Creating Administrative
Assessment Plans

Overview & Guide

10/31/2022

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WHAT IS ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the ongoing and systematic process of identifying objectives and the means to measure them, gathering measurements of the objectives, using the information to make decisions about improvement, and implementing improvements based on the data gathered. Assessment at SUNY Potsdam is intended to help all students, faculty, staff, and administrators by providing information that guides decisions and leads to improvement in learning, teaching, and services.

PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

The four main purposes of assessment should be to:

1. **Improve –** The assessment process should provide valuable information and feedback to determine what the unit does well and how the administrative unit can be improved.

2. **Support –** The assessment process should provide support for campus decision-making activities such as unit review and strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.

3. **Prove –** The assessment process should capture and demonstrate what the administrative unit is accomplishing or providing to students, faculty, staff, or other stakeholders.

4. **Inform –** The assessment process should inform department heads and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the administrative unit to the development and growth of students and/or other key campus constituents.

Additionally, assessment is effective when:

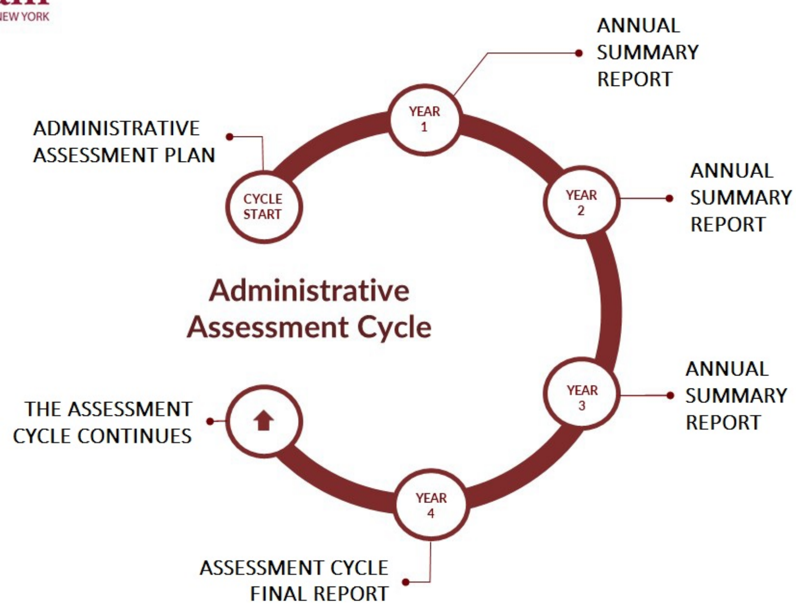
1. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated objectives.
2. Assessment is an ongoing process, not isolated tasks and forms.
3. Assessment enables a wider campus culture of continuous improvement when representatives from across the university community are involved.
4. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students, employees, and to other key stakeholders.

Assessment is best prepared and supported when a group from the division, unit, or dept/office participates in creating the goals, desired objectives and measures. It is highly recommended that unit leaders completing an assessment plan seek input from other members of their unit when developing their assessment plans. This should help ensure understanding, participation, and success in achieving the unit's goals.

As divisions, units, or depts/offices develop their plans and reports, they should keep these principles in mind. They provide sound guidance which should make assessment easier, primarily by pointing out that the institution guides objectives through its mission and values.

Assessment Cycle

Assessment should be understood as a cycle. The administrative assessment calendar at SUNY Potsdam utilizes a four-year timeframe. We prepare our assessment plans at the start of the administrative cycle, submit annual summary reports each year highlighting assessment activity that has taken place, and then we report our findings and analysis at the conclusion of the cycle. After writing the report we immediately launch the cycle over again with a review and updates of plans.



DEVELOPING THE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

A crucial part of developing an assessment plan is to clarify the focus and content of your plan, which should be based on the most critical functions of your administrative unit.

Assessment should be ongoing, with data being collected throughout the entire cycle. If the assessment data reveals a problem, and the entity can identify actions to remedy it immediately, they should fix the problem.

Assessment should improve units and departments, not hinder them. The assessment process, by progressing from year to year, should provide evidence of activity and continuous improvement within the unit.

Using a systematic approach will help you in devising an effective assessment plan that matches the needs of your administrative entity. The following is a six-step approach to aid in developing an effective plan.

