ASSESSMENT MANUAL

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

601.979.0203

JSU 1877 | JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY®

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JSU Mission

To produce technologically advanced, diverse, ethical, global leaders who think critically, address societal problems, and compete effectively.

Our Goal

To maintain a culture of assessment at Jackson State University in both academic and non-academic areas whereby improvements in organizational efficiency are observed by administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Assessment Defined

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for quality learning; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. – (Thomas A. Angelo, *AAHE Bulletin,* November 1995, p.7)

Assessment's Importance

Assessment is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of education are being met. Assessment affects decisions about grades, placement, advancement, instructional needs, curriculum, and, in some cases, funding. Assessment inspires us to ask some hard questions: "Are we teaching the intended curriculum?" "Are students learning the intended curriculum?" "Is there a way to teach the subject more efficiently, thereby promoting improved learning and understanding?"

Academic and Non-Academic Areas

Assessment in Academic and Non-Academic areas should address the following:

1. **Academic**- will show the departmental mission, student learning outcomes (**SLOs**), means of measurement, criteria for success, data collection/ results for outcome, use of results to improve instructional program for SLOs, major difficulties and next year's academic goals.
   Improvement in Service (Internal)-Are our students meeting the student learning outcomes outlined in the curriculum? Do our outcomes correspond to students and societal needs? Do our services and products coincide with our academic community expectations?
   Accountability (External and Internal) - show evidence of student learning and achievement to accreditation groups, local, state, and federal government groups, and other community stakeholders.

2. **Non-Academic**- will show the executive summary of the unit, priorities, operational goals and objectives, means of assessment, criteria for success, results, plans for use of evaluation results to improve services, major difficulties, and next year operational goals and objectives.
   Improvement in Service (Internal)-Does our unit meet the goals and objectives outlined annually? Do our goals correspond to the university, students and societal needs? Do our services and products coincide with our community expectations?
   Accountability (**External and Internal**) – will show evidence of university's mission and goals to achievement accreditation groups, local, state, and federal government groups, and other community stakeholders.

Assessment's Purpose

The purpose of assessment are the following:

1**. To improve** – The assessment process should provide feedback to determine how the administrative unit can be improved.
2. **To inform** – The assessment process should inform department leaders and other decision makers of the contributions and impact of the unit to the development and growth of students.
3. **To prove** – The assessment process should encapsulate and demonstrate the unit's accomplishments to students, faculty, staff and community stakeholders.
4. **To support** – The assessment process should provide support for campus decision making activities such as unit review and strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.

Assessment Objectives and Roles

Objectives and Roles
The efforts of creating an ongoing assessment atmosphere will be done by doing the following:
- Coordinate and document the assessment process (planning and reporting) for degree programs, academic support and educational support units.
- Assure that student learning outcomes, goals and objectives, and program outcomes are established and appropriately published in assessment plans.
- To assist in identifying relevant assessment methods and criteria for success.
- To develop and document assessment plans, assessment reports, and schedules for academic programs, academic support and educational support units.
- To serve as a resource on assessment-related matters.
- To facilitate peer review and communication relative to assessment reports.

Shared Responsibilities of the DIRPA Staff and University Assessment Team Members
In fall 2016, representatives were appointed from each academic college and student service area to form a University Team. The team members have worked collaboratively to achieve university, academic, and student service goals and objectives. They are as follows:

- Understand and promote the importance of the role of assessment in student learning.
- Periodically inventory current assessment activities and data collection methods.
- Disseminate information to campus constituents about assessment theory, practices, and activities.
- Promote faculty and academic support staff professional development (training and education) in the area of assessment.
- Advocate for resources to create and maintain a culture of assessment.
- Review annual assessment plans and reports and provide feedback (recommendations and suggestions) to departments/programs.
- Ensure improvement through the appropriate use of assessment results.

