Wayne State University • Assessment Handbook

Student Services Assessment

Easy Steps to Improving Student Learning

Written by

Catherine M. Barrette, PhD
Director of Assessment

Dian Walster, PhD
Professor
School of Information Sciences

Designed by

Judith A. Moldenhauer, MFA
Professor
Department of Art and Art History

Foreword

Dear colleagues,

Our students' ability to learn and succeed depends on our faculty and staff. By delivering high quality instruction and support systems, we prepare students to thrive in pursuit of their personal and professional endeavors. Program assessment is a tool for achieving that important goal; it's how we work to continually explore and improve student learning and student success.

Through the assessment process, we define what students should gain from our programs, gather evidence of how well we're helping them meet those targets, and analyze that evidence to see where we are achieving excellence and where we could do better to support our students. That process leads us to think reflectively about our goals, program design, and program delivery, and how they intersect to support students' learning and student success. It enables us to make more informed decisions about our programs' design and implementation on an ongoing basis. In other words, we do assessment because we care about our students' success.

The handbook that you are about to read will introduce you to the basics of program assessment at Wayne State, but it is not your only resource. You have many colleagues who can serve as "assessment mentors," as well as a director of assessment whose primary role is to support your program's assessment planning. Various assessment committees can answer your questions, and the Office for Teaching and Learning offers workshops and consultations focused on course-level assessments. You can also find extensive resources on the WSU Assessment website.

Assessment benefits us all – students, faculty, staff, and the university as a whole – by fostering continued excellence and improvement. I look forward to your ongoing engagement and participation in this important process.

Keith E. Whitfield, Provost

How to Use This Handbook

Each chapter in the handbook can be read and used independently.

You may also read the handbook from beginning to end.

Direct links are embedded into the text of the chapters that, when clicked, give you more detailed information about a topic or term.

Underlined words indicate clickable direct links.

Either the Table of Contents or the Quick Reference can be used to quickly access a section of the handbook.

The Quick Reference uses clickable direct links.

Quick Reference

Direct Links to Handbook Sections

Direct Links

This is a brief overview of getting started on developing program assessment materials, plans and timelines. Each item below is directly linked to a section of the handbook. By clicking on the link you will be taken directly to that section and can start work on a particular section of interest to you.

Mission statements
Program outcomes

- Develop, review or revise mission statements and program outcomes.

Exisiting assessment methods

- Inventory existing assessment methods and evaluate them for usability.

New assessment methods

- Construct or identify new assessment methods to meet the gaps that the existing methods do not address.

Results

- Analyze the data and draw conclusions, interpretations and inferences that are turned into results.

Action plan

- Create an action plan.

Timeline

- Create a specific timeline for implementing the action plan.

Report

- Report to stakeholders regarding your conclusions.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents *(cont.)*

Table of Contents *(cont.)*

Table of Contents *(cont.)*

Chapter 1 Why assess?

Introduction to program assessment and the assessment process

Assessment for learning: What is it? Who does it?

Program assessment is a term commonly used to encompass the process of gathering and using evidence about a program's impact on student learning or student success to guide improvements to our programs. It complements assessment of individual student performance by focusing on students as a group. Program assessment results in action; programs must interpret the evidence they collect and act on that evidence for assessment to benefit student learning. Then programs re-evaluate to see if changes had the desired effect on student learning and success.

At Wayne State, all student services programs (e.g. APEX, Student Disability Services, Housing and Residential Life, Financial Aid) engage in program assessment. Staff members lead assessment efforts in student services programs. Students and other stakeholders may also participate in assessment.

Stakeholders are the sum of everyone who is interested in, supports or is affected by your program. Primary stakeholders are typically considered to be students, faculty, staff and administrators. But others such as alumni, community members and accreditors may also have interest in and be supportive of your program.

Why do assessment?

As members of an institution of higher education, student learning and success is central to Wayne State's mission. Program assessment helps us to carry out that mission to the best of our ability by encouraging ongoing, evidence-based decision-making that enhances students' success. In addition, evidence-based investigation can contribute to professional knowledge as some of our WSU colleagues have demonstrated through their conference presentations. Furthermore, at the local level, program assessment supports students, faculty, and staff by helping programs to:

- Articulate their goals through a mission statement.
- Measure how well programs are achieving those goals
- Use that information to improve program quality
- Communicate programs' successes and needs effectively

