

Academic & Student Support Services Assessment Planning Guide

Office of Planning and Assessment

Purpose of Assessment Planning

Assessment involves the systematic collection, review, and use of evidence or information related to the department's outcomes. Assessment helps administrators understand how well their department is performing particular functions. The assessment plan helps OPA relate information to our accreditors, such as SACSCOC, about each department's impact on students and the university through the years.

Overview of the Assessment Cycle

The assessment cycle is best conceptualized as an ongoing process that evaluates and identifies continuous improvement within Student Support Level departments. Part of the assessment process is to create deliberate, measurable goals about the department's purpose. A well-developed assessment plan includes a strategy to reach the goals, means of assessment for each strategy, review and evaluation of results, and evidence that demonstrates how the results were used to improve the department. The following provides a brief summary of the different phases of the assessment cycle:

Planning Phase – This is often seen as the beginning phase of assessment. During this phase, outcome statements are developed or revised. The planning phase also involves making decisions about the specific strategies and assessment-related activities for each outcome. Other common aspects of the planning phase are establishing timelines and assigning specific personnel to these activities.

Assessing Phase – The assessing phase involves selecting the appropriate assessment method(s) for each outcome, implementing those assessments, and analyzing the assessment data to learn more about the department's performance in relation to the outcomes.

Improving Phase – This phase is most commonly omitted from assessment discussions, but it is one of the most important steps in the assessment process. During this phase, administrators reflect upon the information gathered from the different planning and assessment phases to determine the necessary changes that may increase department performance. Additionally, the improving phase involves the implementation of these changes. For example, administrators may identify problems with the assessment methods and adjust the means of assessment.



How do I develop my assessment plan?

There are 5 components to an assessment plan:

- Expected **Outcomes**
- **Strategies and Initiatives**
- **Results**
- **Annual Reflections**

Outcomes

i An **outcome** is a formal statement of the expected impact a department has on student success. It may directly or indirectly involve students. If it is an indirect relationship, a brief explanation connecting the outcome to students can be stated.

The outcome statement itself should be succinctly written in one sentence. Departments are required to have 3-5 outcomes.

These statements feed into the university's mission statement or strategic plan.

Note This department assessment is not where operational outcomes are measured, such as maximizing the budget or personnel management. Rather, these statements refer to the expected outcomes impacting students.

Examples of outcomes:

- Increase student awareness and/or knowledge of legal issues and processes.
- Provide continued and updated resources for students and faculty as they conduct research.
- Provide qualified environment wherein students feel confident and satisfied in their medical care.

Questions to help form outcome statements:

What does our department's mission look like to students on a daily basis?

What does success mean for our department?

How does the quality of our service impact students?

Strategies and Initiatives

i The **Strategy or Initiative** statement explains how a department will achieve their expected outcomes. It outlines actionable plans that include assessment **methods** and a **target** output.

The **Assessment Methods** provide means of quantifying outcomes. You likely already evaluate your unit's effectiveness. Examples of these types of artifacts or instruments include the monthly manager's report, grant reporting, staff reports, surveys, etc. There is no need to create a special data collection process for SACSCOC; just summarize existing processes.

Targets state the level of performance or output expected from the strategy so that the outcome is achieved. Targets often state the minimally accepted level of performance or a benchmark from which to build. Targets should be reflective of the strategy and related to the assessment method.

Each outcome should have at least one strategy and each strategy should have a method to measure its success.

Example Strategies and Initiatives:

- The Student Legal Services will track outreach programs and marketing efforts which promote student awareness of legal issues and our program (document containing total list of presentations along with their affiliations).
- The Library will place extra resources and focus in the area of online media to increase number of on- and off- campus students using Document Delivery (maintain tallies of number of documents retrieved online).
- Improve overall patient experience score by 1-2 percentage points annually until 90% overall satisfaction is achieved (collect data using the Patient Satisfaction Survey).

Questions to help form assessment methods:

What measurable actions does our department do to achieve their expected outcomes?

How can we prove our departments impact?

How will we keep track of this impact?

Structure of a Strategy/Initiative

- **Outcome:** Texas Tech University faculty and staff will be well-prepared to meet OPA's faculty credentialing, assessment, and strategic plan expectations.
- **Strategy/Initiative Name:** Faculty and Staff Trainings
- **Strategy/Initiative Description:** OPA will provide multiple training opportunities for faculty and staff and report satisfaction survey results for the following areas: software training, SSL feedback consultations, in-office trainings, and departmental feedback consultations.
- **Assessment Methods:** OPA will monitor the success of these trainings through a Workshop Feedback Survey distributed after each training session.
- **Target:** OPA will reach and maintain an overall 3.5 on a 4.0 scale for all survey results.
- **Timeline:** AY 2021-2026

Results

i The **Results** component should include a statement of results in relation to the target as well as an analysis of the data.

Analyses of Result Data should demonstrate how a strategy or initiative is contributing each expected outcome. The goal of data analysis is to determine what needs improvement and what is doing well.

