



**Annual Cycle for Continuous Improvement:
Outcomes Assessment Guidelines**

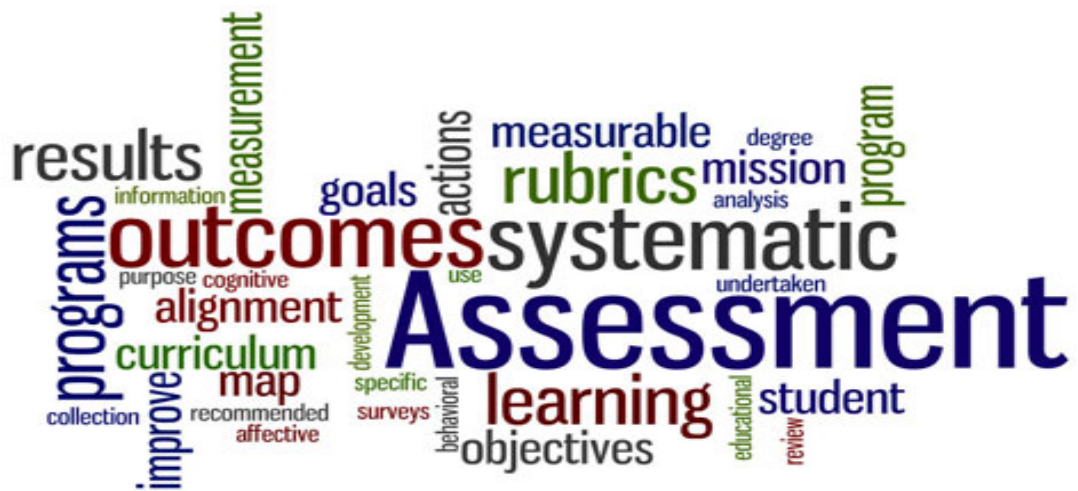


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Preface

Once upon a time there lived 3 fish in a pond. One was named “Plan Ahead”, another was “Think Fast”, and the third was named “Wait and See”. One day they heard a fisherman say that he was going to cast his net in their pond the next day. “Plan Ahead said”, “I’m swimming down the river tonight!” and so he did. “Think Fast” said, I’m sure I’ll come up with a plan.” “Wait and See” lazily said, I just can’t think about it now!” When the fisherman cast his nets, “Plan Ahead” was long gone. But “Think Fast” and “Wait and See” were caught! “Think Fast” quickly rolled his belly up and pretended to be dead. “Oh, this fish is no good!” said the fisherman and threw him safely back into the water. But “Wait and See” ended up in the fish market. That is why they say, “In times of danger, when the net is cast, plan ahead or plan to think fast!”

MORAL: One should have vision in their life. Having a vision helps to plan ahead to avoid the danger like “Plan Ahead”. Author Unknown

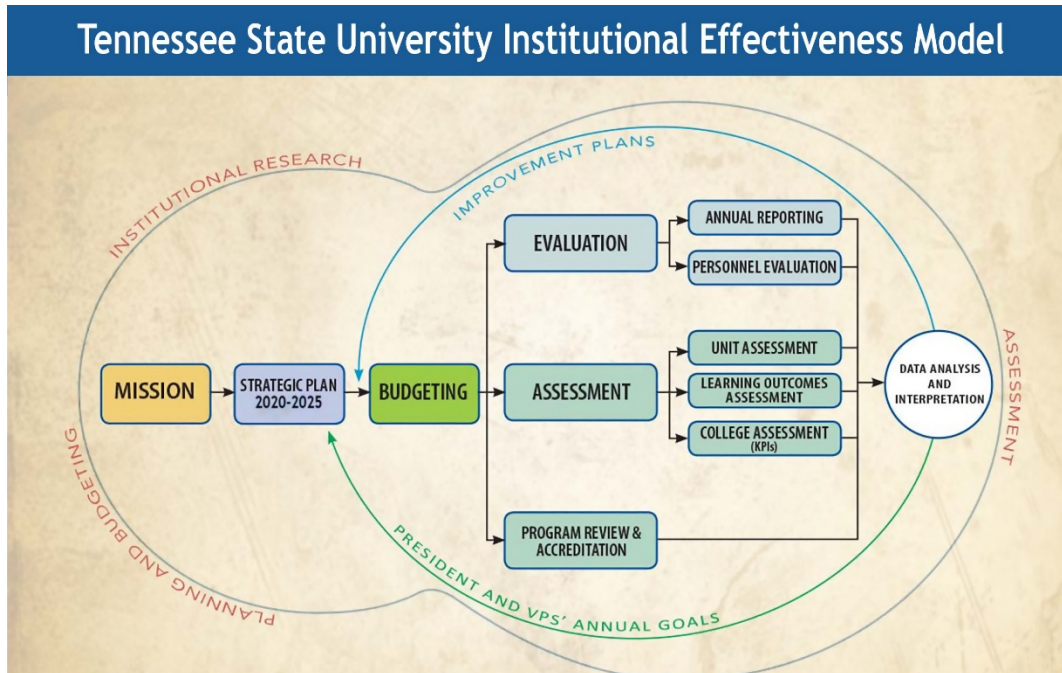
This story highlights the power of vision, of seeing situations as opportunities for prominence. The Annual Cycle for Continuous Improvement (ACCI) process at Tennessee State University (University) provides the platform for University leaders to build the synergy and work in unison to advance our shared vision for students and our community. To support the ACCI process, we have weaved resources together in this manual. The purpose of the manual is threefold: First, the manual provides a common understanding and set of expectations regarding the ACCI process at Tennessee State University. Second, it serves as a resource to aid the campus in their assessment efforts. Finally, it acts as a communication piece for our internal and external stakeholders, updating them about our assessment process and accomplishments. As such, it is a living document that will be updated on a regular basis.

Additionally, the Office of Assessment and Accreditation provides online resources and regular professional development workshops. We want to support you in any way we can, as we continue to plan ahead in excellence.

Introduction

What is IE?

IE, an acronym for Institutional Effectiveness, refers to "the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against mission in all aspects of an institution" (SACSCOC Resource Manual, 2018, p. 170). The components of Tennessee State University's Institutional Effectiveness model are illustrated in the figure below.



At Tennessee State University (University), assessment is one of the six components of the IE model inclusive of the assessment of both operational effectiveness and learning effectiveness. To assess the operational and learning effectiveness, all units and educational programs of the University are engaged in the Annual Cycle for Continuous Improvement (ACCI), which consists of developing the assessment plans, implementing the plans, collecting data to gauge the extent to which the expected outcomes are achieved, and then using the analysis of assessment results for continuous improvement.

What is Assessment?

- Dary Erwin defines assessment as "The systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students..."(Erwin, 1991).
- Fred Volkwein maintains that "assessment is a process, not a product; it is a beginning, not an end" (Bauer & Volkwein, 2000).
- Assessment is the "measurement of what an individual knows and can do" (Banta & Palomba, 2015).

