

ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

Assessment of student learning is not a matter of reaching an end point, but rather an ongoing process of inquiry, development and improvement. Such a process requires commitment, as well as communication and collaboration within and between departments and program areas within the University. The Office of Academic Assessment Mini-Grant Program was created to provide support for assessment-related activities.

The pages below will provide the following information:

- Program Overview
- Possible Mini-Grant Projects
- Use of Mini-Grant Funds
- 2008-2009 Mini-Grant Program Timeline
- Applying for an Assessment Mini-Grant
- Mini-Grant Application Form
- Dean/Department Head Acknowledgement E-Mail
- Criteria for Review of Mini-Grant Proposals
- Assessment Mini-Grant Final Reports

Information in this packet can be found on the web page for the Office of Academic Assessment at <http://www.uni.edu/assessment/minigrants.shtml>.

ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROGRAM 2008-2009 SCHOOL YEAR

During the 2008-2009 school year, the Office of Academic Assessment will sponsor a mini-grant program for assessment-related projects from academic departments and program areas from UNI. An overview of the program is provided below. If additional information is needed, contact the Office of Academic Assessment by calling 273-2778.

Purposes of the Program

Assessment of student learning is not a matter of reaching an end point, but rather an ongoing process of inquiry, development and improvement. Such a process requires commitment, as well as communication and collaboration within and between departments and program areas within the University. The Office of Academic Assessment Mini-Grant Program was created to provide support for assessment-related activities and reflects the mission of the Office of Academic Assessment and strategic goals of the University of Northern Iowa.

The [mission of the Office of Academic Assessment](#) is “to provide leadership for the planning and implementation of student outcomes assessment, academic program review and other procedures that support academic program improvement, student learning, and accreditation.”

Objectives from the [2004-2009 UNI Strategic Plan](#) reflected in the mini-grant program include Objective 1.1: Maintain the excellence in undergraduate and graduate programs that distinguishes the University. . . , Objective 2.2: Support faculty initiatives to enhance the quality of their teaching, and Objective 5.2: Develop intellectual resources by providing opportunities for faculty and staff to pursue professional development and to enhance performance.

The purposes of the assessment mini-grant program are:

1. to enhance the culture of assessment on campus by encouraging conversation, collaboration, research and scholarship that focus on student learning;
2. to support and encourage faculty involvement in the assessment of student learning and the application of assessment results for continuing improvement of programs and curricula;
and
3. to strengthen policies and procedures for assessment of student learning at UNI.

Funding Amount and Duration

Grant awards up to \$500 will be awarded during the 2008-2009 school year. Teams developing grant-funded projects are encouraged contact their department heads to see if funds would be available to supplement grant funding and/or to provide ongoing support after the conclusion of the grant funding period.

The grant application includes a section for the intended use of grant funding. Expenditures must be made by the end of the fiscal year. See Use of Mini-Grant Funds for a list of expenditures that can be covered by an assessment mini-grant. The application form includes a budget page for anticipated use of grant funding; a final expense report will be required at the conclusion of the grant-funded project.

Eligibility

Full-time faculty from academic departments at UNI may apply for grant funding. Although proposals may be submitted by an individual faculty member, preference in awarding funding will be given to projects from department or program-area assessment committees or other collaborative groups. Project teams may include student members.

Application Procedures and Deadlines

The grant application provides a format for presenting the purposes, activities, and budget for the assessment-related project to be covered by grant funding. The department head and dean of the college for the group proposing the project will be required to e-mail the Director of Academic Assessment to indicate their awareness and approval of the project. See "Applying for an Assessment Mini-Grant" for more information.

Grant applications are to be **submitted electronically** and will be due by **November 3, 2008**. If the total amount of grant funding available for the 2008-2009 school year is not awarded for projects proposed during the fall semester, a second round of applications will be received on a rolling basis. Announcements of grant awards for the first round of applications and the availability of funding for the second round will be made by December 1, 2008.

Selection Procedures and Criteria

Proposal Reviewers

Grant applications will be reviewed by members of the [Student Outcomes Assessment Committee](#).

Review Criteria

Criteria on which applications will be judged are included in the following list.

- Relationship of project to specific department assessment plans/needs
- Potential to support development with respect to student learning, program quality, and/or department/program assessment planning
- Clarity of purpose and intended outcomes
- Feasibility and specificity of the plan of action and related timelines
- Adequacy and defensibility of the budget related to project goals
- Articulation of a clearly defined strategy for disseminating and using project outcomes

The SOA Committee will use a rubric for review of mini-grant applications.

