academics, Registrar – catalogs, calendar, REACH curriculum, graduation requirements; Academic Resources*)
- Program specific documents (*Hot Sheets, Program Handbooks*)
- Self-service Timeline and Progress tabs (*Program requirements, progress toward completion*)
- Admission and Marketing materials
- Open houses and information sessions
- Day-In events
- Orientation sessions
- Advising Days

- Academic support events
- Orientation schedules
- Dining with Departments events
- 15 to Finish (Academic Support)
- Virtual Orientations and Day-In events (not in evidence)

Summary of Evidence:

Mercyhurst offers a broad spectrum of academic programs across many levels including certificate, associate, bachelor's and master's degree programs. Information about all programs is available to prospective and enrolled students through a variety of sources, including the University website, catalogs, the Hub, student handbooks, program specific documents, admission and marketing materials, open houses and information sessions, Day-In events, orientation sessions, faculty advising, and academic support. Specific details regarding some of the more comprehensive sources are noted below.

Information available on the website can be found from the main page under the Academics tab where there are links to bachelor's, associate, certificate, and master's degree programs. In addition to being a gateway to the specific programs of study, each of these links identifies the expected time to completion as well. For instance, the link for bachelor's degree programs indicates 4 years, and associate degree programs 2 years. Within each of these tabs the applicable programs of study can be found. Within the links for Academics and Curriculum students can access information about the liberal arts core (REACH) as well.

Within each academic level, the programs/majors link to the program pages where all academic requirements are listed along with numerous other links to helpful information. For example, under the Biology link Student Learning Outcomes are listed along with tabs to explore concentrations and minors, a link for Biology degree requirements, and additional links for related resources. Contact information is available for the department chair and associated faculty.

From the main page of the website students can also access information about admission events under the Admissions and Aid tab. Examples of events include Open Houses, Information Sessions, and Program Spotlight sessions. These sessions include time for prospective students to get more information from program faculty about the respective programs, including degree requirements and time to completion.

Students have access to catalogs on the University website under the Academics tab, Catalogs and Calendar. Certificate, associate, and bachelor's degree programs can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog, while master's degree programs and advanced certificates are listed in the Graduate Catalog. The catalog is an electronic, searchable document. The main menu within the catalog provides easy access to Degrees/Certificates and Course Descriptions. Students can access information about degrees and certificates through an alphabetical list or by department. Using Biology as an example, once the student selects biology from the menu, they are provided with the list of degrees within the biology department. When a specific degree is selected, the next window provides a description of the program, the student learning outcomes, opportunities associated with the degree, and a listing of course requirements. Each course is linked to the course description.

Another area available through the main menu within each catalog is a link to Academic Affairs. This is where students can locate information specific to general requirements for graduation, including the minimum number of credits to complete a degree, which addresses time to completion.

The Mercyhurst Hub is another source of information for students regarding academic programs and degree requirements. In the Student Hub, under the Academics and Registrar tabs, students can select Course Catalogs to link back to the searchable documents discussed above. Additional information accessible through the Registrar pages on the HUB include the academic calendar, details regarding the REACH liberal arts curriculum, graduation requirements, and links to PDF versions of prior catalogs.

For students working toward a bachelor's degree, the Academic Resources tab on the Student Hub provides another source of information related to expected time to completion under the 15 to Finish tab. This page highlights the four-year completion time, which requires students to take fifteen credits each semester.

In addition to the broad spectrum of information noted above, prospective students are provided with program information at a variety of admission events. The respective admission offices host numerous events throughout the year including Open Houses, Information Sessions, Day-in events, and Program Spotlights. Program materials are provided to prospective students at these events, including Hot Sheets, which provide details of admission requirements and time to completion. For example the Physical Therapist Assistant Program Hot Sheet begins with "Our two-year program..." Due to Covid 19 mitigation strategies, Day-In events have become virtual.

Orientation sessions for newly enrolled students provide an opportunity for students to meet with a faculty member from within their chosen major or program. This scheduled meeting allows for further clarification of program requirements. Many programs also have a more specific orientation session where a Program Handbook or Student Handbook might be reviewed. Program Handbooks generally include more detailed information about degree requirements and academic policies. Nursing, for example, has a detailed program handbook it provides for new students.

Further, program faculty serve as academic advisors to students in the respective majors or programs. Faculty advisors are a rich source of information regarding degree/program requirements and time to completion. Students can meet with their advisors at any time, however advising is formally planned to occur on Advising Day, which is included in the Academic Calendar. Advising day is scheduled to occur one week prior to registration for the following semester. This provides an opportunity for deliberate and thoughtful review of the student's current academic standing and planning of their schedule for the next semester. During these advising meetings, faculty discuss student progress toward degree completion and advise students accordingly if they are falling short of meeting program requirements.

Students can also easily track their progress toward degree completion via Self-Service. Within Self-Service students can view their progress, which indicates completed, enrolled and planned courses. All required courses for program completion are listed with the status of each course clearly identified.

Summary of Compliance:

Evidence of compliance regarding information that is made available to students is readily observable through the sources noted above. Effectiveness of the many sources of information are assessed

through individual departments responsible for the information provided. For example, the Office of Admission tracks attendance at various admission events and monitors engagement of potential students from the first contact through application, confirmation, and matriculation. Communication from the Admission office states, "We track student attendance in our CRM system. We then follow up with communication pieces and are able to follow the application process and funnel stage for each student. For example, 17 students attended out of 21 registered for the "Day-In Fashion" event. 13 students were seniors in high school, and 7 ended up enrolling at Mercyhurst for the Fall 2020 semester. Over 50% "yield" rate on an event is exceptional." (Christian Beyer survey response.) Data pertaining to materials provided through the Office of Admission supports, in part, the usefulness and clarity of information.

Students are an essential source of data supporting access to and usefulness of information available about their respective programs of study, curricula, and progress to completion. A survey implemented through Student Government reveals that 59% of respondents use the HUB, with 65% indicating information provided on the HUB is useful. Eighty percent of respondents indicate they access the HUB at least weekly, and 82% indicate information is easy to understand. Additionally, 88% of respondents use Self-Service as their primary source of information regarding their program requirements and progress.

As indicated on a student survey, the HUB is likely underutilized: "I think the hub is great, but students do not look at it enough! Maybe start pushing it hard to new freshman?" (Student survey response.) Faculty advisors and academic support staff could emphasize the utility of the HUB to a greater degree, encouraging students to seek out information available to them. Further exploration on the availability and usefulness of information may be warranted and could be accomplished through a survey of incoming freshmen students.

Criteria III-4 *sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and student's academic progress*

Potential Evidence

Advising Day Reminder Letter

Capstone Assessment Form Responses August 2019

Center for Teaching Excellence Programming

Departmental Sophomore Review Processes

Fleet Services Policies and Procedures

Orientation Family Guide (SharePoint document is titled, 2019-2020_Family Guide)

REACH Curriculum

USE Data from the Tutoring Center, Writing Center, and Testing Center

Internship Syllabus

15toFinish What is It

15toFinish Poster

15toFinish Bookmark

15toFinish Logo

Post Career Fair Survey Questions for Employers

Post Career Fair Survey Question for Students

Post Workshop Survey Results October 2020 –

Career Four Year Plan Updated (Not in evidence)

Summary of Evidence

Mercyhurst University provides a wide variety of learning opportunities and resources that support the institution's programs and the academic progress of all students.