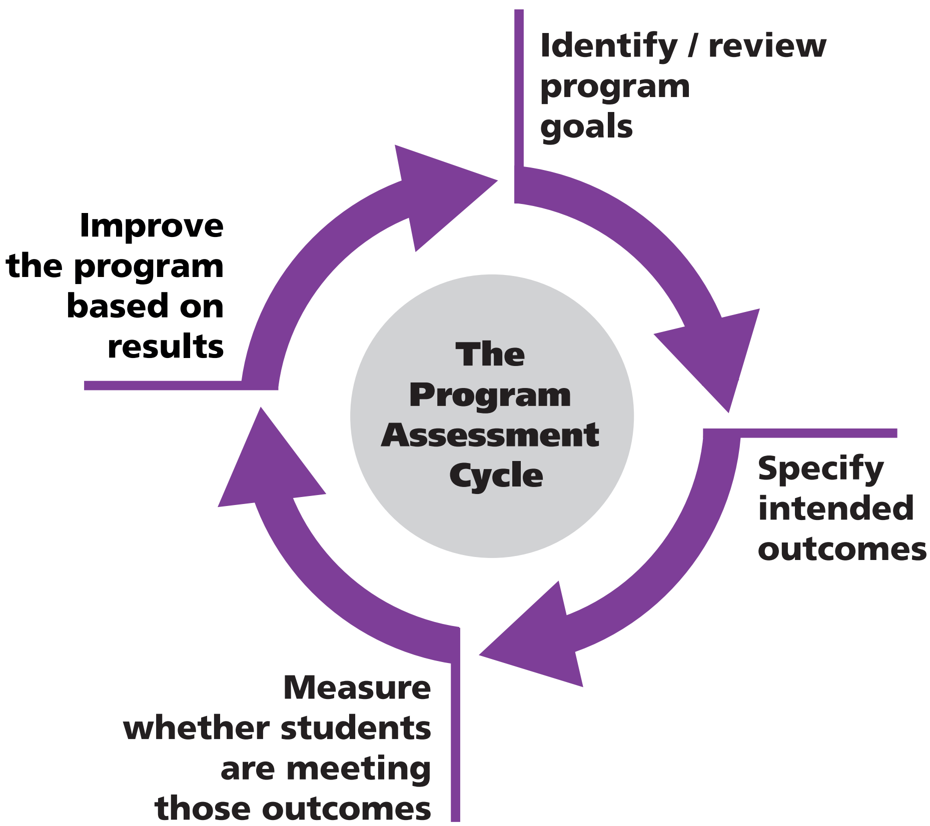
A similar national focus on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning is reflected in the high priority that our accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission, places on effective, useful program assessment.

Assessment process overview

Program assessment is a cycle focused on continuous improvement (see Fig. 1). During the cycle, you will identify your program's goals, specify what you expect students to gain from the program, measure whether students are doing so at target levels set by the program, and use the results of those measurements to inform programmatic decisions and actions.

Your decisions and actions then become part of the cycle's feedback loop; programs evaluate whether decisions and actions led to programmatic improvement including student learning. You may refine or redefine goals, expected outcomes, or assessment methods as well as make changes to the program itself as part of continuous improvement efforts. You may also celebrate and share successes!

Figure 1 The Program Assessment Cycle



Specific documentation corresponds to each part of the cycle: Broad program goals are articulated in a mission statement. Expectations for student learning and program success are precisely stated in outcomes. Measurement processes are specified in descriptions of assessment methods and reports of results. The use of results for program improvement is explained through action plans and an implementation timeline. Reports to stakeholders provide an opportunity to share your assessment work with your students, colleagues, and your broader community. Other sections of this guide provide information about each of these elements.

WSU's Assessment Timeline

The assessment cycle is carried out in stages throughout the academic year (See Fig. 2), with semester-by-semester targets for documenting your program's progress. Each Fall semester, programs focus on making sure that their mission statement and outcomes reflect the program's priorities and that the assessment methods will deliver actionable evidence of program performance.

Winter semesters are focused on gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data as the basis for developing an action plan and setting timelines for making future improvements to support students' success. A report of the year's assessment plan, results, and future actions is posted to the program or unit website the following Fall semester.

If your program has a timeline that does not perfectly align with the academic year, please consult with the Director of Assessment to discuss how to fit the cycle to your program's calendar.

The timeline will be similar from year to year (see Fig. 2). The reporting cycle runs from September 1 to the following August 31.

Figure 2 Program assessment timeline for Compliance Assist

Fall (1)

Identify

Assessment coordinators and assessment committee members are selected

In **Compliance Assist**, each program submits or refines their:

- mission statement – *1*
- program outcomes – *2*
- measures (assessment methods) – for *at least 2* program outcomes

Winter

Measure

Programs use assessment methods

In **Compliance Assist**, each program submits:

- results – *2*
- supporting data files – *2*
- action plans – *2*
- a timeline for each action plan – *2*

Fall (2)

Implement

Programs implement action plans

In **Compliance Assist**, and on the the program website, each program submits an assessment report for stakeholders describing their assessment:

- process
- results
- action plan

Each program begins the assessment cycle again for the next year

Who should help with assessment planning?

Responsibility for program assessment rests with everyone involved in a program. For example, individuals may be responsible for discussing and agreeing on what outcomes to assess and how to assess them, or for scoring student work that has been selected as assessment data, or for aggregating data from multiple people and providing a summary to colleagues who will together interpret the results and decide how to use them to improve student learning. How this process is managed may be different for each unit or program area.

Each program's culture, needs, and ways of working collectively influence assessment. However, at some point your program needs to decide who manages the process, who develops the assessments, who collects the data, who analyzes and interprets the data, who implements the plan and creates the reports, and who ensures that reviews, revisions, and action plans are carried out.