University Assessment Team's Roles and Performance Expectations

The following roles and duties of the **University Team Members** have remained constant since their inception and they are listed below:

- To serve as a liaison for departments and programs in the college/division.
- To assist in assessing the appropriateness and measurability of current objectives, student learning outcomes, and program outcomes in academic/non-academic units.
- To facilitate the development, coordination and documentation of assessment plans and reports for units in each respective college/division and educational support units.
- To assist in identifying assessment instruments for departments and programs in each respective college/division.
- To provide peer review feedback to other members of the Assessment Team.
- To attend and participate in scheduled professional growth opportunities.

Statement of Assessment Responsibilities

The statement of assessment is to improve academic programs and non-academic support services. These continuous processes will refine our structures to meet the highest standards, quality and excellence for student learning. The following are the responsibilities:

Administrators

Responsibility for assessment is a institution-wide process that is shared by administrators, faculty, and staff. While the primary responsibility for classroom and discipline outcomes assessments rests with faculty, administrators' role in management through the delivery of resources makes them integral in responding to assessment related challenges. Administrators are charged with:

1. Encouraging and supporting outcomes assessment at all levels including program planning and development efforts.
2. Facilitating faculty, discipline and program changes as designed by faculty in response to classroom and discipline assessment findings.
3. Encouraging cross-division dialogues and activities supporting development of assessment efforts and faculty skills across the curriculum.
4. Amplifying and supporting curriculum changes in classrooms, disciplines or programs where challenges have been identified through institutional assessment activities.

Full-Time/Part-Time Faculty

The purpose of assessment is to understand and improve the educational outcomes of our efforts. It is in the interest of faculty to ensure quality instruction through professional development and responsive outcomes by assessing their actions. Student learning outcomes assessment is first and foremost faculty responsibility. Part-time faculty share professional commitments with full-time faculty, as many of the assessment activities are similar. However, in recognition of their limited availability, part-time faculty are not expected to be as active in planning and implementing assessment activities at the discipline, program and institutional levels. In support of these ideals, part-time faculty is to be active in assessment through the following activities:

1. Conduct classroom assessments in order to focus student learning and implement instructional strategies supportive of improving student learning outcomes.
2. Report utilization of classroom assessment in order to share ideas and strategies with colleagues and support institutional documentation and accreditation efforts.

3. Participate in planning and conducting discipline-specific and/or program assessment and work with colleagues to improve discipline and program outcomes.
4. Cooperate with the university assessment efforts through active support of general education, and other university assessments.
5. Support actions and recommendations from Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment and respond positively to challenges as identified by those efforts.

Students

Students must be active participants in assessment. The basic responsibility of our students is to participate in both direct (tests, activities, projects, portfolios, etc.) and indirect assessment activities (interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc.). Other roles that students can assume in assessment are the following:

1. Participate in institutional exams, surveys, and focus groups.
2. Take ungraded standardized tests or locally developed exams.
3. Participate in focus groups and surveys in their major and minor departments and programs as students and alumni.
4. Participate in national student learning and satisfaction surveys as requested.
5. Provide feedback and comments on activities, products, and services of the university.
6. Facilitate and participate in peer-review assessment activities.

ASSESSMENT PLANS AND REPORTS

Assessment Plan

Every JSU program and academic or educational support unit must have a written assessment plan, which is comprised of five parts: (1) descriptive information about the program or unit; (2) program/unit mission; (3) student learning outcomes (SLOs) (**academic**) and operational goals and objectives (**non-academic**); (4) means of assessment inclusive of both direct and indirect measures for each SLO and goal; and (5) criteria for success.

The Plan must be submitted using a standardized template, which can be found on the Institutional Planning website http://www.jsums.edu/dpa/forms/.

Effective Program Assessment

Effective Academic Program Assessment Answers These Questions
1. What are we trying to accomplish (our goals) with reference to student learning outcomes and department/unit performance?
2. How is effectiveness demonstrated and measured relative to student learning outcomes and department/unit performance?
3. How, using the answers to the first two questions, can we improve our actions in helping all to accomplish the mission of JSU?

Effective Non-Academic Unit Assessment Answers These Questions:
1. What are you trying to do?
2. How well are you doing it?
3. Using the answers to the first two questions, how can you improve what you are doing?
4. What and how does the unit contribute to the development and growth of students?