One of the overarching pieces of evidence is the REACH Curriculum that is embedded in most associate and bachelor's degree programs at the institution and forms the foundation for those programs' commitment to the liberal arts education at Mercyhurst. The REACH Curriculum provides a variety of course offerings in multiple disciplines, such as Economics, Psychology, Biology, English, and Religious Studies. The REACH Curriculum includes the Freshman Year Experience, (iMU and Research and Writing), The five REACH categories (Reason and Faith, Expression and Creativity, Analytical Thought, Contexts and Systems, Humans in Connection), and the Capstone experience (ETH 400 and program Capstone). In the five REACH categories, multiple programs are represented. Bachelor's students, for example, are required to take two courses from each category, but these courses must have different prefixes. In Reason and Faith, for example, students would take courses from either Religious Studies (RLST), Catholic Studies (CST), or Philosophy (PHIL). The courses are all introductory level (100 or 200), and any courses at that level from these three programs will count toward a student's REACH requirement as long as the student ultimately has two different prefixes represented. In this way, students can tailor their REACH experience toward their particular interests while still engaging with the broader perspectives of the liberal arts. An Intelligence Studies major, for example, might prefer a course in Religion and Violence, while an English major might prefer a course in Sacred Texts. Because in many departments offering REACH courses every course they offer at the 100 and 200 level counts for REACH, students have extensive opportunities for learning in ways that most appeal to them and that support their academic progress.

Institutional support and encouragement of faculty professional development opportunities such as the Center for Teaching Excellence Programming directly impact academic programs and student success within classes. Programming offered through the Center for Teaching Excellence includes in person and virtual workshops, online resources, and offers support for introducing new faculty to Mercyhurst programs and students as well as continued support for full and part-time faculty at the institution. In addition, the Departmental Sophomore Review Process and Capstone Assessment Form Responses provide academic programs with evidence to assess if academic department learning outcomes are effectively delivered throughout the intended course or course sequence. Information provided from both processes is also reviewed to understand if students are meeting the overall learning outcomes of the institution.

Mercyhurst provides resources to students throughout their academic tenure at the institution. Beginning with New Student Orientation, students and families are provided with resources and information about the institution and available supports. Specifically, families are provided the Orientation Family Guide, which contains resources about the REACH Curriculum, academic support, student life, and residence life. Academic support resources provided to students, such as the 15 to Finish campaign and subsequent materials, encourage students to enroll in at least 15 credits each semester of their four-year program to remain on track for degree completion. In conjunction with the 15 to Finish campaign for students, Academic Support sends an Advising Day Reminder Letter to faculty prior to Advising Day each semester. The letter includes basic information for faculty to remind students about maintaining academic progress and staying on track to graduate. A

university wide LMS system is used to provide student access to synchronous courses and supplemental course materials as well as assignments and grades, supporting academic progress.

Academic supports are available throughout the student's academic program. Upon enrolling, every undergraduate student is provided with both an academic advisor and an academic counselor. Every graduate student has an advisor within their specified programs. The academic advisor is usually a faculty member, while the academic counselor comes from the Academic Support office. Students can access support resources such as the Tutoring and Writing Centers, the Testing Center, and Career Services. The Tutoring and Writing Centers are primarily peer staffed and offer complimentary assistance with a peer tutor to review course content, prep for an exam or presentation, or assistance from a writing consultant to provide guidance and support throughout the various stages of writing papers. The Testing Center offers complimentary testing services for all students requiring alternative testing arrangements, such as extended time on exams, a reduced distraction environment, or needing to complete a make-up exam. Career Services encourages students to engage in major exploration and career planning beginning with their first year. The Career Four Year Plan Updated outlines the targeted approach to career planning and resources available throughout a student's academic program. Career services opportunities are available as students progress in their academic programs, such as an annual career fair and career workshops. The Annual Career Fair provides students with an opportunity to network with potential employers, while the career development workshops outlined in Career Workshop Fall Schedule 2020, help students prepare for an employment fair, or job interview, and guide them through the internship process. Career Services offers a variety of internship opportunities to support academic progress and future employment opportunities. These services are available to all students throughout the University.

Additionally, institutional resources come from University services such as, the copy center, mail center, University fleet services available for academic purposes, the Cohen Health Center and Counseling services, as well as campus ministry services and programs. Athletic teams offer additional academic support for their students, In soccer, for example, the coach has "Pride sheets" that students fill out weekly to track their grades and GPA. Pre-Covid it was in-person where students would walk in and could talk to him about how school was going. Due to Covid 19 mitigation, it has switched to an Excel doc. The Community Engagement office also acts as a resource for student engagement and success. For example, 30 students in Intro to Sports Medicine (Fall 2020) took advantage of a customized virtual service challenge to fulfill a course requirement to meet community, course, and student needs while aligning with Mission.

Summary of Compliance

As evidenced by the many support services discussed, the institution offers resources and learning opportunities to support academic programs and student progress. Usage data was not available to the working group in areas such as Learning Differences, Academic Support, and Fleet Services, however this information may be available upon request directly to those offices. Areas where data is available and highlighted are the robust offerings and availability of professional development through the Center for Teaching Excellence, the evidence of ongoing assessment of the Departmental Sophomore Review Process identified in departmental five-year self-study reports, and student usage of academic support services such as the Tutoring Center. Data is available from Career Services workshops; however, this service is still new and in the beginning stages of collecting survey results. Finally, with regard to the REACH curriculum, In some cases, programs have specific requirements for cognate courses that will also fulfill a REACH requirement for students. In this way, more room is made in the students' schedules

for electives or additional programs, for example a double-major or a minor that complements the student's primary field of study.

Standard III-5 *At institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:*

5a. Offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field;

5b. Offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives;

Potential Evidence

REACH Curriculum

University-wide learning outcomes

Moral Framework Essay Prompt for ETH 400 (not currently in evidence)

iMU

OIE (Capstone Assessments, University-wide learning outcomes)

Global Programs

Department chairs

Chalk and Wire assessment/reflections

Library website/catalogue/resources

Career Development

Departmental offerings

Summary of Evidence:

The general educational foundation of a Mercyhurst University education is designed to provide undergraduate students will a well-rounded Liberal Arts education. The particular format of the general education program is aligned with the Mission and Core Values of a Catholic institution in the Mercy tradition. While the general education program is freestanding, it also intertwines with various programs, and challenges students to become mature and more well rounded individuals who can succeed within and beyond their fields of study. The REACH curriculum is explained in detail on the university website (<https://www.mercyhurst.edu/academics/reach>), and involves the following components:

The Freshman Experience

An introduction to academic writing and thought, as well as to college life. COMP120 (Research and Writing), plus two one-credit courses to help ease the transition from high school to college (Introduction to Mercyhurst: iMU101 Introduction to Mercyhurst and Involvement at Mercyhurst: iMU102).

The Liberal Arts Experience

The Liberal arts core of the general education curriculum is ten courses that students take in ten different disciplines. This ensures that students explore a variety of fields of study and provide breadth of engagement to their education by requiring students to take two courses in each category and with two different prefixes.

	Theme	Applicable Academic Disciplines
R	Reason & Faith	Catholic Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies
E	Expression & Creativity	One course in English, plus one course in Art, Dance, Music, or Theatre
A	Analytical Thought	Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Science (including at least one science with a lab)
C	Contexts & Systems	Economics, History, Political Science
H	Humans in Connection	Anthropology/Archeology, Psychology, Sociology, World Languages

Courses that fulfill a REACH requirement are either 100 or 200-level. That means for many of these programs, any course they offer at the 100 or 200-level can fulfill a REACH requirement. This system provides students with a tremendous diversity of courses from which to choose and allows them to tailor the general education requirements to their interests while still providing significant breadth of experience within the liberal arts. The small size of the general education curriculum provides students space for exploratory electives and to find programs (second major, minor/s) that complement their primary course of study. For example, a student in Criminal Justice may, through taking PHIL 190 Introduction to Ethics, decide to add an Ethics minor to their Criminal Justice major. The REACH curriculum is also the where the Core values of the institution blend with the University-wide learning outcomes to provide an education that incorporates cultural and global awareness as well as cultural sensitivity, oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical and creative analysis and reasoning, information literacy, values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.

