



UT Arlington

**Unit Effectiveness Process
Assessment Handbook
Spring 2012 Edition**

LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES AND APPENDICES.....	4
SECTION I: INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK	5
WHAT'S NEW TO THE UEP	5
<i>Assessing Learning Outcomes for Certificate Programs and Stand-alone Minors.....</i>	<i>5</i>
LAYOUT OF THE HANDBOOK	5
ADDITIONS TO THIS EDITION OF THE HANDBOOK.....	6
SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW	7
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	7
BRIEF HISTORY OF ASSESSMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON	7
SACS EXPECTATIONS	8
ASSESSMENT BASICS.....	9
<i>Assessment Defined</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Assessment Purpose.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Assessment Myths</i>	<i>12</i>
ASSESSMENT INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO UT ARLINGTON.....	13
<i>Assessment Phases and Key Elements of the UEP</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Reporting</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Report Submission.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Report Status and Feedback</i>	<i>16</i>
SECTION III: PREPARING FOR ASSESSMENT.....	18
<i>Designating Planning Responsibility</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Revising or Reaffirming Unit Mission/Purpose</i>	<i>18</i>
REVISING OR REAFFIRMING CORE FUNCTIONS OR STUDENT COMPETENCIES	20
<i>Academic Administrative Units (Colleges/Schools).....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Academic Instructional Units</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Administrative Support Units</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Inventorying Existing and Needed Assessment Methods.....</i>	<i>21</i>
SECTION IV: PREPARING THE ASSESSMENT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTING ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES.....	22
DEVELOPING INTENDED OUTCOMES	22
<i>Bloom's Taxonomy.....</i>	<i>23</i>
WRITING INTENDED OUTCOME STATEMENTS	24
<i>ABCD Outcome Writing Model</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Intended Outcome Sample Statements</i>	<i>26</i>
LINKING INTENDED OUTCOMES TO RELATED STUDENT COMPETENCIES OR PLANNING PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND/OR CORE FUNCTIONS	27
OUTLINING ACTION STEPS	27
DETERMINING ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY.....	28
SOURCES OF ASSESSMENT MEASUREMENTS	30
RUBRICS	30
<i>Rubric Types</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Rubric Components.....</i>	<i>32</i>

<i>Steps for Developing a Rubric</i>	32
<i>Rubric Orientation and Calibration</i>	34
ESTABLISHING THE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS.....	35
THE RELATIONSHIP OF ASSESSMENT TO GRADING.....	35
SECTION V: DOCUMENTING ASSESSMENT & USING RESULTS	37
DOCUMENTING ASSESSMENT	37
USING RESULTS	37
<i>Proposing Changes for Improvement</i>	37
<i>Annual Improvement Updates</i>	38
SECTION VI: OATS	39
SECTION VII: RESOURCES	40
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING AND EFFECTIVENESS STAFF	40
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING AND EFFECTIVENESS LIBRARY	40
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING AND EFFECTIVENESS WEBSITE	40
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES.....	40
APPENDIX A: UEP ASSESSMENT PLAN AND RESULTS REPORT RUBRIC	42
APPENDIX B: MISSION STATEMENT WORKSHEET	48
APPENDIX C: SAMPLE ACTION VERB LIST	49
APPENDIX D: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS CHECKLIST ACADEMIC UNITS.....	51
APPENDIX E: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS CHECKLIST ADMINISTRATIVE AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT UNITS	53
APPENDIX F: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF VARIOUS ASSESSMENT METHODS	55
GLOSSARY	59
WORKS CITED	69

List of Tables, Figures and Appendices

Tables

Table 1	UEP Cycles	13
Table 2	Plan and Report Status Summary	16
Table 3	Bloom’s Taxonomy Level and Explanatory Questions with Corresponding Action Verbs	24
Table 4	UTA Strategic Planning Priorities 2006-2012	27
Table 5	Examples of Direct and Indirect Types of Assessment Methods	29
Table 6	Rubric Resources	34
Table 7	Electronic Assessment Resources	41

Figures

Figure 1	Assessment as an essential part of institutional effectiveness –planning, review and improvement	7
Figure 2	Program output versus outcome model	10
Figure 3	Unit Effectiveness Process detail	15
Figure 4	Flow chart for UEP Biennial Assessment Activity Report submission	16
Figure 5	Flow chart for UEP Annual Improvement Update Report submission	16
Figure 6	Wheel of UEP assessment responsibility	19
Figure 7	Side-by-side comparison of the original Bloom’s Taxonomy and the revised version of Bloom’s Taxonomy	24
Figure 8	Holistic rubric	31
Figure 9	Analytic rubric	32

Appendices

Appendix A	Assessment Plan and Results Report Rubric	42
Appendix B	Mission Statement Worksheet	48
Appendix C	Sample Action Verbs	49
Appendix D	Institutional Effectiveness Checklist-Academic Units	51
Appendix E	Institutional Effectiveness Checklist-Administrative Units	53
Appendix F	Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Assessment Methods	55

Section I: Introduction to the Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with an orientation to and an overview of academic and administrative outcomes assessment as it is conducted at the University of Texas Arlington. The assessment process at UT Arlington is called the Unit Effectiveness Process (UEP). This Handbook aims to provide information, resources and examples to assist you in preparing for assessment activities, creating the UEP assessment plan and documenting your assessment activities and subsequent improvements.

What's New to the UEP

Assessing Learning Outcomes for Certificate Programs and Stand-alone Minors

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) expects the University to comprehensively assess student learning. We must assess all programs for which academic credit is awarded, including degree programs, certain certificate programs and stand-alone minors. Certificate programs in which the course work is not assessed through a degree program should be assessed independently. Stand-alone minors, such as Women's Studies, that are not tied to a major must also be assessed independently.

Layout of the Handbook

The Handbook is divided into multiple sections.

- Section I states the purpose of the Handbook, while highlighting new aspects of the UEP process, new components of the UEP Handbook as well as other important points of consideration for conducting outcomes assessment at UT Arlington.
- Section II describes the history of outcomes assessment at UT Arlington and explains how outcomes assessment fits into the larger scope of institutional effectiveness. You will find useful definitions as well as a "big picture" overview of the UEP in this section.
- Section III offers guidance in preparing for assessment, including a description of what should be in place in order to formulate the UEP assessment plan.
- Section IV delineates the information that should be included in the UEP assessment plan and provides multiple examples.
- Section V details the information that should be included in the results portion of the Biennial Assessment Activity Report (formerly Form C), which documents the results of assessment and any proposed improvements based on the results. This section also details the information that should be included on the Annual Improvement Update Report (formerly Form D), which documents improvements that were implemented based on data gathered through assessment.
- Section VI is a brief description of the Online Assessment Tracking System (OATS), which is the reporting system for the UEP.
- Section VII contains a compendium of resources aimed at either providing direct assessment assistance or directing you to where more information can be located and obtained.

Additions to This Edition of the Handbook

This edition of the Handbook contains the following new features:

- Output-Outcome Model;
- The “Wheel of UEP Assessment Responsibility”;
- ABCD Outcome Writing Model;
- Descriptive section about rubrics;
- Updated electronic resources table;
- Revised Biennial Assessment Activity Report Rubric; and the
- Institutional effectiveness checklist for both academic and administrative units

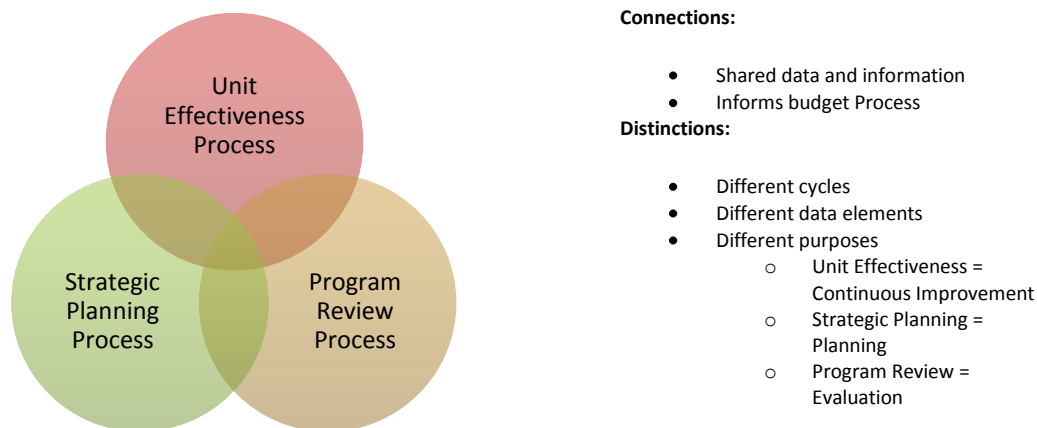
Section II: Assessment Overview

Relationship between Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

The Southern Association of College and Schools determines that institutional Effectiveness occurs as “The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes, (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission (SACS COC, 2010, p. 16).

Institutional effectiveness at UT Arlington is in the form of a triad that includes the Strategic Planning Process, the Program Review Process and the assessment process, known as the Unit Effectiveness Process (UEP). These processes are linked through shared information and their impact on the budget. They diverge in cycle length, data elements and purpose. The strategic planning process establishes organizational priorities. The program review process evaluates the quality and effectiveness of a program in supporting the University’s mission (University of Texas Arlington, 1998). Assessment, i.e. the UEP, focuses on student learning outcomes and strategies to implement the goals and objectives of the UT Arlington Strategic Plan. Figure 1 illustrates these relationships (Pet-Armacost & Armacost, 2006).

Figure 1. Assessment as an Essential Part of Institutional Effectiveness – Planning, Review and Improvement (From Pet-Armacost & Armacost, 2006).



Recognizing that Strategic Planning needs more specificity at the unit level, the UEP provides for the development and implementation of unit plans. These unit plans help ensure that each unit of the University is engaged in activities and initiatives that support the University’s Strategic Plan and address the institutional priorities. This, in turn, means that energies and resources will be used effectively across the University toward a shared vision and common goals. Each administrative and academic unit of the University participates in the UEP, which, links unit purpose and outcomes to the University mission, goals, and objectives found in the Strategic Plan.

Brief History of Assessment at the University of Texas at Arlington

In 1996, the University implemented a comprehensive, ongoing, campus-wide planning and evaluation process in response to expectations set forth by SACS. In 2001, the University moved to a biennial system of assessment. In 2005, the Unit Effectiveness Plans were postponed to accommodate the University-wide strategic planning process. It was decided that the revision of University priorities, goals and objectives should be completed first in order to provide the foundation for the unit plans. Coinciding with the strategic planning process was the formation of the UT Arlington Institutional Effectiveness Advisory Committee commissioned to improve the Unit

Effectiveness Plan process. The committee met several times during Fall 2005 and eventually agreed on six recommended areas of improvement. Recommendations addressing those areas of improvement were devised and some changes in the process were addressed in the Spring 2006 edition of the Handbook. Other improvements are still in the developmental or implementation phases.

Prior to 2006, the University's effectiveness and improvement process was referred to as the UEP, which was an acronym for Unit Effectiveness Plan, the main report for the process. In 2006, the process was given an official name, the Unit Effectiveness Process (UEP). Very similar to Unit Effectiveness Plan, it maintains name recognition while acknowledging that continuous improvement and effectiveness is a process, in and of itself, that encompasses planning, assessment, analysis and improvement. The Unit Effectiveness Process plan formation resumed in 2006 for assessing the 2006-2007 academic year. During the Fall of 2009, the Online Assessment Tracking System (OATS) was implemented in order to house UEP reports.

SACS Expectations

Beginning in 2001, our accrediting body, the Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS), set forth their new guidelines for accreditation that were more explicit than ever before regarding continuous improvement and institutional effectiveness. As of 2010, SACS' most recent edition of *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (February 2010) continues the emphasis on continuous improvement and institutional effectiveness. The following are excerpts from the aforementioned edition that illustrate the emphasis the accrediting body places on assessment.

Core Requirement 2.5, Institutional Effectiveness

The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission (p. 16).

Comprehensive Standard 3.3 Institutional Effectiveness

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

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

3.3.1.2 administrative support services

3.3.1.3 educational support services

3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate

3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate (p. 25)

Comprehensive Standard 3.4.4, Acceptance of Academic Credit

The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. (See Commission policy "The Transfer or Transcribing of Academic Credit.") (p. 26)

Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1, College-level Competencies

The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them (p. 27).