Chapter 2 Where to begin?

Getting started by establishing a foundation

Student services' program assessment plans consist of seven elements. These elements provide the necessary foundation for building understanding of student learning and student success and for making principled decisions based on supporting data and evidence.

In Chapter 2, mission and outcomes will be the focus. A mission statement articulates your program's broad goals. Program outcomes state behaviors that define the broad goals more concretely and in measurable form. Concrete suggestions and examples will help you develop them for your own program.

Mission

A program mission statement is a sentence or short paragraph that describes the program's purpose, goals, offerings and stakeholders.

When developing a program mission statement you state, in a concise way, why your program exists and what you hope to accomplish for and with students. It also provides information for your stakeholders regarding the directions and goals of your program.

Explicitly stating a program's mission helps you:

- express program benefits to stakeholders
- attract students
- align programmatic decisions and priorities with the program's overarching goals
- more effectively request support
- make improvements to your program

How to write a program mission statement

A mission statement, for the purposes of assessing student learning, includes brief descriptions of the program's:

Purpose
Why does the program exist? What are its general goals? What are its *unique* or *signature features*?

Offerings
What support, skills, or areas of knowledge do students acquire in the program? What kinds of activities does the program do to support student learning or success?

Target audience/Stakeholders
Who benefits from the program?

The mission statement should be aligned with the University mission, and be realistic and achievable. Students are the primary stakeholders, so the mission statement should be written for a general, not expert, audience, and focused on how the program supports student learning and success.

Examples of program mission statements

The following are examples of mission statements from three programs at Wayne State University. They each identify their purpose, the student populations that are their audience and the general activities they offer to support students.

Colored brackets identify target audience, offerings, and stakeholders.

- The stakeholders are is indicated in blue. As you can see each program has a different target audience: freshman, all students, and undergraduates.
- The purposes for the first two are indicated in red. Can you identify the purpose for the final program?
- The offerings for the first program are indicated in green. Can you identify the offerings for the other two programs?

ACADEMIC PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE PROGRAM (APEX)

[stakeholders]
[purpose]
[offerings]

The APEX Scholars Program is an alternative admission program designed to help [incoming freshman] participants [transition and progress successfully] through their first thirty-six credit hours (1.5 semesters) at Wayne State University. APEX Scholars receive support in their adjustment to WSU through:

- [Conditional Admission] through APEX Summer Bridge or Fall Bridge Programs
- [Regular meetings] with APEX Academic Advisors
- [Enrollment in select WSU courses] designed to maximize academic development and success
- Consistent participation in [academic support resources] such as tutoring, APEX Learning Community Study Groups and designated on-campus study hours
- Participation in academic major and [career development activities]

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

[stakeholders]
[purpose]

The mission of the Academic Success Center is to ensure that [all Wayne State University students] become [self-determined, motivated and independent learners.] We accomplish this through tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, individual instruction and workshops that support students' development of skills to achieve academic excellence.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

[stakeholders]

To support Wayne State University's commitment to student learning and retention, the Learning Community Initiative seeks to enhance our [undergraduates'] experience by providing all interested students dynamic, focused communities in which students, staff, and faculty learn and grow together.

Examples to analyze

Additional examples of mission statements are provided below. For these mission statements the purpose is indicated in red. Can you identify the target audience and the offerings for each of these programs?

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM (UROP)

[purpose]

The mission of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) is to [provide resources and support] for undergraduate students [to pursue mentored research and creative projects] in their chosen fields. UROP engages students by facilitating collaborations between undergraduate researchers and faculty mentors who are leaders in their fields. UROP provides funding and opportunities to present at local and global conferences and events.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

[*purpose*]

CAPS is a progressive and exemplary counseling center that [enhances the wellness and success] of students and the university community, by providing research-based, ethical, collaborative, and caring mental health services (including counseling, case management, and psychiatric care), consultation, and psychoeducation tailored to meet the needs of our urban, diverse, multicultural, and international student body.

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID

[*purpose*]

The mission of the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) is to [provide access to financial resources] in a fair, sensitive, and confidential manner; to [inform and educate] students and their families [about their financial options]; and to continually improve our services so that students may take full advantage of their educational opportunities. OSFA is dedicated to administering financial aid programs per Federal, State and University regulations and policies while maintaining a high standard of ethics.

Mission statements help both the program and students understand the purpose and goals the program values. They provide a solid foundation for developing outcomes and assessments that set the direction for the program and result in direct benefits to students and other stakeholders.

Outcomes

Program outcomes are measureable statements of what graduating/exiting students should know, be able to do, believe, or value as a result of participating in your program.

Program outcomes are statements that translate your broad program goals into narrow, observable, and measurable behaviors. They are the foundation for staff to plan and deliver appropriate activities and opportunities for students and to create valid assessments.

Outcomes must be measurable, observable behaviors (see Fig. 3). Student services programs can have two types of outcomes: learning outcomes and performance outcomes. Learning outcomes describe what a student will know, be able to do, or value after experiences in your program. Performance outcomes are benchmarks that indicate the program's success at meeting non-learning outputs, such as financial targets, satisfaction, quantities served, return on investment, or meeting operational goals.