The five University-wide Learning Outcomes are available through the Provost’s page on the HUB and are as follows:

Critical and Creative Thinking

1. Skillfully conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and/or evaluate information gathered from observations, experiences, reflection, reasoning, and/or communication.
2. Effectively analyze and critically evaluate information and/or ideas from multiple perspectives in original ways; work in an imaginative methodology characterized by a high degree of innovation and/or divergent thinking.

Effective Communication and Information Literacy

1. Demonstrate effective skills in writing, visual communication, and speaking with clarity, coherence, and purpose.
2. Access sources and evaluate information that facilitates critical inquiry; adhere to standards of academic honesty.

Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning

1. Use mathematical concepts to make logically sound decisions, judgments, and/or predictions; effectively use scientific inquiry and reasoning to solve problems and analyze and interpret data.

Civic Engagement and Intercultural Skills

2. Develop the knowledge, skills and values to promote a quality of life that is both individually enriching and socially beneficial.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of cultural diversity and multiple global perspectives in order to interact effectively in multicultural contexts.

Ethical Reasoning

1. Develop informed awareness and understanding of ethical conduct, social responsibility, and academic and professional integrity. Assess individual ethical values and the social context of problems, recognizing ethical issues in a variety of settings, and considering the ramifications of alternative actions.

The Senior Experience

1. Ethics 400, a capstone course for the REACH Curriculum, along with the capstone course in your academic major.

outREACH

In the sophomore or junior year each undergraduate student will be involved in a one-credit experience in service learning or civic engagement referred to as Beyond the Gates or BTG. The purpose is to help students connect their classroom experience to the world around them and expand their understanding of their world. Many of these experiences take place within Erie County, while others are connected to study abroad opportunities.

The Introduction to Mercyhurst (iMU) courses helps to build smaller cohorts of student learners in facilitated and individualized classroom learning environments while relaying consistent information across the full first-year student population. Students are introduced to resources such as Career Development, the Library as a place to help with research, and future opportunities such as Study Abroad or other off-campus learning experiences. The iMU course also encourages a process of self-discovery and building a community among learners from various disciplines. In the early weeks of this introduction, each first-year student submits responses to several prompts based on their early service learning experience that provides the baseline for assessment for student growth by revisiting the process in BTH and ETH 400. The outREACH reflections together (iMU, BTG, and ETH 400) share outcomes to track student engagement with the University-wide learning outcomes and Core Values across their four years. Examples of those common outcomes include effective communication and the ability to work in unfamiliar situations and appreciate diverse perspectives and people. Even with COVID-19 protocols, due to innovative approaches and virtual delivery of BTG experiences such as live facilitated student dialogue on systemic racism in place of more traditional community engagement, there was little hiccup in the occurrence and subsequent ability to measure learning gains made by 2020 BTG students as compared to pre-COVID.

The integration of REACH and BTG eligible course into study abroad opportunities expand the cultural sensitivity and global awareness of many Mercyhurst students. This can be achieved through either the Dungarven, Ireland campus, individual FSAT (study abroad) courses, or more traditional study abroad semesters with REACH and BTG approved coursework.

The senior year is filled with capstone experiences that have been built upon a solid foundation of the full curriculum alongside departmentally specific content and learning experiences. By design, the Ethics capstone course is situated last in the sequence of the REACH curriculum. The purpose of the course is

to help students come to a greater understanding of their own moral framework and connect it to their major course of study, the Mercyhurst Mission and Core Values, and their whole Mercyhurst education. REACH categories and University-wide learning outcomes are addressed throughout the course as students wrestle with specific questions of social justice. Similar to the iMU and BTG experiences, the totality of a student's undergraduate experience is channeled through a catalogued Chalk and Wire reflection response for Ethics 400 that demonstrates student maturation and reasoning abilities through the lived experience of the full curriculum. At the same time, each student has an opportunity to demonstrate discipline specific competency with a separate capstone experience such as a performance, field experience, or a significant research project. As shown by the Capstone Assessment survey administered by OIE, program chairs from 2019 reported on alignment between university-wide outcomes such as civic engagement and/or quantitative and scientific reasoning, and provided context for how students demonstrated learning with respect to communication and creative thinking when completing capstone experiences.

Summary of Compliance:

In conclusion, there is evidence – externally viewable and/or internally documented and tracked – of an intentionally designed liberal arts curriculum with integrity in terms of breadth and depth for excellent student learning. The University-wide learning outcomes of critical and creative thinking, and civic engagement and intercultural skills specifically develop cultural sensitivity and cultural and global awareness in Mercyhurst students through the Reason and Faith, Contexts and Systems, and Humans in Connection components of the general education curriculum. Oral and written communication as well as information literacy are introduced in the COMP 120 Research and Writing course in the freshman year, and reinforced in every category of the REACH curriculum. Scientific and quantitative reasoning are explicitly addressed in the University-wide learning outcomes and the analytical Thought REACH category, but can also be found in Contexts and Systems and Humans in Connection. Critical analysis is the first University-wide learning outcome and is incorporated in all REACH categories as well as the freshman and senior year experiences. Technological competence is taught through a wide-variety of mediums across the curriculum, particularly given the realities of the current Covid crisis. Finally, the Mission and Core Values of Mercyhurst are explicitly addressed in iMU and ETH 400, where ETH 400 devotes 2-3 weeks of class to the analysis of these and application to the students' personal, professional, and civic lives. ETH 400 is dedicated to ethical reasoning, the final University-wide learning outcome, in the formal understanding of theory, the application of theory to practice in questions of social justice, and the development of students' understanding of their own moral framework. This is assessed not only through reflections but also thorough a shared assignment in a "Moral Framework" essay. Room for further analysis and, therefore, additional compliance would be through a full four-year cohort analysis of student response data from 2016-2020 using the Chalk and Wire system in terms of the iMU, BTG, and Ethics reflections for the 2020 graduating cohort and subsequent cohorts. Currently the University-wide learning outcomes are not being fully assessed, although data is being collected. The Assessment Coordinator indicates plans for more fully integrating University-wide learning outcome assessment into the REACH curriculum. Additionally, any validation of the curriculum through recent Alumni, Career Development, or Departmental specific surveys may bolster the collection of evidence and further show compliance with regard to student learning and the uniqueness of the curriculum in applied contexts beyond the boundaries of the university.

Because Welcome Week activities play an important role in setting the stage for a student's Mercyhurst career and is the time in which students engage in their first service learning project, first-year student welcome programming was forced to adapt rapidly to social distancing and limited capacity of events due to the impacts of COVID-19. Welcome Schedule programming changes reflected the necessity to

adapt to the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19 but also reflected the importance of the consistent content provided each year to first-year students. While the adapted format for 2020 does highlight the ability to pivot and still provide first year students with programming in a revised format, the Working Group suggests studying and measuring the effects of welcome week 2020 activities for planning in 2021. The same recommendation is made in regard to classroom environment, where an assessment of the distinctive Mercyhurst Hybrid Model for classroom experience and content delivery is strongly encouraged.