Assessment Basics

Although assessment and the UEP has a substantial history at UT Arlington, confusion and uncertainty about the purpose and function of outcomes assessment is not uncommon, especially among new faculty and staff members. This section is intended to provide a common base of understanding about assessment, both in general and as it is practiced at UT Arlington.

Assessment Defined

Assessment is a systematic and ongoing process of gathering and interpreting information to discover if programs/services are meeting intended outcomes and then using the information to enhance/improve the programs/services (adapted from Virginia Common Wealth, 2002 and Marchese, 1987).

Assessment of **student learning outcomes (SLOs)** is a learner-centered process ensuring that students are learning what we intend for them to learn. It does not evaluate individual student performance nor does it focus on individual faculty / staff performance. Palomba and Banta (1999, p. 4) indicate that assessment helps us answer the following key questions about student learning:

- What should graduates know, be able to do, and value?
- Have the graduates of our institution acquired this learning?
- What are the contributions of the institution and its programs to student growth?
- How can student learning be improved?

Assessment of **administrative outcomes** is also a crucial part of the UEP as assessing outcomes related to strategies for implementing the UTA Planning Priorities insures that each department on campus is working from the same set of expectations. Essentially, each unit on campus promotes student learning in some form or fashion. Consider the advantages of assessing administrative outcomes:

- Decisions about improvement can be based on documentation rather than assumption.
- Stakeholder expectations such as reliability, efficiency, quality and cost effectiveness can be improved.
- Areas for improvement can be identified.
- Improvement progress can be optimized (Selim et al., 2005a).

Assessment, when undertaken seriously and purposefully, provides a return on the time invested in the following ways:

1. Faculty (especially adjuncts) become more clear about learning objectives for the degree program,
2. Rationale for curriculum design/course sequencing is more clear,
3. Students learn better when faculty and students are clear about learning expectations, and
4. Faculty and staff learn more about student learning as well as providing services to students and are thus able to direct their respective efforts accordingly (from Kansas State University, n. d.).

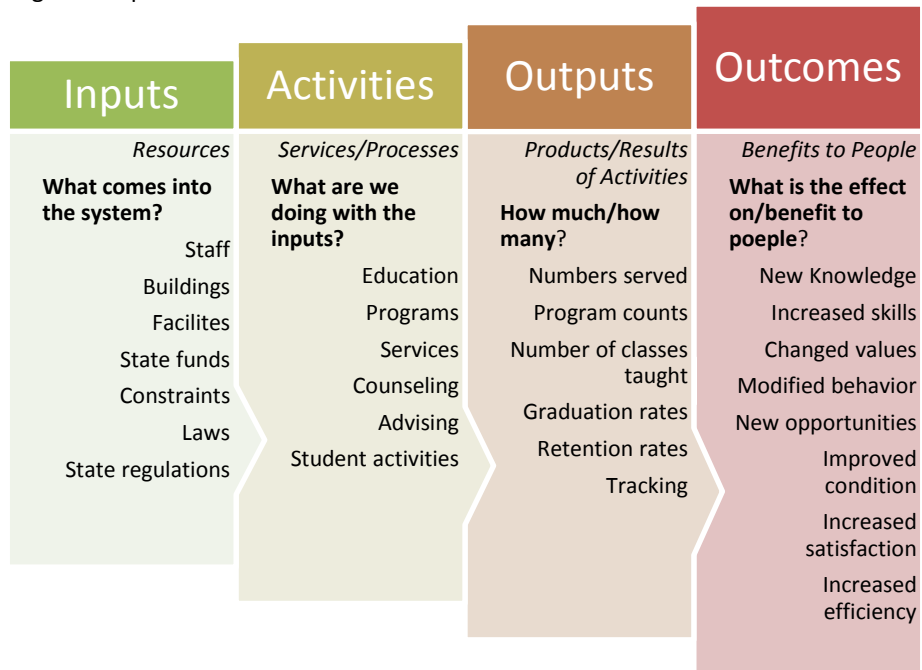
Assessment Purpose

Assessment serves institutional effectiveness through its four main purposes, it:

1. **Improves** programs/services through assessment results that indicate areas for change.
2. **Informs** students, faculty, staff and other stakeholders of the state of a program/service and its impact.
3. **Validates** that a program/service is accomplishing what it says it is accomplishing through a demonstration of assessment results.
4. **Supports** campus-decision making processes, strategic planning, program review and additional accountability activities such as SACS reaffirmation and re-accreditation of academic programs by professional accrediting bodies (adapted from Selim et al., 2005b & Virginia Common Wealth, 2002).

The assessment process focuses on the outcomes, rather than the outputs of work processes, thus the process is intended to measure outcomes over outputs. Figure 2 illustrates the distinction between outputs and outcomes. Outcome data is generally superior in providing information that can be used to improve programs and services. For instance, simply knowing how many students are processed through Financial Aid says little about Financial Aid processes.

Figure 2. Program output versus outcome model.¹



Assessment Principles

A task force formed by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) formulated the AAHE Nine Principles of Good Practice in Assessing Student Learning (Bauer, 2003). Below are the nine principles along with an explanation of how our institution demonstrates commitment to these principles.

Principle 1: Assessment of student learning begins with educational values.

Our educational values are set forth in our mission statement, specifically "...the advancement of knowledge and the pursuit of excellence." The University is committed to the promotion of lifelong learning through its academic and continuing education programs..."

The values are further affirmed by our commitment to several educational objectives. The University prepares students for full, productive lives and informed and active citizenship. To that end, we have developed undergraduate and graduate curricula and classroom practices that engage students actively in the learning process. Outside the classroom a wide range of student organizations and activities contribute to the learning environment. Our service learning program offers students the opportunity to supplement their academic study with internships in a variety of community settings, testing their skills and aptitudes and challenging their values. State-of-the-art teaching technologies, distance education, and off-site instruction afford access to off-campus as well as traditional students. Non-degree certificate and continuing education programs offer practical, aesthetic, and intellectually stimulating opportunities for community learners, for individual courses or a sustained program of study (UTA Mission Statement).

¹ Adapted from Manning and Wells, 2009.

Principle 2: Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.

The University understands that learning is multidimensional and integrated and caters to this undergirding concept through a host of programs. The University is devoted to research, which in many cases is student driven. In addition, there are several programs and initiatives that allow students to learn in non-traditional environments such the newly opened Smart Hospital and study abroad opportunities. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) pilot projects integrate active learning techniques into the traditional classroom setting to accommodate the multiple modes of learning.

Faculty, both tenure and non-tenure track, are encouraged to participate in a variety of instructional support sessions. Some of these sessions are aimed at broadening a faculty member's pedagogical style to facilitate teaching and learning beyond the traditional lecture mode. Faculty can also find additional teaching resources through the University's Active Learning web portal, <http://activelearning.uta.edu/>.

Non-academic units, such as those within the division of Student Affairs also offer learning opportunities through their co-curricular activities such as the Leadership Center, student governance, and opportunities provided by Camus Recreation.

Principle 3: Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.

Program purposes are found in the mission/purpose statements of administrative, academic and educational support units. Administrative and educational support units further articulate and specify their purpose through delineation of core functions, which are statements of major responsibility of the unit. Academic units detail unit purpose through articulation and delineation of student competencies, which are statements of broad knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors that program majors should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the degree program.

Principle 4: Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also, and equally, to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.

UT Arlington emphasizes the experiences that lead to outcomes by requiring units to articulate action steps/objectives within the assessment process.

Principle 5: Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.

Our assessment process is bi-annual, every other academic year, except in special cases, our administrative, academic and educational support units assess their programs and services.

Principle 6: Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives across the educational community are involved.

Our commitment to wide involvement in the continuous improvement process is demonstrated in part by the involvement of all units on campus, including administrative, academic and educational support units in the UEP. In addition, units describe how assessment results are communicated to members of the unit as well as describing the process for engaging all members of the unit in the feedback loop of the assessment process.

Principle 7: Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.

Units choose the outcomes that are important to the members of the unit. Only in cases where the accrediting or supervising educational authority mandates points of consideration do we impose requirements for specific aspects of programs and services that must be evaluated.

Principle 8: Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.

Institutional effectiveness is the integration of planning and evaluation processes that result in continuous improvement (SACS COC, 2006). Our institutional effectiveness system at the University consists of Strategic Planning, the Unit Effectiveness Process (UEP), and Academic Program Review. These three processes are connected through shared information and their impact on the budget; however, they differ in cycle length and purpose. The strategic planning process establishes organizational priorities and unit-level strategies to support those priorities. The UEP is a biennial process focusing on assessment of outcomes, both student learning outcomes and administrative outcomes. The administrative outcomes assessed in the UEP relate back to the goals, objectives and strategies of the UT Arlington Strategic Plan. The Academic Program Review process evaluates the quality and effectiveness of programs in supporting the University's mission on a five-year cycle. All three of these processes focus on continuous improvement.

Principle 9: Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and the public.

We meet our responsibilities to students and the public by implementing improvements based on results of assessment (i.e. data driven decision-making). This is demonstrated through the required documentation of implemented improvements

Assessment Myths

Often there are misconceptions about the function and purpose of assessment. The University of Central Florida (2008) assessment team has compiled a list of some of the most common myths and dispelling explanations about program assessment.

Myth 1: The results of assessment will be used to evaluate faculty / staff performance.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Faculty and staff awareness, participation, and ownership are essential for successful assessment, but assessment results should never be used to evaluate or judge individual faculty or staff performance. The results of the assessment are used to improve programs and services.

Myth 2: Our program is working well, our students are learning; we don't need to bother with assessment.

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve the quality of services and educational programs to improving student learning. Even if you feel that the quality of your services and program are good, there is always room for improvement. In addition, various discipline specific accrediting bodies mandate conducting student outcomes assessment. To not conduct assessment is not an option.

Myth 3: We will assign a single faculty / staff member to conduct the assessment. Too many opinions would only delay and hinder the process.

While it is a good idea to have one or two faculty / staff members head the assessment process for the unit, it is really important and beneficial to have all faculty/staff members involved. Each person brings to the table different perspectives and ideas for improving the academic programs / services. Also it is important that all faculty / staff members understand and agree to the mission (or purpose) and goals of the unit.

Myth 4: The administration might use the results to eliminate some of the unit's programs or services.

There are two types of evaluation processes: summative and formative. The purpose of summative program evaluation is to judge the quality and worth of a program. On the other hand, the purpose of formative program evaluation is to provide feedback to help improve and modify a program. The UEP is intended as a formative evaluation and not a summative evaluation. The results of UEP assessment will not be used to eliminate programs.

Myth 5: Assessment is a waste of time and does not benefit the students.

The primary purpose of assessment is to identify the important objectives and learning outcomes of your program for the purpose of improving student learning. Anything that enhances and improves the learning, knowledge and growth of your students cannot be considered a waste of time.

Myth 6: We will come up with an assessment plan for this year and use it every year thereafter.

For program assessment to be successful, it must be an ongoing and continuous process. Just as your program should be improving, so should your assessment plan and measurement methods. Each academic department must look at its programs and its learning outcomes on a continual basis and determine if there are better ways to measure student learning and other program outcomes. Your assessment plan should be continually reviewed and improved.

Myth 7: Program assessment sounds like a good idea, but it is time consuming and complex.

It is impossible to “get something for nothing.” Effective program assessment will take some of your time and effort, but there are steps that you can follow that can help you to develop an assessment plan that will lead to improving student learning. This Handbook is intended to assist you in conducting meaningful and purposeful assessment.

Assessment Information Specific to UT Arlington

Assessment activities associated with the UEP are coordinated through the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE) and managed by the Assistant Director of Outcomes Assessment.

The process is biennial whereby outcomes are assessed every other academic year. Prior to 2000, assessment was conducted every year. Eight cycles have been completed since UEP inception in 1996. Table 1 is a listing of UEP cycles, previous and future through 2015.

Table 1

Assessment Cycle	Academic Year Assessed
1 st	1997-98
2 nd	1998-99
3 rd	1999-00
4 th	2001-02
5 th	2003-04
6 th	2006-07*
7 th	2008-09
8 th	2010-11
9 th	2012-13
10 th	2014-15

*Assessment of academic year 2005-06 was postponed to 2006-07 to complete the University-wide strategic plan.