In addition to the criteria listed above, decisions about funding awards will also include the goal of sharing available grant funding with the broadest representation of colleges and departments. Thus, multiple awards to a single college or department may not be awarded, depending upon the number and quality of applications received.

Announcement of Awards

Decisions concerning grant applications will be communicated by December 3 for proposals submitted by the November 1 deadline. Awards for proposals submitted on a rolling basis after November first will be announced as decisions concerning funding are made by the Student Outcomes Assessment Committee. Descriptions of projects receiving grant funding will be posted on the web page of the Office of Academic Assessment.

Reports

A final project report and a final expense report will be required for all funded projects. The final project report will be due no later than August 3, 2009, and will be made available from the Office of Academic Assessment web page. The final expense report will be due by the end of the fiscal year (June).

Grant recipients may also be asked to share the results of their project in a public forum on campus, particularly one open to the University community as a whole, e.g., at a workshop or a panel or poster presentation sponsored by the Office of Academic Assessment or other office/department.

Grant recipients are encouraged to consider sharing their project in a conference presentation or a journal article and to provide a copy of their presentation, article or other documentation to the Office of Academic Assessment.

Getting Started

There are many directions that projects funded by the Assessment Mini-Grant Program could take. See the list of Possible Mini-Grant Projects as a resource to begin thinking about projects that would benefit assessment and student learning in your department or program area. You may also want to check out the assessment planning resources available from the Academic Assessment web page and printed resources available from Rod Library and in the Office of Academic Assessment.

POSSIBLE MINI-GRANT PROJECTS

The areas and possible directions for activity listed below do not cover all of the possibilities for directions that mini-grant projects might take. They are intended to start department conversations for potential mini-grant proposals or other department assessment-related activities. Several areas might also be combined in a single project.

If you would like to discuss an idea for a project before proceeding to complete an application, please feel free to contact the Director of Academic Assessment (donna.vinton@uni.edu) or any member of the [Student Outcomes Assessment Committee](#). For ways that mini-grant funding can help with your project, see “Use of Grant Funding.”

Assessment Planning

- Research, apply and share assessment issues and strategies related to your discipline.
- Explore ways to involve students in assessment activities and planning.
- Organize a discussion group around a book or set of readings on assessment and explore implications for departmental assessment activities.
- Plan a departmental retreat to review/develop/evaluate department assessment plans and strategies.
- Systematize data collection efforts to spread them over the time period between Academic Program Reviews.
- Identify constituent needs with respect to student learning outcomes and program outcomes.
- Review, revise, and/or update student learning outcome statements.
- Examine connections between assessment activities done for an outside accrediting agency and UNI student outcomes assessment procedures and plan ways to make the two work together.
- Develop ways to add or increase faculty participation in the assessment process.

Assessment Tools and Methods

- Develop rubrics for evaluating student work used for assessment—e.g., portfolios, writing assignments, projects.
- Pilot-test the use of an evaluation system for rating student performance for assessment purposes.
- Develop a new assessment tool—e.g., a survey, an assignment or project
- Examine and implement ways to enhance student motivation to perform well in assessment-related activities.
- Review/revise/develop student, alumni and employer surveys.
- Learn more about direct methods of assessment and review possible methods to implement.
- Review and/or pilot test software or special equipment that could be useful to your department’s assessment processes.
- Explore ways to embed assessment methods in classes.
- Explore potential uses and strategies for implementing electronic or paper portfolios for capturing student work.
- Identify and develop/test strategies for making use of external communities (alumni, employers, internship reports, etc.) to validate student learning. .

Use of Assessment Data

- Create reports/summaries using data that has been collected in the past.
- Enter and analyze data that has been collected but not yet processed.
- Extend previous findings, e.g., through the use of focus groups, development or revision of additional assessment methods, deeper data analysis, etc.
- Connect assessment data with specific learning outcomes and create a format for reporting on the data and what has been learned from it.
- Explore connections between various sets of data that have been collected.
- Determine usefulness of current data and explore additional data needs to provide necessary and useful information on student learning outcomes.

Curriculum Development

- Track program student learning outcomes through courses and course syllabi to determine which outcomes are taught in which courses (i.e., create a “curriculum map”).
- Explore ways to communicate program learning outcomes through course syllabi.
- Create specific strategies for connecting assessment-related data and information with the curricular review process.
- Identify needed curricular changes and create a plan for implementing them.

Communication Strategies

- Develop a web page to share student learning outcomes for your program with current and potential students and other interested groups.
- Develop ways to include student learning outcomes and assessment-related information and findings in newsletters, brochures, or other department publications.
- Create and/or formalize processes for communicating assessment findings within and outside of your department and/or college.
- Develop assessment materials and reports, identifying who gets what information when and in what format.
- Present assessment findings at a department meeting or retreat.