Standard III-6 *In institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula*

Potential Evidence:

Capstone Assessment Form Responses August 2019 (Thesis and Capstone Projects)
Thesis/Research Project Author Permission Form
Access to CITI Human Subject Training
Illumination/Student Scholarship Symposium
4+1 Programs
Research Methods Courses (Syllabus Repository, MS III Department Chairs)
Additional Writing Support (Tutoring Services Usage)
Post Graduate Surveys
Department Specific Brown Bag Lunches for Conference Prep (not in Evidence)
Faculty Mentor Graduate Assistant Opportunities for Research and Publishing (not in Evidence)
Funding for Graduate Students for Conferences and Research (not in Evidence)
Employer Evaluation Form (Graduate Internships)
National Exams/Field Tests (not in Evidence)
PLS 3rd Learning (weblink)
Practicums/Clinical Rotations/Student Teaching (Not in Evidence)
Graduate Catalog
MS STD III -6 Graduate Thesis Library Procedure

Summary of evidence:

Mercyhurst University provides a wide variety of graduate-level learning opportunities that support the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking. These offerings range from 4+1 programs, graduate and certificate programs, supervised field experiences, capstone and thesis experiences, to national exams and field tests. The resources to support these graduate programs center on research and writing supports, funding, and providing venues to communicate and publish scholarly works, field placement opportunities, and national exam preparation.

As per the Graduate Catalog, the majority of the graduate programs require a thesis and/or capstone project to complete their program of study. While some programs require or opt for a thesis, other programs require a capstone project. The outcomes for the thesis and capstone projects are assessed as part of the department's annual assessment procedures (i.e., Capstone Assessment Form Responses August 2019). Additionally, the faculty and graduate student work with the Hammermill Library so that copies of their thesis are available. The Thesis/Research Project Author Permission Form confirms that the author granted Mercyhurst University Hammermill Library an electronic copy of the work listed

without alteration of the content, for purposes of continuous preservation and access by those affiliated with Mercyhurst University who have an active username and password.

Many graduate students are afforded opportunities to present their research on campus in a juried atmosphere (i.e., Illumination Scholarship Sessions 1 2 3). Students submit abstracts for acceptance and are notified of their presentation date/time. Programs are available that note student participation and their research paper topics. Some of the graduate departments have provided opportunities for their students to present their research or posters to the faculty and students in their programs. This provides a venue to communicate their work to others in the field. It also helps the students to ready their work for presentation at conferences. Additionally, opportunities for faculty mentorship and graduate assistant opportunities for research and publishing exist within departments. Some of the graduate departments have university or grant funded graduate assistants that assist faculty with their research and publishing and/or lab work. Other departments have a formal or informal faculty-mentoring program where they work with students on research projects in their courses. As part of these informal activities, some of the graduate departments have university or grant funding opportunities to support graduate students to attend and present their research at local, state, regional, and national conferences.

As noted from the syllabus repository, each of the graduate programs offer a research methods course that is relevant to their discipline (i.e., Syllabus Repository and Survey with Dept. Chairs). In a survey of department chairs and program directors, it was noted that the graduate programs offer various courses that focus on research methodologies and research analysis. The course catalog and program curricula will also show the research courses available and their course descriptions. These courses are assessed as part of their departmental assessment plans. Students in the undergraduate and graduate programs have access to the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). Data (CITI Report Academic Year 2019-2020) is collected on the usage of the training, the types of training modules completed, and the overall successful completion rates. This data is used by faculty who teach research methods courses as well as members of the Institutional Review Board so they are aware that the students who are pursuing IRB approval understand their ethical responsibilities with research and human subjects.

Highly qualified undergraduate students have the opportunity to apply for an accelerated course of study in various programs. These 4+1 programs, (i.e., <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/academics/4plus1programs>) and application processes are listed in the university website. These programs are promoted with major/minor fairs, graduate school fairs, and by departments that have 4+1 programs. The 4+1 programs have a program code in Self Service for students and program directors to be able to track their progress in their program of study. In order to support 4+1 and graduate students, the Hammermill Library has created a Resource for Graduate Students Library tab (i.e., <https://library.mercyhurst.edu/c.php?g=603934&p=4185381>) that compiled specific resources for graduate students for how to navigate the library as well as services that are available to them. There are a number of helpful links to texts on how to write a thesis, submitting your thesis to be bound, and how to have your thesis published. This resource has been used in addition to the Writing Center (i.e., Tutoring Center Usage report). The university has a fully staffed writing center that services both the graduate and undergraduate students. The writing center has virtual office hours that are able to accommodate our fully online programs as well. The writing center generates a report of its overall usage, number of students serviced, and types of assignments assisted with.

In addition to the traditional classroom experiences, a number of departments offer graduate internship placements (i.e., Graduate Catalog Internship descriptions; Employer Evaluation form). Individual

departments as well as the university's Career Development Center's internship coordinators support graduate students who chose to complete internships during their program. Internships can be credit and noncredit bearing. There are a number of graduate and certificate programs that require a practicum/clinical rotation or student teaching opportunity. These are supervised activities (i.e., Nursing Clinical Evaluation Forms) where students are observed and assessed based on appropriate criteria, and, in some cases, accreditation standards. The completion rates for these activities are housed with the department directors and appropriate accreditation bodies. Mercyhurst University partners with PLS 3rd Learning (<https://www.mercyhurst.edu/admissions-aid/graduate-admissions/professional-development-courses-educators-pls-3rd-learning>) to provide graduate-level education courses online and on-site at locations throughout the region, offering educators a convenient opportunity to complete courses for professional development or license renewal. A number of the graduate and certificate programs require a national exam or field test to be taken. The pass rates for the exams are housed with the department directors and reported as part of their annual assessment documents, self-studies, and accreditation documentation. Lastly, Mercyhurst University's Career Development Center and individual graduate departments conduct Post Graduate surveys to gauge their alumni's satisfaction with their programs and also ask about their job placements.

Summary of compliance:

Given the evidence presented, there are a number of services and resources available to individual students and faculty as well as to departments to support students' academic progress in graduate education programs. A number of the activities and outcomes are demonstrated through the assessment process at the university. As part of the annual assessment process, the university reports pass rates of the national exams and major field tests; these scores are also used as part of program self-studies and accreditation process and renewals. Assessment of graduate capstone courses and theses are included in the department's individual assessment documents (e.g., Capstone Assessment Form Responses August 2019) and used for department analysis. As part of these ongoing processes, action plans have been used to make changes to capstone and thesis.

Successfully completed theses are also catalogued and displayed in the Mercyhurst University Hammermill Library. The Director of the Library (e.g., MS STD III -6 Graduate Thesis Library Procedure) noted the early bound theses are housed in the archives and cataloged in our Library Management System (LMS). The more current (past 5 years) is in electronic format only and in our LMS. It was also stated that students and faculty can search our LMS catalog and obtain access to electronic copies immediately. Older bound copies have only been scanned into the LMS if the author gave us permission. In terms of the future strategic work, the University has both a Graduate Thesis and Research-based projects that can be bound by the graduate student/author if they would like a copy. A copy is also bound for the department of record. The library pays for both copies. Additionally, looking forward, it is planned that since the theses are housed in the archives and the archives have the optimum scanner, which the archives will at some point take over the management of the thesis.

In order to achieve a number of these outcomes, resources and supports need to be in place for students and faculty. Each of the graduate program's research methods courses (e.g., Research Methods Course Syllabi) are evaluated as part of the departmental assessment process. If there are any issues with the outcomes of these courses, faculty complete action plans for noting changes to the course for the next iteration of the course offering. A number of the research methods courses require the use of Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). CITI data is compiled by the

Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee to review its usage. However, a more robust review of how the IRB committee and the university uses the document is warranted. For example, is this practice used as evidence for grant funding for evaluation research for studies with human subjects? Is it used as an external validation of IRB knowledge to guard the university in lawsuits for research with human participants? Is it required by faculty for requirements of the course and to conduct research?