Assessment Phases and Key Elements of the UEP

IRPE conceptualizes the UEP as a multi-phase, multi-element process, which can be described in three-phases.

Phase I: Planning

This is the phase when UEP plans are devised, submitted to IRPE and should include the following elements:

- Statement of mission or purpose,
- Intended outcomes,

- Related core function and/or Planning Priority Strategy (for administrative outcomes); related student competency (for student learning outcomes),
- Action steps to achieve each intended outcome, and
- Assessment methodology/methodologies for each intended outcome related criterion/criteria of success, timeline, and responsible individuals.

Phase II Implementation, Assessment, Analysis and Reporting

During this phase, planning should already be complete and the actions steps designed to achieve the intended outcomes are implemented. Assessment data is collected, analyzed, reviewed and reported. Proposals for improvement are developed and reported.

Phase III Improvement

Proposed changes are implemented and reported. This part of the process completes the planning and evaluation cycle by looking back over the change proposals of the previous cycle and listing improvements that were actually implemented. The report generated for this phase of the process serves as documentation that the University is “closing the loop” by using assessment results for improvement.

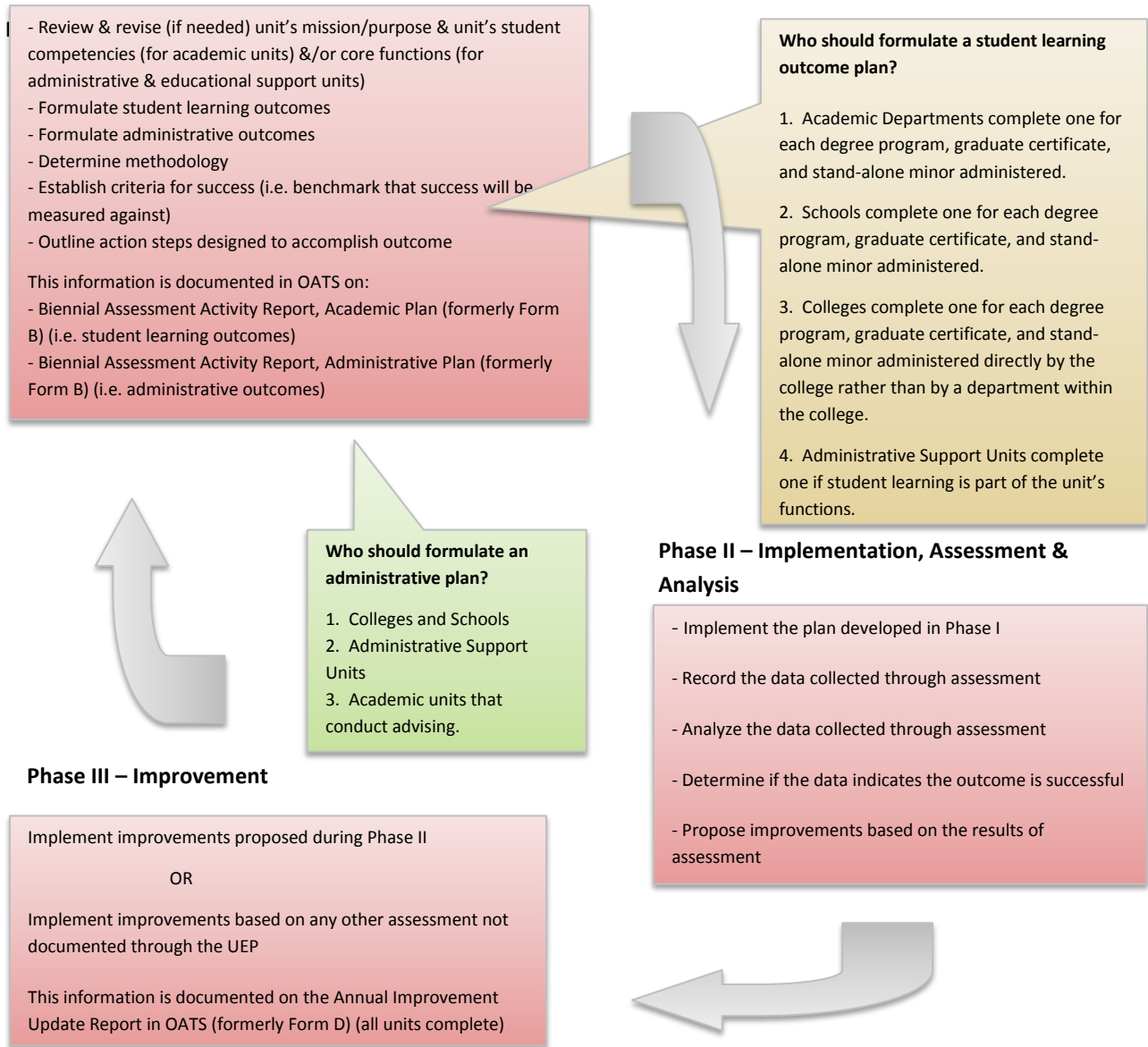
Reporting

Assessment activities are documented in the Online Assessment Tracking System (OATS). There are two reports available in OATS to document assessment planning, results of assessment and improvements implemented based on the results of assessment, the Biennial Assessment Activity Report and the Annual Improvement Update Report.

The Biennial Assessment Activity Report (formerly Forms A-C) is comprised of unit information (i.e. unit contacts and unit mission/purpose statement) (formerly documented on Form A); student competencies or core functions, the assessment plan (formerly documented on Form B) and the results of assessment (formerly documented on Form C).

The Annual Improvement Update Report (formerly Form D) documents any improvements that were implemented based on information gathered through assessment. This report is completed annually. [OATS](#) can be accessed directly or the link can be found on the [UEP web page](#). Figure 3 illustrates the UEP detail, tying together the phases, elements and corresponding reports.

Figure 3. Unit Effectiveness Process detail.



Report Submission

OATS contains a report submission function that routes plans and reports to IRPE for review. **However, prior to submitting either part of the Biennial Assessment Activity Report (either the plan or results), the plan or report should be reviewed by the unit's Dean/VP.** Review and communication between the unit and the respective Dean/VP is a process internal to the unit. Reports should not be submitted through OATS to IRPE until they have been vetted by the Dean/VP. It is not necessary to route the Annual Improvement Update Report to the Dean/VP before submitting to IRPE.

Submission deadlines are noted on the [UEP cycle calendar](#). Figures 4 and 5 are diagrams of plan/report submission.

Figure 4. Flow chart for UEP Biennial Assessment Activity Report submission (formerly Forms A-C)

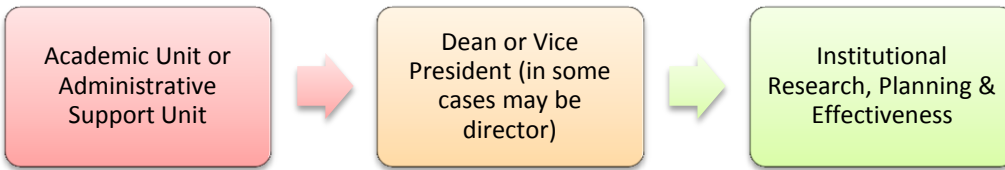
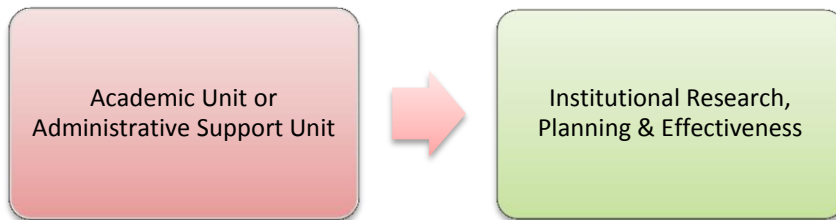


Figure 5. Flow chart for UEP Annual Improvement Update Report submission (formerly Form D)



Report Status and Feedback

OATS has been customized with status designations and is programmed to distribute automatic notifications via email when the status of a plan/report changes. Once your plan/report is submitted to IRPE, it enters into the review process and it is assigned a status based on its location within the journey to finalization. Table 2 summarizes the details of each status. If the report needs revisions, it will cycle through the Ready for Review – Being Reviewed – Revisions Requested portions of the process until the report is ready for finalization. Controls refer to the users' access to editing the report. For instance, the plan/report is locked to users during the review process. The status categories are applicable to both the Biennial Assessment Activity Report and the Annual Improvement Update Report.

IRPE will provide feedback when necessary to units regarding plans and reports. The feedback may be delivered in various forms including email from the Assistant Director, email sent directly from OATS, automated email distributed by OATS, and verbal feedback from Assistant Director by phone and in-person.

IRPE has devised a rubric in order to measure the quality of the assessment planning and results documentation. Each unit's UEP Contact and department chair/ program director will receive the results of the assessment of their unit's assessment plan and results report. Deans/Vice Presidents will receive this data for each of the units under their supervision. The rubric will be used during IRPE's first review of the assessment plan and the first review of the results report. Timeframes for distribution of the results of the assessment may vary from cycle to cycle. [Appendix A](#) contains the assessment rubric. Your unit is encouraged to use this as a guide when preparing assessment plans and results reports.

For specific instructions and details about OATS and viewing feedback within OATS, please consult the [OATS User Manual](#).

Table 2

Plan and Report Status Summary

Status	Description	Auto Notification	Controls
Not Started	Report does not contain any information	No	View & Edit
In Process	Report is in process & contains some information	No	View & Edit
Ready for Review	Report has been submitted to IRPE for review	Yes – to IRPE & UEP Contacts (sample notifications can be found in the OATS User Manual Appendices)	View Only
Being Reviewed	Report has been accessed by IRPE & is under review	No	View Only
Revisions Requested	Report has been restored to Edit enabled so that changes can be made by unit	Yes – to UEP Contacts (sample notifications can be found in the OATS User Manual Appendices)	View & Edit
Finalized	Report is in an acceptable form & (further) revisions are not needed	Yes – to UEP Contacts (sample notifications can be found in the OATS User Manual Appendices)	View Only

Section III: Preparing for Assessment

Planning is the first phase of the UEP and its importance is not to be underestimated as it directs a unit's assessment activities for the following academic year. It is advisable to organize and prepare your planning tools prior to devising the UEP Assessment Plan. The following are recommended steps in preparing for assessment:

1. Designate planning responsibility.
2. Revise or reaffirm unit mission/purpose.
3. Revise or reaffirm administrative core functions or student competencies.
4. Review the strategies being developed by your college/school/administrative unit for the strategic planning exercise.
5. Inventory existing and needed assessment methods and tools.

Designating Planning Responsibility

Assessment is the responsibility of all levels of the University although the bulk of conducting assessment will likely be on faculty and staff. Figure 6 is the Wheel of UEP Assessment Responsibility and it delineates the role of Deans/Vice Presidents; Chairs/Directors; Faculty/Staff; Unit Assessment Coordinators and UEP Contacts; Students/Clients/Customers; and IRPE and the Assistant Director for Outcomes Assessment. You will note on Figure 6 that continuous improvement is at the center of assessment responsibility. The remainder of this section contains recommendations for designating planning responsibility at the unit level.

Units should appoint an assessment committee, designate an existing committee to assume the assessment responsibilities, or use the entire unit as a committee-of-the-whole. If a committee assumes the assessment responsibilities, it should report the recommendations to the entire unit. It is important that unit planning be as broad-based as possible, and not just the work of one person.

Primary and secondary unit effectiveness contacts are the communication liaisons between the unit and its administration as well as IRPE. The primary contact should be a faculty member or administrator and the secondary contact is one who provides support to the primary contact (this person may also be a faculty member/administrator or administrative support). Primary contacts are generally individuals who have or have been appointed a leadership role in the UEP. As many contacts as is necessary can be designated in OATS.

If you need to add, update, or change contact information, please go to http://www.uta.edu/irp/unit_effectiveness_plans/contact.php to complete and submit the UEP *Unit and Contact Information Update Form*.