(Hutchings and Marchese, 1990)

10 Characteristics of Successful Assessment Programs

1. The assessment program is driven by values.
2. The unit makes a long-term commitment.
3. Instructional leaders understand and believe in the value of assessment.
4. Faculty and staff lead the program and own the results. (Accountability)
5. Technical expertise and support are provided.
6. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are defined programmatically.
7. Measurement tools align with outcomes.
8. A viable research design and methodology are used.
9. Results are used by faculty and staff to improve/impact student learning and/or the learning/working environment.
10. Assessment is linked to college/division and departmental planning.

Source: Presentation by Wes Payne. The Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools: July 30-August 2, 2006.

Successful Student Support Units: Questions to ask while writing the plan

Are the goals consistent with the mission?
Do the goals describe the services or processes?
Are the goals under the control of the unit?
Are the goals specific and measurable?
Are goals stated in clear and precise language?
Do the goals focus on key areas where outcomes will enable the unit to improve?
At what point in the process will the methods for measurement be used?
Who will be involved in the assessment plan?
Who is the sample?
What is the timeline?
Who will collect the results?
Who will tabulate the results?
How will the results be disseminated?

Evidence of Academic Program and Non-Academic Units Assessment
Academic
SUCCESS

Sincerity means people trust the process.
Usefulness means the process helps people.
Clarity means people understand the process.
Commitment means people believe the process works to their advantage and leaders support the process.
Enthusiasm means the people want to do it.
Systemic and Sustainable means everyone is continuing to use it.
Support means people are not alone.

Non-Academic
Create SMART Outcomes! (Adopted from Peter Drucker)

Specific (Clear and definite terms describing the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities.)
Measurable (It is feasible to get data; data are accurate and reliable; multiple methods of assessment. It is recommended to have a minimum of three methods to measure each outcome.)
Aggressive/Attainable (The outcome has the potential to move the course or program forward.)
Results-oriented (Describe what standards are expected from students.)
Time-bound (Describe a specified time period for accomplishing the outcome.)

Source: Presentation by Julia Pet-Armacost. The Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. July 30 – August 2, 2006. Daytona State College (2014) Institutional Effectiveness Manual

Should Assessment Be Conducted Every Academic Year?

Assessment in academic and non-academic units should be ongoing. The frequency of the assessment should reflect a commitment to the assessment process. Assessment reports are requested every year, but the timetable for doing assessments should be established by the student learning outcomes and program goals established in the plan. The Assessment Plan may be established so that some assessment methods are conducted in alternate years or take several years to complete. Academic and support programs with very small enrollments may benefit from assessment plans that are established with alternate or multiple-year timetables for implementation.

Assessment Report

The Assessment Report is comprised of the assessment plan and three additional components:
1. Data Collection/ Results for Program Outcomes
2. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Programs and Services
3. Major Difficulties

In addition, academic and non-academic units should identify goals and objectives for the next fiscal year based on acquired results.

The indicators used to assess academic departmental performance each academic year are categorized as follows:

Student Points of Progress
1. Pass rate on national standardized and licensing exams
2. Enrollment in online courses
3. Pass rate on common exams
4. Pass rate on graduate comprehensive exams
5. Pass rate on English Proficiency Exam
6. Number of academic departments using student portfolios
7. Number engaged in service-learning
8. Number completing internships
9. Undergraduates completing major research projects
10. Number of first-time freshmen in one or more intermediate courses
11. Number of students on academic probation
12. Student achievement of knowledge/skills that comprise the expected learning outcome
13. Student outcomes based on established goals

Faculty Points of Progress
1. Number of peer reviewed articles by faculty member and department
2. Number of non-peer reviewed articles by faculty member and department
3. Number of published papers presented at regional and national conferences by faculty member and department
4. Total dollar value of awards for research and sponsored projects
5. Number of published research i.e. grants, dissertations by faculty and student(s) and department.