Recordkeeping and Procedures

- Develop procedures and/or a database for recording and tracking assessment-related data and findings.
- Create tools/strategies for collecting anecdotal or performance examples of student achievement.
- Review/revise/develop procedures for yearly/bi-yearly/other regular updating of assessment data and assessment-related activity and results between academic program reviews.

USE OF MINI-GRANT FUNDS

The funding provided through the assessment mini-grants, up to \$500 per funded project, is most suitable for short-term, small-scale projects. Matching or supplemental funding from the department may be used to add to what is supplied through the mini-grant. Uses of funding will be included in the grant application and in the final report for the grant project. Funds must be expended by no later than June 30 of the funding year.

The list below suggests some possible uses of grant funding. Use of funds is subject to college and university regulations and requirements. If you have questions about allowable expenditures, please contact Shirley Uehle (shirley.uehle@uni.edu) in the Office of Academic Assessment, 273-2778.

Grant funding can be used for:

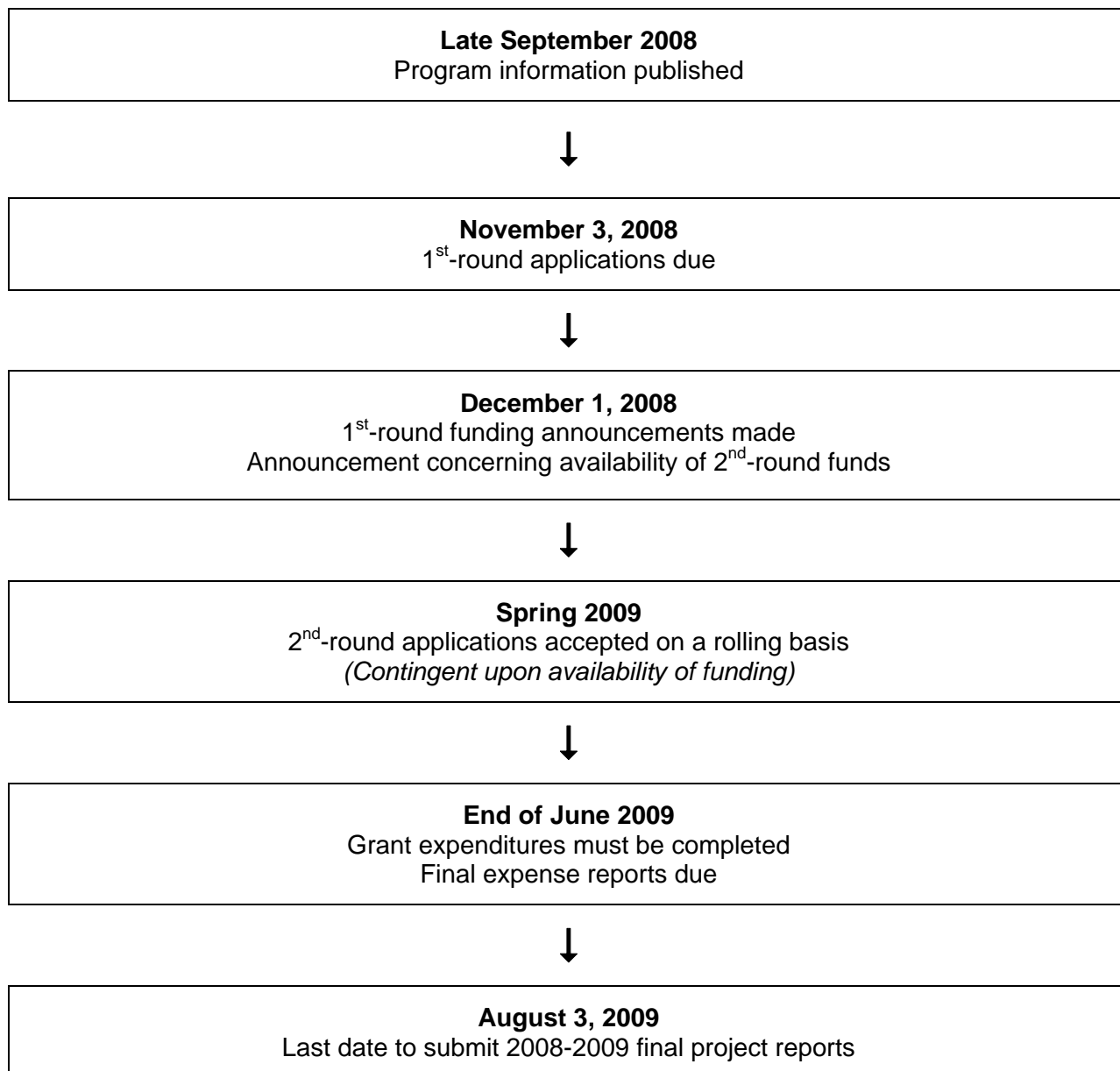
- Costs for printing and mailing of assessment instruments
- Purchase of assessment texts
- Purchase of instruments or software for assessment of student learning
- Incentives for students or other participants (e.g., employers, alumni) to complete or participate in assessment activities
- Costs for data input or analysis
- Stipends for faculty evaluation of student work (e.g., portfolios, papers, project) done during non-work hours
- Wages for student workers or temporary staff to assist with assessment projects/activities
- Costs for web page design
- Costs for travel to another campus in order to consult with colleagues about assessment procedures or strategies they have used and which you are considering
- Honoraria for on-campus visits by colleagues or others who could add information and expertise for department assessment planning processes
- Funding for retreats for departmental strategic planning and goal-setting