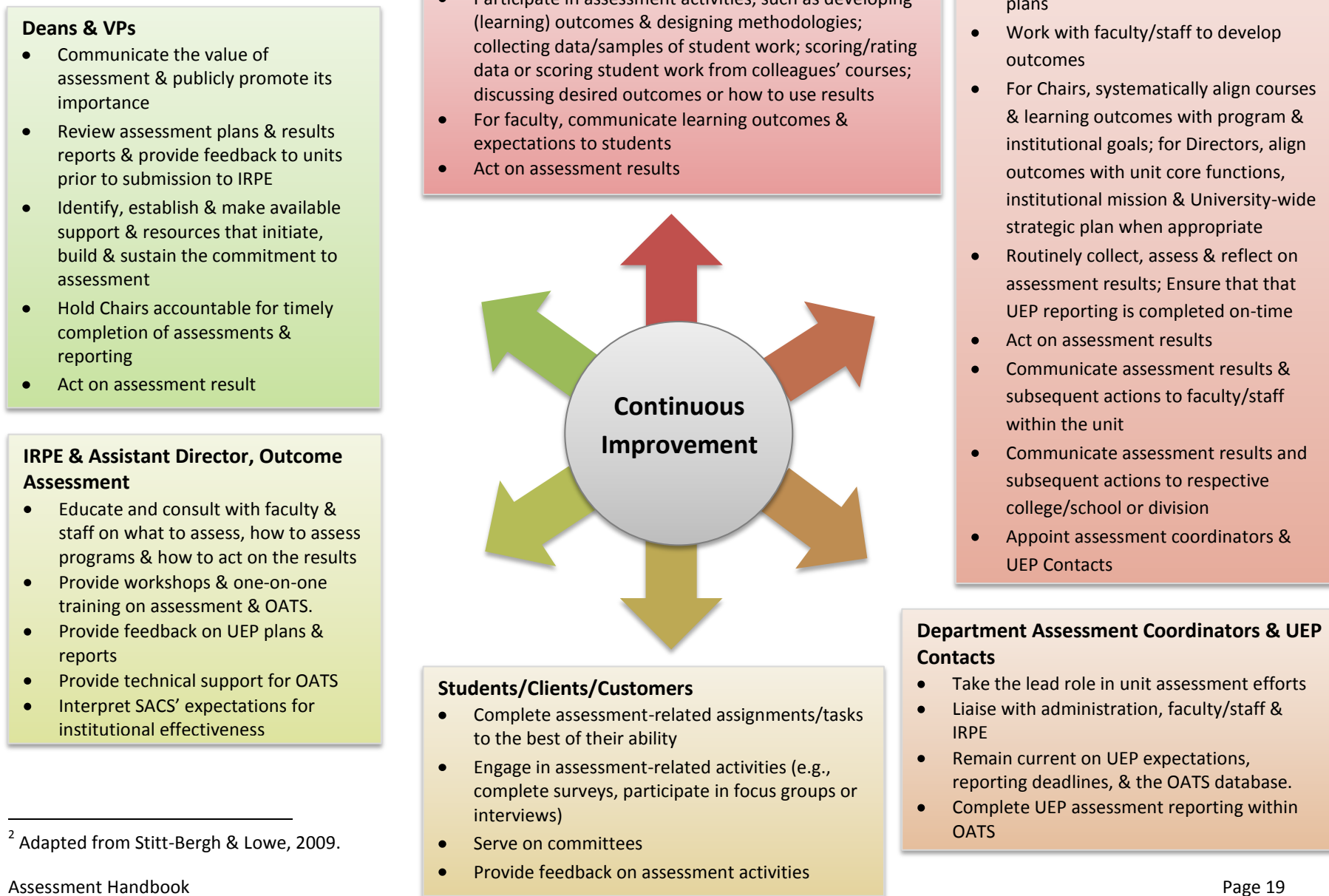
Revising or Reaffirming Unit Mission/Purpose

Stating the unit mission is a required piece of the UEP Assessment Plan. An effective mission is a broad statement of purpose that guides the activities of an organization. The following are guidelines for writing a well-defined mission statement (modified from Selim et al., 2005b):

- Briefly, state the purpose of the unit.
- Indicate the primary functions or activities of the unit.
- Indicate the stakeholders.
- Ensure that the mission statement supports the institution's mission as well as the missions of superior units in its hierarchy.
- Distinguish your unit from all other units.

Example 1 *The mission of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE), a component of the Office of the Provost, is to*

Figure 6. Wheel of UEP assessment responsibility.²



² Adapted from Stitt-Bergh & Lowe, 2009.

conduct research and analysis in order to provide information to support institutional planning, assessment, policy analysis and decision making.

Example 2

The Department of Biology is dedicated to the University mission of teaching, research and service. Our goals are to provide rigorous, modern training in the biosciences to undergraduate and graduate students to enable them to pursue directly careers in biology, biomedical and allied health sciences, or enter graduate programs leading to research careers in the biosciences or related medical sciences. Faculty scholarship and research are integral to our mission and improve the quality of our undergraduate and graduate training. Outreach to local public schools and other public institutions serve to promote the University's activities and increase community awareness of the role of science in our society.

[Appendix B](#) is a worksheet to help you review and evaluate your unit's mission (Selim et al., 2005b).

Revising or Reaffirming Core Functions or Student Competencies

Core functions are the major responsibilities of a unit encapsulated in a few succinct statements. Student competencies are statements of broad knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviors that program majors should be able to demonstrate upon completion of a degree program. Units should review student competencies and/or core functions to determine if updates are needed. These statements were submitted originally to the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness in December 2002. The most recent UEP cycle Assessment Plan template contains the mission statement and core functions/student competencies that were carried over from the previous assessment cycle. It is recommended that the unit reviews these and makes revisions or updates as needed.

Academic Administrative Units (Colleges/Schools)

Colleges/Schools are administrative in nature; therefore, the core functions would include research, service, development and other outcomes reflecting administrative and support functions. These functions must be reflected on the UEP plan by outcomes derived from each function. Advising may also be a core function of a college/school if it is not the purview of individual academic units.

Example

Seek gifts and development funds to support future development of the College.

Academic Instructional Units

Academic instructional units are to come to consensus on approximately five to seven competencies that state the broad knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors that program majors should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the degree program. Competencies may also be adopted in whole or part from discipline specific accrediting bodies.

Example

Upon graduation, students are expected to be competent in identifying, formulating, and solving engineering problems.

Administrative Support Units

Each administrative support unit is to designate approximately five core functions for which it is accountable.

Inventorying Existing and Needed Assessment Methods

Review assessment methods that have been used in the past and discuss other activities embedded in coursework that can be used to assess student learning. Determine if additional assessment methods need to be developed. For further information and resources in assessment methodology, see [Section IV](#) of this Handbook.

Section IV: Preparing the Assessment Plan and Implementing Assessment Activities

A crucial part of the assessment plan is the intended outcome statements. These statements are often a reflection of unit priorities or they provide focus for the upcoming assessment activities. At UT Arlington, intended outcomes are conceived in two ways, 1) as student learning outcomes or 2) as administrative outcomes. These two types of outcomes are distinguished through definition. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are operational statements of demonstrable knowledge or skill that students will possess upon completion of a program/course. For UEP purposes, these statements should be more specific statements derived from the student program competencies. An example of an intended student learning outcomes is given below.

Student Learning Outcome Example

Upon graduation, English majors will demonstrate the ability to analyze a text critically.

Administrative Outcomes are operational and specific statements derived from a unit's core functions that describe the desired quality of key services within an administrative unit and define exactly what the services should promote (modified from Selim et al., 2005b, p. 19). An example of an intended administrative outcome is given below.

Administrative Outcome Example

UT Arlington faculty and staff will be highly satisfied with Facilities Management's response time on service calls.

Academic departments should formulate and assess student learning outcomes for each degree program, graduate certificate, and stand-alone minor. Colleges/Schools should formulate and assess student learning outcomes for each degree program, graduate certificate, and stand-alone minor that is administered by the College/School. Administrative support units should formulate and assess student learning outcomes if student learning is part of the unit's functions.

Colleges/Schools, administrative support units, and academic departments that conduct advising should formulate and assess administrative outcomes. In the case of Colleges/Schools, research, service, and development must be assessed each assessment cycle. Advising should also be assessed each cycle by the College/School if it is conducted at the College/School level, otherwise it should be conducted at the academic department level.

The next two subsections offer guidance and suggestions for developing and writing intended outcome statements.

Developing Intended Outcomes

The first step in developing intended outcome statements is to determine what you want to know about student learning or your unit's programs and services. The two bulleted lists that follow, first for learning outcomes and the second for administrative outcomes, contain several more specific questions to consider when devising your intended outcomes.

Learning Outcome Guiding Questions:

- What skills/abilities/values do you think students should have as they approach graduation from their program of study? What can students be able to do when they "know"?

- What quality of work will students produce when they “know”?
- How will students behave when they “appreciate” or “value” something?
- What evidence can be used to measure that students are doing what we expect them to be able to do?
- How can the quality of student work or behavior be confirmed?
- Will data be obtained that can be used to improve programs and services?

Administrative Outcome Guiding Questions:

- What types of things is your unit striving for?
- What direction do you want your unit to move?
- What would you like to accomplish during the upcoming academic year and why?
- In terms of intended outcomes, what would the “perfect” unit look like?
- Will data be obtained that can be used to improve programs and services?

While you are considering what to assess keep in mind the following list of “**musts**” that have to be met in the intended outcome development process.

1. Assessment of the intended outcome **must** be within the capability of the unit to achieve without requiring significant participation at a broader level.
2. Intended outcomes **must** be related to Student Competencies in the case of SLOs, or to Core Functions and Planning Priority Strategies in the case of administrative outcomes.
3. Intended outcomes **must** be measurable during the upcoming academic year and based on strategies that can be implemented during or prior to the same academic year.
4. Intended outcomes **must** be developed with the idea that the results data has practical significance.

(Bulleted and numbered lists in this subsection were sourced from University of Connecticut, n. d.; Northeastern Illinois University, n. d.; Hoy, 2006; UCF Administrative Unit Assessment Handbook, 2008).

If you are developing intended student learning outcomes, you may want to consider using Bloom’s taxonomy to further guide your efforts.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Historically, discussions about student learning have been guided by a taxonomy of learning that has come to be known as Bloom’s taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). This taxonomy is a hierarchical structure representing six levels of thinking and learning skills that range from basic learning objectives such as knowledge of content through higher-order learning such as synthesis, evaluation, and creativity. Bloom’s taxonomy formed the basis for early work on the development of instructional objectives for classes and curricula (Excerpted directly from University of West Florida, n. d., para. 1).

Recent decades have given rise to numerous criticisms of Bloom’s original taxonomy, implying that the model was out of date. These criticisms included concerns with setting applicability, contemporary language, and process conceptualization. Emphasis has shifted from *instructional objectives*, which describe what instructors do and the content of material presented during classroom instruction, to *student learning outcomes*, which describe what students can do as a result of their educational experiences.

Instructional objectives were typically described as things (knowledge, understanding, content, facts) that could be delivered during a lecture or presented in written text. In contrast, student learning outcomes are described using concrete verbs (behaviors that can be observed in the student) rather than nouns. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) have adapted Bloom’s model to reflect the needs of today’s outcome-oriented language by changing nouns to active verbs. Most notably, *knowledge* has been converted to *remember*. In addition, the highest level of development is *create* rather than *evaluate* (Above paragraphs excerpted and modified from University of West Florida, n. d. para. 1; Smythe and Halonen, 2009). Figure 7 is a side-by-side comparison of the original Bloom’s

model and the revised model. Table 3 is a list of explanatory questions that describe the New Bloom’s terminology and corresponding action verbs.

