

## Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

### Testing Center

**Department:** Academic Support

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

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

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

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

## Service Outcome (SO):

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

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

## Findings:

2024-2025: Target was met.

2025-2026: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. The testing center offered and administered Accuplacer tests daily for both in-person and remote students. During Freshman Connection, we relocated to Russell Hall, near the check-in. We tested mid-morning to attract more students. The results showed an increase in numbers of testers. We also participated in Freshman Connectors' Campus Quest where we had the opportunity to help students by answering their questions and help them understand how our center can support their academic success.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025, the testing staff made changes for AC 2025-2026 to improve services for both faculty and students and drive the cycle of improvement. One of the notable adjustments was relocating to Russell Hall for Freshman Connection event, then coming back to the library to continue proctoring services. Due to scheduling conflicts with the welcome hour, we piloted early morning testing sessions to allow students to participate in the start of Freshman Connection activities. Despite the earlier testing time, participation remained strong and competitive with last year's numbers. A total of 17 students completed testing during the freshman connection period, which is a surprisingly high number given the early schedule. This reflects continued students' engagement and the effectiveness of the adjusted approach.

Staff that worked in the calm room took extra time to review scores with students. They encouraged those who needed to take the Accuplacer to do so during the event. This proved to be an excellent resource for students who were unsure about their scores and guided them on the next steps for admission and advising. While many students tested in Russell Hall in the morning, those unable to attend could come to the testing center later in the day. The number of students that needed to take the test was high; however, they opted to test later.

Freshman Connection is a fast-paced event with multiple sessions happening simultaneously. Main campus offers four different session events catering to over 200 students per session. Students who did not meet the required scores were given study guides to help them succeed in future attempts.

Fortunately, most students who tested during Freshman Connection achieved the required scores for college admission. This is a strong indication of their preparedness and reflects the effectiveness of the support provided throughout the program.

We also took part in Campus Quest, which brought incoming first-year students to our testing center. This event served as a fantastic opportunity to distribute handouts and share information about our services. The traffic for the quest increased from last year. We saw an increase in students at the testing center inquiring about our services, focusing on how to schedule an exam.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-2026 the target was met. We engaged students through various channels, including events, emails, phone calls, and in-person interactions, to raise awareness about the services offered by the testing center. These initiatives have significantly enhanced students' understanding of the different offerings at the testing center, such as proctoring, national tests, certifications, and scheduling processes. At this time, the library has not moved forward with a new dedicated social media platform, however, we have continued to utilize the existing social media platforms already established. Additionally, we recertified proctors to ensure they are fully equipped to administer the Accuplacer while traveling. Furthermore, we collaborated with the international department to provide remote vouchers for students wishing to take the Accuplacer in other countries. This approach exemplifies our commitment to delivering exceptional service and expanding access to testing opportunities for all students.

**Decision.** In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of AC 2025-2026 results, the testing center will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. To further improve accessibility to students, we will participate in all Freshman Connection events on the main campus and will relocate to Russell Hall. The opportunity will strengthen outreach and presence.

The testing center will continue to provide Accuplacer testing throughout the day during Freshman Connection for those who need it. We will allow prospective students to walk in without a prior appointment. This will create a welcoming experience and provide students a learning experience about our program. To increase participation, we will collaborate with recruiting to streamline and simplify the registration form for the next Freshman Connection, ensuring it is user-friendly and ask for attendees' session preferences.

Accuplacer will be offered daily at both our main campus and off-site locations, with an option for remote testing for students who need more flexibility. Our efforts to engage the international student population are proving successful, as we have received multiple requests for testing from these prospective students. We plan to partner with the Director of International Resources to offer testing vouchers for students.

Also, the testing center will update testing information annually in the university catalog. We will work with academic services to educate incoming freshmen taking University Studies about testing resources available to them. The testing center provides a wide range of services that we will continue to promote and enhance for students and the surrounding communities we serve. The testing center will welcome new instructors and

inform them of the range of services designed to assist them and the students. The testing center will continuously improve the website, make it easier for students to access valuable information, schedule exams, and connect with us. We will remind all proctors to renew their certifications to administer the Accuplacer. Several local high school students took the Accuplacer test in hopes of taking dual enrollment classes. We will remind the counselors to encourage high school students to come and test with us. This is an excellent opportunity for students to save money and time when coming to college after graduation.

These enhancements will improve the students' awareness of the services we offer, including the range of tests and certifications, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

### **Findings:**

2024-2025: Target was met.

2025-2026: Target was not met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. During peak periods, the testing center extended its operating hours to accommodate students. Additionally, we offered Saturday morning testing to ensure we met the needs of the students. There were 5,946 proctored exams for AC 2024-2025, which was over 10% from the previous year.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025, the testing center implemented changes for AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. First, the Testing Center extended its operating hours to better accommodate late arrivals and last-minute testers. Additionally, during peak periods throughout the academic year, the center has introduced early morning Saturday testing opportunities for students who require increased access. This adjustment ensures greater accessibility and flexibility for students with varying schedules.

