

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

FORMAT AND GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC UNIT ASSESSMENT PLANS*

School and Degree Program Information

Please include at the top of Page 1 of the plan the following information:

- School/College Name
- Department Name (if departmentalized school/college)
- Degrees Awarded: (Name relevant degree(s))
- Date

Plan Format

The plans will have the eight sections listed below. For each Program Outcome identified, there will be a corresponding section IV: “Procedures, Measures and Criteria” that will have the four sub-sections listed below.

- I. Mission Statement(s)
- II. Program Educational Objectives
- III. Program Outcomes
- IV. Procedures, Measures and Criteria
 - Measurable performance criteria
 - Curriculum map - location in curriculum
 - Assessment methods or instruments used
 - Group performance standard established
- V. Implementation Plan
- VI. Evaluation Results
- VII. Feedback Channels
- VIII. Use of Results

Plan Guidelines

I. Mission Statement(s)

- State the missions of the school/college and the department (as appropriate) in which the program is housed. The mission statement identifies for constituents external to the unit the purpose of the unit and describes why it exists.
- The department’s mission statement should be consistent with the mission statement of the University and the school/college in which it is housed.

II. Program Educational Objectives

- Program Educational Objectives are broad statements that describe the career and professional accomplishments that the program is preparing graduates to achieve.
- These statements also describe the expected accomplishments of graduates during the first few years after graduation.

III. Program Outcomes

(Note: These Program Outcomes will also be entered into the University’s Online

Assessment Tracking System, OATS, for inclusion in the annual assessment updates due each year on October 15th.)

Program Outcomes are statements that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation, and they consist of the 3-8 most important broad student learning results desired from the program (What is to be achieved?)

Program Outcomes should:

- Be stated in terms of expected student behaviors/achievements;
- Be measurable;
- Be aggregate, focusing on the program and not on individual students or courses; and
- Specify the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and other desired program-specific attributes (e.g., competencies, understandings, and values) that students should have acquired as a result of having completed the program of study.

For each Program Outcome, the plan will have a "Procedures, Measures and Criteria" section.

IV. Procedures, Methods and Criteria

(Note: These Procedures, Methods, and Criteria will also be entered into the University's Online Assessment Tracking System, OATS, for inclusion in the annual assessment updates due each year on October 15th.)

This section forms the heart of the assessment plan. Procedures, measures and criteria serve to:

- Define measurable performance criteria to be assessed within each Program Outcome (what specifically is to be measured?);
- Indicate how they will be assessed (with what method or instrument?);
- Indicate where in the curriculum those competencies will be assessed (develop the curriculum map); and
- Indicate the group performance standard to be achieved (what level is acceptable as evidence of success?)

Notes:

- Performance is often not observable, so *indicators* of performance must be sought.
- Triangulation, or use of multiple methods, is usually needed to assure accuracy of measurement. Therefore, most plans will feature at least 2 to 3 procedures for assessing any given Program Outcome.
- The same assessment method or instrument can often be used to measure several Program Outcomes. For example, senior presentations in a capstone course might be used to assess discipline-related knowledge, oral communication skills, report-writing skills, and problem-solving abilities.
- Inventory existing evaluation strategies. What assessments are you doing now that you can use for the specified learning objectives?
- From the outset, attention should be given to using valid, reliable, high-quality measurements, so that resulting data can be interpreted and used for curricular decision-

making.

V. Implementation Plan

The implementation plan has three basic components. It should:

- Define responsibilities for tasks related to assessment, including data collection, data analysis, and reporting;
- Specify the data collection timetable; and
- Display in matrix form how the Program Outcomes relate to the methods/assessment tools used for measurement.

VI. Assessment Results

(Note: Assessment results will be entered in the University's Online Assessment Tracking System, OATS, for inclusion in the annual assessment updates due each year on October 15th).

In OATS, a summary discussion should be entered, organized according to each Program Outcome, of the extent to which the assessment results confirm that the pedagogical strategies used in the degree program are achieving the desired results.

VII. Feedback Channels

This section should identify the specific forum or mechanisms and frequency for disseminating assessment results to program faculty. How, when, and where will results be shared? Feedback should:

- Be provided in a timely manner to all faculty so decisions can be made regarding improvement of practices;
- Provide information for decision making; and
- Provide a basis for evaluation.

VIII. Actions Taken: Use of Results

(Note: Actions taken as a result of assessment findings and subsequent faculty recommendations will be entered in the University's Online Assessment Tracking System, OATS, for inclusion in the annual assessment updates due each year on October 15th.)

In OATS, A summary discussion should appear, organized according to each Program Outcome, of the actions that are being taken or planned to take place as a result of assessment findings and subsequent faculty recommendations. A timeline for such actions should be included in OATS.

* For information on the concepts and terminology used herein, see the *Assessment Planning Flow Chart* by Gloria Rogers at <http://www.utexas.edu/provost/sacs/resources/flowchart.html> and the spring Accreditation Workshops presentations and other resources found at the University's SACS web site at <http://www.utexas.edu/provost/sacs/resources/index.html>.