Staff Points of Progress

1. Number of hours of participation in professional development and training
2. Total work production in conjunction with departmental goals and objectives
3. Total dollar value of products and services

Academic Program Productivity
1. Six-year cohort (150%) graduation rate
2. Number of baccalaureate graduates obtaining employment or admission to graduate/professional schools within 12 months of graduation
3. Fall-to-fall cohort retention rate
4. Eight-year retention rate
5. Headcount enrollment and Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

6. Number of undergraduate students 25 years and older
7. Number of MS public community college transfer students
8. Number of undergraduate minority students
9. Number of graduate minority students
10. Number of first-time students with ACT score of 18 or above
11. Number of degrees by level in natural sciences, mathematics, computer science, engineering, allied health sciences, teacher education and accounting
12. Number of degree programs accredited by a national professional accrediting agency
13. Number of full-time faculty who hold a doctoral or first professional degree
14. Ratio of full-time faculty to Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) students
15. Number of classes taught by part-time faculty
16. Number of written formal partnership agreements with public and private sector entities
17. Number of full-time minority faculty
18. Number of courses with global emphasis

The indicators used to assess non-academic departmental performance each fiscal year are categorized as follows:

Educational Student Support Unit (Non-Academic)
1. What does the data indicate about the quality of services provided?
2. What does the data indicate about the satisfaction of the client?
3. Are there specific areas where performance is outstanding or weak?
4. Do you see specific areas where you would like or expect to see higher performance levels?
5. What was the most valuable thing learned from the assessment results?
6. Was the assessment tool sufficient or does it need revising?
7. Are there any considerations of implementing new programs or services to support student success?
8. Use the findings to support planning and budgetary decisions or to supplement existing program review processes.
9. Communicate findings with other campus units or stakeholders.
10. Use the findings to create outcomes for the upcoming year.
11. Consider ways to improve the assessment process.
12. Provide data to base decision-making in the unit.
13. Provide a process to measure performance.
14. Address gaps or weaknesses within the unit operations.
15. Set forth an action plan to improve unit operations.
16. Identify a process to assess the effect of changes to a unit.
17. Enhance or improve efficiency in the daily functions of the unit.
18. Provide a documented process of measuring performance against the college's mission.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING
ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PLAN AND REPORT

Assessment Plan

Academic

Step 1→ Identify the Degree Program and Level, Academic Year and Date for Submission.
Step 2→ Define the Departmental Mission Statement of the program.
Step 2→ List the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the Academic Program.
Step 3→ Identify the Means of Assessment for each SLO.
Step 4→ List the Criteria for Success for each SLO.

Non-Academic

Step 1→ Identify the Department, Fiscal Year, Submission Name and Date.
Step 2→ Identify the Executive Summary of the program.
Step 3→ Identify the Priorities of the Department.
Step 4→ List the Operational Goals and Objectives of the Department.
Step 5→ Identify the Means of Assessment for each Goal/Objective.
Step 6→ List the Criteria for Success for each Goal/Objective.

Assessment is a continuous and dynamic process consisting of a series of steps, each of which is dependent on the information gathered from the previous step. The process is recursive; as one cycle is completed, another cycle begins. Student learning outcomes/goals and objectives and assessment methods are reviewed and revised, if necessary. New data are collected, analyzed, and changes are implemented to improve student learning. Regardless of the program or department being assessed, the process includes the following steps:

Mission statement
A brief statement of the values and philosophy of the department/program. It should guide decision-making about the curriculum and provide a framework for setting goals. It should also be aligned with the University's mission.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
SLOs are statements that specify what **students** will know and demonstrate when they have completed or participated in a program/activity/course/project. **Outcomes** are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, attitudes or values. SLOs should be written in language that clearly implies a measureable behavior or quality of **student** work. (Guide to Developing Measurable Student Outcomes)

Goals

Statements of broad, long range intended outcomes of the program and the curriculum. They describe the knowledge, skills, and values expected of the organization. Goals flow from the mission statement and provide a framework for the objectives. It is suggested that three to five goals are written for a department or program. Limiting the number of goals will assist with writing overarching statements and creating an assessment plan that is both meaningful and feasible to implement.

Effective goals are:
• Broad statements of meaningful expectations
• Clearly written
• Achievable
• Assessable through related objectives
• Consistent with the mission statement

Objectives

Brief, clear statements of learning outcomes that flow from the goals. They should be written using action words that specify observable and measurable behaviors.