Funds cannot be used for:

- Payment for faculty release time
- Payment for faculty time during the regular work week
- Food for regular, ongoing departmental meetings or committee meetings

After receiving assessment grant funding:

- Project leaders for funded projects will be asked for an account number for transfer of funds.
- The project leader will be responsible for keeping expenses within the budget outlined with the grant application and making sure there are appropriate records and documentation of expenditures.
- A final expense report should be submitted by e-mail, as an attached file, to the [Office of Academic Assessment](#) (shirley.uehle@uni.edu) by the end of the fiscal year. This report will consist of the budget page of the application form with final expenses inserted and the total amount spent noted. Records and documentation of expenditures will remain with the office dispersing the funds.
- Funding that is not used will be returned to the Office of Academic Assessment.

TIMELINE FOR THE 2008-2009 ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

APPLYING FOR AN ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT

- Use the **Word file provided** to fill out the application form.
(http://www.uni.edu/assessment/minigrant_application.shtml)
- **Name the file** using the semester, the name of the program or department for the proposal and the name of the project leader—e.g., F07sociologysandstrom.
- Keep the total application, including budget and cover page to no longer than **five pages**, using font no smaller than 10 point.
- Note that application cover page for funded projects will be **posted on the web page** for the Office of Academic Assessment.
- Share your mini-grant proposal with the appropriate Department Head(s) and College Dean(s) and ask them to e-mail the [Office of Academic Assessment \(shirley.uehle@uni.edu\)](mailto:shirley.uehle@uni.edu) with their acknowledgement that they have read and approve of the proposed mini-grant funded project. Applications will not be considered complete without these **letters of support**.
- **Submit your application by e-mail** as an attached file, sending it to the [Office of Academic Assessment \(shirley.uehle@uni.edu\)](mailto:shirley.uehle@uni.edu) by midnight of the deadline date.
- **Deadlines:** Grant applications will be due **November 3, 2008**.

If the total amount of grant funding available for the 2008-2009 school year is not awarded for projects proposed during the fall semester, a **second round of applications** will be announced by December 1, 2008, with applications received and reviewed on a rolling basis.

- If you have **questions** about a potential project or the application process, feel free to contact Donna Vinton (donna.vinton@uni.edu), Director of Academic Assessment, or any member of the [Student Outcomes Assessment Committee](#).

ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

Project Title:
Department(s)/Program(s) Included in This Project:
Project Leader: Name: Department: E-mail: Phone:
Names, Departments, and E-Mail Addresses of Other Project Participants:
Brief Description of Project: <i>(Please limit description to 150 words.)</i>
Total Amount of Funding Requested:
List below the names of Department Head(s) and Dean(s) who will be submitting e-mailed acknowledgements/approval of this project:
Check one: <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal Submission <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal Resubmission

ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL PROJECT DETAILS

Overview
<i>(Address the following as appropriate: Problem or Need That Your Project Addresses, Relationship to Current Assessment Plan/Activities, Intended Outcomes of the Project)</i>
Description of the Project
<i>(Address the following as appropriate: Explanation of What Will Be Done and By Whom, Approximate Timeline of Activities/Steps, Description Of Funding Needed and How It Will Be Used)</i>
Impact and Dissemination
<i>(Address the following: Plans for Sharing Project Results, Plans for Using Project Outcomes to Improve Student Learning/Program Goals or Quality)</i>

ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL BUDGET

Add or delete rows as needed to complete this form. Provide brief, but specific descriptions.