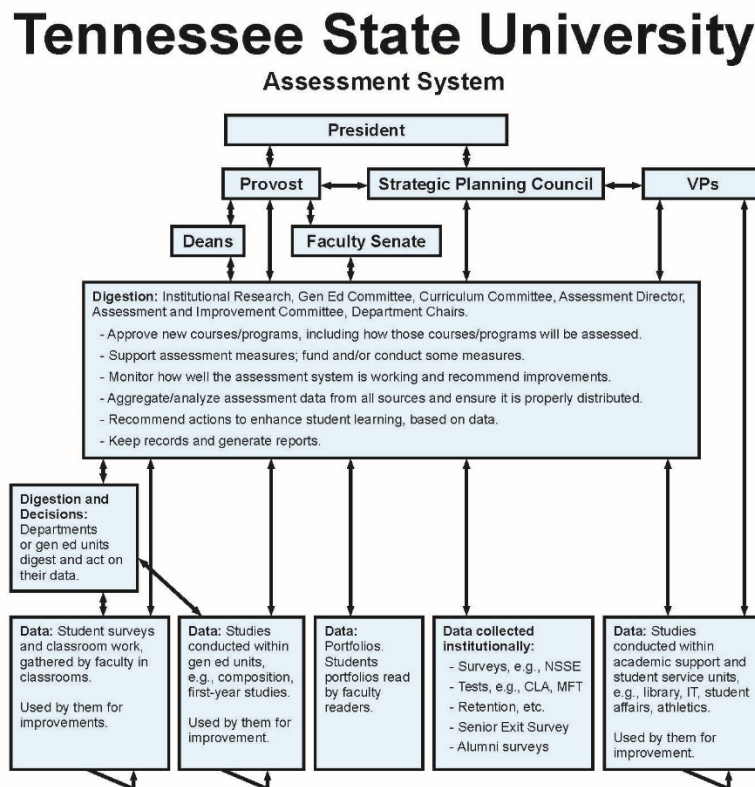
Many definitions of assessment exist, some emphasize accountability and others emphasize improvement of student learning as its principal purpose. While assessment focuses mainly on student learning, broader definitions describe assessment as evaluation of institutional effectiveness, evidence of resources, implementation actions, and outcomes undertaken for improving the effectiveness of instruction, programs, and services in higher education. The common theme is assessment is systematic and ongoing.

Tennessee State University Assessment System

The University' assessment systems is a campus-wide system that assesses how well students are achieving learning outcomes and to inform decisions at every level, from classroom and department on up to vice presidents and president. Figure 1 below provides a useful tool mapping the institutional assessment system which tracks how data about student learning flow into decisions throughout the institution. The diagram is read from the bottom up. The figure's basic structure highlights three aspects:

1. *Data*. The various kinds of data about student learning.
2. *Digestion* – How these data are digested – that is aggregated, analyzed, and disseminated.
3. *Decisions* – How these data are used for decisions, policies, planning, and budgeting.

Figure 1



Adopted from Walvoord, B. (2010). *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*. Jossey-Bass.

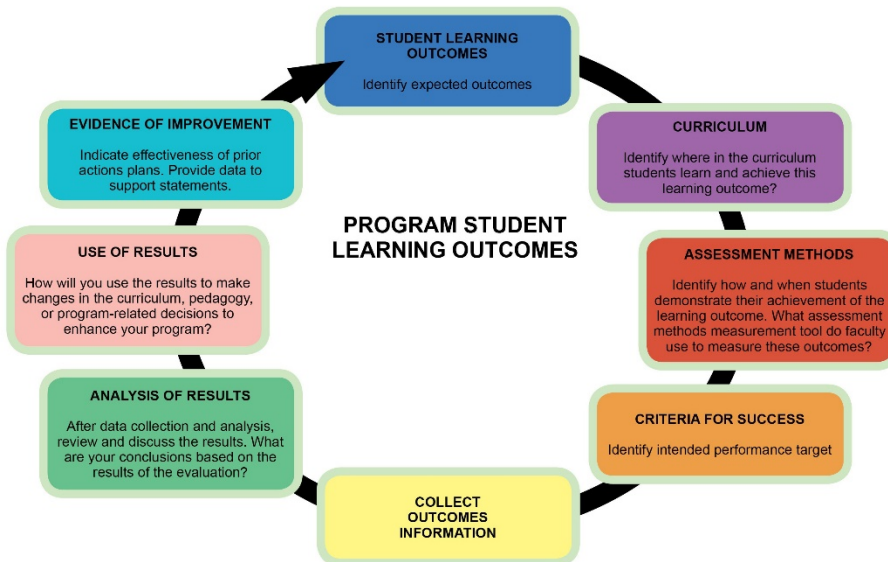
Annual Assessment Cycle

It is important to think through all steps of the assessment cycle. It is important to remember that assessment is an iterative process, intended to provide useful feedback about what and how well students are learning. When developing the plan, it is important to think through all steps of the cycle.

1. Set program or unit outcomes (student learning, operational, or quality of service). For academic programs, decide and articulate what students should know, value, and/or be able to do when they complete the program. For support units, decide and articulate issues that are pertinent and important to the department that will enable the department to improve.
2. Curriculum: identify where in the curriculum students learn and achieve the learning outcome.
3. Develop and implement assessment methods: design tests, assignments, reports, performances, or other activities that measure the types and quality of learning expected.
4. Establish criteria for success and performance target.
5. Review the assessment data: analyze the results of the assessments to see what they show about operational efficiency or student learning and if the criteria were met.
6. Create an action plan: decide how to address issues raised by the assessment data to improve operational efficiency or student learning; how will the results be used to make changes to enhance the unit or program.
7. Evidence improvement (close the loop): Implement prior year plan and document changes made - what was the impact, was it successful or non-successful.

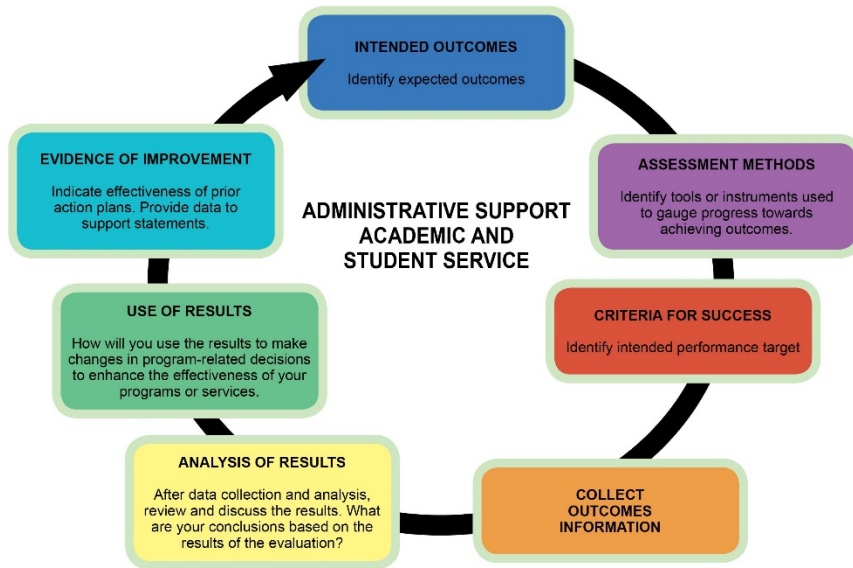
Tennessee State University

Annual Cycle for Continuous Improvement



Tennessee State University

Annual Cycle for Continuous Improvement



Outcomes Assessment for Continuous Improvement

01.01 As indicated in the mission statement and shared values, Tennessee State University inspires students to innovatively transform our city, state, and world. The University values excellence, learning, accountability, integrity, shared governance, diversity, and service. Outcomes assessment is an essential function for gathering critical information used to inform decision-making leading to continuous improvement of programs and services.

01.02 The University complies with our regional accrediting body’s compliance standards relative to Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (Section 7) and Student Achievement (Section 8), and in accordance with Standards 7.3 and 8.2. a, b, and c of [The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC):

“The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.” (7.3 Administrative effectiveness)

“The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.” (8.2.a *Student outcomes: educational programs*)

“The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.” (8.2.b *Student outcomes: general education*)

“The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for academic and student services that support student success.” (8.2.c *Student outcomes: academic and student services*).

01.03 The University has an established comprehensive outcomes assessment program that identifies and assesses the attainment of outcomes for administrative support services and student achievement in educational programs, general education, and academic and student services.

01.04 This policy describes the process by which the University schedules, conducts, reviews, and approves assessment activities to ensure data are collected and used for seeking improvement.