In Fall 2025, we proctored a total of 2,891 exams, reflecting a decrease compared to Fall 2024. In Spring 2026, proctor activity increased to 2,981 exams, up from the previous spring total of 2,765 exams. Overall, the total number of exams administered reached 5,872, representing a decrease of less than 2% over the year. Several factors contributed to this decline. There has been a slight decrease in university enrollment for the AC 2025-2026 academic year with approximately 120 fewer students. Additionally, many professors reported smaller class sizes, reflecting fewer requiring proctoring. Finally, some students are opting for third-party remote proctoring options due to convenience or travel accrued expenses such as gas, childcare, etc.

While the number of Pearson VUE certification exams administered has remained steady, we have observed an overall decline for Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and Praxis exams. This trend may be influenced by fewer students entering the teaching profession and the fact that several universities no longer require GRE scores.

We also hosted College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) for local high school students but the demand for these tests remained low during this reporting period. We did not offer “Accuplacer Day” this year, however, several students from those schools did come into the testing center to complete the Accuplacer test, increasing our numbers.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-2026 the target was not met. Over the past assessment periods, the center extended its operating hours and successfully accommodated a high volume of testers. While there was a slight decrease reflected in the assessment data, it is important to note that these figures do not account for our extensive off-site proctoring activities.

The assessment does not include participation in events such as the Literary Rally and N Side view hosted by our university. These initiatives provide valuable opportunities for engagement with prospective students and allow us to expand our services beyond the testing center. We connected with over 1500 high school students and administered over 2000 exams to participants from 38 high schools at the Literary Rally. The Testing Center Director served on the rally committee and collaborated closely with the event director to ensure successful proctoring services.

Additionally, we support both the fall and spring N Side View days by administering Accuplacer exams, Advance Standing tests in math, English, and foreign language assessments. These experiences enabled direct interaction with potential students interested in NSU.

Overall, while the assessment data showed a slight decline, our expanded outreach increased accessibility, and off-site testing services demonstrated a strong and growing impact.

**Decision.** In AC 2025-2026 the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the results, the testing center made the following changes for AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. To better enhance operational efficiency during peak testing periods, we will continue to expand our hours of operation. The utilization of supplemental proctors will be implemented as needed to ensure adequate staffing. We will also expand outreach by actively participating in campus events such as Literary Rally, N Side View, and similar initiatives. These efforts are intended to improve visibility, promote available services, and foster greater engagement with the campus community. The director of testing will work closely with various departments to promote the use of our center for senior exams.

Furthermore, the Testing Center will move forward with plans to pursue designation as a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved testing site. This designation will allow us to provide certified testing for aviation-related certifications and licensure. This advancement represents a significant opportunity to expand our services, enhance our reputation, and better support workforce development in the aviation sector.

Also, the testing center will reach out to neighboring high schools to encourage participation in CLEP testing. As CLEP exams are offered at a reduced rate during the summer, the center will provide timely communication to partner schools to ensure awareness of this opportunity for their students. These changes are designed to enhance student interactions with testing staff, provide greater flexibility in scheduling tests, and facilitate inquiries about available services, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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

### **Findings:**

2024-2025: Target was met.

2025-2026: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Professors took advantage of scheduling their classes to complete exams in the testing center, which contributed positively to our overall proctoring results. In total, the testing center proctored 38 whole-class appointments, which reflects a significant increase compared to the previous year.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the staff made several changes for AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. We encouraged all faculty members to take advantage of our services throughout the year. Professors welcomed the idea to support the testing center by reminding students to have their tests proctored at the center. Faculty has coordinated with the testing center for their exams to accommodate both individual and group exam setting, including multi-day testing arrangements. For Fall 2025, we scheduled 36 class exams, representing a significant increase from the previous semester. Additionally, we arranged 54 whole-class exams for Spring 2026, culminating in an overwhelming total of 90 whole-class appointments for AC 2024-2025.

As a result of these changes, AC 2025-2026 target was met. These strategies positively impacted on proctoring operations, including increased testing volume on certain days. Many professors took advantage of the opportunity to have their entire classes complete exams at the Testing Center. Professors allowed extended testing windows as well so we could meet the needs of the students. Communication with faculty was instrumental in this achievement. This approach provided greater flexibility for students while also helping distribute testing volume more effectively.