- Learning outcomes are typically written with action verbs that demonstrate levels of learning.
- Performance outcomes are more general in nature but still contain active verbs which indicate what the program will do in order to enable student learning or success.

Figure 3 Examples of learning outcomes and performances outcomes with active verbs

Learning vs. Performance Outcomes

Learning Outcomes	Performance Outcomes
Program supports student learning ▼ Undergraduates will be able to clearly communicate research or creative product results to a general audience.	Program enables student success ▼ Cases received by Financial Aid Officers will be reviewed and responded to within 48 hours.

Whether writing learning outcomes or performance outcomes the objective is to describe one behavior per outcome. The specificity and clarity of these statements will help develop effective assessments to measure whether or not you have achieved your mission and goals.

Examples of learning outcomes

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

Clients will demonstrate motivation for self-improvement and personal responsibility.

DEAN OF STUDENTS' STUDENT COMMUNITY SERVICE

Students will identify opportunities to become involved in community service activities.

Examples of performance outcomes

TESTING, EVALUATION & RESEARCH SERVICES

Students will increase their participation in SET.

OMBUDS OFFICE

The Ombud's Office provides relevant information, and/or referral, to all who contact it.

Chapter 3 What happened?

How to measure and verify results

Mission
▼
Outcomes
▼
Assessment
▼
Results
▼
Action Plan
▼
Timeline
▼
Reporting

Once your program mission and outcomes are in place, you can begin to develop assessments to measure relationships among program activities, student learning, and student success. Assessments are tools and processes for gathering and analyzing data (both qualitative and quantitative). The results are then interpreted to guide action planning and timelines.

Chapter 3 looks specifically at assessment methods and results. You'll explore strategies and techniques for collecting quantitative and qualitative data. After the data has been analyzed and interpreted, your program will summarize the information as the basis for your action plans.

Assessment

An assessment is a tool for gathering systematic evidence of student learning or student success.

In this chapter you will be introduced to basic strategies and techniques for selecting and creating assessments for student learning and success. Because programs are at different points in their assessment planning, this chapter is an introductory guide.

The basic strategies and techniques in this chapter include:

- Practical strategies for making choices from among the range of possible assessment methods.
- An examination of two broad types of assessment methods which are commonly used: direct and indirect.
- Techniques for helping to ensure the data you collect directly relate and are meaningful for judging student learning regarding program outcomes.

Practical strategies for choosing assessments

Program assessment does not have to be an overwhelming or burdensome task if you approach it with a focus on what is meaningful to you and what data you already gather about student learning and success. Here are a few tips to make practical assessment choices:

1. ***Measure what matters to you.*** For example, if you and your colleagues believe students do poorly in classes because they don't have good study skills, then assessing their study skills might be a good starting point.

2. ***Don't collect everything.*** If you're interested in effectively establishing a relationship with students, identify key behaviors that contribute to initiating relationships (e.g. knowing students' names). Then assess whether staff do that piece well. If your focus is on whether interaction with your staff changed student behavior, compare intake and exit notes, surveys, or checklists, for example.

3. ***Use what you have.*** For instance, repeat user rates, satisfaction surveys, cost per student analyses, or a review of complaints and requests might be information you already track that could be used for program assessment.

The selection of a good assessment is essential to getting useful information about program outcomes. Assessment methods come in many forms, as you'll see below; the key considerations are whether you will get clear information that accurately reflects performance and whether it is representative of all students using your program. Programs that use a combination of measures obtain a more robust understanding of student learning and success, often complementing *what* students know, can do, and believe/value with *why* that is the case.

Direct and indirect assessment methods

In direct assessment methods a qualified observer evaluates performance on an outcome. The observer reviews concrete evidence of students' skill, knowledge, values, or beliefs and makes a judgment about the level of performance represented. In contrast, indirect assessments come in two primary forms. The first is self-assessments, in which the learners make a judgment about the level of their performance based on personal perceptions, such as a survey asking students how well they have mastered the program's learning outcomes. The second is the evaluation of factors believed to contribute to or correlate with an outcome. For example, attendance at public seminars is indirect evidence of professionalization because it shows that students are aware that they should attend, but does not provide evidence of what students actually learn by attending.

Examples of direct assessment methods

Direct assessment methods comprise a range of measurement approaches in which a qualified observer reviews concrete evidence of students' skill, knowledge, values, or beliefs and makes a judgment about the performance. In collecting direct assessment information both quantitative and qualitative techniques can be used. Many day-to-day activities in our programs are potential direct assessment methods that can provide either quantitative or qualitative assessment data, such as:

Direct Assessment Methods	Quantitative Data Collection	Qualitative Data Collection
1. Comprehension checks ("Tell me what you need to do next based on the information I gave you.")	1. Student responses are tallied numerically on a counting sheet or checklist.	1. Student responses are recorded and later analyzed by categories of responses.
2. A floor chart quiz to assess whether RAs are establishing rapport with their residents.	2. RAs put the first names of residents on the chart. Total correct responses are counted.	2. RAs describe the residents on their floor in a focus group. Observers judge the level of rapport their conversation represents.