01.05 For the University’s purposes, outcomes assessment activities are expected to be informative and not punitive, and are conducted predominantly for the purposes of enhancing student achievement and improving programs and services. The focus should be placed on the area, rather than singling out individuals.

01.06 The University encourages each area to employ methods that will provide indicators for improvement. The University acknowledges that this may involve submitting results with low success rates with respect to the target in question and considers this a mark of effective assessment. The aim is not to show that the area is performing well. Rather, the aim is to determine how instruction and services might be improved.

01.07 The annual assessment cycle followed at the University includes two phases (Phase I – Planning and Phase II – Results Reporting). In early fall of each year, assessment plans are developed or revised to include the mission or purpose statement, outcomes, methods and measures of assessment. In late spring for student outcomes and summer for administrative outcomes, results, plans of action, and evidence of improvement are reported.

01.08 All outcome assessment plans are maintained in an electronic repository, *Campus Labs Compliance Assist*. Reports are accessible to all the University faculty and staff with a user ID. Refer to the [Assessment and Accreditation website](#) for specific cycle due dates, tools, and other pertinent information.

02. DEFINITIONS

02.01 Area – includes all responsible for providing assessments (i.e., office, department, unit, school, college, center, or institute, depending on the type of outcome).

02.02 Division – includes areas that directly report to the president.

02.03 Unit – includes areas that directly report to a vice president.

02.04 Administrative Department – includes those that directly report to a unit head.

02.05 Assessment – in higher education, includes gathering information in a prescribed manner and interpreting that information to make decisions about policy, curriculum, instruction, initiatives, or assessment practices.

02.06 Outcome – the results that an area desires to attain, expressed in general terms.

02.07 Methods – strategies, along with tools or instruments, used to gauge progress toward attaining outcomes. Method statements should clearly indicate *who* will conduct the assessment; *who* will be assessed; *when*, *where*, and *how* it will be assessed; and *what* specifically will be assessed.

- a. Direct – assessment tools that evaluate actual performance. Examples include exam scores, portfolios, observations, records of error, time, cost, efficiency, productivity, etc.
- b. Indirect – assessment tools that evaluate perceived learning or performance based on opinions. Examples include student or employer perceptions, perceived satisfaction levels, perceived timeliness, perceived capability, etc.

02.08 Measures – observations of achievement reported in numeric terms.

02.09 Targets – desired level of performance or attainment expressed in specific terms.

02.10 Results – the findings amassed from the corresponding method.

02.11 Action Plans – future steps to be taken toward attaining continuous improvement based on the reported results.

02.12 Evidence of Improvement – current performance level achieved as compared to previous levels achieved, expressed in specific terms; intended to present result patterns from semester to semester, year to year, etc.

03. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES OUTCOME PROCEDURES

03.01 Administrative support service outcomes identify core functions for providing effective and efficient administrative services in support of the academic mission of the university.

Administrators for each identified administrative support service area will lead staff discussions to gain collective input and consensus to create and assess appropriate, measurable expected outcomes for each administrative support service area.

03.02 All areas that directly report to a vice president (units), as well as those that directly report to unit heads (administrative departments) as demonstrated on official published division organizational charts, are required to identify and measure administrative support service outcomes.

03.03 Phase I consists of creating a system for assessment of administrative support service outcomes. Phase I begins with a thorough review of the area's mission. Mission statements should be:

- a. brief and clearly stated;
- b. distinctive to the area;
- c. reflective of the core purpose, primary functions and activities of the administrative support service area; and
- d. consistent with the mission of the university, division, unit, department, and office.

03.04 Once the mission is in place, at least three measurable outcomes specific to the administrative support service area are identified. These outcomes should align with the mission and primary functions of the administrative support service area. Ideally, these outcome statements should reflect continuous improvement of services. Outcomes:

- a. focus on issues pertinent and important to the administrative support service area as specifically defined in the mission statement;
- b. focus on key areas where outcomes assessment will enable the administrative support service area to improve, emphasizing the end result and not the means to get there; and
- c. clearly articulate the intended result or action desired.

03.05 Each identified outcome should include two methods of measurement that will be used to assess achievement of the corresponding outcome. Multiple methods of measurement are necessary to build reliability and validity. Direct methods are preferred. Method statements should:

- a. align with the intent of the outcome;
- b. apply to service, regardless of location or mode of delivery;
- c. allow for the collection of accurate, valid, and reliable data for each method and measure in a reasonable and efficient manner within the academic year;
- d. provide detail on *who* will conduct the assessment; *who* will be assessed; *when, where, and how* it will be assessed; and *what* specifically will be assessed; and
- e. clearly indicate the desired level or target of performance.

03.06 Once the outcomes, methods and measures are in place, a system should be developed for implementation and assessment. This system should identify:

- a. how, where, and when the service will be provided;
- b. who will be involved in the implementation and measurement process;
- c. what instruments and scoring rubrics will be needed to quantify results;
- d. when the services will be measured; and
- e. how the data will be evaluated.

03.07 Phase II consists of collecting and analyzing the assessment data. Assessment results should be reported in a brief, but detailed summary for each method and measure. Discussions of findings should include:

- a. a reflection upon and discussion of the findings amassed from the corresponding method and measure;
- b. results based on reliable and valid data collection methods;
- c. a level of achievement of performance targets;
- d. indicators for further improvement that can be gleaned from the results;
- e. evidence of achievement related to the outcome aggregated for all services and disaggregated based on mode or location of delivery and other pertinent factors; and
- f. effectiveness of previous action plans for attaining results;

3.08 Based on the assessment results, a plan of action should be developed. Action plans should be feasible considering the availability of time and resources and should lead to continuous improvement of services.

3.09 A synopsis of year-to-year evidence of improvement gained from actions taken based on previous outcomes assessments should also be provided. This evidence of improvement should focus on continuous improvement of services and should be documented with improvements cited in the assessment results.

3.10 Once completed, outcomes reports are reviewed and approved by the appropriate unit head and vice president.

3.11 At the end of each phase of the assessment cycle, outcomes reports are audited by the Assessment and Improvement Committee on Administrative Support Services. Audit reports provide useful feedback for improving outcomes reports.

04. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OUTCOME PROCEDURES

04.01 Educational program student learning outcomes identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate by the end of their course of study in an educational program. Chairs, directors, and program coordinators for each educational program will lead faculty discussions to gain collective input and consensus to create and assess appropriate, measurable student learning and administrative outcomes for each program.

04.02 All educational programs identified by a distinctive four-digit CIP code are required to identify and measure student learning outcomes.

04.03 Phase I consists of creating a system for assessment of educational program outcomes. Phase I begins with a thorough review of the program mission. Mission statements should be:

- a. brief and clearly defined;
- b. distinctive to the program;
- c. reflective of the core purpose, primary functions, and activities of the program; and
- d. consistent with the mission of the university, college, and department or school.

04.04 Once the mission is in place, at least three measurable student learning outcomes for undergraduate programs and three for graduate programs are identified. These outcomes should align with the mission and overall goals of the program, as well as reflect the level of the program. Ideally, the student learning outcome statements should demonstrate higher levels of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning domains. Outcomes:

- a. describe the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes of a successful graduate;
- b. focus on issues pertinent and important to the program;
- c. reflect on learning throughout the program curriculum rather than through elective courses or extracurricular activities;
- d. focus on student learning rather than instructional or administrative processes; and
- e. focus on key areas where outcomes assessment will enable the program to improve.

04.05 Each identified outcome should include two methods of measurement that will be used to assess achievement of the corresponding outcome. Multiple methods of measurement are necessary to build reliability and validity. Direct methods are preferred. Method statements should:

- a. effectively and accurately reflect learning addressed in the outcome;
- b. align with the type and level of learning indicated in the outcome;
- c. apply to multiple sections of the same course, regardless of location or mode of delivery;
- d. allow for the collection of accurate, valid, and reliable data for each method and measure in a reasonable and efficient manner within the academic year;
- e. provide detail on *who* will be assessed; *when, where, and how* it will be assessed; and *what* specific knowledge, skill, value, or attitude will be assessed and
- f. clearly indicate the desired or target level of performance.