**Decision.** In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of AC 2025-2026, the testing center will implement several changes in AC 2026-2027 aimed at increasing whole-class proctoring to drive the cycle of improvement. The center will generate a report each semester for new professors coming into the college. The plan is to engage with all professors, emphasizing that the testing center is a valuable resource for their students. Communication will be sent to all faculty members to encourage utilization

of the testing center. We will remind professors that we can accommodate group settings for multiple days. Should they wish to extend the testing dates to a group setting, we will be able to assist them, freeing them from the need to come to campus to administer their exams.

We will recommend that they take advantage of the center throughout the semester. These changes will improve professors' ability to schedule their whole class tests, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

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

### **Findings:**

2024-2025: Target was met.

2025-2026: Target was not met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Professors actively utilized the testing center services and consistently encouraged students to schedule appointments for their exams. A total of 5,013 exams were proctored, reflecting an overall goal of 10% increase.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the testing center made the following changes for AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The center took the opportunity to review and update its website, including all relevant information and forms. Enhanced collaboration among students, faculty, and departments proved to be beneficial, as evidenced by the numbers. The testing center successfully proctored 5,012 student exams during AC 2025-2026, reflecting a slight decrease of only one exam from the previous year.

As a result of these changes, the AC 2025-2026 was not met. Although there was improvement in the spring terms, the overall increase did not reach the 10% growth target. During Fall 2025, the testing center proctored 2,442 exams, while spring 2026 showed a modest increase to 2,570 exams. Overall enrollment was down, which directly affected the number of exams requiring proctoring. The university revamped the entire website which impacted access to forms. Students had difficulty locating or accessing the proctor request form for all campuses. Efforts were made to send reminders to students to schedule their free exam with the center, however, some students who live out of town chose to use third party proctoring to avoid travel costs. It is important to note that NSU students are not charged a proctoring fee for exams administered through the testing center. We do not charge a proctoring fee for NSU students requiring exam supervision; this service is provided free of charge. Additionally, we offer off-site proctoring for students residing out of town. Despite these efforts, these measures were not sufficient to achieve the desired increase in exam volume this academic year.

**Decision.** In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the staff plans to implement specific changes for AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. A key priority will be enhancing communication among

NSU students, faculty, and staff, to ensure exceptional service. To support this goal, we will increase outreach and engagement with all stakeholders. Planned initiatives are:

- Supporting students with scheduling, rescheduling, and accommodating times.
- Send appointment reminders to help students stay organized.
- Expanding collaboration with faculty who require proctoring services.
- Promoting the Testing Center's complimentary proctoring services for NSU students, compared to fee-based third-party providers.
- Continuing to update our website to ensure accurate and current information.
- Welcome walk-ins and assist students with their proctoring needs.

By improving awareness and expanding testing capacity, we aim to increase testing numbers and push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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

### **Findings:**

2024-2025: Target was met.

2025-2026: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2024-2025, a survey was conducted and met. Overall, the feedback received from students was positive, reflecting an important level of satisfaction with the services provided.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the testing center made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. After each exam, testers received emails inviting them to complete a survey aimed at gathering feedback on their testing experience. Emails included a link to click or a QR code to scan. To incentivize participation, we promoted the surveys and offered prizes through a random drawing for those who shared their thoughts.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025-2026 the target was met. Testers who responded to the survey provided above-average ratings in key areas that include scheduling, communication, and professionalism. Overall, feedback was positive and reflected a strong testing experience for students. There were helpful useful suggestions for continued improvement. Some testers indicated interest in expanding the variety of calculator options available, we well as implementing softer lightning within the testing space. A few comments highlighted concerns related to occasional technology issues and room temperature, and noise.

The testing center has four function calculators, nevertheless there are times when the students need graphing calculators. Currently, our budget does not allow us to purchase calculators. There were intermittent technology issues during the semester due to internet outages, which are out of our control. We offered to reschedule the testers and reach out to professors for approval of extensions for their exams. Please note that temperature settings in the testing center are centrally controlled and not managed by the staff. We will check on softer options for lightning with the electrical department at the college.

We received new noise cancelling headphones which helped with outside noise distractions. Additionally, we continued to use sandwich board in the hallways and walkways.

Our goal is to maintain a professional environment where students feel comfortable, recognizing that testing can be stressful enough without adding to their anxiety. We continue to strive for improvements that enhance the testing experience for everyone.

**Decision.** In the AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on an analysis of AC 2025-2026, the testing center will make the following changes for AC 2026-2027 to further drive the cycle of improvement. We will encourage students to complete the surveys during both the fall and spring semesters. We will reach out to the Math department to inquire about the availability of any spare graphing calculators. We will also remind the students that they can check out a calculator in the library with proper identification. Lightning is installed and maintained by NSU facilities staff. We will contact them to see if there are softer options for bulb replacements. These surveys provide a voice for our students and allow the staff to better serve the needs of the students to the best of their ability.