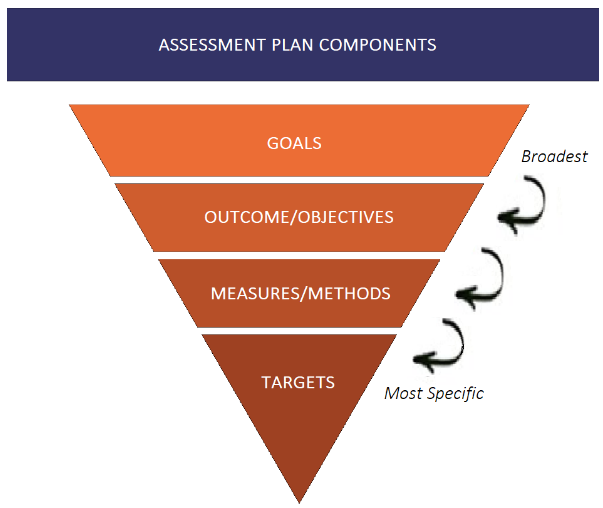
Each step is covered in detail in the following pages.

PREPLAN

Before assessment can begin, key staff, committees and structures must be identified. One or more persons may lead the unit assessment process, but it is crucial for all staff to assist and/or be involved with assessment activities.

CREATING AN ASSESSMENT PLAN

The following are the core components of an Administrative Assessment Plan



1. UNIT MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is a description of what a division, unit, or dept/office does, and what philosophy and principles guide it. This statement should be succinct, but should still convey how the unit supports the mission of the institution. If your unit already has a mission statement you may not need to take any additional action as mission statements should only be rewritten when an entity experiences a significant change.

Mission Statements should:

- be clear and concise
- identify or reference key stakeholders
- encompass the core functions of the unit

Example Mission Statement

The SUNY Potsdam Office of Institutional Effectiveness facilitates data collection, analysis, and reporting of institutional research to support planning, decision-making, assessment, and student success across the College in an objective manner that conveys results accurately to appropriate administrative, academic, and external constituencies. This work contributes to the College mission by ensuring that decisions are informed by evidence, and practices are evaluated for their effectiveness at achieving campus goals.

2. GOALS

Goals are one of the building blocks from which administrative assessment is conducted. They are the basis from which units develop desired outcomes and objectives. Goals generally indicate the broad priorities of the unit and should be linked the college's strategic plan or institutional priorities.

- Goals are more specific than mission, but are still somewhat broad and long term.
- Goals should relate to the major roles and core functions of the unit.

Administrative assessment plans at SUNY Potsdam require at least three goals. While it is not necessary to have more than three goals, units may list more if they feel they important and essential enough to include.

Example Goals

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Goal 1: Gather, synthesize, summarize and disseminate College information to meet internal and external information needs.

Goal 2: Design queries and gather, troubleshoot, organize, and maintain a robust data infrastructure to support Institutional Research work.

Goal 3: Develop skilled use of data tools, programming, statistics, communication, and best business practices as well as expertise in the fields of Institutional Research and Higher Education.

3. OUTCOME/OBJECTIVES

The intent of assessment is to keep units moving toward improvement in their operations.

Objectives…

- are statements of intention, describing a task to accomplish or a goal to meet.
- can be reasonably achieved within an expected timeframe and with available resources.
- should be SMART

While goals represent the major priorities of the unit, outcomes and objectives reflect the expected results of units that will support the broader goals. Accordingly, every goal statement can have several outcomes that support it.

The following types of outcomes and objectives are often used in Administrative Assessment:

Operational Outcomes reflect the core mission and purpose of the administrative unit by stating the expected results. Operational outcomes are generally assessed to ensure effectiveness of the unit at meeting its mission. Accordingly, operational outcomes are written in present tense.

Strategic Outcomes reflect future expected results of the unit, based on a planned activity. Strategic outcomes are generally assessed as part of the planning process to ensure strategic initiatives have the intended or positive results. Accordingly, strategic outcomes typically are written in future tense.

Example of Operational and Strategic Outcomes

Goal: Gather, synthesize, summarize and disseminate college information to meet internal and external information needs.

Operational: The Office of Institutional Effectiveness maintains accurate, secure datasets and records.

Strategic: Over the next year, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will increase the number of data summaries, reports, and presentations available on their website as data resources for the campus.