Supplies, Resource Materials, Printing, Postage	
<i>Item Description</i>	<i>\$ Amount Requested</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Subtotal:	
Student Assistance	
<i>Description (e.g., tasks, hours, rate/hour)</i>	<i>\$ Amount Requested</i>
1.	
2.	
Travel Reimbursement	
<i>Description (e.g., who, where, mileage, meals)</i>	<i>\$ Amount Requested</i>
1.	
2.	
Subtotal:	
Equipment and/or Software	
<i>Item Description</i>	<i>\$ Amount Requested</i>
1.	
2.	
Subtotal:	
Other Direct Costs	
<i>Item Description</i>	<i>\$ Amount Requested</i>
1.	
2.	
Subtotal:	
Total Amount Requested:	

**DEAN/DEPARTMENT HEAD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
OF THE ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL**

Applications for assessment mini-grant funding are not considered to be complete without an e-mailed acknowledgement of the proposal by the Department Head(s) and College Dean(s) for the department(s) and/or program area(s) involved in the proposed grant-funded project.

Acknowledgements should be e-mailed to [Shirley Uehle \(shirley.uehle@uni.edu\)](mailto:shirley.uehle@uni.edu), secretary for the Office of Academic Assessment.

E-mails for Fall 2008 applications must be received no later than the due date for applications—November 1, 2008. For applications received on a rolling basis during the spring semester, letters of acknowledgement by the Department Head(s) and College Dean(s) must be received before applications will be reviewed by the SOA Committee.

A suggested format for the e-mail follows:

I am familiar with the proposed project entitled [name of project] and led by [name of project leader] and approve of its submission for funding from the Office of Academic Assessment Mini-Grant Program.

[Additional comments in support of the project are optional, but may be added.]

Name

Title

For additional information, please e-mail the [Office of Academic Assessment \(shirley.uehle@uni.edu\)](mailto:shirley.uehle@uni.edu) or call the office at 273-2778.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF MINI-GRANT PROPOSALS

Project Title: _____

Reviewer: _____

Criterion	E	S	N
Relationship of project to specific department assessment plans/needs			
Potential to support development with respect to student learning, program quality, and/or department/program assessment planning			
Clarity of purpose and intended outcomes			
Feasibility and specificity of the plan of action and related timelines			
Adequacy and defensibility of the budget related to project goals			
Articulation of a clearly defined strategy for disseminating and using project outcomes			

Excellent:

Well-developed plan, clearly and thoughtfully presented, capable of immediate and successful implementation.

Satisfactory:

Details and justifications/explanations are sufficient to show direction and potential for productive action, capable of being implemented with a minimum of fine-tuning or additional planning.

Needs Work:

Missing some information, justifications/explanations not clearly presented or inadequate, implementation would require further clarification or development before action could be taken.

Comments:

ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT FINAL REPORTS

A final project report and a final expense report will be required for all funded projects. The project leader will take the responsibility for submitting final reports. Due dates are listed below.

The **purposes** for the final reports are to:

- Provide evidence of the value of the Assessment Mini-Grant Program in encouraging the development of assessment-related activities on campus
- Offer a means of sharing accomplishments from the grant-funded projects with faculty and staff across campus
- Encourage future applications to the Assessment Mini-Grant Program.

Submit reports to the [Office of Academic Assessment \(shirley.uehle@uni.edu\)](mailto:shirley.uehle@uni.edu) as an attached file.

The **final project report** should include the following:

1. A **cover page** that includes the following:

- Project title
- Department(s)/program(s) included in the project
- Name, title, department, and e-mail address of the project leader
- Names, titles, and departments of other members of the project group
- Project dates

2. A **narrative** no longer than 4 pages that includes information on the following:

Project Description:

Provide information on the problem/need the project addressed and the activities it involved.

Results

Possible topics for this section: What were the outcomes of the project—e.g., in terms of products, processes, policies, changes, etc.? What strategies added to the success of the project? What did you learn from doing the project? What challenges/obstacles did the project group encounter and how were they addressed? (Or how would you address them if you were to do the project again?)

Use of Results

Discuss how the results of the project were/will be shared outside of the group and how the project has affected or will affect student learning, and/or program quality, and/or department or program assessment planning?

Final project reports for the 2008-2009 funding period are due no later than August 3, 2009, although project leaders are encouraged to complete reports within 30 days of completion of the project. The final project report will be posted on the web page for the Office of Academic Assessment.

The **final expense report** is separate from the final project report. Use the budget page of the application form, inserting final expenses and total amount spent. ***Final expense reports are due by the end of the fiscal year*** for which funding was provided.