Examples of Results and Analyses of Result Data:

- Result Data: Student Legal Services provided 21 presentations; and, attended 98% of student information fairs.
 - Analyses of Result Data: SLS continued its partnerships with specific on-campus organizations in an active efforts help maintain our presence in the student eye.
- Result Data: Document Delivery was used 750,000 times in AY 18-19.
 - Analyses of Result Data: This is an 8% decrease from the year before. Although there has been a decrease, this resource has been used consistently for students and faculty conducting resources and thus, should be maintained.
- Result Data: This academic year, 88.24% of students stated that they are overall satisfied with their visit.
 - Analyses of Result Data: We improved patient satisfaction by more than 1% from previous assessment cycle. Thus, student patient satisfaction is slowly increasing.

Questions to help form Results:

How do you define successful achievement of your goal?

Did the strategy/initiative meet its criterion?

What does this data say about our progress towards the Outcome?

Challenges and Takeaways

- One size does not fit all. Some methods work well for one department but not others.
- Do not try to develop the perfect assessment all at once. Take a continuous improvement approach.
- Allow for ongoing feedback.
- Keep data simple to collect or access.
- Results should be easily interpreted.
- The assessment should be useful for improving the department.

Annual Department Reflections

i Regular **Reflections** are necessary to the assessment cycle. This component summarizes actions you **have taken or plan to take** with the goal of seeing improvement.

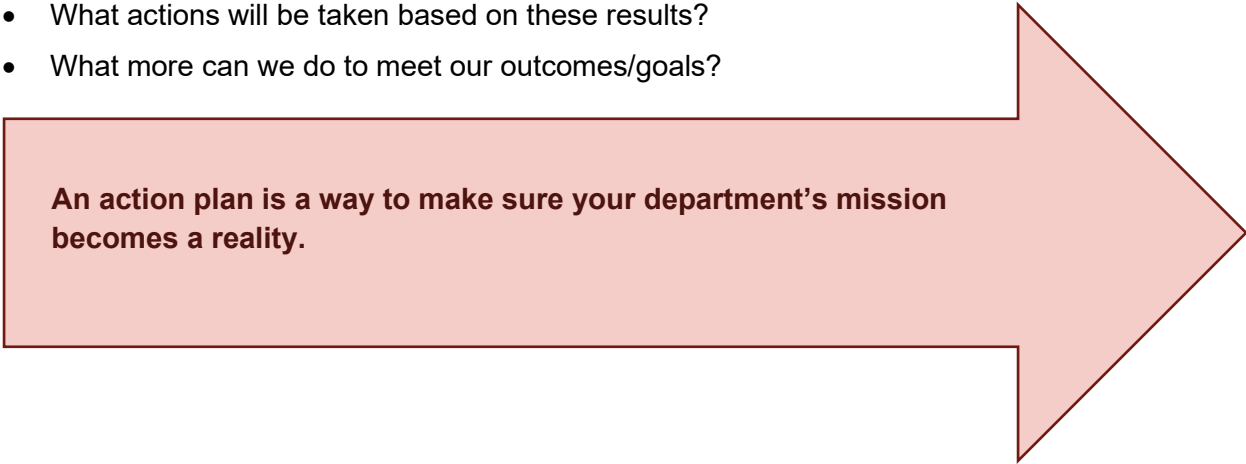
Using your Analyses of Results Data from this assessment cycle, identify what department or programmatic revisions need to be made to your department or initiatives to ensure student learning. Within these reflections, you may also record achievements or changes that were enacted during this assessment cycle.

Examples of Evidence of Improvement:

- Student Legal Services needed to reestablish a minimum of 25 presentations during the next Academic Year. SLS will hold the same presentations as this assessment cycle but will add four more which focus on current issues. Also, our next steps should involve a student feedback survey to determine how many students were positively impacted by these presentations. Lastly of note, SLS had hoped to re-establish the Medical Decision Planning workshop this assessment cycle, but did not happen because of covid limiting in-person meetings. It should remain on the agenda for future actions of improvement.
- Results from users accessing resources through DocuDelivery has decreased another year. The library conducted a survey to identify potential and improved documentation delivery systems. Review of updated technological services yielded that there is not a better or more suitable technology system we could use to replace DocuDelivery. Thus, administration should determine if more outreach and awareness of the library's resources should be implemented. A related plan for such outreach should be drafted and ultimately implemented.
- The weekly staff group huddle was a success. It constantly kept our minds on the issue of patient satisfaction. The score has continued to increase this year as well. It is recommended that our next steps be to implement a weekly patient experience huddle where we can review and talk through various issues related to the patient experience survey as they arise.

Questions to help form Opportunities for Improvement:

- What actions will be taken based on these results?
- What more can we do to meet our outcomes/goals?



An action plan is a way to make sure your department's mission becomes a reality.

If you have questions about developing your assessment plan, contact Kara Page at kara.page@ttu.edu.