Figure 7. Side-by-side comparison of the original Bloom’s taxonomy and the revised version of Bloom’s taxonomy.³

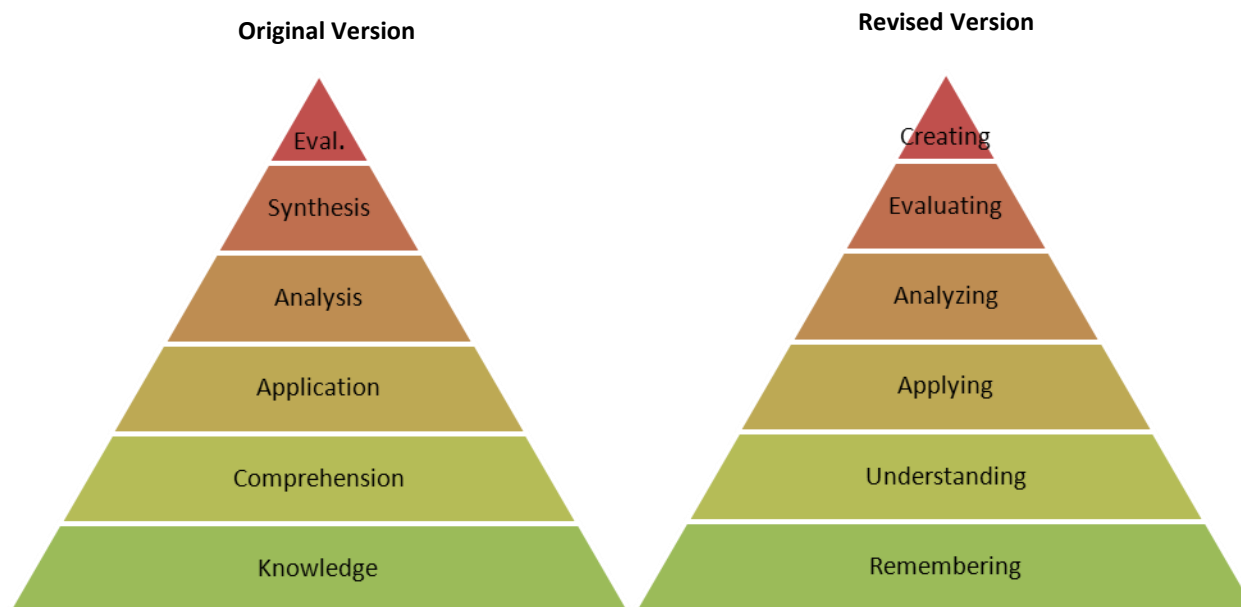


Table 3⁴

Bloom’s Taxonomic Level & Explanatory Question	Corresponding Action Verbs
Remembering: can the student recall or remember the information?	define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce state
Understanding: can the student explain ideas or concepts?	classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase
Applying: can the student use the information in a new way?	choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write.
Analyzing: can the student distinguish between the different parts?	appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test.
Evaluating: can the student justify a stand or decision?	appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate
Creating: can the student create new product or point of view?	assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write.

Writing Intended Outcome Statements

Intended outcomes statements have a prescribed format and are stated in terms of what students, faculty, staff or services will accomplish (not do, but accomplish). When writing intended outcomes statements, use the following list of “*musts*” that outcomes statements have to meet.

³ Illustration from Overbaugh and Schultz, n. d.

⁴ Table from Overbaugh and Schultz, n. d.

1. Intended outcome statements **must** be written as an end result to be achieved rather than an action (program, process, etc.) to be implemented and must be written using action verbs. [Appendix C](#) is a list of sample action verbs.
2. Intended outcomes statements **must** be written from the learner, participant, client, customer or stakeholder perspective.
3. Intended outcome statements **must** be written in specific, measurable terms.
4. Intended outcome statements **must** be written such that you do not join elements in one outcome statement that cannot be assessed by a single method.

Example: *Customers will be highly satisfied with the service and requests for service will increase.*

Satisfaction should be measured separately from the number of requests for service.

(Point 4 is directly from University of Connecticut, n. d. Other sources for points 1-3 include Northeastern Illinois University, n. d.; Hoy, 2006; UCF Administrative Unit Assessment Handbook, 2008).

Writing statements from an end result perspective may not be intuitive for you and you may benefit from using an outcome writing model. The next section is a presentation of the ABCD Outcome Writing Model.

ABCD Outcome Writing Model

You may wish to consider using the ABCD Outcome Writing Model (Henrich et al., 1996), especially if you are new to outcome writing. ABCD is an acronym whereby “A” represents audience, “B” represents behavior, “C” represents condition, and “D” represents degree of mastery. Audience is concerned with to whom the outcome pertains. Behavior is shorthand for what you expect students/stakeholders to know, be able to do, value or experience. Condition identifies the circumstances under which the learning or experience to occur. Degree of mastery connotes how much will be accomplished and to what degree.

According to the model, ABCD are the four parts of a well-written outcome. Below is the ABCD intended outcome statement template (Caretta and Rice, 2010).

A	Students/stakeholders will...
B	<know/be able to do/value/experience what>
C	<under these circumstances/conditions>
D	<to this level of competency/effectiveness/satisfaction>.

Below are three sample intended outcome statements where the ABCD portions of the statement have been colored coded to correspond to the colors used in the template above (color code concept from Penn State Learning Design Community Hub, n. d.).

Example 1 **Resident Assistants** participating in Behind Closed Doors role playing Resident Assistance training **will recognize most** policy violations.

Example 2 Given a set of common rocks and minerals, **students in the Mineralogy and Petrology courses** should be able to provide the name and classification of each, and explain how and where each typically occurs **with high accuracy.**

Example 3 **University Center visitors** that use dining services **will be highly** satisfied with the condition of the physical facilities.

Of Note

While this ABCD Outcome Writing Model prescribes that the degree of competency/achievement be included in the intended outcome statement, it is acceptable to include that only as the criterion for success in the methodology description. For more on assessment methodology, see page 28.

Intended Outcome Sample Statements

<i>Example 1 (Undergraduate Learning Outcome)</i>	<i>Upon graduation, English majors will demonstrate the ability to analyze a text critically.</i>
<i>Example 2 (Undergraduate Learning Outcome)</i>	<i>Graduating seniors in the Department of Modern Languages will demonstrate cultural awareness associated with the language of their major.</i>
<i>Example 3 (Undergraduate Learning Outcome)</i>	<i>Undergraduates will demonstrate organizational skills in formal presentations.</i>
<i>Example 4 (Graduate Learning Outcome)</i>	<i>Masters students will be able to determine methods of testing a hypothesis.</i>
<i>Example 5 (Graduate Learning Outcome)</i>	<i>Students will be able to present the results of their research.</i>
<i>Example 6 (Graduate Learning Outcome)</i>	<i>Graduate students will be proficient in the use of the scientific method for original research.</i>
<i>Example 7 (Research)</i>	<i>External dollars generated by faculty in the department will increase.</i>
<i>Example 8 (Service)</i>	<i>The departmental faculty will be involved in programs aimed at disseminating information to community organizations.</i>
<i>Example 9 (Development)</i>	<i>Financial contributions to the College, resulting from increased development efforts in support of scholarship, research and teaching will increase.</i>

Of Note

Advising must be assessed by the Academic Unit if it is not assessed at the College/School level.

<i>Example 10 (Advising)</i>	<i>Students will be aware of the range of career opportunities for those with a liberal arts degree.</i>
<i>Example 11 (Advising)</i>	<i>Students will receive accurate, timely and useful academic advising that enhances students' success and facilitates degree completion.</i>
<i>Example 12 (Advising)</i>	<i>Students will be satisfied with the advising services they receive from the department.</i>
<i>Example 13 (Administrative)</i>	<i>The number of positive news stories regarding UTA in the Dallas Morning News, specifically, and in the national news media in general will increase.</i>
<i>Example 14 (Administrative)</i>	<i>Administrators who request information/assistance from IRPE will receive accurate, timely, and useful information.</i>

Example 15 (Administrative) UT Arlington faculty and staff will be satisfied with Facilities Management's response time on service requests.

Units may repeat intended outcome statements (and continue assessment methods) from the previous cycle's plan if both the outcome statement and the assessment method meet the current cycle's guidelines. Many assessment activities require more time and/or resources than may be available in a single academic year. Consider breaking the project into increments and addressing one or two of the increments during the academic year.

Linking Intended Outcomes to Related Student Competencies or Planning Priority Strategies and/or Core Functions

The UEP Assessment Plan requires that each intended outcome be anchored by a broader priority. As mentioned previously, academic units may use student competencies as intended student learning outcomes, but a better practice is to derive student learning outcomes as more specific statements of student knowledge, skill or ability from the student competencies.

Administrative Support Units and Academic Administrative Units should tie intended outcomes to the appropriate Core Function and a University Planning Priority Strategy (see Table 4) when applicable.

<i>Example</i>	<p>Core Function <i>Coordinate Planning and Assessment Activities</i></p> <p>Intended Administrative Outcome <i>Unit effectiveness contacts will acquire the knowledge needed to complete Unit Effectiveness Process reporting appropriately.</i></p>
-----------------------	---

Table 4
UTA Strategic Planning Priorities 2006-2012

-
- I. Provide a high quality educational environment that contributes to student academic achievement, timely graduation and preparation to meet career goals.

 - II. Provide an enriching university experience for all members of The University of Texas at Arlington community.

 - III. Enhance The University of Texas at Arlington's research, scholarly, and creative capacity and reputation.

 - IV. Use available compensation resources for faculty, staff, and students to build excellence.

 - V. Promote The University of Texas at Arlington locally, nationally, and internationally.

 - VI. Build external collaborations and partnerships, which contribute to economic, social, and cultural development.

 - VII. Promote a culturally diverse and inclusive university community.

 - VIII. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of University operations.

 - IX. Embrace a dynamic culture of planning, evaluation, and assessment to insure progress toward the University goals.

Outlining Action Steps

Action Steps specify what the unit will do to facilitate the achievement of the outcome. Action Steps must be implemented:

- Within the time constraints of the current planning cycle.
- With current and secured resources.
- With approval from administrative bodies within the unit at the time of plan submission.

Example 1 Student Learning Outcome: Upon graduation, undergraduate Biology majors will have the ability to read and analyze a scientific publication.
Action Steps: Assign students in a section of BIOL 3310 to read topical papers and complete written reports.

Example 2 Administrative Outcome: Increase amount of funding by 5% a year.
Action Steps: Encourage faculty to increase grant submissions and reward successful applicants with salary increases.

Determining Assessment Methodology

Assessment methods outline what data will be collected, from what sources, using what methods, by whom, and in what approximate timeframe. The following is a list of guiding questions to use when determining the assessment methodology (Hoy, 2006):

- What type of data will provide the needed information?
- What type of research design and sample will best provide this information?
- What data displays, comparisons or statistics will be appropriate?
- How often will this information be collected and who will collect it?

The criteria below should be thoroughly considered when choosing an assessment strategy (Hoy, 2006; Palomba and Banta, 1999):

1. Consider the relationship to the assessment question. Does the method have the ability to answer the assessment question? Some assessment methods are better than others at answering the same question. An example of using a measure that does not consider the assessment question would be to use a student satisfaction survey to measure student knowledge.
2. Consider the reliability of the assessment method. Reliable measures are ones that produce consistent results through time. Measurement errors can occur through the individuals responding, through the administration and scoring of the instrument and through the instrument itself. Some errors can be minimized or avoided by insuring that the instrument is well written and without ambiguity.
3. Consider the validity of the instrument. Validity refers the instrument's ability to measure what we want it to measure. Are we measuring what we say we are measuring?
4. Consider the timeliness and cost effectiveness of the method. When choosing an assessment strategy, consider if the measure will allow your unit to conduct assessment within the confines of the academic year. Also consider if your unit has the funds/personnel on hand to conduct the assessment with the particular method in question.
5. Consider the significance of the data that will be produced. Will the data that will be produced be good enough to use for decisions and improvement? Is the data going to be useful for making improvements at the unit level (as opposed to improvements that must be made on a larger scale)?
6. Other Considerations. Think about whether the assessment strategy will provide results that are clear to understand and interpret. Consider if fluctuations in the results could be related to the assessment issue or other correlating factors. Will the results provide the type of information your unit needs to promote change and improvement?

While you are considering the essential criteria above, make sure you keep close at hand the methodological "**musts**" listed below. The selected methodology has to meet each of these essential points (as applicable).

1. Assessment methodology **must** evaluate the extent to which the Intended Outcome is achieved, not whether the Action Steps were or were not completed.

2. Assessment methodology intended to measure student learning **must** examine a student work product (student performance in response to a specific project, assignment, knowledge test, etc.). This is referred to as using a direct measure of student learning. Indirect measures can be used to support the data derived from the direct measure. Table 5 lists examples of direct and indirect types of assessment methods.
3. Assessment methodology for learning outcomes **must** utilize objective information (based on direct measures) and not rely *solely* on self-reports or other subjective information, which are referred to as indirect measures (see Table 5 for samples of indirect measures). If indirect measures are used to measure student learning, then they must be accompanied by a direct measure. Indirect measures can be used as the sole measure for administrative outcomes.