Effective objectives:
• Tell us how we know when a goal has been achieved
• Use action words that specify observable behavior
• Are realistic and achievable
• Are measurable
• Use simple language

The following table presents some relevant verbs that may be useful for writing objectives. Each column represents one of the levels of **Bloom's Taxonomy**: [Gronlund, N.E. (1991). *How to write and use instructional objectives* (4th Ed.), New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.]

TABLE 1: Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Define	Classify	Apply	Analyze	Arrange	Assess
Identify	Describe	Compute	Calculate	Construct	Estimate
Indicate	Discuss	Construct	Categorize	Create	Evaluate
Know	Explain	Demonstrate	Compare	Design	Discriminate
Label	Identify	Illustrate	Contrast	Formulate	Judge
List	Locate	Interpret	Determine	Organize	Interpret
Name	Review	Investigate	Differentiate	Plan	Rate
Select	Summarize	Predict	Distinguish	Prepare	Revise
Underline	Translate	Use	Relate	Produce	Support

Example 1:

Student Learning Outcome: *Student will investigate major writers, literary periods and genres of English and American Literature.*

Objective 1 Compare two or more works and authors in English and/or American Literature, for example, analyze the character of Satan in Milton's "Paradise Lost" and compare it to other satanic characters in literature.

Objective 2 Analyze a novel, short story, poem, play or significant piece of prose showing familiarity with the techniques and literary contexts of the particular genre being examined.

Objective 3 Describe the historical context or literary period of the work or author being examined, for example, a discussion of Crane's Maggie as an example of American Naturalism.

Example 2:

Goal 1: *Increase growth in total contractual revenues over previous year FY'16.*

Objective 1 Promote five new items, re-introduce five older products, and continue to provide convenience of desired goods and services while increasing revenues.

Objective 2 Identify five additional vendors to enhance the goods and services offered through the card, licensing programs and contracted venues.

Priorities

The university's priorities are important goals that relate to each student support department (**non-academic**). These priorities are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime Bound and have been embedded into the university's community to provide the framework for building assessment plans and reports. Each unit will describe the department in a broad range that will result in the impact achieved, challenges faced, and the action and changes of the unit. The priorities are listed as follows:

Priority 1: Review and restructure academic programs and budgets.
Priority 2: Accelerate the integration of technology throughout the institution.
Priority 3: Improve management and increase the size of JSU's available resources.
Priority 4: Enhance the image of JSU.
Priority 5: Create a model learning and working environment for the entire JSU Family.

Means of Assessment
Means of Assessments address how **academic programs** and **non-academic units** will measure student outcomes and goals/objectives, ultimately indicating the success or failure of the desired outcomes. Assessment planners can consider the following statements as they develop plans/reports. This is not exhaustive list but suggestive in nature for assessment planners.
- Use terminology that is specific and measurable.
- Use direct and indirect methods to ensure that student learning and program productivity are measured.

- Use multiple measures for each student learning outcome/objective. One measurement must provide direct evidence of student learning and program effectiveness.
- Employ methods that can evaluate more than one student outcome/objective to increase feasibility of assessment.
- Use numerical and realistic terms.
- Ensure that means of assessment are directly related to the outcome.
- Consider all aspects of the outcome.
- Review existing data trends when setting benchmarks.
- Ensure that means of assessment are manageable and practical.

Examples:

1. Completion of Senior Project in Comparative Lit XXX consisting of a portfolio of four papers and a reflective essay. A departmental committee **will review and evaluate** the portfolios using a 5-point scoring rubric developed and approved by department faculty. [Direct Measure]

2. A graduating senior survey **will be used** to examine students' perception of competence regarding all department goals/objectives. [Indirect Measure]

Assessment Methods
Table 1 and 2 describes several methods of assessment with a variety of approaches. Select the methods most appropriate for your departmental student learning goals (outcomes) and/or operational goals and objectives. Be reminded that assessment should be meaningful, measurable, manageable, and sustainable.