04.06 Once the outcomes, methods and measures are in place, a system should be developed for implementation and assessment. This system should identify:

- a. how and where the concepts, skills, and values are being taught;
- b. who will be involved in the implementation and measurement process;
- c. how individual student learning will be measured;

- d. what instruments (i.e., exams, assignments) and scoring rubrics will be needed to quantify student learning;
- e. when the learning will be measured; and
- f. how the data will be evaluated.

04.07 Phase II consists of collecting and analyzing assessment data. Assessment results should be reported in a brief, but detailed summary for each method and measure. Discussions of findings should include:

- a. a reflection upon and discussion of the findings amassed from the corresponding method and measure;
- b. results based on reliable and valid data collection methods;
- c. level of success in achieving the desired performance target;
- d. indicators for further improvement that can be gleaned from the results;
- e. evidence of learning related to the outcome aggregated for all sections of the course and disaggregated based on delivery, location, mode, and other pertinent factors;
- f. student accomplishments and success;
- g. improvement over previous assessment cycles; and
- h. effectiveness of previous action plans for attaining results.

4.08 Based on the assessment results, a plan of action should be developed. Action plans should be feasible considering the availability of time and resources and should lead to continuous improvement in student learning.

4.09 A synopsis of evidence of improvement gained from actions taken based on previous outcomes assessments should also be provided. This evidence of improvement should focus on continuous improvement in student learning and should be documented with improvements cited in the assessment results.

4.10 Once completed, outcomes reports are reviewed and approved by the appropriate department chair and college dean.

4.11 At the end of each phase of the assessment cycle, outcomes reports are audited by members of the Assessment and Improvement Committee on Educational Programs and Student Learning. Audit reports provide useful feedback for improving outcomes reports.

05. GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOME PROCEDURES

05.01 General education student learning outcomes identify the core components and competencies that students are expected to demonstrate by the end of their course of study. Members of the General Education Committee (GEC) will lead faculty discussions to gain collective input and consensus to create and assess appropriate, measurable student learning outcomes for general education.

05.02 The GEC, with the guidance of the Chair of the GEC, will develop and assign a mission statement for each component. The GEC will also develop an outcome for each component and competency and assign outcomes to courses approved in each component.

05.03 All academic units providing general education core courses are required to measure general education student learning outcomes as identified by the GEC.

05.04 Phase I consists of creating a system for assessment of general education student learning outcomes and includes a review of the mission statement and outcomes assigned to the approved general education course.

05.05 For each identified outcome, a method of measurement should be identified to assess achievement in student learning. Direct methods are expected. Method statements should:

- a. effectively and accurately reflect learning addressed in the outcome;
- b. apply to all sections of the same course, regardless of location or mode of delivery;
- c. allow for the collection of accurate, valid, and reliable data for each method and measure in a reasonable and efficient manner within the academic year;
- d. provide detail on *who* will be assessed; *when, where, and how* it will be assessed; and *what* specific knowledge, skill, value, or attitude will be assessed; and
- e. clearly indicate the desired level or target level of performance.

05.06 Once the outcomes, methods and measures are in place, a system should be developed for implementation and assessment. This system should identify:

- a. how and where the concepts, skills, and values are being taught;
- b. who will be involved in the implementation and measurement process;
- c. how individual general education student learning will be measured;
- d. what instruments (i.e., exams, assignments) and scoring rubrics will be needed to quantify student learning;
- e. when the learning will be measured; and
- f. how the data will be evaluated.

05.07 Phase II consists of collecting and analyzing assessment data. Assessment results should be reported in a brief, but detailed summary for each method and measure. Discussions of findings should include:

- a. a reflection upon and discussion of the findings amassed from the corresponding method and measure;
- b. results based on reliable and valid data collection methods;
- c. level of success in achieving the desired performance target;
- d. indicators for further improvement that can be gleaned from the results;
- e. evidence of learning related to the outcome aggregated for all sections of the course and disaggregated based on delivery, location, mode, and other pertinent factors;
- f. student accomplishments and success;

- g. improvement over previous assessment cycles; and
- h. effectiveness of previous action plans for attaining results.

5.08 Based on the assessment results, a plan of action should be developed. Action plans should be feasible considering the availability of time and resources and should lead to continuous improvement in general education student learning.

5.09 A synopsis of evidence of improvement gained from actions taken based on previous outcomes assessments should also be provided. This evidence of improvement should focus on continuous improvement in general education student learning and should be documented with improvements cited in the assessment results.

5.10 Once completed, outcomes reports are reviewed and approved by the appropriate department chair or school director and the assistant vice president for Academic Services on behalf of the GEC.

5.11 At the end of each phase of the assessment cycle, outcomes reports are audited by the appropriate members of the GEC. Audit reports provide useful feedback for improving outcomes reports.

06. ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SERVICES OUTCOME PROCEDURES

06.01 Academic and student service outcomes identify core functions for providing academic and student services in support of student learning. Directors and administrators for each identified area across applicable divisions (e.g., Student Affairs, Academic Affairs) will lead faculty and staff discussions to gain collective input and consensus to create and assess appropriate, measurable outcomes for each academic and student service area.

06.02 All academic and student service areas are required to identify and measure academic and student service outcomes.

06.03 Phase I consists of creating a system for assessment of academic and student service outcomes. Phase I begins with a thorough review of the area's mission. Mission statements should be:

- a. brief and clearly stated;
- b. distinctive to the area;
- c. reflective of the core purpose, primary functions and activities of the academic and student service area; and
- d. consistent with the mission of the University, division, unit, department, and office.

06.04 Once the mission is in place, at least three measurable outcomes specific to the academic and student service area are identified. At least one outcome should be identified for each core service offered by the unit. These outcomes should align with the mission and primary functions

of the academic and student service area. Ideally, these outcome statements should reflect continuous improvement of services at impacting student learning. Outcomes:

- a. describe impact of academic and student service on student success;
- b. focus on issues pertinent and important to the academic and student service area as specifically defined in the mission statement;
- c. focus on key areas where outcomes assessment will enable the academic and student service area to improve emphasizing the end result and not the means to get there; and
- d. clearly articulate the intended result.

06.05 Each identified outcome should include two methods of measurement that will be used to assess achievement of the corresponding outcome. Multiple methods of measurement are necessary to build reliability and validity. Direct methods are preferred. Method statements should:

- a. align with the intent of the outcome;
- b. apply to academic or student service, regardless of location or mode of delivery;
- c. allow for the collection of accurate, valid, and reliable data for each method and measure in a reasonable and efficient manner within the academic year;
- d. provide detail on *who* will conduct the assessment; *who* will be assessed; *when, where, and how* it will be assessed; and for student learning outcomes, *what* specific knowledge, skill, value, or attitude will be assessed; and
- e. clearly indicate the desired level or target level of performance.

06.06 Once the outcomes, methods and measures are in place, a system should be developed for implementation and assessment. This system should identify:

- a. how, where, and when the service will be provided;
- b. who will be involved in the implementation and measurement process;
- c. how impact of service on student success will be measured;
- d. what instruments and scoring rubrics will be needed to quantify results;
- e. when the services impacting student success will be measured; and
- f. how the data will be evaluated.

06.07 Phase II consists of collecting and analyzing the assessment data. Assessment results should be reported in a brief, but detailed summary for each method and measure. Discussions of findings should include:

- a. a reflection upon and discussion of the findings amassed from the corresponding method and measure;
- b. results based on reliable and valid data collection methods;
- c. level of success in achieving the desired performance targets;
- d. indicators for further improvement that can be gleaned from the results;
- e. evidence of learning related to the outcome aggregated for all services and disaggregated based on mode or location of delivery and other pertinent factors;

- f. student accomplishments and success, when possible;
- g. improvement over previous assessment cycles; and
- h. effectiveness of previous action plans for attaining results.