Table 5

Direct Measure Examples	Indirect Measure Examples
Exams (National; Pre-test/Post-test; Licensure, etc.)	Surveys of Attitudes
Portfolios	Interviews
Juried Activities	Focus Groups
Grading Rubrics	Questionnaires
Practical exams	Graduation and retention rates
Research papers, thesis & dissertations	Graduate follow-up studies
Exhibitions and demonstrations	Job placement data
Oral exams or presentations	Curriculum and syllabus analysis

Because measurement in education is not an exact science, it is a good idea to identify more than one method of assessment for each intended outcome. Finding that two assessment methods produce similarly positive (or negative) results lends some degree of validity for the results and conclusions drawn from those results. This is especially true when using indirect methods. Using multiple measures to increase the degree of validity is referred to as triangulation of data.

Example 1 Student Learning Outcome: Upon graduation, English majors will demonstrate the ability to analyze a text critically.

Direct Assessment Method: Senior students taking ENGL 43XX will write a paper critically analyzing a selected text. An external expert (or experts) will review a sample of student work by utilizing a departmentally developed rubric, which identifies students' areas of strengths and weaknesses. Department faculty will review the resulting reports to determine how many students met the criteria of success. For the outcome to be considered achieved, 90% of papers assessed must score "Proficient" or "Distinguished" in at least three of the four elements of critical analysis.

Example 2

Student Learning Outcome: Graduating seniors in the Department of Modern Languages will demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language and cultural awareness associated with that language.

Direct Assessment Method 1: 100% of graduating seniors in Modern Languages will earn a passing grade on a departmentally developed exit exam covering written, oral, and cultural awareness competencies. Departmental personnel will administer the exam during the students' final semester. Departmental faculty will review test results to determine any needed curricular changes.

Indirect Assessment Method 2: All students enrolled in the senior level capstone course will maintain weekly journals. Journal entries will consist of student reactions to course content and student perceptions of progress toward course objectives. Instructors will examine the student journals for evidence of language proficiency and cultural awareness. Departmental faculty will review the instructors' findings to determine curricular strengths and weaknesses.

Sources of Assessment Measurements

When devising measures for your intended outcomes consider what your unit may already be doing that could be used or modified for assessment purposes. For administrative units, potential measurement tools could be satisfaction surveys or tracking measures. For academic units, potential measurement tools could be capstone projects, lab assignments, or licensure exams. In academic units, using already existing student assignments, projects, and exams is often referred to as embedded assessments. [Appendix D](#) and [E](#) are institutional effectiveness inventories for academic units and administrative units, respectively. These inventories offer a pre-developed way to take stock of what your unit is currently doing or using that could be applied to assessment efforts.

You may also consider what is being used at other institutions, but within your field. Administrative units may consider the use of regional or national benchmarking tools. An example of such is the Educational Benchmarking, Inc.'s survey of Residence Life (<http://www.webebi.com/>). One part of this survey measures student satisfaction with on-campus housing. Student responses are then benchmarked to other institutions results.

In-house developed tools generated by faculty/staff can be efficient, informative and cost effective. [Appendix F](#) contains a list of some advantages and disadvantages of various assessment methods. In your search for an appropriate and effective assessment methodology, you are likely to encounter rubrics or the suggestion to devise a rubric for assessment purposes. The section that follows is a brief primer on assessment rubrics.

Rubrics

In the bevy of educational terminology aimed at improved student learning and accountability, "rubric" has emerged as a buzzword. The educational field has co-opted the term to describe "a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work...; it also articulates gradations of quality for each criterion, from excellent to poor" or some such gradation (Goodrich, 1997: 14).

As a type of criteria-based assessment and/or grading, rubrics are a valuable educational tool that can provide benefits to both faculty and students. Sadler (2005) indicates that the arguments for criteria-based assessment and/or grading in relevant literature can be summed in two major points: 1) students are graded on the basis of

their work alone without being compared to or competing with other students and 2) students deserve to know the criteria upon which their work will be judged. Sadler goes on to explain that the traditional grading model measuring overall achievement (i.e. the A-F model) can be argued to be a criteria-based model; however, the aggregate nature of traditional grades obscure patterns of strengths and weaknesses in student performance. Rubrics, on the other hand, can be used to determine student grades as well as patterns of strengths and weaknesses. The following are additional reasons to use rubrics:

- Make grading consistent and fair
- Save time in the grading process (at least after the rubric has been developed)
- Clarify expectations to students
- Provide explanation of grades to students (especially useful when students contest grades)
- Track changes in student performance
- Generate consistency in teaching and grading among TAs and adjunct faculty
- Form the basis for course and programmatic assessment
- Assist faculty in agreeing on criteria for common exams, multiple sections and/or sequential courses (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998).

Rubric Types

Rubrics can be sorted into two main categories, holistic and analytic (Quinlan, 2006). A holistic rubric (Figure 8) evaluates a work product based on the overall, perceived quality of the work. An analytic rubric (Figure 9) disaggregates the criteria expected from the work product and evaluates them individually. Analytic rubrics may also be referred to as Primary Trait Analysis.

Neither type of rubric is better per se than the other, but IRPE often recommends the use of the analytic rubric for assessment at UT Arlington. Analytic rubrics allow for trends to be tracked individually. Using the samples above, plot, setting and character can be analyzed individually and this allows for differing scores for each; the holistic rubric however, only allows for one score for all three areas. So you may have a paper with very strong character development, but minimal plot development. The score for work will like be an average of those two elements when using a holistic rubric. The weakness of plot development is lost among the strengths of the work. The analytic rubric allows for each area content area to receive its own rating. This is often quite helpful when using the data in a formative way, to improve programs and services.

Figure 8. Holistic rubric.⁵

Fiction Writing Content Rubric

- **5** – The plot, setting, and characters are developed fully and organized well. The who, what, where, when, and why are explained using interesting language and sufficient detail.
- **4** – Most parts of the story mentioned in a score of 5 above are developed and organized well. A couple of aspects may need to be more fully or more interestingly developed.
- **3** – Some aspects of the story are developed and organized well, but not as much detail or organization is expressed as in a score of 4.
- **2** – A few parts of the story are developed somewhat. Organization and language usage need improvement.
- **1** – Parts of the story are addressed without attention to detail or organization.

⁵ From “Analytic vs. Holistic Rubrics,” n. d.

Figure 9. Analytic Rubric.⁶

Criteria	Fiction Writing Content Rubric			
	4	3	2	1
PLOT: "What" and "Why"	Both <i>plot</i> parts are fully developed.	One of the <i>plot</i> parts is fully developed and the less developed part is at least addressed.	Both <i>plot</i> parts are addressed but not fully developed.	Neither <i>plot</i> parts are fully developed.
SETTING: "When" and "Where"	Both <i>setting</i> parts are fully developed.	One of the <i>setting</i> parts is fully developed and the less developed part is at least addressed.	Both <i>setting</i> parts of the story are addressed but not fully developed.	Neither <i>setting</i> parts are developed.
CHARACTERS: "Who" described by behavior, appearance, personality, and character traits	The main <i>characters</i> are fully developed with much descriptive detail. The reader has a vivid image of the characters.	The main <i>characters</i> are developed with some descriptive detail. The reader has a vague idea of the characters.	The main <i>characters</i> are identified by name only.	None of the <i>characters</i> are developed or named.

Rubric Components⁷

Rubrics are composed of four basic parts. In its simplest form, the rubric includes:

1. A task description. The outcome being assessed or instructions students received for an assignment.
2. The characteristics to be rated (rows). The skills, knowledge, and/or behavior to be demonstrated.
3. Levels of mastery/scale (columns). Labels used to describe the levels of mastery should be tactful but clear. Commonly used labels include:
 - Not meeting, approaching, meeting, exceeding
 - Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable
 - Advanced, intermediate high, intermediate, novice.
 - 1, 2, 3, 4
4. The description of each characteristic at each level of mastery/scale (cells).

Steps for Developing a Rubric⁸

Rubrics can be developed using common office productivity software, such as Word or Excel, or you can create them using free or proprietary software. Listed below are a couple of free rubric building web sites include.

- Rubistar: <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>
- Rcampus: <http://www.rcampus.com/indexrubric.cfm>

Regardless of which tool you use to build a rubric, the steps you take in development of the rubric are the same. The remainder of this section is a step-by-step approach for developing a rubric.

⁶ From "Fiction-Writing Content Rubric," n. d.

⁷ Excerpted verbatim from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, n. d., sect. What are the parts of a rubric?

⁸ Steps are excerpted verbatim from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, n. d., sect. Developing a rubric.

- Step 1** Identify what you want to assess
- Step 2** Identify the characteristics to be rated (rows)
- Specify the skills, knowledge, and/or behaviors that you will be looking for.
 - Limit the characteristics to those that are most important to the assessment.
- Step 3** Identify the levels of mastery/scale (columns).
- Step 4** Describe each level of mastery for each characteristic (cells)
- Describe the best work you could expect using these characteristics, which describes the top category
 - Describe an unacceptable product, which describes the lowest category
 - Develop descriptions of intermediate-level products for intermediate categories
- Important: Each description and each category should be mutually exclusive
- Tip: Aim for an even number (4 or 6) because when an odd number is used, the middle tends to become the "catch-all" category
- Step 5** Test rubric
- Apply the rubric to an assignment
 - Share with colleagues
- Tip: Faculty members often find it useful to establish the minimum score needed for the student work to be deemed passable. For example, faculty members may decide that a "1" or "2" on a 4-point scale (4=exemplary, 3=proficient, 2=marginal, 1=unacceptable), does not meet the minimum quality expectations. They may set their criteria for success as 90% of the students must score 3 or higher. If assessment study results fall short, action will need to be taken.
- Step 6** Discuss with colleagues, review feedback and revise
- Important: When developing a rubric for program assessment, enlist the help of colleagues. Rubrics promote shared expectations and grading practices which benefit faculty members and students in the program.

You may find it useful to borrow, in part or as a whole, a rubric that another institutional has already developed. The web is full of a variety of rubric samples as well as informational sources for developing, building and testing rubrics. Table 6 is a list of online resources that you might find helpful in you exploration to rubrics. IRPE is also available to assist you in this endeavor.

Table 6

Rubrics Resources	
UTA Active Learning web portal	http://activelearning.uta.edu/FacStaff/tools.htm
Association of American Colleges and Universities	http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=35718428&CFTOKEN=86166291
California State University Fullerton (Mihaylo College of Business and Economics)	http://business.fullerton.edu/centers/CollegeAssessmentCenter/RubricDirectory/other_rubrics.htm
Kansas State University	http://www.k-state.edu/assessment/plans/measures/samples/index.htm
Texas A&M University (Division of Student Affairs)	http://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/sllo/
University of Wisconsin-Madison (College of Engineering)	http://www.engr.wisc.edu/faculty/assessment/resources.html
University of Rhode Island	http://www.uri.edu/assessment/uri/guidance/rubrics.html
Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education	http://course1.winona.edu/shatfield/air/rubrics.htm
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/rubrics.htm

Rubric Orientation and Calibration⁹

When using a rubric for program assessment purposes, faculty members apply the rubric to pieces of student work (e.g., reports, oral presentations, design projects). To produce dependable scores, each faculty member needs to interpret the rubric in the same way. The process of training faculty members to apply the rubric is called "norming." It's a way to calibrate the faculty members so that scores are accurate. Below are directions for carrying out the norming process. IRPE can also coordinate the norming process.

Suggested materials for a scoring session:

- Copies of the rubric
- Copies of the "anchors": pieces of student work that illustrate each level of mastery. Suggestion: have 6 anchor pieces (2 low, 2 middle, 2 high)
- Score sheets
- Extra pens, tape, post-its, paper clips, stapler, rubber bands, etc.

Hold the scoring session in a room that:

- Allows the scorers to spread out as they rate the student pieces
- Has a chalk or white board

Process:

1. Describe the purpose of the activity, stressing how it fits into program assessment plans. Explain that the purpose is to assess the program, not individual students or faculty, and describe ethical guidelines, including respect for confidentiality and privacy.
2. Describe the nature of the products that will be reviewed, briefly summarizing how they were obtained.
3. Describe the scoring rubric and its categories. Explain how it was developed.
4. Analytic: Explain that readers should rate each dimension of an analytic rubric separately, and they should apply the criteria without concern for how often each score (level of mastery) is used. Holistic: Explain that readers should assign the score or level of mastery that best describes the whole piece; some aspects of the piece may not appear in that score and that is okay. They should apply the criteria without concern for how often each score is used.