Examples of indirect assessment methods

Indirect assessments come in two primary forms. The first is self-assessments, in which the learners make a judgment about the level of their performance based on personal perceptions, such as a survey asking students how well they believed the program has served them. Second is the evaluation of factors that are believed to contribute to or correlate with an outcome. For example, attendance at an event such as new student orientation is indirect evidence of understanding how to navigate the university but does not provide evidence of what students actually learn about the university systems, resources, etc.

Questionnaires, *focus groups,* and *interviews* are the most common indirect assessment methods. In each format, respondents indicate their perceptions of the program. For example, items such as the following, when linked directly to specific outcomes for different programs, provide students' perceptions about the program:

Student Survey (*Hypothetical example*)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement:

1. Working with a Career Services counselor helped me improve my interviewing skills.
   Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. I am more likely to continue my education at this university as a result of Career Services.
   Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

3. What knowledge and skills do you feel Career Services helped you to develop?

Similarly, stakeholders other than students may respond to survey questions about their general perceptions of a program:

Other Respondents (*Hypothetical example*)

- How do the Study Abroad Office's programs impact students in your department?

- How well do the students serving as interns in your company perform the following tasks?

Communicate with clients:	Very well	Well	Adequately	Poorly
Accurately diagnose a problem:	Very well	Well	Adequately	Poorly

[*Note*: These same questions would be direct measures if the employer used a set of criteria to evaluate their university-graduated employees while observing them on the job.]

Other indirect assessment methods are comprised of a review of information that may suggest performance on an outcome, but that does not directly observe that performance. Use of institutional data (e.g., attendance, repeat class rates, retention rates, time to graduate) is a common example, but other data sources may also be selected.

Is one type of assessment (e.g., direct or indirect) better than the other?

In fact, programs that use a combination of direct and indirect methods obtain a more robust understanding of student learning and success, often complementing *what* students know, can do, and believe/value with *why* that is the case. The following is an example of a program using multiple assessment measures, both direct and indirect.

UNIVERSITY ADVISING CENTER

Three complementary methods assess whether students understand the value of completing their math and composition Gen Ed requirements early in their studies:

- ballots at orientation regarding the importance of foundational courses in the first year
- a two-question survey on the same topic
- a review of student records to determine the percentage of students who completed these requirements by 30 credit hours

Choosing assessment methods that provide useful and accurate information

In choosing an existing assessment method or developing a new one, two kinds of questions are essential to keep in mind at all times:

1. How well does the data collected from the assessment support the claim that students have mastered the learning or performance outcome? In other words, is the assessment *useful*? Is there a direct correspondence between the data collected from the assessment and the performance required for the outcome?

2. How consistently are the data collected from one form or one semester to another? Did enough students participate to provide credible information? In other words, is the assessment *accurate*? The data collected need to be representative of the students who interact with your program.

A method of data collection from the University Advising Center above will be used to illustrate how these two questions might be applied. (Fortunately the actual Advising Center staff have considered all of these questions and made good decisions for each of them!)

Assessment method

UNIVERSITY ADVISING CENTER

- The performance outcome for 2016/17 is: 80% of students will complete their math and composition Gen Ed requirements early in their studies.
- One assessment measure is: A review of students records to determine the percentage of students who completed math and composition Gen Ed requirements by 30 credit hours.

Discussion

Are the data useful? How well do the data support the claims?

It would seem that reviewing records and determining percentages has a direct correspondence to the learning outcome. If 80% or more reach this level then the outcome has been successfully reached. However, is "by 30 credit hours" universally considered early in a student's studies? Might it be too early or is it an appropriate benchmark?

How accurate and representative are the data?

If one individual was reviewing student records and their form read "early in their studies" and a second reviewer had a form which read "by 30 credit hours", different results might occur. The results might not be completely representative of students because the first reviewer might believe that within the first semester was the measure of "early in their studies". Only 30% might reach the outcome for this reviewer. For the second reviewer 80% may have reached the outcome "by 30 credit hours".

Once the data have been collected, an individual or a group would review the results. Perhaps they would discover that one form indicated only 30% met the outcome and the other form indicated 80% met the outcome. This large difference might result in questions being asked and perhaps changes being made for the next year based on inconsistent data.

- One option to minimize the difference might be to revise the outcome so that it indicates “by 30 credit hours.” This would make the assessment and the outcome clearly matching.
- Another option would be to make certain that all data collection forms and reviewers understood clearly that within 30 hours was the measurement standard.

Examples of assessment methods

Examples of different types of assessment methods are provided below. Which are direct or indirect methods? Which do you think would be reasonable measures in terms of usefulness and/or accuracy?

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

Student journals, essays, and exams in the first year success seminar to evaluate growth in study skills, wellness, and self-management over time.
Comparison of GPAs across students that used and did not use Supplemental Instruction for each targeted course to assess the effectiveness of participating in SI sessions.