6.08 Based on the assessment results, a plan of action should be developed. Action plans should be feasible considering the availability of time and resources and should lead to continuous improvement of academic and student services.

6.09 A synopsis of improvement gained from actions taken based on previous outcomes assessments should also be provided. This evidence of improvement should focus on continuous improvement in academic and student services and its impact on student success and should be documented with improvements cited in the assessment results.

6.10 Once completed, outcomes reports are reviewed and approved by the appropriate unit head and vice president.

6.11 At the end of each phase of the assessment cycle, outcomes reports are audited by the Assessment and Improvement Committee on Academic and Student Services. Audit reports provide useful feedback for improving outcomes reports.

Adopted from Texas State University

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Resources

[James Madison University Center for Assessment](#)

[National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment \(NIOLA\)](#)

Tennessee State University [Assessment and Accreditation Website](#)

APPENDICES

TEMPLATE FOR WRITING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Outline for Reporting *Mission*

1. The mission of (*name of program*)
2. is to (*describe primary purpose*)
3. for (*who*: undergraduate, masters, doctoral) students
4. by (*core functions or expectations for students*).

Outline for Reporting *Student Learning Outcomes*

1. (*Describe minimum number of student learning outcomes/desired learning end results in terms appropriate to the mission and level of the program*).
2. (*Describe minimum number of administrative outcomes/expectations appropriate to the program*).

Outline for Reporting *Methods/Measurement of Student Learning Assessment*

1. In (*when*: fall and spring semesters), (*who*: instructors of specified classes, faculty in review committees, graduate advisor) will assess
2. (*who*: undergraduates, graduates, doctoral, seniors, freshmen)
3. (*where*: courses, sections, capstone review processes)
4. (*when*: midterm, final)
5. using (*what*: portfolios, embedded test questions, pre-test/post-test, comp exam, thesis, essay, survey, etc.). (*Provide details about assessment such as number, type and subject of questions*).
6. The assessments are designed to measure students' ability to (*do what*: understand, apply, analyze specific knowledge, skills, attitudes) and will be analyzed using (*assessment tool*: scoring sheet, rubric, scantron analysis).
7. scoring sheet, rubric, scantron analysis).
8. Students are expected to achieve (*stretch target*: percentage, number, level).

Outline for Reporting *Results of Student Learning*

1. In (*when*: fall and spring semesters, 2019-2020),
2. (*how many*: number)
3. (*who*: undergraduates, graduates, doctoral, seniors, freshmen)
4. were assessed using (*what*: portfolios, embedded test questions, pre-test/post-test, comp exam, thesis, essay, survey, etc.)
5. in order to measure students' ability to (*do what*: understand, apply, analyze specific knowledge, skills, attitudes)
6. The (*who*: faculty panel, course instructor, thesis committee) found that
7. (*Insert your findings here*).
8. Thus, (n %)
9. of (*who*: undergraduates, graduates, doctoral, seniors, freshmen)

10. (met or exceeded expectations, excelled using whatever rubric used)
11. by demonstrating (*what: specific knowledge, skills, attitudes*).
12. (*Very briefly, in approximately two or three sentences, reflect upon/discuss the findings. Specify how the results relate to the target and to results from previous years. Briefly describe how implementing prior action plans enhanced student learning.*)
13. (*Then, given the findings, briefly mention ways in which students could improve.*)

Outline for Reporting Evidence of Improvement in Student Learning

1. Based on a comparison of the 2018-2019 results, improvements in student learning are evident in (*which outcomes*). Because last year's action plan (*describe steps taken*) was implemented, (*extent of improvement*) improvements were observed in (*what*).
2. (*Describe specific area of the outcome that was improved*).
3. (*Describe how implementation of prior actions plans contributed to improvement*).
4. (*Describe the extent of the improvement*).

**If no improvements were noted in any of the program's outcomes assessments, faculty in the program should review and discuss these results and determine how to achieve greater success in assessing student learning.*

Outline for Reporting Action Plans for Improving Student Learning

1. Based on the results, the (*who: faculty panel, course instructor, thesis committee*) plan to
2. (*do what: modify, add, delete*)
3. (*Briefly describe actions to be taken, including when and where*)
4. to improve students' ability to (*do what: understand, apply, analyze specific knowledge, skills, attitudes*).

Key Word Lists for Use in Writing Student Learning Outcomes

Cognitive Key Words:

Knowledge	Arrange, define, describe, duplicate, enumerate, identify, indicate, know, label, list, match, memorize, name, reads, recall, recognize, record, relate, repeat, reproduce, select, state, view, underline
Comprehension	Classify, cite, convert, defend, describe, discuss, distinguish, estimate, explain, express, generalize, give examples, identify, indicate, infer, locate, paraphrase, predict, recognize, report, restate, review, rewrite, select, suggest, summarize, tell, trace, translate, understand
Application	Act, administer, apply, articulate, assess, change, chart, choose, collect, compute, construct, contribute, control, demonstrate, determine, develop, discover, dramatize, employ, establish, extend, give examples, illustrate, implement, include, inform, instruct, interpret, investigate, manipulate, operate, organize, participate, practice, predict, prepare, preserve, produce, project, provide, relate, report, schedule, shop, show, sketch, solve, teach, transfer, translate, use, utilize, write
Analysis	Analyze, appraise, breaks down, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, correlate, criticize, debate, determine, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, focus, identify, illustrate, infer, inspect, inventory, limit, outline, point out, prioritize, question, recognize, relate, select, separate, subdivide, solve, test
Synthesis	Adapt, anticipate, arrange, assemble, categorize, collaborate, collect, combine, communicate, compile, compose, construct, create, design, devise, develop, explain, express, facilitate, formulate, generate, incorporate, individualize, initiate, integrate, intervene, manage, model, modify, negotiate, organize, perform, plan, prepare, produce, propose, rearrange, reconstruct, reinforce, relate, reorganize, revise, set up, structure, substitute, validate, write
Evaluation	Appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, conclude, contrast, criticize, critique, decide, defend, enumerate, estimate, evaluate, grade, interpret, judge, justify, measure, predict, rate, reframe, revise, score, select, support, value

Affective Key Words:

Receiving	Ask, choose, describe, follow, give, hold, identify, locate, name, point to, reply, select, sit erect, use
Responding	Answer, assist, compile, conform, discuss, greet, help, label, perform, practice, present, read, recite, report, select, tell, write
Valuing	Complete, describe, differentiate, explain, follow, form, initiate, invite, join, justify, propose, read, report, select share, study, work
Organization	Adhere, alter, arrange, combine, compare, complete, defend, explain, generalize, identify, integrate, modify, order, organize, prepare, relate, synthesize
Characterization by Value	Act, discriminate, display, influence, listen, modify, perform, practice, propose, qualify, question, revise, serve, solve, use, verify

Skills Key Words:

Perception	Choose, describe, detect, differentiate, distinguish, identify, isolate, relate, select, separate
Set	Begin, display, explain, move, proceed, react, respond, show, start, volunteer
Guided Response	Assemble, build, calibrate, construct, dismantle, display, dissect, fasten, fix, grind, heat, manipulate, measure, mend, mix, organize, sketch, work
Mechanism	Assemble, build, calibrate, construct, dismantle, display, dissect, fasten, fix, grind, heat, manipulate, measure, mend, mix, organize, sketch, work
Complex Overt Response	Assemble, build, calibrate, construct, dismantle, display, dissect, fasten, fix, grind, heat, manipulate, measure, mend, mix, organize, sketch, work
Adaptation	Adapt, alter, change, rearrange, reorganize, revise, vary
Origination	Arrange, combine, compose, construct, design, originate

(Adapted from Gronlund, 2000; DAMMCQs, DLRN Technology Resource Guide; Washington Univ. website, Bakersfield PACT Outcomes Assessment Handbook, 1999).