4. MEASUREMENTS/METHODS

A measure identifies evidence and methods you will use to determine whether you are achieving expected results and provide evidence that the entity is accomplishing its objectives. Measures should show performance compared to a set criteria for success for the expected objectives.

In collecting this evidence, the entity should learn two things:

(1) whether the objective is being met
(2) where there is room for improvement toward the objective.

For each objective, at least 1- 2 measures should be identified to gather this needed information. Also, whenever possible consider using one direct and one indirect measure.

Direct measures are more powerful because they provide data that correlate exactly with the objective. Direct measure explains what *specific* activity will be undertaken to show the extent to which an objective has been accomplished, and to provide information that may be used to make decisions for improvements in following years. Each objective usually has at least one direct measure associated with it.

Direct Measure Example: Count the number of data summaries, reports, and presentations on the website. (To fit the objective "…increase the number of data summaries, reports, and presentations available on their website.")

Indirect measures are valid if paired with a direct measure, but they are weak in terms of evidence. Indirect measures ask for opinion or perception about an outcome that is otherwise measurable. Student surveys, alumni surveys, and focus groups are examples of indirect measures.

Indirect Measure Example: Survey campus constituents about their satisfaction with the number of the number of data summaries, reports, and presentations on the OIE website. (To fit the objective "…increase the number of the number of data summaries, reports, and presentations available on their website.")

Additional Thoughts on Measures

Measures may not tell you why objectives are or are not being met. However, they should be specific enough to answer w*hether or not* the objective is being met. When the expected levels of achievement are not met, the measures will likely help lead the entity to identify problem areas and decide on actions to improve the results.

5. TARGETS

Targets should flow easily from the measures that are set. Targets have a single purpose, which is to communicate clearly the level accomplishment for the particular measure. Targets must always indicate what is expected to be achieved in the current administrative assessment cycle.

In most cases, targets must have specific numbers in them which indicate the level of accomplishment for the measure. They can indicate a number or percentage of items, people, or activities, or they can indicate a designated level of proficiency, or both.

Target example 1

Method: Review of data submission deadlines versus actual dates of submissions
Target: 100% on-time completion

Target example 2

Method: Review ticket system data regarding requests and response time
Target: 90% of requests will be responded to within one week (5 business days)

There is no easy rule for determining what the targets should be for any objective. Generally, an entity either has an idea of the current level of achievement and defines a new target from that, or they have a desired level of achievement and work toward that.

Additional Thoughts on Targets

It is important to note that targets must be clear not just in numbers, but in words. “Satisfactory” and “successful” are positive, but they are not easily understood. A better way to define these concepts, is to share the rating scale. Does “satisfactory” mean 3 out of 5 points? Does successful mean fewer than 5 mistakes? Define a target so that the meaning is easily understood.

6. PLAN SUBMISSION

Once a unit leader has a completed draft of their assessment plan, they should review it with their supervisor(s). Once the supervisor(s) have approved of the draft plan they should forward it to the Assessment Committee for their review. Currently, plans can be submitted to the committee by emailing them to ie@potsdam.edu.

APPENDIX A

Administrative Assessment Plan
Evaluation Rubric

Unit Name:
Reviewer Name:
Assessment Year:
Date:

I. Mission		
Meets Requirements ☐	Does Not Meet Requirements ☐	Not Evident ☐
• Clear and concise statement of unit's purpose • Identifies stakeholders • Encompasses the core functions of the unit	• Statement of the unit's purpose is overly general • Doesn't identify any stakeholders • Does not encompass the core functions of the unit	
Comments:		

II. Goals		
Meets Requirements ☐	Does Not Meet Requirements ☐	Not Evident ☐
• All goals are grounded in the mission of the unit • Broad and general • Reflect aspirations for long-term positive change • Focus on strengthening and improving critical functions	• One or more goals are not related to the mission of the unit • Goals are overly specific • Do not reflect aspirations for long-term positive change • Lack focus on strengthening and improving critical functions	
Comments:		

III. Goals Describe link between goals and institutional priority area(s) selected.		
Meets Requirements ☐	Does Not Meet Requirements ☐	Not Evident ☐
• Clear and reasonable link between goals and the institutional priority areas selected.	• Vague or inconsistent link between goals and the institutional priority areas selected	
Comments:		

