

Developing an Assessment Plan

1. Review/revise mission of your work unit

- Does it reflect your unit's most important purposes?
 - Does it link to the mission of your department? To the Division? To the University?
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2. Identify major services, programs, and activities of your work unit

- Do they link to your mission? To the Division's mission? To the University's?
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3. Specify student or program outcomes for one of your services, programs or activities

- What will students be expected to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skill, and/or attitudes upon completion?
 - What will the program do, achieve, accomplish? What is the target audience of your outcome (students, faculty, staff, parents)?
 - Consider: Is the outcome meaningful to your program? How do the activities support/deliver the outcome?
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4. Identify information needed to show that student learning or program outcomes have been met (methodology and criteria for success).

- How will you measure the outcome?
- What type of evidence will lead you to make a decision for continuous program improvement? Is there more than one source of data (survey, focus groups)?
- Will the information generated allow you to make decisions? Will it be credible? Will it tell you something usable?
- How will you know if the outcome has been met? What are the criteria for success? At what level, or to what degree, do you consider this outcome accomplished? Criteria need to be stated in measurable or observable terms.

Means of Assessment:

Criteria for Success:

(over)

5. Identify existing and new data to be used in #4.

- Consider: Do you already collect this information? Is it available elsewhere in the institution?
 - Consider: With whom can you collaborate to develop an instrument or focus group? How will you assure a methodologically sound instrument design, data collection and analysis?
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6. Identify how you will use the data obtained in #5.

- Consider: What will you do if the results of your assessment are negative?
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7. How will you disseminate the results of your assessment and to whom?

- Consider: organizing your report around issues, not solely data
- Consider: interpreting your data so that it informs program improvement, budgeting, planning, decision-making, or policies

8. Implementation of assessment

- Who is responsible for what?
- Timeline

9. Results

- What did the results of your assessment show?
- What did you learn about the outcomes?
- What was your assessment plan not able to tell you?

Remember:

- Be very clear with what you are trying to assess. Do you want to assess what your program is accomplishing and the degree to which it is being accomplished (program outcomes)? Do you want to assess what students are learning or what staff is learning as a result of the curriculum or training your program is offering (learning outcomes)?
- Is your outcome measuring something useful and meaningful? Will relevant parties find the information generated credible and applicable to decisions that need to be made?
- Is the outcome measurable? If it is not, you need to redefine your outcome.
- Be patient. Try not to be frustrated with the process and seek assistance from others. Asking others to evaluate your outcomes is a good way to improve them. Writing good outcomes takes practice, and it takes time.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Celebrate your accomplishments. Writing good outcomes will suggest good measurement. Good measurements will provide the information to continuously improve the program.