⁹ Excerpted verbatim from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, n. d., sect. Scoring rubric group orientation and calibration.

5. Give each scorer a copy of several student products that are exemplars of different levels of performance. Ask each scorer to independently apply the rubric to each of these products, writing their ratings on a scrap sheet of paper.
6. Once everyone is done, collect everyone's ratings and display them so everyone can see the degree of agreement. This is often done on a blackboard, with each person in turn announcing his/her ratings as they are entered on the board. Alternatively, the facilitator could ask raters to raise their hands when their rating category is announced, making the extent of agreement very clear to everyone and making it very easy to identify raters who routinely give unusually high or low ratings.
7. Guide the group in a discussion of their ratings. There will be differences. This discussion is important to establish standards. Attempt to reach consensus on the most appropriate rating for each of the products being examined by inviting people who gave different ratings to explain their judgments. Raters should be encouraged to explain by making explicit references to the rubric. Usually consensus is possible, but sometimes a split decision is developed, e.g., the group may agree that a product is a "3-4" split because it has elements of both categories. This is usually not a problem. You might allow the group to revise the rubric to clarify its use but avoid allowing the group to drift away from the rubric and learning outcome(s) being assessed.
8. Once the group is comfortable with how the rubric is applied, the rating begins. Explain how to record ratings using the score sheet and explain the procedures. Reviewers begin scoring.
9. If you can quickly summarize the scores, present a summary to the group at the end of the reading. You might end the meeting with a discussion of five questions:
 - Are results sufficiently reliable?
 - What do the results mean? Are we satisfied with the extent of students' learning?
 - Who needs to know the results?
 - What are the implications of the results for curriculum, pedagogy, or student support services?
 - How might the assessment process, itself, be improved?

Establishing the Criteria for Success

The criterion for success is the benchmark or target that serves as an indicator for accomplishment. Criteria for success should be concrete levels of achievement based on the measures employed through the assessment tool. These targets are established during the planning process of Phase I (i.e. prior to implementation of the action steps).

Units should consider the use of primary and secondary criteria for success (Nichols & Nichols, 2000). The primary criteria for success are the overall levels of success and the secondary criteria are the detailed levels of success that contribute to the overall level of success. For instance, an administrative unit may establish a criterion of success for client satisfaction and then establish additional criteria to address each element contributing to overall success, such as customer service, quality of work/product, timeliness of service, etc. An academic unit may also use primary and secondary criteria for success. As an example, consider the assessment of a written composition. The primary criterion may be that 90% of students are able to compose a 'Good' to 'Excellent' essay. The secondary criteria may be that 85% students are to perform at a level of 'Good' to 'Excellent' in each area of a composition including composition, grammar, use of references, etc.

Of Note

Full plan samples are available in the [Quick Guide to Reporting](#).

The Relationship of Assessment to Grading

Assessment is not a substitute for grading and grading is not a substitute for assessment. While the processes each focus on the evaluation of student work products with the goal of improved student learning, each process is a means to a different end. Grading is aimed at evaluating individual student performance while assessment is aimed at improving the overall learning process for students. Further, a course grade is an overall evaluation of a student's performance in a course that is comprised of multiple learning outcomes. Outcome assessment is

focused on evaluating a single outcome at a time. Therefore, **course grades should not be used as the criteria for success in outcomes assessment.**

Course grades do not provide the level of detail necessary to discern patterns of strengths and weaknesses in student performance. Course assignments, also referred to as embedded course work (homework assignments, tests, quizzes, in-call exercises, etc.), can be used for assessment. However, consideration should be given to the grading method when the student work product will also be used for assessment. It may be necessary to modify the grading method to make embedded course work useful for assessment purposes.

Grading systems that employ unstated criteria, such as “it feels like a B” (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998) or pass/fail grade designations should not be used as the sole criteria for success for the same reason as overall course grades should not be used. These grading methods may be used as a criterion only in conjunction with more detailed secondary criteria. Walvoord and Anderson (1998) recommend a grading method called Primary Trait Analysis (PTA) which creates a scoring rubric that can be used to assess any student performance. More information about PTA and scoring rubrics can be obtained through resources maintained in the IRPE library (including Walvoord & Anderson, 1998), the resources section of the UEP website and the Faculty/Staff page under “Templates & Tools” of the [Active Learning web portal](http://activelearning.uta.edu/FacStaff/) (<http://activelearning.uta.edu/FacStaff/>) as well as information made available online by other institutions (see Resources [Section VII](#) for links).

Section V: Documenting Assessment & Using Results

Documenting Assessment

When documenting the results of assessment activities, include a full description detailing the data collected. Be sure to include:

- A description of the group that was assessed.
- The sample size of the assessed group.
- A description of the data collected (e.g. the number of articles, the number of references, the number of satisfied responses, etc.).
- The results obtained.
- A description of how the unit examined the results.

In addition, results documentation must also contain the following:

- The extent to which the Intended Outcome was achieved (i.e. achieved, not achieved, or partially achieved).
- The person(s)/group that analyzed and interpreted the assessment results (e.g. assessment committee, department chair, outside consultant, entire staff or faculty of a unit).
- An interpretation of the results. What does the data mean? Were there extenuating circumstances affecting the results?

Using Results

Improvement is at the heart of assessment. The need for improvement is revealed generally by the assessment results, but may be discovered during the assessment process itself. Hence, the use of assessment results is paramount in the assessment process. The UEP expects that results of assessment and subsequent interpretation will be disseminated to members of the unit. Further, it is hoped that the unit will illicit feedback from the members of the unit, especially in cases where improvement is warranted.

Proposing Changes for Improvement

Once feedback is obtained from unit members, changes for improvement can be proposed. Since proposed changes for improvement are put forth for consideration by Deans, Vice Presidents or other decision-making persons, it is important to include decision factor information, specifically the timeframe for implementation and resources needed to implement the change(s). Proposals for improvement are documented in OATS on the Biennial Assessment Activity Report.

Of Note

In cases where outcomes are not achieved or partially achieved, it is expected that an improvement will be proposed. If an improvement is not proposed, the results description should contain an interpretation of the results that makes it clear why an improvement is not being proposed.

Resources Needed for Proposed Changes

Needed resources must directly relate to the implementation of the Proposed improvement as well as the Intended Outcome.

Implementation of Proposed Improvements may come from these three sources:

1. Proposed improvements that can be implemented by your unit with existing resources.
2. Assistance needed from other units in the University (e.g., policy changes, space, communication or collaboration with another unit,

etc.) to implement improvements (e.g., staffing or equipment) with existing resources.

3. Proposed improvements that require additional resources for implementation and the estimated cost for each.

Annual Improvement Updates

The final step in the assessment cycle is to implement changes based on assessment results, in order to improve programs and services. While proposed changes and resources needed are described in Phase II of the UEP, the changes are actually implemented in Phase III and documented in OATS through completion of the Annual Improvement Update Report (formerly Form D).

Please note that improvements reported on the Update can be based on assessment results from other assessments in addition to the UEP (e.g., results of a departmental survey, academic program review, or other activity not included on the UEP assessment plan).

Section VI: OATS

The Online Assessment Tracking System (OATS) is the reporting system for the Unit Effectiveness Process (UEP). The OATS system provides a centralized location to document assessment and demonstrate continuous improvement. It replaces the previous system of reporting, which consisted of Word Template Forms A-D. UEP assessment plans and results reports from the 2008-2009 assessment cycle forward and the Annual Improvement Update Report from academic year 2008-2009 forward are available in OATS. Previous UEP reports can be requested from the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness.

OATS is a free ware program originally created by Georgia Tech University. The University of Texas then adopted and modified it for their purposes and granted UT Arlington access to their customized version of OATS. Our in-house team within the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE) further modified and customized the system to suit the needs of our institutional effectiveness process. The system is currently maintained in-house and user access is controlled through password administration (NetID) authentication. Access to the system is granted on a case-by-case basis based on your role in the UEP (i.e. as a UEP contact) and/or based on your leadership role within or for the unit. For instance, Deans and Vice Presidents have, at minimum, the ability to view all reports for the units under their purview.

The web-based OATS application can be accessed via an Internet connection from any location on the UTA network. **You must proxy into the network to access the system outside of the UTA network using VPN.** You do not need to have VPN if you are logged into the UTA network. If you would like set up a VPN, please follow the instructions provided by OIT: <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/software/vpn/>.

If you do not have access to OATS and believe you should, please request access through our [online request form](#).

For full technical instructions on how to use OATS, please consult the [OATS User Manual](#).

Section VII: Resources

Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness Staff

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness provides technical support for planning and assessment. IRPE staff is available to provide consultation in developing outcome statements and assessment methods as well as supplying information such as University statistics and survey research.

Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness Library

The IRPE Library houses numerous materials related to institutional planning, assessment, evaluation, and effectiveness. These materials are available to the UT Arlington community to use in planning and assessment efforts. To browse/search the library, following the instructions below:

1. Go to http://www.uta.edu/irp/irp_library/irp_library.htm.
2. Select a predefined search option or search by "Title" or "Author."

Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness Website

The IRP web page contains this Handbook, the UEP Quick Guide (a quick reference guide for completing UEP reports), planning memoranda, examples of unit plans as well as links to planning resources on other campuses and much more. You can find the IRPE home page at <http://www.uta.edu/irp/> and the UEP home page http://www.uta.edu/irp/unit_effectiveness_plans/uep.htm. Table 7 is a list of other useful internet resources.

Electronic Resources

There are numerous resources about assessment available via the internet. Table 7 contains some resources and their respective links.

Table 7

Resource	URL
Organizations	
Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)	http://www.abet.org/assessment.shtml
Association of American Colleges and Universities	http://www.aacu.org/index.cfm
Association of Institutional Research (AIR)	http://airweb.org/
Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education	http://aalhe.org/
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)	http://www.cswe.org/
National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA)	http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/institute/institute.asp
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)	http://www.sacs.org/
Texas Association of Institutional Research (TAIR)	http://www.texas-air.org/
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)	http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/
Other Institutions Assessment Sites	
Florida Atlantic University Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Analysis	http://iea.fau.edu/
Kansas State University Office of Institutional Research	http://www.k-state.edu/assessment/index.htm
Morningside College Office of Assessment and Institutional Research	http://www.morningside.edu/academics/research/
North Carolina State University – University of Planning and Analysis	http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/ or for an extensive list of internet resources for assessment in higher education http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/resource.htm
Texas A & M University Office of Institutional Assessment	http://assessment.tamu.edu/index.html
University of Central Florida Office of Operational Excellence and Assessment Support	http://oeas.ucf.edu/
Virginia Commonwealth University Accountability and Quality Enhancement site	http://www.vcu.edu/quality/index.html
Rubrics	
UTA Active Learning web portal	http://activelearning.uta.edu/FacStaff/tools.htm
Association of American Colleges and Universities	http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=35718428&CFTOKEN=86166291
California State University Fullerton (Mihaylo College of Business and Economics)	http://business.fullerton.edu/centers/CollegeAssessmentCenter/RubricDirectory/other_rubrics.htm
Kansas State University	http://www.k-state.edu/assessment/plans/measures/samples/index.htm
Texas A&M University (Division of Student Affairs)	http://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/sllo/
University of Wisconsin-Madison (College of Engineering)	http://www.engr.wisc.edu/faculty/assessment/resources.html
University of Rhode Island	http://www.uri.edu/assessment/uri/guidance/rubrics.html
Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education	http://course1.winona.edu/shatfield/air/rubrics.htm
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/rubrics.htm
Listsers and Blogs	
ASSESS – Assessment In Higher Education	http://lsv.uky.edu/archives/assess.html
Higher Ed/	http://highered.blogspot.com/
Assessment Forum	http://assessmentforum.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default

Appendix A: UEP Assessment Plan and Results Report Rubric

UNIT EFFECTIVENESS PROCESS BIENNIAL ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY REPORT RUBRIC

I. Student Competencies/Core Functions

Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Student Competencies/Core Functions are not stated.	Student Competencies are stated, but appear to inadequately identify broad knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors that program majors should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the degree program. Core Functions are stated, but appear to inadequately identify the major responsibilities of the unit.	Student Competencies/Core Functions appear to adequately identify what they should. Further, those stated for graduate level academic programs are progressively more advanced based on degree programs gradations and they identify expectations for students with regard to knowledge of the literature for the discipline.	Student Competencies/Core Functions appear to adequately identify what they should. Further, those stated for graduate level academic programs are progressively more advanced based on degree programs gradations and they identify expectations for students with regard to knowledge of the literature for the discipline. Plus, these statements are broader than the outcome statements identified on the plan.	