Assessment Measures for Academic and Non-Academic Units

TABLE 1: Examples of **Academic** Assessment (direct and indirect) Methods

Method	Definition	Direct or Indirect Evidence
Capstone Course	Assessments take place in a capstone course that can be program-based or required of all students. Assignments are directly related to student learning objectives	Direct
Embedded Questions	Questions related to program learning objectives are embedded within an exam taken by all students. Faculty member grades exams as usual for course grades but responses to the embedded question are aggregated and scored with a common rubric.	Direct
Exit Interviews	Graduating seniors are interviewed to obtain feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the	Indirect

	program in regard to student learning objectives.	
Focus Groups	A series of planned discussions for 6-10 students who are asked a series of open-ended questions related to student learning objectives.	Indirect
Portfolios	A compilation of a student's work throughout the program which is evaluated by a team of faculty using a common scoring rubric.	Direct
Scoring Rubrics	A numerical range used to evaluate the quality of a project, paper, etc. in relation to student learning objectives.	Direct
Standardized Test	Department administers a national test to all students. [Be certain that test items measure student learning objectives for department]	Direct
Survey [of students, alumni, employers]	National or locally-developed survey to measure student satisfaction, perceptions, values, in relation to student learning objectives.	Indirect

TABLE 2: Examples of **Non-Academic** Assessment Methods

Student satisfaction surveys	Number of applications
Number of complaints	Processing time for requests
Count of program participants	Number of users
Growth in participation	Focus groups
Average wait time	Opinion surveys
Comparisons to professional organizations' best practices	External review
Statistical reports	Number of staff trained
Staff training hours	Dollars raised
Attendance at events	Student participation in clubs and activities

Criteria for Success

Criteria for success are proposed for each goal and clearly reflect increases in the program unit's performance and productivity. While outlining the criteria for success, keep in mind the following questions:
- Is the criteria for success labeled for each student outcome or goal/objective?
- Is the criteria for success specific?
- Does the criteria for success answer the question "I know I am successful when"?
- If the same goal was used for multiple years, does the criteria for success show progression (increases in student performance)?

For each goal, make sure to include defined targets. These targets should be quantified by using dates, percentages or realistic numbers for each specific objective to be reached. Criteria for success or your action plan should be written in anticipation of desired results.

Assessment Report

The Assessment Report is comprised of the **plan** and three major parts for both **Academic and Non-Academic Units**:

Step 1→ Identify Data Collection/ Results for Instructional Programs/Outcomes and Goals
Step 2→ Identify the Use of Results to Improve Instructional Programs/Outcomes and Goals
Step 3→ Identify the Major Difficulties
Step 4→ List the Academic Goals/Operational Goals and Objectives for the next year

Data Collection/Results for Academic Program/Non-Academic Units

Describe the process used to analyze and summarize the results. Provide the results. Specifically, document whether the data meets, exceeds, or does not meet the criteria for success.

Example:

The criteria for success was met.
Out of 11 graduates who were enrolled in SPCH 499 and DR 425, 90% completed portfolios/productions at 85% or higher pass rate.

Use of the Results to Improve Academic Programs/Non-Academic Units

Data results will indicate steps to improve or revise the assessment processes. If results are above the criterion for success, revising the assessment process is necessary to increase the criterion for success or assessing another outcome or aspect of that outcome. If the results fall below the criterion, specific improvements are necessary.

Example 1:

The syllabus was modified for CMD 495. A senior project has been developed for classes to write a literature review regarding minority performance on standardized tests and participate in tutoring sessions to improve performance on the Graduate Record Examination.

Example 2:

JSU plans to continue providing responses to survey requests to enhance the availability of research data regarding state agencies, institutions of higher learning, HBCU's etc.

Step 3→ Major Difficulties

Each **Academic** and **Non-Academic program unit** is asked to document any major difficulties encountered in accomplishing each goal. If none were encountered, indicate "none".

Step 4→ Next Year's Academic Goals/Operational Goals and Objectives
After reflecting on the past academic year, **Academic/Operational Goals and Objectives** for the next academic year should be recorded as part of the completed assessment report.