IV. Goals - Desired Outcomes and Objectives		
Meets Requirements ☐	Does Not Meet Requirements ☐	Not Evident ☐
• Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) • Each desired outcome or objective is clear and concise. • At least two outcomes are listed for each goal when possible • A mix of operational and strategic objectives, when possible • Each outcome or objective is directly related to the mission, goals, or core functions of the unit	• Objectives do not follow SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) principles. • Not all outcomes and objectives are clear and concise. • Multiple outcomes or objectives are not listed for each goal where possible. • A mix of operational and strategic objectives is not used when possible • Each outcome or objective is not directly related to the mission, goals, or core functions of the unit	
Comments:		

V. Goals - Assessment Measures and Targets		
Meets Requirements ☐	Does Not Meet Requirements ☐	Not Evident ☐
• At least two measures for each outcome when possible or appropriate • A mix of direct and indirect measures are used to assess each outcome when possible • Assessment tools and methodology are described and are relevant to the outcome • Targets are clearly defined for each measure and are sufficiently challenging	• Not all outcomes have at least two measures when possible or appropriate • Few direct measures used • Assessment tools and methodology are vague or not defined • Targets not defined for each measure and/or are not sufficiently challenging	
Comments:		

Feedback to Unit & Supervisor:

☐ Plan Meets Requirements

☐ Plan Does Not Meet Requirements

APPENDIX B

SUNY Potsdam
Administrative Unit
Assessment Plan

Administrative Unit: Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) Unit Contact Name: Matt LeBire Date: 10/31/2022

Phone: x2176 Email Address: lebiremj@potsdam.edu Assessment Cycle: 2022-2026

PURPOSE

Administrative Assessment is an ongoing process that allows a unit to evaluate and – where necessary – improve its programs, services and operations. Assessment is a systematic approach to demonstrate continuous improvement in programs, services and operations. This template is to be used when creating your assessment plan. Assessment plans should be measurable, meaningful and manageable.

MISSION STATEMENT

The SUNY Potsdam Office of Institutional Effectiveness facilitates data collection, analysis, and reporting of institutional research to support planning, decision-making, assessment, and student success across the College in an objective manner that conveys results accurately to appropriate administrative, academic, and external constituencies. This work contributes to the College mission by ensuring that decisions are informed by evidence, and practices are evaluated for their effectiveness at achieving campus goals.

GOAL #1

Reminder: Generally speaking, goals should be grounded in the mission of the unit, be broad, and linked to the overall institutional priorities and goals. They should focus on strengthening and improving critical functions, services and processes and reflect the most important/urgent priorities of the unit.

Serve as the university's primary data source for accountability reporting to Federal and State governments, SUNY, and other various educational and commercial agencies.

GOAL #1 - WHAT INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITY AREA(S) DOES THIS GOAL LINK TO? (Select all that apply) ☒ Retention and Enrollment ☒ Financial Stability and Analysis ☒ Academic Programs and Planning ☐ Strengthening Community Connections ☒ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging	**Briefly describe the link between goal #1 and the institutional priority area(s) selected.** Submissions such as IPEDS are required under law for institutions that participate in federal student aid programs. Similarly, New York state also has a variety of mandating reporting requirements. IE has also designated other optional submissions and surveys as critical to data collection for the campus. Some of the data submitted relates to enrollment, program completions, finances, faculty and staff, graduation rates, financial aid, and demographics. These data submissions serve as a valuable tool for our campus and stakeholders. They allow for greater analysis and comparison of our campus which in turns helps inform decision making and strategic planning. These data sets are critical as we look internally comparing various points in time as well as comparing against peers and other institutions.

GOAL #1 – DESIRED OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES
Tip: Outcomes and objectives should be SMART… Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

1A: OIE will successfully complete, on time, all Federal IPEDS reports and submissions that are required and assigned to their office.
1B. OIE will successfully complete, on time, all State reports, such as NYSED submissions, that are required and assigned to their office.
1C. OIE will successfully complete, on time, all IR related SUNY SIRIS submissions
1D. OIE will successfully complete, on time, various external surveys and reports that are IE related. (See attached Appendix A)

GOAL #1 – ASSESSMENT METHODS, MEASURES, AND TARGETS
Reminder: These should be aligned with the objectives being assessed. Also, consider using a combination of direct and indirect measures. Be sure to include specific targets.