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE: STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS SERVICES AREA

Analysis of successful and rejected requests for funding from student organizations to assess whether funding is being distributed across many student organizations and whether more training in writing effective proposals is needed

OFFICE OF MILITARY AND VETERANS ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Report of submission date and time for VA Certification Requests to assess whether OMVAE’s target for ensuring education benefits requirements are met to enable payment of student stipends.

Collaborating on assessment

Developing assessments and collecting data may require collaboration among groups of staff, students and other stakeholders. While an individual and/or a committee may be the “point people” for program assessment, inclusion of a variety of individuals for developing assessments, collecting data and analyzing results is beneficial. Differing perspectives can add depth to the overall process and can identify areas for improvement and revision and assure programs of accurate, representative, and useful information. Once specific assessments are identified, developed, and implemented, who administers the assessment, collects the data and manages the data can be divided among available and appropriate individuals.

Describing assessment methods effectively

Once you've selected an appropriate assessment method, it's important to document it accurately and completely so that you'll have a record of the details when you start to analyze your data. That record is also useful when you want to repeat the assessment a year later to see what effect your action plan had on student learning. Responsibilities for assessment may also change hands, and the new person will need to know what has been done in the past.

Several simple questions can guide your assessment method description as you enter it in Compliance Assist:

Questions	**Quiz example**	**Technology example**	**Survey example**
What is your data source?	A quiz at the end of each program/event	Sales Force tracking tools	A survey of employers' perceptions of students' skills and knowledge
Who is the data collected from?	All student participants	Students using the program's services in 2017-2018	Employers that have hired WSU students in the last three months
How often will the data be gathered? By whom?	Once per event, by the staff member facilitating the event	Daily by the Sales Force system as part of normal work procedures	Annually by the program director
How often/when will the data be gathered?	Every Fall semester	Daily, throughout the day	Three months after employment begins
Who will evaluate or score it?	Program coordinator	Team leader	Program director
What criteria will be used to evaluate/score it?	% of correct answers	% of target response times that are met	Scale: Unsatisfactory to Satisfactory
What are the criteria for acceptable performance?	70% of students get at least 80% of the questions correct	80% of inquiries receive substantive responses within 48 hours	Employers rate student employees as "Satisfactory" or better on all survey items
Who will review the results and when will they review them?	Scores across related events will be aggregated and reviewed each semester by the staff members that facilitate those events and the program coordinator	The program director will meet with the team members to review results each month	The program director will present a summary of results to faculty and staff each semester

Results

Your summary of the data and inferences from the analysis will constitute the results of assessment.

Once your program has selected assessments and administered them, you will then summarize and evaluate the data. An easy starting point is to calculate a sum or average if you have quantitative data, or to identify common themes or trends in qualitative data.

Some questions to consider regarding each of these processes:

Evaluating data

- How many students met your program's expectations?
- In what way(s) did students (not) meet them?
- What successes or concerns arose from the data or the assessment process?
- What are the common themes in the data?

Summarizing data

- Did the assessment provide the data you expected in relation to your learning outcome(s)?
- Was the scoring system useful, accurate and consistently applied?
- How well did the data represent the range of students in the program?

Examples of results

Provided below are two examples of result summaries that describe the results, compare them to the targets, and note any details relevant to interpreting them:

[*Note*: Only report de-identified data.]

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

The Office of the Registrar, working with the schools, colleges and departments, has continued to have the overwhelming majority of degrees posted within 30 days of the end of the semester. Over the last academic year (Spring/Summer 2016, Fall 2016 and Winter 2017) we have only had 9 degrees posted after those 30 days. Winter 2017 had no degree postings come in after the deadline. For that semester, 1 exception was made which made a correction to a previously posted degree. This is notable because Winter semesters have our largest number of certifications to process. Communication between the academic units and the graduation unit are imperative to this process succeeding.

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL LIFE

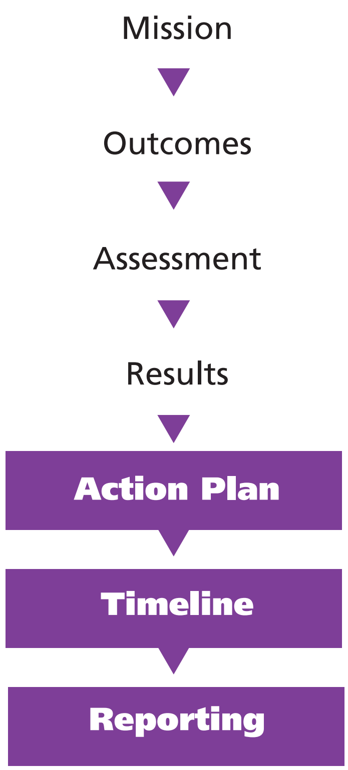
Informing residents of resources: there were several statements on the EBI survey that addressed providing resources for residents. The scores were above the range we were hoping for. The hope was above a 4.0 out of 7 and all were above a 5.0. This includes: Support for the Community - 5.09 Helping with a Problem - 5.48 Organizing Programs - 5.56 Efforts to get to know residents - 5.17 The one area that was not strong which was a yes/no questions was around discussing academics with residents - this score was 38.9%. Building rapport with residents: there were several statements on the EBI survey that addressed building rapport with residents. The scores were above the range we were hoping for. The hope was a 4.0 out of 7 and all scores were above 5.0. This includes: Availability - 5.72 Treating everyone fairly - 5.84 Promoting tolerance for all residents - 5.70 Efforts to get to know you - 5.16 In addition, the yes/no question of residents know my name scored a 89.5%. Based on the EBI survey, we scored well in most areas and also have room for improvement.