Graduate students have a number of opportunities to communicate and present their research and scholarship. The university sponsors and hosts the Illumination/Student Scholarship Symposium on an annual basis. From review of the programs, it appears that a healthy number of students participate in the program. While the program is open to both undergraduate and graduate students, a more detailed program would be able to delineate between undergraduate and graduate students. Additionally, for future events, there should be consideration of how to be more inclusive of graduate students in completely online programs. A virtual component could be added to the current program for a more inclusive event. As opportunities for presenting graduate work conferences do exist, so does funding for preparing graduate students for the conferences and events. Some of the graduate departments provide university or grant funding for students to travel to conferences. Further exploration on the process for awarding funding as well as the amount of funding per student may be warranted and could be accomplished through a centralized budget for graduate student research endeavors.

In addition to the Illumination event, graduate students have opportunities to demonstrate research, scholarship, and independent thinking through graduate internships, practicums, student teaching, clinical rotations, and PLS 3rd Learning. The Career Development Center, individual departments, and partnering agencies offer internships, practicums, student teaching, and clinical rotations for students to gain experience in the field. There are site supervisor forms (e.g., Nursing Clinical Evaluation Forms) that are completed at the end of each experience and provided to the departments for evaluation of the student. These are also included in the assessment process for the university and the accrediting bodies. Mercyhurst University partners with PLS 3rd Learning to provide graduate-level education courses online and on-site at locations throughout the region (<https://plsclasses.com/our-classes/?partner=Mercyhurst%20University>). This offers educators a convenient opportunity to complete courses for professional development or license renewal. A report on the number of students who use this partnership for coursework completion would be beneficial.

Standard III-7 *adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers*

Potential Evidence:

Associate College Articulation Agreements
Baccalaureate College Articulation Agreements
Graduate College Articulation Agreements
Online Consortium of Independent Colleges and Universities (OCICU) Provider Agreement

Summary of Evidence:

Mercyhurst University is dedicated to providing high-quality educational experiences and opportunities for all students. If any student desires to complete a course outside of Mercyhurst University, the university undertakes adequate and appropriate institutional review of the opportunity designed and

delivered by other institutions or third-party providers. Much of the review is completed in advance using articulation agreements.

Articulation Agreements are an educational partnership where a university agrees to accept certain credits that were earned at a different educational institution. Sharing this type of agreement with potential, or current, students identifies potential opportunities for continuing education at partner institutions once Mercyhurst degree requirements are met. The Articulation Agreements are found in the footer of the Mercyhurst public facing website under Policies and Compliance. According to the Associate College Articulation Agreement document, an articulation has been developed between Mercyhurst University and Corry Higher Education Council, Erie Central Tech High School, Erie County Technical School, Harbor Creek High School, North East High School, Perseus House Charter School, and Warren County Technical High School. There is also information on Mercyhurst's public facing website about our partnership with Mercyhurst Prep High School. According to our website, "the agreed course articulations afford Mercyhurst Prep students the chance to earn college credits and fulfill Mercyhurst University curriculum requirements simply by completing equivalent courses at Mercyhurst Prep."

According to the Baccalaureate College Articulation Agreement document, an articulation has been developed between Mercyhurst University and Clarkson University, Corry Higher Education Council, Duquesne University, D'Youville College, Fashion Institute of Technology, Gannon University, Jamestown Community College, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM), New York Chiropractic University, Ohio University, Philadelphia College of Medicine (PCOM), Rochester Institute of Technology, Saint Vincent Health System, Syracuse University, and the University of Pittsburgh. According to the Graduate College Articulation Agreement document, an articulation has been developed between Mercyhurst University and Corry Higher Education Council and Lord Corporation. The OCICU Provider Agreement is housed with the Office of Distance Learning under the direction of the Office for Institutional Effectiveness.

Summary of Compliance:

As evidenced by the Articulation Agreements, Mercyhurst University participates in appropriate institutional review and approval of educational experiences offered by third-party providers. The Articulation Agreement documents adequately establish in writing a commitment that strongly supports the concept of seamless student transfer. Relevant details are provided that go into detail regarding guaranteed admission, transfer credits, scholarships, and academic and course requirements. The Consortium Provider Agreement outlines the obligations of a consortium provider and associated fees, in addition to consortium terms and intellectual property. In the same way, the OCICU Provider Agreement document adequately establishes the responsibilities of OCICU and Provider Institutions, while also holding each party accountable.

Criteria III-8 *periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student-learning opportunities.*

Potential Evidence:

Academic PLAN

Program Curriculum Maps

Action Plan Form (for academic departments)

Assessment Handbook

Assessment Institute Schedules

Campus Climate Survey
Departmental Sophomore Review Processes
IDEA Diagnostic Instrument
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2019 Survey Results
Program Change Form
Programmatic Accreditation Chart

Summary of Evidence

Mercyhurst University has worked diligently over the last ten years to cultivate a culture of assessment. This is accomplished through assessment of faculty, courses, programs, and University-wide learning outcomes. There are both frequent short term as well as longer periods of assessment to study and hopefully improve upon programs for students.

At the departmental/program level, there are a number of assessment tools in order to evaluate how well departments are achieving their goals and make improvements. Goals and learning outcomes are developed by departments/programs through their Academic Plan and the Curriculum maps they develop. This provides the foundation of assessment. The Departmental Sophomore Review Process is conducted across most undergraduate programs to assess student progress within their majors. The review process is unique to each academic department and is typically conducted in a student's sophomore year or second year in the program. The sophomore review process is an integral component assessed during each departmental five-year self-study report. The review process should include assessment of the student's competency within predetermined program SLOs.

Each department conducts an annual departmental assessment of specific learning outcomes. This is done with the guidance of the OIE during the assessment institute. At that time, if departments determine there are outcomes or goals they are not achieving, an action plan is created in an Action Plan Form to address it. Departments must provide information about the SLO, targeted measure of assessment, evidence of missed target, and provide concrete steps to improve success of the intended SLO measure. Through the process of completing the Action Plan Form, departments must assess the SLO and effectiveness of the delivery of content designed to demonstrate student knowledge and/or competency within any given program SLO. Additionally, updated targets are sometimes identified or even the need for significant departmental reorganization. For example, with changes in from a Core Curriculum to the REACH curriculum, many departments offering REACH courses made adjustments to better accommodate the demands of the REACH curriculum while still meeting departmental goals and learning outcomes. The assessment handbook provides a detailed guide to programs for the creation, implementation, and maintenance of annual assessment protocols. All departments also do a five-year self-study that contains a summary of the assessment reports and places those into the larger context of faculty make-up, departmental resources, and future goals.

The Program Change Form, available through the OIE, must be completed prior to implementing changes to a program. Depending on the magnitude of changes, several offices must review the program changes (Deans, OIE, and the Provost) prior to approval. The Program Change Form provides a consistent, uniform structure when departments propose program changes. The form requires departments to provide detailed information and rationale for program changes, degree completion plans that must include each course, and the SLOs for each course indicating whether the SLO will be introduced, developed, or mastered within each course.

Every three years, a first-year student cohort and a senior cohort (intentionally designed so that each first-year cohort is surveyed again on a triennial basis) is given the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) at Mercyhurst University. While it does not distill down to a university-specific naming of each individual program, the **2019 NSSE** snapshot report (obtained through the OIE), shows Mercyhurst alongside a comparison group of similar universities on a variety of domains related to student learning such as high-impact practices, learning environments, and faculty-student interactions. With a 179 student completion tally, the response rate was similar to the 2013 and 2016 response rates. The NSSE data from 2019, specifically in the 2019 Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons report, shows where student responses are for ranking their quality of interactions – which can be considered above average or good – with members of the learning community such as students, faculty, and support staff. The university can consider this data and the breakout reports such as the “high impact practices,” for example, when isolating programs or areas for improvement or noticing broader trends for maximizing program effectiveness.

