

Program Assessment Planning:

A Three Part Series on How to Set
Up a Manageable and Effective
Assessment Plan



Office of Assessment
and Evaluation
at Virginia Tech

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Overview

Assessment overview

- What is assessment?
- Why do we do assessment?
- Are we required to do assessment?

Developing a Program Assessment Plan: What is included in the three part series?

- Part I: Developing a mission statement, writing good student learning and program outcomes, and developing a curriculum map
- Part II: Implementing appropriate measures, creating additional assessment maps, developing targets, and analyzing data
- Part III: Designing an action plan, closing the loop, and reporting results

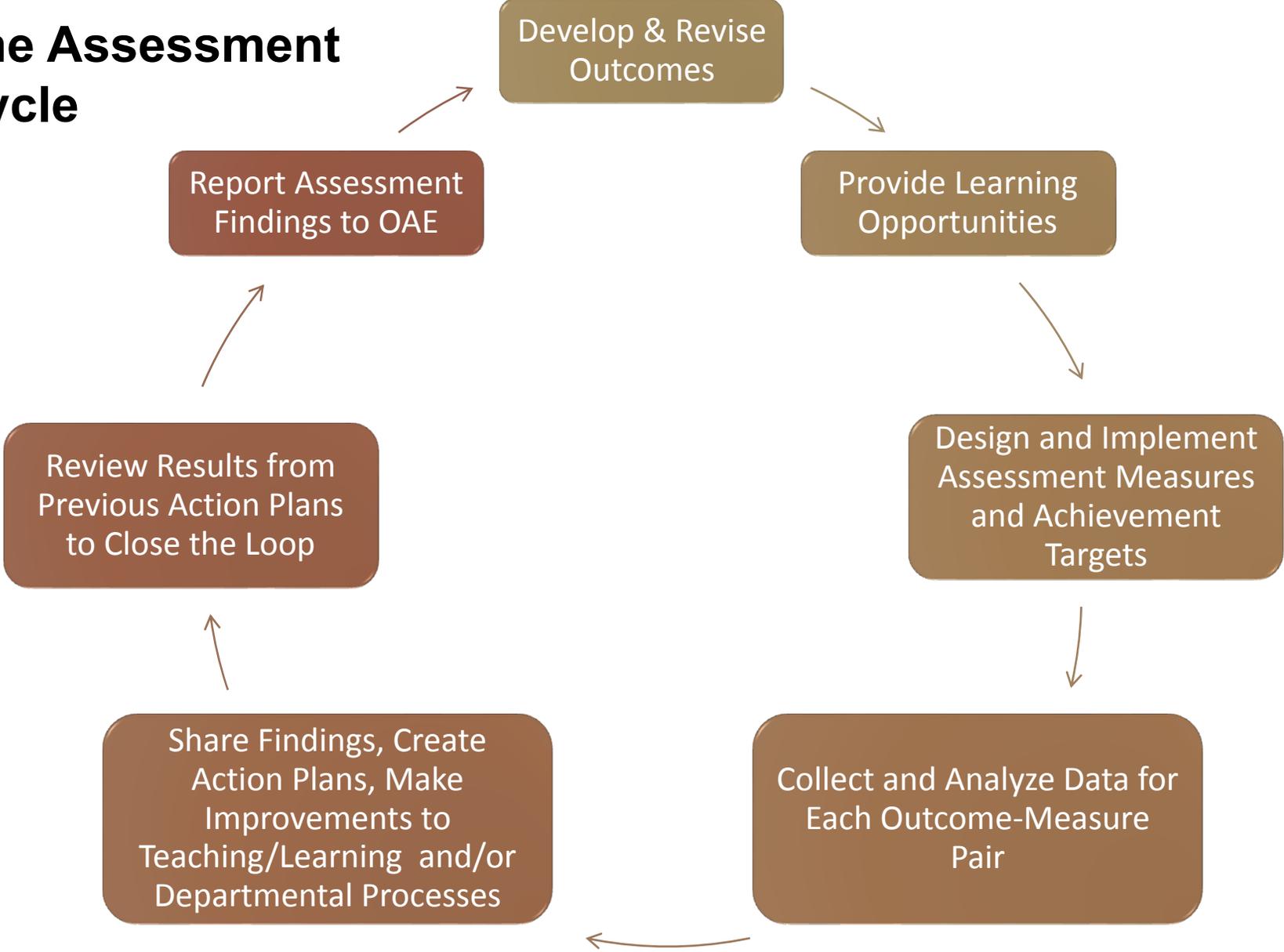
What is assessment?

Suskie (2009, p.4) defined assessment as an ongoing four-step process:

1. “establishing clear, measureable expected outcomes of student learning;
2. ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes;
3. systematically, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations;
4. using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning.”

Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide* (2nd ed.).
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The Assessment Cycle



Why should programs do assessment?

- Help identify a program's strengths and areas for improvement
- Provide student learning evidence for stakeholders including discipline-specific and regional accreditors
- Highlight the contributions of the program to stakeholders
- Encourage collaboration among faculty in the program
- Create a program vision and ideal
- Encourage the review of the curriculum as a whole

BUT the PRIMARY REASON is to improve the teaching and learning process

What are the SACSCOC requirements for program assessment?

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Comprehensive Standard,

“3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes” (pg.27).

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2011, December, pg. 27). *The principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement*. Retrieved from <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

What are some things SACSCOC considers when examining this standard?

- “How are expected outcomes clearly defined in measurable terms for each educational program?”
- What assessment instruments are used and why were they selected?
- Have the programs assessed the extent to which they have been successful in achieving their learning outcomes?
- If called for, have program improvements been made as a result of assessment findings?”