Examples of Methods for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

Direct Methods

Comprehensive exams
Course-embedded exams
Pre-test and post-test evaluations
Standardized tests
Performance on licensure exams
Blind scored essay tests
Classroom assignments
Project or course imbedded assessment
Case study/problems
Capstone papers, projects or presentations
Samples of individual student work
Collections of work (portfolios) of individual students
Internal or external juried review of student work
Performances
Externally reviewed internship or practicum
Activity logs
Interviews (including videotaped)
Documented observation and analysis of student behavior/performance
Panel discussions/debates
Theses evaluation

Indirect Methods

Questionnaires and Surveys

- Students
- Graduating seniors
- Alumni
- Employers

DEVELOPING AN ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OR ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SERVICE UNIT ASSESSMENT PLAN

STEP 1 - WRITING THE DEPARTMENT/UNIT MISSION STATEMENT

- Your mission serves as the foundation for assessment planning.
- The mission statement should describe **the purpose of the department/unit** as well as reflect the mission of the university.
- Mission statements should clearly and effectively communicate WHAT you do, for WHOM, WHY you do it, and HOW you do it.
- It gives the department/unit a **unique identity**.

Characteristics of a Well-Defined Mission Statement:

- Brief, concise, distinctive
- Clearly identified the program's purpose
- Clearly aligns with the mission of the division and the University
- Explicitly articulates the essential functions/activities of the program
- Clearly identifies the primary stakeholders of the program; i.e., students, faculty, parents, etc.

Evaluating Quality of Mission Statement

- Mission statement is clearly stated and specific to the department/unit, and
- Mission statement defines the core purpose(s) of the department/unit,

General Format of Program Mission Statement:

“The mission of the [insert unit name] is to [insert unit's primary purpose] by providing [insert essential functions/activities of the program] to [stakeholders]. [Additional clarifying statements]”

Examples of Well-Defined Program Mission Statements:

“University Career Services, an integral part of the educational process, assists students and alumni in assessing their career possibilities, setting their personal goals and achieving their objectives toward becoming productive citizens in the global community. While assisting its clients in identifying professional employment opportunities, University Career Services also provides the university community with insights into the ever-changing world of work to help develop realistic ways to better educate tomorrow's leaders.” (Texas Christian University)

“The primary purpose of the Office of Academic Advising is to assist students in the development and implementation of their educational plans. To this end the Office of Academic Advising subscribes to the philosophy of developmental advising; advising is a cooperative effort between

advisor and student that consists not only of course planning and selection, but the development of the person as a whole. This includes the selection of career and life-long goals.” (University of La Verne)

“The Accounting Office seeks (1) to provide administrators with accurate and timely financial data to assist them in the management of the institution’s resources, and (2) to ensure that financial records are maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and guidelines as established by State and Federal guidelines.”

STEP 2 - IDENTIFYING AND WRITING ADMINISTRATIVE OUTCOMES (OUTCOMES)

An **outcome is a result** for (or impact on) a customer or the institution that is a consequence of the work that you do. The outcome itself does not describe the activities that you perform nor the service or product that you provide to get the customer to that result. Outcomes are directly related to the mission (purpose) and key functional responsibilities of the department. A department should be able to identify at least one expected outcome for each of its functional responsibilities.

Outcome statements will have two mandatory elements: the intended **beneficiary** (customers, students, institution, community) and the **gain or benefit** they receive from what you do (impact/end result). Outcomes should be stable over several years, not time dependent. If it is time-dependent, you are probably writing an objective rather than an outcome.

Outcomes also need to be **measurable and actionable**. In other words, you must be able to monitor changes in those beneficiaries, and you must have some degree of controllable influence on the outcomes. It is also important to remember that you should be tracking and measuring things here that will tell you where you can improve your operations.

An outcome should lend itself to improvement, be singular and not bundled, be meaningful and not trivial, and not lead to a yes/no answer.

Tips for writing intended or expected outcomes:

First develop a master list of “what do we do” and then identify key services or functions. Begin the outcome statement with the beneficiary as the subject:

- *Customers have . . .*
- *Administrators are able to . . .*
- *Clients understand . . .*
- *The University enjoys . . .*
- *Customers employ . . .*
- *Students are aware of . . .*
- *The institution gains . . .*

By contrast, a goal statement nearly always uses the department as an implied subject and will typically begin with a phrase like • *to provide . . .*

- *to establish . . .*
- *to ensure . . .*
- *to implement . . .*

Possible outcomes to measure:

- *efficiency*
- *accuracy*
- *effectiveness*
- *client satisfaction (improve, increase)*
- *quality*
- *comprehensiveness (understand)*
- *compliance with standards*

If you mistakenly utilize a goal statement as an outcome, you will end up assessing your goal attainment rather than the results for the customer or institution.

Example of a **Goal Statement**:

To provide accurate and timely reports to university administrators.

Example of an **Outcome Statement**:

University Administrators have the financial information they need to make decisions effectively.

Example of a **Goal Statement**:

Provide safe, clean, maintained and visually attractive buildings and grounds to be enjoyed by students, faculty and staff.

Example of **Outcome Statements**:

Faculty and staff will report they feel safe while on campus.

Faculty and staff will report they are satisfied with the cleanliness of campus buildings.

Faculty and staff will report they are satisfied with the cleanliness of campus grounds.

Faculty and staff will report they are satisfied with the maintenance in campus buildings.

Faculty and staff will report they are satisfied with the visual attractiveness of the campus grounds.

Faculty and staff will report they are satisfied with the visual attractiveness of the campus buildings. NOTE: do not join multiple outcomes in one statement

Evaluating Quality of Outcomes

- Three outcomes are provided
- Each outcome focuses on issues pertinent and important to the department/unit, as defined in the mission statement
- Each outcome concentrates on key areas where outcomes assessment will enable the

- development/unit to improve, with a focus on the end result and not the means
- Achievement of each outcome must be measurable – the target/measure will be identified in the Method/Measure you write for each outcome (see next section)
- Each outcome clearly articulates intended result or action

General Format of for Writing Outcome Statements:

[Intended audience] who [action verb 1] [program/service] will be able to [action verb 2] [intended outcome].

Intended audience – students, faculty, staff, users, employees within division, employees within department, alumni, customers, administrators, clients, the university, etc....

Action verb 1 – complete, engage in, participate in

Program/service – respond to maintenance requests, process payments in the drop box, prepare revenue forecast report, etc.

Action verb 2 – demonstrate, describe, discuss, explain, identify, list, summarize, prepare, rate, utilize, use, select, plan

Or [Intended audience or the department] will be able to [action verb to describe what it will do, achieve or accomplish]

Examples :

Facilities staff in the plumbing shop will be able to respond to maintenance requests within 24 hours of notification.

Students who use the online payment process will be able to make timely payments and not lose their scheduled courses.

University administrators have the financial information they need to make decisions effectively. Administrators who request information from the facilities inventory will receive accurate, timely, useful information.

STEP 3 - DEFINING HOW YOU WILL ASSESS PROGRESS TOWARDS THESE OUTCOMES (METHODS AND MEASURES)

Start by taking an inventory of the kinds of tools your department/unit is already using. What information are you already collecting? What kinds of assessments are you already using or are already familiar with? Other departments on campus, such as the Office of Institutional Research, may be collecting data that you can incorporate into your methods/measures. The data collected should be representative of the whole year. You may want to collect data continuously or you may want to take “snapshots” at regular intervals. You may want to sample systematically, rather than collect data on every event/person/day. For each expected outcome, describe methods (e.g., survey) you are using or plan to use and the measurement (e.g.,

satisfaction) to measure how well your department/unit is actually performing in relation to the outcome.

