

Program Assessment Overview & Planning Training

Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

World Changers
Shaped Here



SMU

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Why Assess?

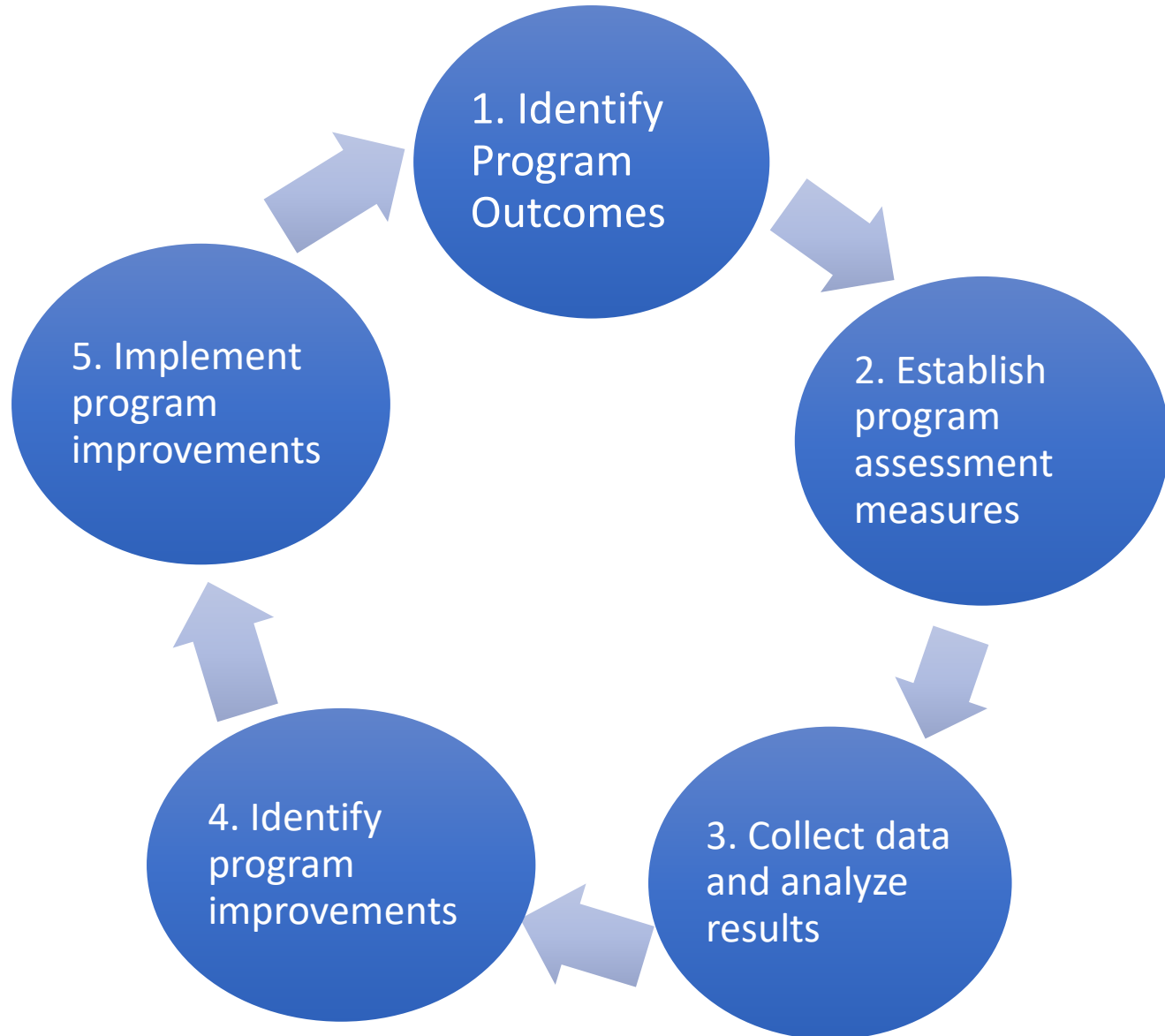
- ✓ Internal desire to improve
- ✓ External factors such as accreditation and calls for accountability

SACSCOC Standard 8.2

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

- a. **educational programs**, to include student-learning outcomes (*All degree & certificate programs*)
- b. **general education** (*general education competencies of undergraduate degree program*)
- c. **academic and student services that support student success** (*All administrative and educational support services*)

Program Assessment Cycle



Assessment is a journey, not a destination.

Program Assessment Plan

- Program Mission Statement
- Program Outcomes/Objectives
 - Program Student Learning Outcome (PLO)
 - Program Operational Objective (PO)
- Measures & Targets

Program Assessment Report

- Findings and Interpretation of Results
- Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan)
- Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle

Program Mission Statement

- Describe the purpose and focus of your academic program (e.g., what students with this degree will be prepared to do after graduation with knowledge and skills gained in the program).
- The physical geographic location of program delivery should be clearly stated for all programs included in the program assessment plan. This refers to the campus and/or the program approved teaching site (e.g., Taos, Galveston, Fort Worth, etc.).
- If the program is available through distance education technology, this should be noted and the format of delivery should also be clearly stated (e.g., asynchronous, synchronous, or both).
- For programs less than three years old, indicate the first academic year during which students were enrolled in the program. This helps assessment staff determine expectations for reporting. For example, new four-year programs are expected to submit a Plan but may not yet have data for the Report. Conversely, programs that have enrolled students for several years are expected to report assessment results annually.