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (Second Edition 2012, p.55). *Resource manual for the principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement*. Retrieved from <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/Resource%20Manual.pdf>

Part I – Mission Statements, Outcomes, and Curriculum Mapping

By the end of this session you will be able to:

1. Describe the components of a good mission statement
2. Explain why it is important for programs to develop student learning and program outcomes
3. Explain the difference between a student learning outcome and a program outcome
4. Describe what makes a good student learning or program outcome
5. Explain why your program should develop a curriculum map

Developing your Mission and Outcomes



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What is a mission statement?

The Program Mission Statement is:

- A concise statement about the values and purpose of the program
- The foundation a program uses to help define its program goals and outcomes
- Consistent with the mission of the institution and the college
- A broad statement on what the program does and for whom and what it is trying to achieve with the curriculum
- Program-specific and designed by faculty

What should be in a program mission statement?

Components of a Program Mission Statement:

- Primary functions or activities of the program or unit
- Purpose of the program or unit
- Stakeholders

Structure of a Program Mission Statement

“The mission of (name of your program or unit) is to (your primary purpose) by providing (your primary functions or activities) to (your stakeholders).” Additional clarifying statements.

Note: the order of the mission statement may vary from the above structure.

- Adapted from: <http://assessment.uconn.edu/docs/HowToWriteMission.pdf>

Why do programs need student learning and program outcomes?

- Help clarify / reinforce the mission of the program
- Assist the program in making informed evidence-based changes to the curriculum, program, or student learning
- Focus student learning as core to the educational mission
- Engage faculty in collective ownership of the curriculum and the process of institutional effectiveness
- Meet SACSCOC accreditation standards
- Describe the program to stakeholders (e.g., interested students, accreditation agencies, graduate schools, etc.)
- Inform students as to what they are expected to achieve

What is the difference between a program outcome and a student learning outcome?

	Program outcomes	Student learning outcomes
Definition	Reflect the services the program provides OR outline specific student achievement areas of the program (ex. retention, graduation rates, etc.).	Reflect the knowledge, skills, abilities, or competencies that students are expected to acquire as a result of being in the program.
Example	Students who declare XYZ as a major will complete the program.	Graduates should be able to explain how past events in the area of XYZ impact society now.

How many outcomes should you have and how often should they be measured?

- Programs should have a mix of student learning and program outcomes.
 - 5 to 8 student learning outcomes
 - 2 to 3 program outcomes
- Programs with discipline-specific accreditation requirements (ex. ABET, AACSB, etc.) might have more outcomes
- Each program should measure at least 2-3 student learning outcomes and 1-2 program outcomes every year.
- All outcomes should be measured at least twice in five years.

What makes a good program outcome?

A program outcome:

- Is a statement defining program metrics or services
- Focuses on what your program wants to accomplish or a service it provides
- Specifies program student achievement areas

A good program outcome:

- Is a specific action, behavior, or achievement
- Can feasibly be measured accurately and reliably
- Is related to the program's mission and can be achieved or improved upon if not achieved
- Is meaningful to the program

What makes a good student learning outcome?

A student learning outcome:

- Is a specific behavior or knowledge that students are expected to be able to demonstrate as a result of the program
- Focuses on what you want students to know or be able to do
- Completes the statement: At the end of the program, students will be able to...

A good learning outcome:

- Addresses an observable, attainable behavior (not a “bundled” statement)
- Is narrowly focused
- Is measurable
- Is stated at the appropriate cognitive level for the degree or expectations of the program (Bloom’s taxonomy:
http://ww2.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm)

What are examples of good program outcomes?

Examples of measureable, specific, and feasible program outcomes:

- The MA program will develop new courses to meet discipline-specific accreditation requirements.
- The department of XYZ will increase its graduation rates.
- Students graduating from the program will obtain licensure.

What are examples of good student learning outcomes?

Examples of measureable, observable student learning outcomes:

- Students will be able to explain the XYZ theory
- Students will be able to describe the style and form used in paintings by Monet
- “Explain the logic of the four-field approach to American anthropology.” (<http://www.washburn.edu/academics/college-schools/arts-sciences/departments/sociology-anthropology/ba-in-anthropology.html>)

Practice writing your own outcomes

Please take a few minutes to develop a program outcome and student learning outcome for your program.

Be ready to share with the group.

Developing a Program Curriculum Map



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What is a curriculum map and why should a program develop one?

Curriculum mapping:

- Is a technique that allows programs to align their learning outcomes and courses
- Exposes when there are “gaps in the curriculum”
- Assists assessment planning by demonstrating where and when assessments can be effectively implemented

Curriculum mapping “improves communication among faculty,” “improves program coherence,” and “increases the likelihood that students achieve program-level outcomes.”

Reference: (<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/mapping.htm>)

What does a program curriculum map look like?

Student Learning Outcome (SLO)	Required Introductory Courses (100 / 200 level)		Required Upper Level Courses (300 /400 level)			Concentration Specific Requirements	Additional Required Academic Experience
	BIOL 1006	BIOL 2010	BIOL 3025	BIOL 4030	BIOL 4064		
						BIOL 3018	Internship (required)
SLO#1: Explain the core biological concepts related to evolution and principles of genetics.	I	I		R, A			R
SLO #2: Critically analyze biological research and findings.		I	R		R, A		
Continue with the rest of your CORE learning outcomes							
SLO Concentration Example: Explain the use of cells and biological materials in biochemistry.	I	R				R, A	
Complete for each concentration outcome							

“I” indicates where the concept is first being introduced to the students, “R” represents where the concept is being reinforced, and “A” indicates the assessment point.

Next session

Part II – Measures, Additional
Mapping Techniques, Targets, and
Analyses

Question and Answer

For questions or additional information please contact the
Office of Assessment and Evaluation

We are always happy to help!



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Presentation will be made available on the
Office of Assessment and Evaluation website.