Summary of Compliance

As evidenced by the Departmental Sophomore Review Process, Mercyhurst participates in assessment of the effectiveness of student learning opportunities. One example to highlight is Religious Studies. The self-study for Religious Studies outlines the evolving process by which students are assessed during the sophomore review process. The self-study also addresses challenges with the sophomore review process within their department, specifically citing that many students who declare Religious Studies as their major, do so in their sophomore or junior year. Students are often in their senior year when they have completed enough major courses for review and become eligible for sophomore review. The self-study includes plans to update the sophomore review process to better align with and assess the student learning outcomes identified by the department.

In the NSSE 2019 reports, it was observed in the Snapshot and Multi-year reporting areas, especially against comparison institutional groups, and in comparison to 2013 and 2016 data, that the university may benefit from looking more closely at the sophomore through senior experience and see where opportunities exist to bolster and assess the efficacy of additional community-based learning and learning communities as well as social supports that help the well-being of student learners.

As evidenced by the Action Plan and Program Change Forms, Mercyhurst provides consistent, uniform resources for departments to continue to assess and enact data driven changes to programs providing student-learning opportunities.

Standard III Requirements of Affiliation

Requirement 4: *The institution’s representatives communicate with the Commission in English, both orally and in writing.*

Potential Evidence:

Board Committee Charters
MSCHE Reports
University Bylaws May 2019

Summary of Evidence:

Board charters, MSCHE reports, University Bylaws are all written in English.

Summary of Compliance:

All documents of the university are written in English. Those who have primary contact with the Commission speak in English in those conversations. All working Group and Steering Committee meetings are conducted in English. Yes. Mercyhurst is entirely compliant here.

Requirement 6: *The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and state) laws and regulations.*

Potential Evidence:

Associate Articulation Agreements
Baccalaureate Articulation Agreements
Graduate Articulation Agreements
PDE Higher Education Reports
North East Consolidation Plan (check name in evidence)
Covid 19 Mitigation Plan (not in evidence)
FERPA (not in evidence)
Title IX reports (not in evidence)

Summary of Evidence:

Mercyhurst University, through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Provost's Office, and the President's Office maintain each of these agreements and reports in good standing, submitted on time with responses from appropriate agencies. As Mercyhurst works toward the Consolidation of the North East and Erie campuses, all of this work is done with a careful eye to Federal and state regulations as well as MSCHE requirements. The University's response to the Covid 19 crisis in the spring semester when classes were forced to remote status and in the fall with in person and online classes, all CDC and Erie County Department of Health regulations were followed carefully. Finally, the institution sends annual reminders to faculty and staff of FERPA regulations, and a link to Title IX compliance training.

Summary of Compliance:

Because the articulation agreements are in good standing and the University has confirmation from PDE of compliance with state regulations, the University is in good standing with all current federal and state requirements. Regular consultation occurs with local and state department of health officials for housing, food service, classroom experiences, athletics, and co-curricular activities.

Requirement 7: *The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purposes within the context of higher education.*

Potential Evidence:

Student Handbook (Page 9)
Employee Handbook (Page 2)
Faculty Handbook (Page 13)
Website (About tab, Mission link)
Hub (Mission tab)
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Winter 2018-Winter 2020
Mission, Vision, and Core Values
Strategic Plan 2018-2020
Strategic Plan Update 2.14.20
Conference for Mercy Higher Education October 2020 site visit report (with VP for Mission)

Summary of Evidence:

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy, the University embraces its identity as a Catholic, Mercy institution of higher education and demonstrates a commitment to that identity within its Mission, Vision, and Core Values. Aspects of the Mission are embedded throughout university offices and programs. The Board of Trustees as a whole and the specific mission subcommittee engages the Mercyhurst community in fulfilling the Mission, Vision and Core Values. Members of the Mission Area under the leadership of the VP for Mission meet regularly with the board and serve an integral role in guiding the university. This is evident in the Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, with each meeting including an update from members of the Mission Area.

The Mission statement is easily found in various sources accessible to the public, students, and employees: University Student Handbook page 9; Employee Handbook page 2; Faculty Handbook page 13; Website (About and Mission); and The Hub (Mission tab).

The Mission guides much of university life and serves as the basis of all strategic planning initiatives as evidenced in the Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and the Strategic Plan Update 2/14/20: "Renewal Through the Mercy Mission". The recent strategic initiative for restructuring is also indicative of mission integration: "Mission Inspired. Future Ready." Each of these demonstrates a desire to continue living the mission through practice and education. As stated on the Mercyhurst webpages for Mission: "Mercyhurst education aims at engaging students for life and at creating leaders in justice and service."

During 2019 and 2020, the VP for Mission led the university through a comprehensive mission self-study process which included a culminating multi-day virtual site visit in October 2020 from several representatives of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education. This process helped to illuminate the life of the Mission in terms of recent progress and accomplishments as well as strategic areas for suggested improvement to continue to align with the Mercy, Catholic mission in the current and future contexts of higher education.

Summary of Compliance:

As stated above, evidence of a distinct mission and related goals can be found throughout various documents that guide university life. Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes clearly indicate involvement of the Board in approval and guidance of mission integration. The board created a sub-committee dedicated specifically to the mission. The mission, vision and core values are embedded throughout the university and are intertwined in academic and extracurricular programming. The Mission guides the university goals and strategic initiatives as an institution of higher learning that incorporates the values of a Catholic, Mercy education throughout the institution.

Requirement 8: *The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.*

Potential Evidence:

Program Curriculum Maps
Program Assessment Reports
Departmental 5-year studies
Assessment Handbook

Annual Report on Campus Ministry to diocese of Erie
Mission Office Report to Mercy Coalition (Not in evidence, need to check the name)
IPEDS Webpage
Marketing Reports
Marketing Upload News Stories; Mercyhurst News Stories
Mercyhurst Magazine
Mercyhurst Public Website

Summary of Evidence:

Mercyhurst University maintains a rigorous assessment process of all programs and offices. The Assessment Handbook, created in 2014, for Academic Program and Core Curriculum assessment provides a detailed description of the assessment philosophy of the institution and the Mercyhurst Mission that drives all programs at the University. Strategic goals are identified. The handbook then provides guidelines for programs to develop their assessment plans, conduct annual assessment, and incorporate the results of that assessment into the programs to more effectively achieve their goals. General education assessment is also outlined, including working groups for assessment of University-wide student learning outcomes that includes faculty from across the curriculum. The Handbook provides information on WEAVEonline. "WEAVEonline is a central repository for assessment information where faculty and staff can learn about and document assessment and quality improvement processes, procedures, and evidence. The software records assessment practices in academic, administrative, and educational support areas. This system is also helpful for tracking assessment information for accrediting groups (such as MSCHE) and annual reports. In addition, entered data can be linked to Academic Program Outcomes, General Education/Core Curriculum Outcomes, and the Strategic Plan" (from the 2014 handbook). The handbook does not include information about Chalk and Wire, which is used by many programs for sophomore review, senior exit interviews, portfolio creation, and program assessment. All stages of program assessment are maintained through reports to OIE. Public facing reports are found in official forms through IPEDS, Marketing, and the Website. For example, the University maintained a page on the website for Covid 19 tracking data that was available to the university community and the larger Erie Community. As a Mercy institution, Mercyhurst is independent from the Diocese of Erie, but as a Catholic institution it maintains a good relationship with the Diocese through regular reports. Mercyhurst also completed a comprehensive Mission self-study and site visit through the Conference of Mercyhurst Higher Education.

