Assessment of Student Learning: Instructions and Timeline
SUNY Potsdam
(Revised 5/2016[1])

OVERVIEW

"Assessment is the ongoing process of:
- *Establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning;*
- *Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes;*
- *Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations;*
- *Using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning."[2]*

Two separate documents are completed through the Assessment of Student Learning process at SUNY Potsdam – the *Assessment Plan* and the *Assessment Report and Action Plan*. The *Assessment Plan* provides the opportunity for departments to establish clear and measurable outcomes for student learning. The *Assessment Report and Action Plan* provides the opportunity for departments to report directly to the administration changes to be implemented based on assessment results, as well as additional support requested from administration. The submission of these documents to the Office of Institution Effectiveness allows for records of Assessment of Student Learning to be maintained as required by our accreditor.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is not just the clearinghouse for this information. We are here to support you in this process. Should you find you have questions at any point in the process or if the process is delayed for any reason, please contact the Coordinator of Assessment and Institutional Research (x2176).

DOCUMENT DETAILS

While the *Assessment Plan* and *Assessment Report and Action Plan* templates are similar, please note that they are, in fact, two separate templates.

The **Assessment Plan** template requests the following data:
- **Intended Student Learning Outcome**
  - State the main student learning outcomes *(what should graduates of the program know and be able to do?)*
- **Connection to the University/Department Mission/The Potsdam Graduate**
  - Indicate how the above student learning outcomes relate to the bigger picture or vision that the department has for graduates from its programs
- **Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**
  - Data to be collected and how
  - *What unique assessment activities (direct and indirect) will be used to capture evidence that students are achieving this student learning outcome? What are our criteria for*

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[1] Schedule revised so Assessment Report submissions coincide with departments' Academic Program Review Self-Studies and Mid-Term reviews.
[2] *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*, by Linda Suskie, 2004, p. 3

success? What does it look like when a student can_____? How will we know the objectives have been met?

The ***Assessment Report and Action Plan*** template requests the following data:

- **Intended Student Learning Outcome**
  - Copied from the *Assessment Plan*
- **Measureable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**
  - Copied from the *Assessment Plan*
- **Assessment Data Summary – Results and Analysis**
  - Results – Percentage of student at each level indicated
  - Analysis – Indicate reasoning for the results (i.e. I think our result of x is due to a, b, c); *What do these data tell us?*
- **Application of Results/Action Plan for Improving Student Achievement**
  - *Did you find the assessment used effectively captured the necessary achievement data?*
  - *What is working well and should be continued?*
  - *How have the assessment results been used to improve teaching and learning?*
  - *How will the results be used to improve student achievement of the outcome listed above?*
- **Summary of Action Plans for Upcoming Year**
  - Copy and paste the Action Plans for each student learning outcome

REPORT SUBMISSION CYCLE

Each department/program undergoes Academic Program Review every seven years. The Report Submission Cycle coincides with this process; therefore, departments are expected to submit their *Assessment Report and Action Plan* and revised *Assessment Plan* at the mid-term review point (three or four years into the cycle), as well as the year of their Self-Study for programmatic review.

To identify when your department submissions are due, please see http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/ie/assessment/upload/Assessment-Reporting-Cycles-2.pdf.

TIMELINE

July/August/September
Closing the Loop – Meet with Dean to assess which recommendations based upon data analysis can be implemented.
Closing the loop activities could include:
- Changes to direct and indirect assessment tools and activities.
- Modifications/Development of new *Assessment Plan* for upcoming academic year(s).
- Planning for any professional development related to assessment of student learning outcomes.

September 30th
Submit *Assessment Report and Action Plan,* as well as the revised *Assessment Plan* to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness*.*
  Please note: While *Reports and Action Plans* are being submitted every three or four years, the data collected may show a need for modifications to the *Assessment Plan* sooner than three or four

years. As changes occur to the *Assessment Plan*, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is required upload the current plans to the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Website. So please submit a <u>revised</u> *Assessment Plan* whenever there are changes.

September to May
Faculty implement the *Action Plan(s) (*from the *Assessment Report and Action Plan)*

January/February
Optional: Collect and review assessment data from Fall semester for Department/Program student learning outcomes. Doing this now saves time in May and June.

May/June
- Collect assessment data from Spring semester for Department/Program student learning outcomes (or Fall and Spring semesters if optional step skipped).
- Analyze Fall and Spring semester data for action planning (*What do these data tell us?)*
- Department/Program faculty meet to:
  - Review assessment data
  - Discuss whether student achievement is meeting expectations (i.e. numbers of students exceeding, meeting, approaching, or not meeting standards for each outcome). (*Where are our students' performances below expectations?)*
  - Review previous *Action Plan*'s effect on student achievement as evidenced in the assessment data (i.e. *Did the changes improve students' achievement of knowledge and skills related to the learning outcomes*?).
  - Review assessment tools to determine if anything needs to be added or modified. (*How can we improve our program and assessment process? What is working well and should be continued? Did the assessment methods used effectively collect data about what our students have learned? What are our criteria for success? What does it look like when a student can_____ ?)*
  - Develop an *Action Plan* for the coming academic year(s) along with any changes needed to be made to the current *Assessment Plan*.