RESOURCES

Writing Assessable Goals & Objectives

Avoid Weasel Words and Phrases:

Be aware of   Have a (firm) grasp of
Have an awareness of   Have a (an in-depth) knowledge of
Be conversant with   Be prepared for a variety of
Be familiar with   Have a (good) sense of
Display a broad and full grasp of   Understand
Develop awareness (understanding)   Have an (a broad) understanding of

Use Action Verbs:

Add	Design	List	Restate
Advance	Determine	Locate	Reveal
Alter	Differentiate	Make	Revise
Analyze	Discriminate	Manipulate	Section
Annotate	Dissect	Match	Select
Apply	Distinguish	Mobilize	Separate
Appraise	Divide	Modify	Show
Arrange	Draw	Multiply	Sift
Assign	Earn	Name	Sketch
Assay	Employ	Negotiate	Solve
Assess	Estimate	Offer	Sort
Calculate	Evaluate	Omit	Speak
Canvass	Exercise	Operate	Specify
Change	Exert	Perform	Spell
Check	Expand	Pick	State
Choose	Extrapolate	Plan	Strike
Classify	Find	Point	Subtract
Collect	Form	Predict	Summarize
Combine	Generate	Produce	Support
Compare	Give	Project	Synthesize
Compose	Hold	Propose	Take care, teach
Contrast	Identify	Quality	Tell
Convert	Illustrate	Quantity	Test
Create	Include	Quote	Touch
Criticize	Integrate	Rate	Transfer
Dance	Interpolate	Read	Transform
Deduce	Interpret	Recite	Translate
Define	Judge	Referee	Use
Demonstrate	Justify	Repeat	Weigh
Derive	Label	Reproduce	Write

Gardiner, Lion F. (1989). *Planning/or assessment: Mission statement, goals, and objectives.* Trenton, NJ: Distributed by New Jersey Department of Higher Education, 256.pp.

RESOURCES

Determining Academic Assessment Approaches/Methods

When considering how to assess student learning (i.e. How do we know that our students have learned what we expect them to?), you may wish to consider the following:

1. **What particular learning objectives are addressed?**
   o Courses
   o Programs
   o Services
   o Internships
   o Community service projects
   o Work experience
   o Independent study
   o Undergraduate research

2. **What approaches will you use to assess learning outcomes?**
   o Exams – major field exams, GRE, LSAT, MAT
   o Embedded classroom assessment
   o In-class writing sample
   o In-class analysis of a problem
   o In-class collaborative problem solving project
   o Portfolio
   o Performance
   o Simulation
   o Focus group
   o Capstone course

3. **Are you using direct or indirect measures to assess learning outcomes?**
   Are you using qualitative and/or quantitative measures?

DIRECT methods of evaluating student learning are those that provide evidence of whether or not a student has command of a specific subject or content area, can perform a certain task, exhibits a particular skill, demonstrates a certain quality in his/her work (e.g. creativity, analysis, synthesis, or objectivity), or holds a particular value.
   o Comprehensive exam
   o Writing proficiency exam
   o National exam
   o GRE subject test
   o Major Field test
   o Certification exam
   o Licensure exam
   o Local pre-test and post-test
   o Performance assessment
   o Video/audio tape evaluation
   o Senior thesis/major project
   o Portfolio evaluation
   o Capstone courses designed to evaluate performance in program

RESOURCES

INDIRECT methods of evaluating student learning involve data that are related to the act of learning, such as factors that predict or mediate learning or perceptions about learning but do not reflect learning itself.

- o Comparison with peer institution
- o Job placement
- o Employer survey
- o Graduate school acceptance rates
- o Performance in graduate school
- o Graduation/retention rates
- o Exit interviews
- o Student satisfaction survey
- o Student course evaluation
- o Internship evaluation
- o Focus group evaluation
- o Alumni survey
- o Tracking alumni honors/awards

Assessment methods should reflect the type of learning or performance to be measured. The student learning outcomes must govern the choice of measures. A combination of assessment approaches can be the most effective way to measure student learning and program performance. Assessment tools should be chosen so that students and programs are given multiple ways to demonstrate their learning and performance, respectively.