Assessment measures can be direct (any process employed to gather data which requires subjects to *display* their knowledge, behavior, or thought processes) or indirect (any process employed to gather data which asks subjects to *reflect upon* their knowledge, behaviors, or thought processes), qualitative or quantitative, objective or subjective, and multiple measures should be used for each outcome. An assessment method and measure can be used to assess progress towards more than one outcome.

Examples of Direct Measures of Unit Effectiveness

- Human Resources – selection processes
- Plant Operations – work order response
- Physical Plant – remodeling process
- Mail Services – bulk mail distribution
- Printing Services – reduction of pre-press time
- Payroll Office – payroll distribution

Develop targets or benchmarks for each measure. Targets are specific values that you are expecting to reach (e.g., %). For example,

- *80% of users will report satisfaction with the service in the Customer Satisfaction Survey*
- *100% of monthly reports (note – it would be better to identify the reports by name) will be submitted by the third business day of the month*
- *100% of ad hoc reports (note – it would be better to identify the reports by name) are submitted by the promised deadline*
- *90% of the faculty and staff responding to the annual spring Customer Satisfaction Survey will report they feel safe on campus*

Assessment methods and measures must align with the outcome:

Outcome - Hypothetical Administrative Unit will demonstrate increased timeliness in terms of processing student requests.

Assessment Method: Number of students served by Hypothetical Administrative Unit will be tracked for three semesters. This is an example of assessment that will not provide useful, useable information:

Assessment Method: A computerized log will track the date and time of each student request and the date and time that it is resolved. The time between request and resolution will be compared for two semesters. This is an example of assessment that will provide useful, useable information:

Note: The first example assessment shows that data are being collected, but not useful data. The second example assessment provides information that can be used to determine if the administrative unit is increasing its timeliness.

Tips for developing methods and measures and for collecting data:

Methods and measures must be set before you begin to collect data. If you easily meet your success target, you will want to raise the bar or modify the method, measure and/or the target in order to further improve your outcome. Using the completion of a project as an assessment method is not recommended because simply completing the project does not provide any information on how to improve. Data collection needs to become a regular activity for the department. The more you can automate or make routine, the easier it will be to incorporate into your activities. Remember, if the responsibility for data collection is purposefully assigned to a person or position, it increases the likelihood that it will occur.

Examples of assessment measures for administrative units include: satisfaction surveys, number of complaints, count of participants, growth in participation, average wait time, statistical reports, average service time, staff training hours, number of applications, processing time, number of users, focus groups, opinion surveys, external review, number of staff trained, attendance at events, website hits, year-to-year comparisons, etc.

Evaluating Quality of Methods and Measures

- Two methods and measures are provided for each outcome.
- Method(s) and measure(s) selected align with the intention of the outcome.
- Methods and measures address all of the following: **who** will be assessed and who is responsible, **what** will be assessed, **how** the assessment will be conducted, and **when** the assessment will take place.
- Measures indicate performance targets, such as percentages and numbers.
- Methods and measures can be implemented within the academic year.
- Methods and measures can be implemented in a reasonably efficient manner .
- Methods and measures use direct, or indirect when necessary, means of acquiring data.

STEP 4 – COMPLETE THE ASSESSMENT PLAN (RESULTS)

Once you have collected your data, you will need to compute the results (findings). This usually involves counting or aggregating the data, calculating percentages or other descriptive statistics. You may want to use tables or charts. How you compute the results and present them will depend upon how you defined your method/measure. The key activity here, though, is to compare the results to your success target. Did you meet your target or not? Remember, **you need to have a result for every method/measure you have defined.**

You have your results; you know if you met your targets or not. Now you have to determine what those results mean for your department.

- What did you find out?
- Were the criteria met?

- Why did you or did you not reach your target?
- What strengths do the results reflect about your department or operations? How can these be further strengthened?
- What strategies were successful? What strategies were not? What strategies will you employ to further improve outcomes?
- Where do the results show that additional attention is needed to correct problems or issues?

Evaluating Quality of Results

- Results are provided for each assessment method/measure
- Results include reflection upon and discussion of the findings amassed from the corresponding method/measure
- Results are based on reliable and valid data collection methods
- Results indicate level of achievement of performance targets
- Results provide indicators for improvement
-

STEP 5 – ACTION PLAN

The purpose of assessing outcomes is to provide you with meaningful information that will help you determine where modifications are needed (or wanted) to improve those outcomes and make your department (and the university) more effective. Therefore, the most important section of the assessment cycle is determining how the results will be used to improve performance, and how those actions are articulated in the Action Plan.

Each problem or issue that you noted or identified in your analysis represents a need to improve and must have an action to correct or improve performance. Every outcome for which you successfully met or exceeded your target represents an opportunity to further improve and requires an articulated action or strategy to do so.

- What changes need to be made?
- What additional data are needed?
- What resources are needed?
- What actions do you plan to take?
- Who is responsible?
- When will it be done?

Such actions and strategies may be:

- Operational or programmatic—modifying what you do or how you do it (e.g. adding a program or improving a process)
- Organizational—modifying your organizational structure or work assignments
- Strategic—modifying your mission, functional responsibilities, or outcomes; or
- Assessment-related—modifying your indicators/measures, targets, or method of data collection

For future actions, you should note when you anticipate those actions will be taken, who will be responsible for taking the actions, and what resources will be needed. Where the criterion is met or surpassed, the department/unit may rightly conclude that no change is needed and report, “No action required.” This is not sufficient. If, when the same outcome is assessed the next year, the results are repeated, and the staff can insure the criterion was met, the department/unit should consider assessing a different outcome in the following cycle.

Evaluating Quality of Action Plan

- Action plans are provided for each outcome
- Action plans are based on findings reported in the results
- Action plans are feasible considering available resources and time
- Action plans appear likely to lead to continuous improvement

STEP 6 – EVIDENCE OF IMPROVEMENT

At least a year after implementing the improvement plan, the unit should be able to reflect on the impact its improvement actions have made on the quality of its services. The results of those actions will be revealed in your Findings. Data from subsequent assessments should demonstrate improvement. If that is not the case, perhaps the outcome criteria and methodology, or even the department’s/unit’s function statement need revisiting to determine whether they are appropriate to measure the effectiveness of the office.

Evaluating Quality of Evidence of Improvement

- Evidence of improvement is described
- Evidence of improvement is founded in the results

Definitions

Direct Measures are those designed to directly measure what a targeted subject knows or is able to do of the effective of programming or intervention. Direct measures utilize actual work products as the basis for evaluation as opposed to indicators of perception or satisfaction.

Indirect Measures are those designed to indirectly discern what a target subject knows or is able to do or the effect of impact of a program or intervention. Indirect measures focus on how a participant perceives their level of learning and/or their satisfaction with some aspect of the program or service.

Methods are tools or instruments used to gather data and to gauge progress toward achieving outcomes such as surveys.

Objectives are the tasks to be completed in order to achieve a goal. Objectives are specific and measurable and must be accomplished within a specified time period.

Example: By the end of 2009-2010, all units will have outcomes assessment plans in place.

Outcomes are something that the department/unit wants to achieve; they are desired end results for the organization or program, rather than actions. Outcomes are related to the department's mission and focus on the benefit to the recipient of the service.

Example: All units conduct ongoing and effective assessment of their activities and services and use the results of assessment to inform planning, decision-making and resource allocation.

Strategies are the means you plan to use to achieve your objectives.

Example: Develop and distribute assessment materials in hard-copy and online forms. These will include an assessment guide, plan, and report templates, examples, evaluative rubrics to provide feedback on plans and reports, online links to additional resources, etc.