We plan to conduct a drawing each semester to promote participation in the survey. To support this effort, we will place paper links on the check-in table so students can easily pick up and complete the survey as they exit the center after testing. The approach is designed to make participation more accessible and convenient. We will continue to email the surveys too. Our goal is to foster student satisfaction and support everyone in achieving their educational objectives, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

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

### **Findings:**

2024-2025: Target was met.

2025-2026: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. The NSU Testing Center renewed its membership, and the National College Testing Association (NCTA) reinforced our commitment to maintaining high standards of testing services.

Based on the AC 2024-2025 results, NSU Testing Center made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Our staff maintained active membership with NCTA to ensure alignment with industry standards and ongoing professional development.

As a result of these changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met. We recertified membership with NCTA, which plays a vital role in fostering a culture of continuous

improvement within the Testing Center. Maintaining NCTA membership ensures that we continue to uphold national best practices while expanding our ability to offer a variety of tests and certifications that directly support student success. National recognition of our university provides valuable opportunities for staff to attend workshops and conferences.

**Decision.** In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of AC 2025-2026, the testing center will make changes for AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Membership and certification to NCTA will be renewed, supporting our goal of maintaining high standards of integrity, efficiency, and student-focused service. Collectively, these initiatives are expected to significantly enhance the delivery of our services and strengthen the overall quality and effectiveness of our testing operations, therefore, pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

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

### **Findings:**

2024-2025: Target was met.

2025-2026: Target was met.

**Analysis.** In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Surveys were emailed to faculty in both the fall and spring semesters to gather feedback regarding testing center services. Faculty were asked to complete the survey and provide input on their experiences and overall satisfaction.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the testing center implemented several changes for AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. One of the changes focused on revising the survey's questions to better align with faculty perspectives, rather than focusing solely on student feedback. The updated survey allowed for more meaningful insights into the needs of faculty. As a result, the AC 2025-2026 was met. Faculty members completed the surveys, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive across all evaluated areas. Results indicated strong agreement levels – averaging approximately 90% in key areas such as staff courtesy, knowledge, and professionalism.

**Decision:** In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of AC 2025-2026, the testing center plans to collaborate closely with instructors for AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The surveys help the center to enhance security measures, ensuring the utmost integrity of the testing process. To support these efforts, we will continue to send periodic survey invitations and reminders throughout the upcoming academic cycle. Participation is essential, as the insights gathered directly contribute to improvements that benefit both students and faculty while pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

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

The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvements in AC 2025-2026. These changes are based on knowledge gained through the AC 2024-2025 result analysis.

- The testing center participated in Campus Quest, N-Side View, Literary Rally, and Credit Connection for incoming first-year students.
- The testing center participated in all sessions of Freshman Connection and administered the Accuplacer each day of this event.
- Calm room staff helped recognize students who needed testing and sent them to us during Freshman Connection days.
- Face-to-face and online Accuplacer exams were made available to students needing placement.
- The testing center accepted walk-ins during targeted extended hours of testing.
- Noise cancelling headphones were received and used as intended.
- Recertification of Accuplacer proctors was completed.
- The testing center collaborated with professors to proctor whole-class testing.
- The testing center's website and forms were updated to allow for simpler forms.
- The relationship with all instructors and students improved through surveys.
- The testing center recertified membership with the National College Testing Association, which brought NSU recognition to the National level.
- Student learning and service outcome data were collected from information obtained on rosters and the testing center's calendar.

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

- The testing center will reach out to new and returning faculty, staff, and students to encourage the use of the center for their proctoring needs through channels of events, email, messenger, social media, and the university catalog and website. We will provide the most updated information, links, etc.
- The testing center will participate in the Literary Rally, N-Side View, Freshman Connection, and Freshman Campus Quest.
- The Director of Testing will serve on the committee for Literary Rally.

- The testing center will work with the international department to create Accuplacer remote vouchers for students who live outside the United States.
- The testing center will host extended hours, including Saturdays, during peak periods to accommodate more testers.
- The Testing Center will participate in UNIV 1000 by providing updated information related to general testing resources.
- The testing center will reach out to surrounding high schools to encourage CLEP testing.
- The testing center will offer Accuplacer testing daily during hours of operation including off sites.
- The Testing Center will reach out to department heads regarding proctoring senior exams.
- The Testing Center will welcome whole-class proctoring.
- All proctors will renew their Accuplacer certifications.
- The Testing Center will utilize additional proctors, if needed, during peak periods.
- The testing center will provide exceptional service to the students and faculty by evaluating surveys about their testing experience and implementing suggestions when possible.
- New instructors will be welcomed by the testing center and introduced to the available services.
- Membership of the National College Testing Association will be renewed.
- The Testing Center will actively work toward becoming Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certified testing site.