Linking results to outcomes

The ultimate purpose of collecting data is using it to evaluate whether or not the learning and program outcomes have been achieved by the student group. A direct link between data collection, the results of the analyses and outcomes should be established. In Chapter 4 the process of action planning is explained as a way to ensure that these connections are made and acted upon to improve program assessment and positively impact student learning.

Chapter 4 What now?

Program improvement through action plans and reporting



Once you've collected evidence of outcomes and interpreted your results, the next step is to use that information as the basis for action to improve your program. Whether you want to duplicate your strengths in other areas, move some aspect of your program from good to great, or go from under-performing to meeting your standards, your actions should be clearly linked to the data from your assessments.

In Chapter 4 you'll learn about acting on the data to improve student learning and success, which is the primary goal of assessment after all! Then you'll learn about sharing your program's successes and plans for improvement with your stakeholders.

Action Plan

An action plan is a statement of the concrete actions the program will take based on its assessment data to improve student learning.

Once assessments have been developed and administered, the results collected, and the data analyzed, the program uses the information to take actions that enhance student learning and success. Therefore, deciding how to use the data as part of an ongoing process is essential.

The following steps are helpful for using assessment results:

- Develop an action plan that clearly lays out what will be done based on the data, who will do it and what the expected results will be.
- Create a timeline for implementing the action plan.
- Document efforts through reports, Compliance Assist, and other tools of information dissemination.

How to develop an action plan

At a minimum an action plan will:

- Identify key actions needed.
- Designate specific individuals or groups responsible for taking those actions.
- Create a timeline stating when each action will be completed.

A major consideration as you develop an action plan is to identify a scope that is achievable. You may want to consider both the one year cycle for WSU reporting and more long term actions that encompass multiple cycles. In this chapter we look at the one year cycle. Actions should respond directly to the data analyses and interpretations. Here are some common action plans to think about based on different kinds of results:

If students met program expectations then you might choose to:

- continue to assess the outcome the following year to get longitudinal data.
- dig deeper into the results to see if all groups of students performed equally well.
- raise the bar so more students have to meet the expectations next year.
- add another assessment to get a more balanced picture.
- revise a rubric to get better data or improve feedback to students.

If students did not meet program expectations then you might choose to:

- revise how a particular concept or performance is addressed.
- increase the number of services developing a particular outcome.
- redesign the assessment used.
- modify what is in your program.
- collaborate with others to revise the advice they give to students.

Many other action plan options are also possible; the most important thing is to identify an action that derives from your assessment data and to identify a responsible person or group to implement the action. As an aside, some programs incorrectly report a “plan to make a plan” (e.g. having a meeting to discuss and figure out what to do and who will do it), but an action plan should state the actions agreed upon rather than the process for choosing actions.

Examples of action plans

Two examples of action plans are provided below.

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

Regarding the goal of registering students with disabilities with SDS, a target that was met: Student Disability Services will continue to engage in outreach efforts to make students aware of available support services. These efforts include attending on-campus events as well as developing relationships with transition counselors in Detroit area high schools. Disability specialists from the Student Disability Services office will attend these events. Outreach to FTIAC students is also planned based on the results of the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory. These events will occur throughout the academic year.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

Regarding improving students' study skills, well-being, and self-management:
Review of the Fall 2014 FYS course prompted coordinators to limit the number of students in each section from 32 to 25-28 in order to increase levels of student participation and to strengthen instructor-student rapport. The desired effect was observed, particularly in sections with 25 or fewer students.

In order to allow for more personalized feedback from instructors to students, Fall 2016 class sizes will have a maximum of 25 students per section.

Greater use of technology will be integrated into the Fall 2016 seminar's lesson plans in order to more efficiently capture and analyze students' responses to surveys and brief classroom assessments.

Timeline

The timeline is a declaration of the deadline for each element of the action plan.

The timeline is a declaration of the deadline for each element of the action plan; the details will reflect the complexity or simplicity of the actions to be taken. Some actions may have multiple steps which must proceed in a linear fashion and can be laid out by week or month. Other actions may require only one step or one activity and can be acted upon and completed quickly. All of the activities together will make up the timeline.

Examples of timelines

Examples of student services program timelines are provided below:

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL LIFE

The additional training will take place during Fall 2016 RA training and will be implemented by the Director of Housing and Residential Life.

FINANCIAL AID

- Updated draft [of SAP policies] by 9/30/16
- Approved document by 10/5/16

REGISTRAR

The report will be built during the Fall 2016 semester, rolled out for review and finalized by the Winter 2017 certification period. Staffing realignment can happen now with current staff, as can the enhanced communications to schools and colleges.