Educational Program
Examples of Results, Action Plans, and Evidence of Improvement
(Examples are not based on real data or results)

Example 1

Results

During spring semester of 2019, the 26 students enrolled in the SOCW#####, the capstone course, were assessed by agency field instructors using a 13-item rating scale on a capstone field evaluation form designed to measure students' understanding of social work values and attitudes toward becoming professional social workers. Course faculty analysis of the data found that students scored an average rating of 3.87 on a 4-point scale with "4" representing "strongly agree" on all 13-items. Average scores ranged from 3.39 to 3.99. Thus, all students enrolled in the capstone field study met the expectation of achieving a composite rating of 3 or greater on their understanding of social work values and attitudes. Of the 13-items, students scored the highest on "maintains confidentiality" with an average rating of 3.99. Students scored the lowest on "resolves ethical dilemmas" with an average rating of 3.09. Although the students' ability to resolve ethical dilemmas met the expected standard, it is an area where students could improve.

Action Plans

Compared to other aspects of understanding of SOCW values and attitudes toward becoming professional social workers, adjustments should be made to improve students' ability to resolve ethical dilemmas. Based on the results, the program faculty decided to modify the curriculum to better prepare students to resolve ethical dilemmas. Faculty teaching SOCW##### will incorporate specific examples of resolving ethical dilemmas into their lectures beginning Fall of 2019. Faculty teaching SW##### will revise the case study currently used to more fully address the resolution of ethical dilemmas.

Evidence of Improvement

Based on a comparison of the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 results, improvements in student learning are evident in Student Learning Outcome 1, reflecting students' ability to incorporate the responsibilities of being a professional social worker. Based on actions taken by program faculty, students' composite scores improved from 3.84 in 2017-2018 to 3.87 in 2018-2019. The greatest improvement was noted in students' ability to maintain confidentiality where averages scores rose from 3.76 to 3.99.

Example 2

Results

In the academic year of 2018-2019, 28 seniors were assessed on their portfolios required prior to graduation. The faculty found that of the 9 summer graduates 78% (7) scored an 80% or higher on the portfolio; of the 6 fall graduates 83% (5) scored an 80% or higher on the portfolio; and of the 13 spring graduates 85% (11) scored an 80% or higher on the portfolio. Thus, 82% of the student graduating in OC met the standard of scoring 80% or higher on the portfolio review demonstrating achievement of writing proficiency, organizational skills, independent thinking, computing skills, and high-level reasoning skills. Through faculty observations it was noted that students' writing proficiency could be improved while students' organizational skills appeared very strong.

Action Plan

Based on the results, the program faculty plan to stress writing skills in written assignments throughout the program and provide a more detailed grading structure to assure writing skills are being met.

Evidence of Improvement

Based on a comparison of the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 results, improvements in student learning are evident in Outcome 2: achievement of writing proficiency, organizational skills, independent thinking, computing skills, and high-level reasoning skills. Overall scores on portfolios increased from 80% to 82% showing stronger achievement especially in the areas of organizational and computing skills

Administrative Unit
Example #1 (Weak)
University Planning and Assessment
(Examples are not based on real data or results)

Mission Statement: University Planning and Assessment promotes and guides comprehensive university strategic planning and assessment activities through encouraging and utilizing useful feedback in the planning process, facilitating the assessment processes, and ensuring that outcomes are used to further university excellence.

Outcome Number 1: We will focus our efforts on improving educational and administrative support outcomes and appropriate measures for all identified departments and programs.

Method 1: 100% of the identified Division and Unit assessment plans are in place and operational.

Result 1: At present, identified division, unit, and department assessment plans are in place and operational.

Method 2: Administrative Outcomes Assessment website is utilized and updated regularly by 100% of identified units and departments.

Result 2: As of the ninth year of assessment, the website is being utilized and updated as required by departments, units, and divisions.

Action Plan: Continue to monitor progress.

Evidence of Improvement: More departments have identified the appropriate number of outcomes and methods. A better understanding of assessment is evident based on modified outcomes/methods from previous year. Although not yet perfected, outcomes and methods are being improved by departments based on results from previous year's assessment results. More and more calls are being handled by the department to assist users in entering their own data.

Problems with Example #1

Outcome 1: Is this stated as an “outcome” that you would like to see in place at the end of the assessment period?

Method 1: How will you assess? What will you assess? Who will you assess? When will you assess? What is the desired target level?

Result 1: No reflection, discussion, data collection method, level of achievement, indicators for improvement, or reference to last year’s action plan

Method 2: How will you assess? What will you assess? Who will you assess? When will you assess? What is the desired target level?

Result 2: No reflection, discussion, data collection method, level of achievement, indicators for improvement, or reference to last year's action plan

Action Plan: Not based on actual findings. Will this lead to continuous improvement? Doesn't include actual steps to be taken.

Evidence of Improvement: Founded in result findings from year to year for each method in each outcome? Are there data figure comparisons? Is last year's action plan referenced?

EXAMPLE #2 (Strong) **University Planning and Assessment**

Mission Statement: University Planning and Assessment promotes and guides comprehensive university strategic planning and assessment activities through encouraging and utilizing useful feedback in the planning process, facilitating the assessment processes, and ensuring that outcomes are used to further university excellence.

Outcome Number 1: Educational and administrative support outcomes and appropriate measures are correctly developed and implemented by all identified departments and programs.

Method 1: At least 90% (*target*) of identified department (*who*) assessment plans are correctly developed, assessed and found to be in compliance as demonstrated by a review (*how*) of completed audit reports (*what*) conducted in August (*when*) of each year.

Result 1: A thorough review of initial audit reports for 2018-2019 indicated that 85% of assessment plans were in compliance with audit standards in place for "outcomes and methods/measures" and 80% were compliant with the "results, action plans, and evidence of improvement" portions of the plans. It became evident that there was not a clear understanding of the requirements for outcomes assessment. So, as proposed in *last year's action plan*, additional individual training sessions were provided. Re-audits were conducted after revisions were made. These audits indicated that 100% of departments are now compliant with the "outcomes and methods/measures" portion of the plans. Feedback provided in the audit reports indicate that there are still areas that are in need of improvement, even though plans are compliant. Results are not yet available for the second portion of the audit reports, but should be improved based on revision of outcomes and methods/measures.

Method 2: At least 90% (*target*) of respondents (*who*) indicate that they are assessing their outcomes and utilizing results for improvement of services (*what*) as demonstrated by a satisfaction survey (*how*) distributed to Outcomes Assessment System users every two years in June (*when*).

Result 2: Satisfaction survey results indicate that only 40% of respondents are assessing their outcomes and utilizing results for improvement of services. This could be due to the fact that identified outcomes for the departments were not developed correctly initially or that selected methods/measures were not effective at demonstrating the level of service provided.

Implementing *last year's action plan* of providing additional training sessions has helped users to gain a clearer understanding of outcomes assessment reporting requirements. Perhaps now that revised outcomes and methods/measures are in place, there will be improvements in assessment and results reporting.

Action Plan: Additional professional development sessions and individual training will be offered to departments to better demonstrate appropriate outcomes, methods/measures, results reporting, action plan development, and indicators of improvement and how these should tie together. Audits will be conducted as early as possible to provide effective feedback to departments with plenty of time for them to modify assessment plans to be more useful and effective at improving services, which will be indicated by “results and evidence” reported in department assessment plans at the end of the year.

Evidence of Improvement: In 2010-2011, audit reports indicated that less than 1% of departments were in compliance with either section of assessment plans. In 2011-2012, 80% of departments are in compliance with the first section of their plans, while in 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 100% were in compliance. In 2016-2017, 75% of respondents indicated that they were using assessment results for further improvement of services. Further evidence of improvement should be demonstrated during the next scheduled survey administration date as a result of implementing our identified action plan from last year of increasing training opportunities.