4.   Who are you going to assess? (Academic)
- o All students
- o Student cohorts, such as: At risk students
- o Students with an ACT score over 18
- o Juniors
- o Graduating seniors
- o Random sample

5. What is your schedule for assessing learning outcomes?

- o Upon matriculation
- o At the end of a specific semester
- o At the completion of a required set of courses
- o Upon program completion
- o Upon graduation
- o Upon employment
- o A number of years after graduation

Adapted from materials provided by Kent State University

PROS AND CONS OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

Sources of Information/ Example Assessment Methods	Pros of Method	Cons of Method
From course work (embedded, course- based) (direct assessment methods)	*In general, students take embedded course work seriously; therefore, work has a good chance of reflecting actual abilities. * Reflects program or department's course and curriculum, and program outcomes	*In general, biases of the data over years, instructor or departmental differences can influence the results. *Reluctance of faculty to share results with entire faculty membership.
Tests, including pre-post, entry and exits	*Inexpensive *Comprehensive *Pre-post testing allows for "value added" assessment	*Developing appropriate test questions that reflect leaning outcomes and complex levels of learning takes time and skill. *For pre-post testing: difficult to design tests that are comparable at different times.
*Graded Homework	*Reflects students' ability when they have access to resources	*Does not assess students' ability or overall learning as typically defined.
*Ratings or Rubrics judging quality of papers, reports, projects	*Can be used by others besides instructor, to assess quality	*Developing accurate rubric dimensions that reflect learning outcomes and levels of learning takes time and skill.
Tests, rubrics on paper, projects from capstone course experience	*Allows for assessment of higher cognitive abilities such as synthesis and evaluation of knowledge *Can assess in-depth knowledge *Allows creativity * Assessment of intergrading of learning.	*Labor intensive for both faculty and students *Because course and project are high- stakes, it may produce student anxiety that may result in assessment reflecting lesser ability than actual ability.
*Concept mapping or knowledge mapping	*Unique technique to understand connections of concepts within students' knowledge-base *Assessment of complex relationships	*Difficult to compare across students *Difficult to obtain objective judgment on abilities.
Expert's judgment of performance (e.g., art, drama, healthcare	*Improves face validity of assessment activities	*Obtaining appropriate experts' time
*Criteria, rating, rubrics, judging thesis, dissertation work	*Allows for judgment about overall graduate program across several students	*Difficult to define rubric dimensions that relate to multiple theses or dissertations
Qualifying exams for graduate work	*Developing exam questions across several graduates allows for better assessment of the graduate program.	*Oral presentations may be a challenge for those with language difficulties *Difficult to define questions that relate to several students
From longitudinal, cross- sectional or cross-course comparisons including student portfolios (direct assessment methods)	*In general, shows longitudinal trends with rich detail *Assessment becomes an integral part of students' learning process	*In general, validity depends on how work is collected *Can overload assessment committees with too much information
*Rubrics judging quality of work across time, sections or courses	*Highlights students' strengths and weaknesses in comprehensive manner	*Developing accurate rubric dimension that reflects learning outcomes and levels of learning take time and skill *Content may vary widely by students

ONLINE RESOURCES

Assessment Cyber-Guide for Learning Goals and Outcomes
www.apa.org/ed/guidehomepage.html

Council for Aid to Education (CAE)--Collegiate Learning Assessment
http://www.collegiatelearningassessment.org/

Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE): http://fsse.iub.edu/

Measuring Quality: National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessments
http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):
http://www.nsse.iub.edu

NCPI Assessment Toolkit: Inventory of Instruments
https://web.stanford.edu/group/ncpi/unspecified/assessment_states/instruments.html

Qualtrics: https://www.qualtrics.com/academic-solutions/jackson-state-university/

Templates: http://www.jsums.edu/dpa/forms/

Academic Assessment Resources
Academic Assessment Report Template
Academic Assessment Rubric Criteria
Academic Assessment Rubric
Academic Assessment Presentation

Non-Academic Assessment Resources
Non-Academic Assessment Report Template
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Non-Academic Assessment Presentation