Reporting

Reporting is a description of how and when you will communicate your assessment efforts to students and other stakeholders.

An additional aspect of using assessment results is sharing them with others. Institutional requirements for documenting and reporting are discussed below. Reporting is an opportunity to share your findings with students, other faculty, community members and a variety of additional stakeholders through reports, website access, videos and other communication venues.

Public reporting

Once your data collection, analysis, and action planning are complete, it's time to think about whom to share the process and conclusions with. Your program may want to create different types of reports or explanations based upon the audience who will be viewing the results. For example, a short video presentation with a highlight of key results and actions might be most effective for students, whereas staff might want to see more detailed information and conclusions in a written report directly related to the part of the program that most affects their job duties.

At a minimum programs will want to post their results on the program website. What can be included in this document are ideas related to:

- What was assessed
- How it was assessed
- The results and conclusions
- The action plan for the future to improve the program

Examples of public reports

Career Services: http://careerservices.wayne.edu/pdfs/career_services_annual_summary_report_2015-2016.pdf

CAPS: https://caps.wayne.edu/about#outcomes

Testing, Evaluation, and Research: http://testing.wayne.edu/evaluation/news.php

Institutional reporting with Compliance Assist

The assessment process must be documented annually by using Compliance Assist. Compliance Assist is the online website for gathering and reporting assessment data on all programs at Wayne State University. The Director of Assessment can be contacted for access and training regarding Compliance Assist. In addition, printable Word versions/templates of the questions in Compliance Assist (mission, learning outcomes, and assessments) are available for programs to draft responses before entering them.

Each year in the Fall some information (mission, outcomes, methods, reporting) in Compliance Assist is rolled over to the new year. Programs should check their rollovers carefully to be certain information has been accurately transferred. Also, each year new information is needed for Compliance Assist. What should be documented and the process is available on the WSU assessment website. The process, timeline and requirements for the current academic year (Fall, Winter and the following Fall) are detailed. The progress of programs in turning in required information can also be obtained.

Improving the quality of assessment plans

WSU's University Assessment Council uses an assessment plan feedback rubric to examine the quality of program assessment plans.

[*Note*: The rubric evaluation is not of the quality of a program itself, but rather an evaluation of the program's **assessment plan**.]

Feedback rubric

The WSU feedback rubric was developed and designed to be specifically applicable to programs at WSU. The goal of the feedback rubric is to provide programs with useful feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of their assessment plan that will enable them to implement improvements.

The assessment plan feedback rubric is a tool for identifying the presence and quality of the pieces of a program's assessment plan individually (the mission statement, outcomes, and assessments) as well as together. A complete guide to using the rubric for evaluation can be found in video, Power Point and pdf versions.

Each year 10% of WSU programs are evaluated using this rubric and the reports are provided to the program. However, the rubric can be used as a guide by all programs for examining the effectiveness and quality of their assessment plans.

What to do when changes have been made

When programs make changes to outcomes, assessment measures or other parts of the assessment plan then future action plans will include examining whether or not these changes made a difference. What was the effect of the change? Did it improve the student experience?

Assessment Goal

Ultimately the goal of program assessment is simple:
Did assessment work to improve student learning and success?

Appendix A
Support for Assessment

WSU Assessment Website

Wayne State's assessment website provides explanations, video tutorials, templates, and models of assessment plans, as well as instructions for using our online assessment reporting system, Compliance Assist.

The website also includes a semester-by-semester timeline with deadlines for assessment activities and a progress report showing each College, School, or Division's progress toward the year's assessment goals.

WSU DIrector of Assessment

The director's primary role is to provide expertise in assessment to complement programs' disciplinary expertise in designing assessment plans that will return useful information for program improvement. The director offers general and discipline-specific assessment workshops, presentations, individual and group consultations, feedback, and resources such as the materials at assessment.wayne.edu and sample rubrics to support to all Wayne State programs.

In addition, the director co-chairs the University Assessment Council.

University Assessment Council

The University Assessment Council's role is to support the development of a culture of assessment at Wayne State. University Assessment Council members are appointed by each School, College and the Provost's office (for Student Services).

Research design and Analysis Consulting

Wayne State's Research Design and Analysis (RDA) unit offers consultation to campus members interested in help with research design or statistical analysis of data. While program assessment methods and analyses do not require statistical analyses, programs interested in pursuing this option can draw on the expert assistance of RDA's consultants.

Appendix B
Types of Assessment Measures

- Quizzes or tests: internal and program based
- Practicals (hands-on performances of a task)
- Case study analysis
- Improvement plan project
- Financial analysis project

- Needs assessment
- Presentations
- Informal responses to services or materials
- Discussion board posts
- Team project
- Website interactions

- Publications
- Observations of students
- Simulations
- Peer evaluations
- Technology use (of service points)

- Surveys (of students, faculty, employers)
- Staff member reports (written comments on trends in and circumstances affecting students' performance)
- Reports/documentation
- Reflection papers
- Performance (e.g., accuracy filling out forms, completing an activity, etc.)

- Interviews
- Participation
- Self-reporting
- Checklists
- Rubrics