Summary of Compliance:

Mercyhurst University works to assess all academic programs on an annual basis. These reports are readily available through OIE. Non-academic and co-curricular offices referred to as student services also provide annual assessment reports and complete a self-study every five years. During 2020, student service units were tasked with critically reflecting on various adaptations of programming due to Covid 19. University-wide assessment is planned but not done and undergoing revision. The assessment handbook itself requires regular revision as the strategic plan is updated and as assessment software is changed. Updated handbooks are maintained by the OIE and made available through the HUB, which also provides detailed explanation for conducting departmental 5-year studies. Other public reports on university finances, campus consolidation, and marketing are best addressed by another working group.

Requirement 9: *The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.*

Potential Evidence:

Syllabus Repository
Assessment Handbook
Assessment Institute Schedules
Classroom Observation Form
Course Change Form
New Program Application
ODL Guide for Developing and Teaching Distance Learning Courses
Keep Teaching Guide (Not in evidence)
CTE Programing
Course Equivalency Guide
IDEA Diagnostic Instrument
IDEA Global Learning Outcomes with Mercyhurst Learning Outcomes
Modified USE Survey
OutREACH
REACH
Program Curriculum maps

Summary of Evidence:

Mercyhurst prides itself on the rigor, robustness, and cohesiveness of its academic programs. The syllabus repository is available for students and faculty to see the content of classes for course selection and advising. Programs, as stated earlier, use the syllabus repository to evaluate the content of courses to determine both that courses are being taught at an appropriate level for their place in a program's curriculum and the general education program with REACH courses that may simultaneously fulfill program requirements and REACH requirements. The syllabus repository also allows for comparison of courses across departments to identify similar topics being taught from multiple angles and potential places for development of new courses to fulfill potential gaps in both program and university curricula. In the construction of new courses there are specific criteria for approval. Departments must be able to explain the structure and general content of the course and what need it fulfills in the program. It must be approved by the department, department chair, dean, and provost before it can be added to the curriculum. If programs want to propose additional sub-fields, for example Cyber Security within the Computer Information Science program, that application requires the department to provide a rationale for the program within the department, clear student learning outcomes, identification of courses to be taught, evaluation of the cost of the new program (new courses, additional faculty, additional resources, etc.), cooperation with other departments for cognate courses if needed, and analysis of the value of adding this program to the university offerings. It must be approved by both the faculty senate and the provost's office.

Teaching guidelines from the Center for Teaching excellence in cooperation with the Provost's office and guidelines for online courses through the Office of Distance Learning (ODL) provide parameters and standards for both rigor and cohesiveness of individual courses. The course equivalency guide provided by the provost's office addresses cohesiveness and rigor with courses should the faculty member need to be away for a class period. IDEA student evaluations address both the rigor and cohesiveness of a course from the student perspective and are used by faculty, department chairs, the Rank and Tenure committee, deans, and the Provost's office for evaluating the quality of an individual faculty member's teaching by making use of course observations and IDEA scores along with other pieces of evidence in accordance with the faculty handbook. The Global Learning Objectives for IDEA are mapped with the University-wide learning outcomes in all but one instance.

Summary of Compliance:

Based on the extensive vetting process of courses and programs in light of programmatic and university needs, there is a clear cohesion to a Mercyhurst education. The pairing of IDEA Global Learning Objectives with University-wide learning outcomes connects each course to the larger curriculum of the institution, which reflects the overall mission and core values. The rigor of all learning programs is determined not only at the program level but also at the level of individual faculty and courses, that each course have the appropriate work load and content as determined by the department. In particular, department's with external disciplinary accreditation must demonstrate the rigor and coherence of their programs. The OutREACH program connects the overall learning goals of the University to the mission and core values, from the first semester of the first year in iMU, to BTG in the sophomore or junior year, to ETH 400 in the senior year. While not every program is represented in REACH, every student takes the REACH courses to provide breadth to their course of study in light of the University-wide learning outcomes, and ETH 400 in particular is designed to connect each student's course of study to the mission, core values, and REACH curriculum to ensure coherence across a student's course of study. Student achievement is assessed through sophomore review and senior exit interviews as well as annual assessment of individual programs. Where the university needs to spend more time is in assessment of the University-wide learning outcomes. Also, while many programs use the syllabus repository for internal assessment of individual courses and faculty and to compare the rigor and content of similar courses in other departments, more use of this tool by individual department chairs could enhance the coherence of programs and the sustained and equivalent rigor across courses in the departments and between departments.

Requirement 10: *Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.*

Potential evidence

Mission Survey Results
Annual State of the University Address 2018-2019
Assessment Handbook
Assessment Institute Schedules
Budget Management Policies and Procedures
Employee Handbook
Freshman Course Preference Survey
Fundraising Reports
IDEA Diagnostic Instrument
Information Technology Policies and Procedures
Modified USE Survey – Student Satisfaction
IT Initiatives
IT Roadshow
MFA Setup Instructions and FAQs
New Program Application
Program Learning Goals and Outcomes
Strategic Plan 2018-2020
Strategic Plan Steering Schedule 3.6.20

Substantive Change for Closure of the North East Branch Campus Document is not available in the SharePoint folder
Tutoring Center Data

Summary of evidence

On January 7, 2020, the VP for Mission shared the preliminary findings from the report publicly with employees during an annual Employee Professional Development in-house conference day. The full day of breakout sessions was inspired by and built around the notion of Mission as it is integral to every employee's work. The Office of Mission concluded a "2020 Employee Mission Survey" on January 24, 2020 with the questions and results documented. The survey illustrated the positive change from nearly a decade prior in terms of employees' perceptions about how Mission would be carried forward remaining in alignment with a Mercy Mission without full-time Sisters of Mercy employed by the institution. The survey also became a backdrop for dialogue during an open forum with the VP for Mission for all employees to participate as they wished to share publicly or privately.

The 2018 and 2019 Annual State of the University Address is housed in the Office of Marketing and Public Relations. The speeches were delivered by the president of the university at the opening of the 2018 and 2019 academic years. The messages were delivered to an annual gathering of employees from all campuses to share important future changes, report highlights from the previous year, introduce new faculty members, and provide an overall tone of gratitude for all workers participating in a common educational enterprise. Employees are encouraged to attend and are permitted to close offices temporarily in order to receive the in-person speech.

The (2019) handbook is kept and maintained by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. All employees are encouraged to use the handbook. From student learning outcomes design to a template for the departmental 5-year self-study, the handbook offers an array of resources for immediate utility for faculty and staff. Over the past decade, this updated and revised handbook has become the tool and the backbone for any assessment activity. The handbook is essentially a self-help guide for employees as well as a document that encourages a common language for assessment culture-building across the institution.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness houses the Assessment Institute Schedules from 2016 through the present (2019) with the institutes taking place each August. The intensive all-day approach to annual faculty training creates opportunities for faculty-to-faculty interaction and team building, especially after the summer break. A wide variety of solicited breakout session topic options are available because of requests from faculty members and/or trends in student/classroom and/or faculty/employee surveys where further faculty (re)training may be warranted. Faculty members and any invited administrator/staff presenters observe the schedules and content such as time of breakout sessions and brief summaries of each session.

The Finance Office posts policies and procedures via the Hub and in various emailed memo updates to budget directors. Employees with such responsibility access and manage their budgets through Self-Service. The Hub mentions (as of May 2020) that Finance Policies and Other Documents are coming soon. With changes in technology, requests from auditors, federal changes and/or new management practices, the policy and procedure updates are used by employees to remain current and compliant. Without posted and/or emailed policies and procedural updates, the annual financial management at

the university would be ineffective, inefficient, and pose a risk to the overall financial wellbeing of the university.