1A/B/C: Method = Review of IE submission report, comparison of due dates with dates actually submitted.
1B2: Method = Review of relevant online dashboards such as NYSED
1D: Method = review of survey calendar schedule/due dates with actual dates submitted
1A/B/C/D: Target = 100% on-time completion by due date or approved extension dates.

GOAL #2

Provide accurate and timely research and analysis of institutional data to the campus community for the purpose of guiding institutional decisions, assessment, and support student success

GOAL #2 - WHAT INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITY AREA(S) DOES THIS GOAL LINK TO?	**Briefly describe the link between goal #2 and institutional priority area(s) selected.**
(Select all that apply) ☒ Retention and Enrollment ☒ Financial Stability and Analysis ☒ Academic Programs and Planning ☐ Strengthening Community Connections ☒ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging	Providing current, accurate, and relevant facts, metrics, and data helps guide strategic business decisions at the unit, division, and campus level. The amount of data available can be large and overwhelming to many. By providing accurate research and analysis we help units figure out the ‘who, what, where, when, and sometime why’ of the relevant data available. This helps the various campus areas develop and find insights in the information and thus further supports the various priority areas checked.

GOAL #2 – DESIRED OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

Tip: Outcomes and objectives should be SMART… Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

2A: The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will produce and distribute key internal institutional data reports (See Attached List/Schedule)
2B: Ad hoc requests for data and information will be responded to by OIE in an accurate, timely manner
2C: OIE will maintain, and review annually, appropriate and timely data resource webpages as part of their larger Institutional Effectiveness webpage.

GOAL #2 – ASSESSMENT METHODS, MEASURES, AND TARGETS

Reminder: These should be aligned with the objectives being assessed. Also, consider using a combination of direct and indirect measures. Be sure to include specific targets.

2A1: Method = Review of scheduled due dates versus submitted dates of reports. Target 90% on-time completion

2A2: Method = Gap analysis of data and reports provided: review the original requests and relevant follow-up requests and questions to identify any modifications or new reports that may be needed. Target = Incorporate, when possible, any follow-up requests into existing reports by the following report cycle.

2B2: Method = Review data request and ticket tracker information to assess the response time to ad-hoc requests. Target = 90% of ad-hoc requests will be resolved within one week from request date, unless an alternate date is listed by IE on a ticket, for which that would be the deadline.

2C1: Method = Annual review of website, examining both the information and data provided on it as well as the timeliness of the information. Target = Completion of the annual review by January 30th of each year with the results documented in website report to be stored within IE documentation folders.

GOAL #3

Coordinate and provide guidance with the University’s use of surveys and survey software.

GOAL #3 - WHAT INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITY AREA(S) DOES THIS GOAL LINK TO? (Select all that apply)	**Briefly describe the link between goal #3 and institutional priority area(s) selected.**
☒ Retention and Enrollment ☒ Financial Stability and Analysis ☒ Academic Programs and Planning ☒ Strengthening Community Connections ☒ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging	Surveys remain a valuable tool in many areas of our campus. Whether a unit is looking for feedback on a particular program or topic, identifying trends, or trying to obtain other useful insights, a survey is often turned to as one way of gathering that information. Since data is key when trying to inform decisions or strategically plan for the future, we believe this goal actually links to all the priority areas as they can and are often used in relation to each of them.

GOAL #3 – DESIRED OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

Tip: Outcomes and objectives should be SMART… Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

3A. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will advise campus leadership of, and maintain, a university wide survey policy.
3B. Survey software account requests will be responded to by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in a timely manner.
3C. OIE will maintain a survey related page on the IE website with current and relevant survey software information and guides.
3D. OIE will complete their initial review of survey approval form submissions in a timely manner.

GOAL #3 – ASSESSMENT METHODS, MEASURES, AND TARGETS

Reminder: These should be aligned with the objectives being assessed. Also, consider using a combination of direct and indirect measures. Be sure to include specific targets.

3A. Annual review of survey policy. Target = Completion and documentation of annual review prior to the start of each Fall semester.
3B. Review of RT request tracker dates. Target = 90% of account requests will be handled within 3 full business days from the time of the request
3C. Annual review/update of IE's survey webpage. Target: All documents, videos, information, and links will be current with software functionality and release at the completion of the review. Target = Completion and documentation of annual review prior to the start of each Fall semester, any website update requests will be sent to web content within one week of review completion.
3D. Semi-annual review and comparison of survey approval form submissions dates with actual dates of initial review and response data.