Program Outcomes/Objectives

- All **academic degree programs** are expected to establish a minimum of **four** **Program Student Learning Outcomes (PLOs)** assessed at or near a capstone level by variety of direct and indirect measures directly related to learning.
 - Each degree program should assess at least two PLOs per year and assess all outcomes at least twice in five years.
 - **For undergraduate programs, one of the four PLOs must address Writing in the Major.**
- All **certificate programs** should have **two-four** PLOs, assess at least one PLO per year, and assess all PLOs at least twice in five years.
- All **academic degree programs** and **certificate programs** should also have 1 or more **Program Operational Objectives (POs)**, assess at least one PO per year, and assess all POs at least twice in five years.

Write Effective Program Student Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

- * Align with the program mission.
- * Be **SMART**– Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely.
- * Use action verbs from Bloom’s Taxonomy.
- * Focus on what the end result will be, not the process or experience.
- * Not include more than one outcome each (avoid using “and”).

Useful Categories for Writing Effective Program Operational Objectives (POs)

- **Student Experience** oriented objectives (percentage of students studying abroad, having internships, etc.)
- **Inclusive Excellence** oriented objectives (increasing diversity in students, staff, faculty, or increasing the focus on diverse populations in coursework or research)
- **Student Success** oriented objectives (time to degree, career outcomes, number of new majors, etc.)
- **Research** oriented objectives (numbers of grants submitted or awarded, numbers of publications or citations, etc.)
- **Teaching** oriented objectives (faculty development, teaching awards, course evaluation metrics, etc.)

Measures

Measures describe the methods of collecting and evaluating assessment data to determine success. All PLOs must be assessed with at least one direct measure. Indirect measures alone are not sufficient or appropriate for assessing student learning.

- **Direct Measure**: tangible, visible, self-explanatory, and provide compelling evidence of exactly what students have learned. Direct measures require students to demonstrate why they have learned in a way that is observable and measurable.

Examples: capstone projects, exams, written work, performances, presentations, portfolio reviews, employer or internship supervisor ratings of student performance, oral defenses of thesis/dissertation, etc.

- **Indirect Measure**: helps to capture the perceptions of your constituents.

Examples: student self-assessments of learning gains, employer surveys, job placement data, course enrollment data, exit interviews/surveys, alumni surveys, focus group discussions, number of student's who publish manuscripts or give conference presentations, etc.

Targets

A **target** is the level at which a program considers their program learning outcome (PLO) to be “met” or achieved on a given measure. A strong target statement communicates clear level of achievement.

Targets need to be revisited annually and updated as necessary, particularly if the targets are met year after year.

- *Example: 80% of students will score “accomplished” on final review/exam/etc.*

Programs can use their own data to benchmark performance or consider benchmarking against aspirational peers or national sources.

Findings & Interpretation of Results

Findings are the results from analysis of assessment data. Strong assessment reports will consistently communicate findings in a clear manner using language that aligns with the related measure and target.

Example of reporting findings:

- *Of 300 graduating seniors, 169 students were assessed.*
- *75% of those assessed, scored “accomplished” on review/exam/etc.*
- *Exam and spreadsheet of scores uploaded as evidence.*

Indicate whether the set target was met, not met, or partially met.

Where appropriate, findings are disaggregated (e.g., by mode of delivery, geographic location, etc.).

Reminder: programs are NOT penalized if their targets are not met. What is important with any target and findings is there is reflection and evidence of seeking improvement.

Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plans)

Every program is expected to develop a minimum of one **Action Plan** at year end, regardless of whether all targets are met.

- IF your program does not meet or partially meet the target of an outcome, the action plan explains what the program plans to do in the next academic year to meet the target.
Example: We will focus on improving the course that delivers the PLO on which students underperformed. Explain in full.
- IF you meet your targets, an action plan is not necessary that year, but 2-3 years max on same target, same results.

Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plans) *Cont.*

- Action plans:
 - should have a close, clear connection to the data collected during the assessment cycle
 - describe specific programmatic changes with timelines, if possible, and
 - should be discussed among the faculty to involve them in the improvement or planning process.

- Action plans can be:
 - changes to the curriculum (e.g., course sequencing),
 - changes to the assessment plan or methods,
 - changes to pedagogical practices, or
 - implementation of new technology and / or assignments.

Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle

Program should provide a status update on action(s) identified in the previous assessment cycle.

- For any action items that have not yet been fully implemented, describe in detail what happened this year, where the program is in the implementation process, and when program faculty expect to re-assess the targeted program level outcome(s).
- For any completed action items, provide a brief summary of these actions and expand on the impact of these actions had on student learning. Describe any changes that have been seen in the program assessment results since the implementation of the action plan.

Evidence Files

- **Evidence** files include *rubrics used for portfolio assessment, examples of exams used, spreadsheets with outcomes and scores, budget documents, year-end reports, meeting minutes, etc.*

Logging into Anthology Planning

<http://smu.campuslabs.com/planning>



Resources

Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

Website: smu.edu/assessment

Wiki: <https://wiki.smu.edu/bin/view/AP/>

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