The updated June 1, 2019 edition of the Employee Handbook is maintained by the HR department with editing/input from administration and designated handbook review committee members. It can be found on the Hub. The handbook assists employees by setting work expectations, provides roadmaps for resolving issues, prepares workers for work and life balance, and generally maintains an order for all work to be effective and efficient while allowing for the document to be updated and refined over time to address any changes that arise. New and long-time employees can each access the online handbook any time there are questions, requests for information, or a potential need to edit and update the handbook due to some change at the University or in society.

The annual Freshman Course Preference Survey is maintained through the office of Academic Support with Provost Office oversight. The survey is used to efficiently and more effectively place incoming first-year students into classes with an attempt to offer courses that match student preferences and any needs for remedial course work to courses being offered. Prior to a course preference survey where the courses would be pre-selected based on student input, the reality of planning for the start of Fall semester courses with an optimal environment for student and faculty satisfaction with smooth operations was much more complicated and challenging.

The Advancement Office tracks annual fundraising and produces reports as requested by Trustees or Finance, for example. The IRS Form 990 is an additional resource that annually and publicly reports on university fundraising. The fundraising reports provide an update to individuals, such as the Trustees, who have the authority and interest in tracking annual giving and fundraising efforts. Without fundraising reports, the Advancement team and individuals assisting in the fundraising efforts of the University would neither have a common language nor a clear understanding of goals and outcomes. The reports offer an analysis of giving trends that support various and strategic goals associated with student learning and the overall student experience.

The IDEA Diagnostic Instrument is maintained by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Faculty members use the instrument for student feedback on teaching methods and content delivery success. Having a quick and easy 7-question survey and data from a classroom of students assists both the faculty member and students in the learning process by identifying any challenges or successes with content delivery.

The Information Technology Department maintains current policies and procedures for university IT services, resources, and access. Students and employees can refer to posted IT policies and follow procedures when using campus resources. These are found on the IT Hub page. Having posted policies and procedures allows employees to know the guidelines associated with using various equipment or services provided by the university. These documents create an accountability between IT and individuals using the technology.

The IT Initiatives document is maintained by IT and details a March 2020 update across a three-year span. The document aligns with the strategic plan of the University all IT initiatives in a succinct manner. The list of updates forms a roadmap that charts where IT upgrades and work has been strategically focused. The roadmap will be useful in the future to continue initiatives in progress and weave new initiatives with the new strategic plan.

The IT department, via the Hub, posts the IT Roadshow as a means of connecting employees needing training with IT personnel. The roadshow is an additional mechanism to connect employees in need of technical help with knowledgeable professionals. The IT work order system is the first place for documenting issues or questions on an individual basis. The roadshow creates an additional layer of support for the whole department to receive training or answers to often bigger questions or complex issues. Any Mercyhurst employee or department can initiate the request using the simple form.

The IT department Hub page posts information about multi-factor authentication (MFA) and frequently asked questions (FAQ). The MFA adds a second layer of security to the standard username/password log in process. This security feature has become industry standard and protects important and highly sensitive and regulated information from being accessed by unauthorized users. Students and employees can access the page in order to properly set up devices.

The USE is used annually to offer a snapshot of student satisfaction with a variety of departments and venues across campus. The feedback data collected is shared with the departments to offer any data and comments about the services and programs offered by the department. Departments use the feedback to improve service delivery or offer staff training, for example. The Modified USE Survey is housed within the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The New Program Application document provides a check and balance approval approach with Chair, Dean, OIE, Faculty Senate, and Provost weighing in on the conversation and approval process for new academic programs. The application provides both a document and a process that engages critical discussion and various personnel to vet the new program with resources needed, associated learning outcomes, and opportunities for student enrollees. The Provost's Office houses this application (last revised in 2018), and any faculty member can initiate a conversation and use the provided application and associated pre-application procedure.

The Program Learning Goals and Outcomes and associated outcomes are able to more transparently educate prospective students as they weigh the idea of investing their time, money, and energy into applying for and hopefully working through a university program with the greater potential for new career opportunities at the conclusion of the program. These are located in the course catalog and found on the University website under academics. Prospective and current students/families and other interested parties can use this public information to learn about various academic programs offered by the institution.

The three-year Strategic Plan, in conjunction with the University Mission and Core Values, forms the backdrop to forward progress of the institution in a well-orchestrated fashion. Departments/Programs and individual employees can see goals, strategies, and action steps and contribute to the overall implementation. Because plans change according to University need, this strategic plan evolved rather quickly, particularly Goal 4 (renewing the North East vision) during the 2019-2020 academic year and will feed into the next strategic plan. The 2018-2020 University Strategic Plan ("Renewal Through Mercy") is housed on the Hub and the University's strategic planning website for public view. Internal and external parties can view the plan and its goals and associated action steps.

The transparency of the Strategic Plan Steering Schedule allows for individuals to prioritize and plan for how and when to participate in the planning process. The chief strategic planning officer maintains the schedule and timeline document. It is located on the internal Mercyhurst website, and the timeline provides a year one snapshot and roadmap for invested parties to understand the preparation,

planning, and participating opportunities for the creation of the next strategic plan. The March 2020 schedule also shares activity updates with how many and what types of contributors helped to produce the ideas to be woven into the document.

Substantive Change for Closure of the North East Branch Campus Document is not available in the SharePoint folder

The 2020 tutoring center data is maintained by the Tutoring Center through the Office of Academic Support and Student Success. Having the Tutoring Center data in a single workbook allows for follow-up conversations with departments and future consultants in terms of making informed decisions and adjustments to the budget and center programming for the future semester. It is worth noting the 2020 data is time-stamped and captures the center's programming continuity during the challenges of operating within the COVID-19 remote learning environment. The data illustrates the requests for content area by course with corresponding consultant hours and student requestors.

Requirement 15: *The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs.*

Potential Evidence:

Faculty Handbook Promotion process and Rank and Tenure Processes
Tenured faculty
Faculty with administrative appointments
Faculty with part-time administrative appointments
Academic Support Personnel
Years of service awards for faculty and staff, faculty turn-over rates

Survey of Evidence:

The faculty rank and tenure process can be found in the faculty handbook located on Mercyhurst's internal website under the webpage for the Provost's Office. To locate the handbook, employees go to the Employee Hub, then click on Academics, Provost Office, then locate and click on the Faculty Handbook. The tenure and promotion process ensures a core of faculty that remain over time to provide continuity and coherence to both individual programs and the larger university curriculum. Those who achieve full professor status through this process have been on the full-time faculty roster for a minimum of 12 years, providing a significant level of institutional memory. The tenure process is used to highlight the contribution of faculty to the institution by providing faculty with regular feedback in their third year regarding their progress toward tenure.

Beyond tenure-track and tenured faculty, the University has long-term full and part-time faculty who maintain continuity in programs from year to year. In music, for example, the same adjuncts may be used year after year to teach specific instruments. Faculty with full-time or part-time administrative appointments bridge the institutional knowledge across the administrative and curricular elements of the institution. Academic support personnel do not have the benefit of tenure but also provide continuity in student advising from year to year and are instrumental in the iMU 101 and 102 courses. Faculty, staff, and administrative appointments and years of service are maintained in the HR files.

Summary of compliance:

Through the tenure process Mercyhurst maintains a core of faculty that provide continuity across years in academic appointments. Faculty with full or part-time administrative appointments hold these after many years of service and demonstrate a vested interest in the institution itself. Academic support staff who support academic programs and facilitate iMU 101 and 102 have also shown significant longevity. Confirmation of years of service in faculty, staff, and administrators is a part of the confidential files in Human Resources and therefore not available to the working group. However, if the University does not already do so, the working group recommends an analysis of percentage of faculty who remain past 3rd year review for tenure track faculty. We also recommend an analysis of faculty turnover in nontenure-track faculty, conversion of faculty from part-time to full-time status as well as from full-time to part-time, and correlation between administrative positions and longevity at the institution.