II. Intended Outcome Statements

Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
A. Quantity				
Outcomes are not stated.	Too few outcomes stated (five to eight outcomes expected) and/or unacceptable in one or more of these		Five to eight outcomes stated and, if applicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one outcome related to a) research, b) service, and c) 	

	applicable aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not contain at least one outcome related to a) research, b) service, and c) development, • Does not contain at least one outcome related to advising. 		development, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one outcome related to advising. 	
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B. Clarity and Specificity				
No outcomes are stated.	Outcomes contain imprecise verbs (e.g. know, understand), vague description of content/skill/attitude/level of quality and non-specificity of whom should be assessed. Many or most statements may also be extremely broad and may contain multiple outcomes within a single statement (i.e. compound outcomes).	Outcomes generally contain precise verbs, rich description of the content/skill/attitude/level of quality and specification of whom should be assessed. Few of the statements are broad and contain multiple outcomes within a single statement (i.e. compound outcomes).	All outcomes stated with clarity and specificity including precise verbs, rich description of the content/skill/attitude/level of quality and specification of whom should be assessed.	
C. Orientation				
None of the learning outcomes are stated in student-centered terms or all of the administrative outcomes are termed as process statements.	Few of the learning outcomes stated are in student-center terms or most of the administrative outcomes are termed as process statements	Most of the learning outcomes are stated in student-centered terms or few of the administrative outcomes are termed as process statements	All of the learning outcomes are stated in student-centered terms or none of the administrative outcomes are termed as process statements	

III. Intended Outcomes Mapped to Student Competencies/Core Functions and Planning Priorities

Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Outcomes are not mapped to Student Competencies/Core Functions and, if applicable, Planning Priorities.	Some or all of the outcomes are mapped to a Student Competency/Core Function/Planning Priority, but the relationship appears to be mismatched for all or most outcomes.	Most or all of the outcomes are mapped to an appropriately matched Student Competency/Core Function/Planning Priority. Some or all of the outcomes may be mapped to multiple Competencies, Functions or Priorities.	All of the outcomes are mapped to an appropriately matched Student Competency/Core Function/Planning Priority. Each outcome is mapped to only one Competency, Function or Priority.	

IV. Action Steps

Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Action steps are not stated.	Action steps are stated for each outcome, but one or more do not relate to accomplishing the intended outcomes.	Action steps are stated for each that relate to accomplishing the intended outcomes, but it unclear if they can be implemented within the time constraints of the assessment cycle and without approval from administrative bodies outside the unit.	Action steps are stated for each that relate to accomplishing the intended outcomes and it is clear they can be implemented within the time constraints of the assessment cycle and without approval from administrative bodies outside the unit.	

V. Methodology and Criterion for Success

Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
A. Relationship between Measures and Outcome				
No relationship between outcomes and measures.	At a superficial level, it appears the content assessed by the measures matches the outcomes, but no explanation is provided.	The content assessed by the measures matches the outcomes, general detail about the relationship may exist, but no explanation is provided.	The content assessed by the measures matches the outcomes and detail explanation about the outcome-to-measure match is provided.	
B. Types of Measures				
No measures are indicated.	Most or all of the measures of the learning outcomes are indirect measures (e.g. surveys or other self-report indicators).	Most learning outcomes are measures through direct measures. If indirect measures are used, there are multiple measures employed.	All learning outcomes are measured using at least one direct measure. Multiple measures are used for most of the outcomes.	
C. Specification of Desired Results for Objectives				
No a priori desired result is specified for the outcomes.	Statement of desired results is provided, but no specificity (e.g. students will perform better than last year).	Desired result specified (e.g. 80% of students will score 3 or higher).	Desired results specified and justification is provided (e.g. last year the typical student score 20 points on measure x. The current cohort underwent more extensive coursework in the area, so we hope that the average student scores 22 points or better).	

D. Data Collection and Research Design Integrity

No information is provided about data collection process.	Limited information is provided about what data will be collected; from what sources; during what approximate timeframe by whom. The limited information makes it difficult to determine the veracity of the proposed measure.	Enough information is provided to understand the data collection process, such as a description of the sample, testing protocol, testing conditions and, if applicable, student motivation. Few, if any, mismatches with specification of desired results.	The data collection process is clearly explained and is appropriate to the specification of desired results.	
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VI. Results of Assessment and Proposed Improvements

Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
A. Presentation of Results				
No results presented.	Results are present, but it is unclear how they relate to the outcomes or the desired results for the outcomes.	Results are present and they directly relate to the outcomes and the desired results for the outcomes, but presentation is sloppy or difficult to follow.	Results are present and they directly relate to outcomes and the desired results for the outcome. The presentation is clear and easy to follow.	
B. Interpretation of the Results				
No interpretation attempted.	Interpretation attempted, but the interpretation does not refer back to the outcomes or desired results of outcomes. Or, the interpretations are clearly not supported by the methodology and/or results.	Interpretations of the results seem to be reasonable inferences given the outcomes, desired results of the outcomes, and methodology.	Interpretations of the results seem to be reasonable inferences given the outcomes, desired results of the outcomes, and methodology. Plus there is evidence multiple faculty/staff participated in the interpretive process. Further, interpretation includes an explanation of any confounding factors effecting results.	

VII. Proposed Improvements

Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
No mention of any proposed improvements even though one or more of the outcomes was not achieved or partially achieved.	Improvements are proposed for outcomes that were not achieved or partially achieved, but the link between them and the assessment findings is not clear.	Improvements are proposed and directly relate to assessment findings; however, the proposed improvements lack specificity.	Improvements are proposed and directly related to assessment findings. The proposed improvements are very specific (i.e. includes approximates date of implementation and resources needed).	

Adapted from Fulcher, Sundre, and Russell, 2010.

Appendix B: Mission Statement Worksheet

Worksheet for Reviewing and Evaluating Mission Statements

Date of Review: _____

Unit: _____

Participants:

Date Existing Mission was Last Reviewed/Created: _____

The following checklist should be used to determine if the mission statement is effective and defines clearly the mission of the unit.

- | | | | | |
|--|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. Is the mission statement brief and memorable? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is it distinctive? If the unit name was absent, could one determine the unit otherwise? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Does it state clearly the purpose of the program or unit? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Does it indicate the primary functions or activities of the unit/program? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Does it acknowledge stakeholders? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Does it support clearly the presiding unit's mission as well as the University mission? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

No to any of the above questions indicates the mission may need to be revised.

Consider answering the following questions in a single concise statement.

What does the unit do?

What are the primary functions and activities?

Why do you do these activities?

What is the purpose of the Unit?

For whom does the unit conduct the activities?

Use this format as a basis when writing your statement:

The mission of (your unit name) is to (unit's primary purpose) by providing (unit's primary functions or activities) to (stakeholders). (Additional clarifying statements).

Modified from University of Central Florida, 2008, p. 36.

Appendix C: Sample Action Verb List

Knowledge Acquisition and Application

Add	Apply	Arrange	Calculate	Categorize	Change
Chart	Choose	Classify	Complete	Compute	Construct
Count	Define	Demonstrate	Describe	Discover	Discuss
Distinguish	Divide	Dramatize	Draw	Duplicate	Employ
Examine	Explain	Express	Graph	Identify	Illustrate
Indicate	Inform	Interpolate	Interpret	Label	List
Locate	Manipulate	Match	Memorize	Modify	Name
Operate	Order	Outline	Point	Predict	Prepare
Produce	Quote	Rank	Read	Recall	Recite
Recognize	Record	Relate	Repeat	Report	Reproduce
Restate	Review	Select	Show	Solve	Specify
State	Stimulate	Subtract	Summarize	Translate	Use

Higher Order Thinking Skills

Adapt	Analyze	Assess	Calculate	Categorize	Classify
Combine	Compare	Compile	Compose	Contrast	Create
Criticize	Defend	Design	Devise	Diagram	Differentiate
Dissect	Estimate	Evaluate	Explain	Formulate	Generate
Group	Infer	Integrate	Invent	Investigate	Judge
Justify	Modify	Order	Organize	Plan	Prescribe
Produce	Propose	Rate	Rearrange	Reconstruct	Reflect
Related	Reorganize	Research	Review	Revise	Rewrite
Select	Separate	Specify	Summarize	Survey	Synthesize
Test	Transform				

Psychomotor Skills

Activate	Adapt	Adjust	Align	Alter	Apply
Arrange	Assemble	Calibrate	Change	Check	Choose
Clean	Combine	Compose	Conduct	Connect	Construct
Correct	Create	Demonstrate	Describe	Design	Detect
Differentiate	Dismantle	Display	Dissect	Distinguish	Employ
Follow	Identify	Install	Isolate	Locate	Make
Manipulate	Measure	Operate	Originate	Perform	Prepare
Produce	React	Rearrange	Relate	Remove	Reorganize
Repair	Replace	Respond	Revise	Select	Separate
Set	Show	Sketch	Sort	Test	Transfer
Troubleshoot	Tune	Use	Vary		

Attitude, Values, & Dispositions

Accept	Acclaim	Accommodate	Act	Adhere	Adopt
Advocate	Alter	Answer	Applaud	Approve	Arrange
Ask	Assist	Associate	Assume	Attend	Balance
Believe	Challenge	Change	Choose	Classify	Combine
Complete	Comply	Conform	Cooperate	Debate	Defend
Deny	Describe	Develop	Differentiate	Display	Endorse
Enjoy	Establish	Express	Follow	Form	Formulate
Give	Greet	Have	Help	Hold	Identify
Influence	Initiate	Integrate	Interpret	Invite	Join
Judge	Justify	Listen	Obey	Organize	Participate
Perform	Persuade	Practice	Present	Propose	Protest
Qualify	Question	Reflect	Report	Resolve	Respect
Revise	Select	Serve	Share	Show	Solve
Subscribe	Support	Tell	Use	Verify	Volunteer
Weigh	Work				

From Morningside College, n. d., section Writing Student Learning Outcomes, pp. 4-5.

Appendix D: Institutional Effectiveness Checklist Academic Units

[Please click here to access the electronically fillable version](#)

College:

Department:

Program (Major):

Level:

Part I. Does the program listed above have:

1. A written mission or statement of purpose? Yes No
If yes, please attach a copy or reference a website and/or catalog for retrieval of this information.

2. Statements identifying the program-level Student Competencies? Yes No
(Student Competencies are broad statements of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors that program majors should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the degree program)

3. A separate accreditation agency or process? Yes No
If yes, please list all accreditation agencies.

Part II. Assessment of Outcomes:

During the past year, has your program used any of the following for assessment of outcomes?
Indicate if “Currently Used”; “Not Currently Used, but Interested in Using”; and “Not Applicable”.

Direct indicators of assessment:

1.	Comprehensive exams	
2.	Writing proficiency exams	
3.	National exams assessing subject matter knowledge (e.g., Major Field Achievement Test)	
4.	Graduate Record Examination (GRE) subject test	
5.	Certification exams	
6.	Licensure exams	
7.	Locally developed pre-test or post-test for mastery of knowledge	
8.	Performance assessment for graduating seniors (i.e., recitals, art exhibits, science projects, etc.)	
9.	Video and audio tape evaluations (i.e., music, art, student teaching, etc.)	
10.	Senior thesis/major project	
11.	Portfolio evaluation containing representative examples of student’s work (i.e., written, creative, or scientific papers or projects)	
12.	Capstone courses which are designed to measure student mastery of essential theoretical and methodological issues associated with a discipline (e.g., senior level seminars)	

Indirect indicators of assessment:

1.	Comparison of outcomes with peer institutions	
2.	Job placement of graduating students	
3.	Employer surveys and questionnaires	
4.	Graduate school acceptance rates	

5.	Performance in graduate school	
6.	Student graduation/retention rates	
7.	Exit interviews	
8.	Student satisfaction surveys	
9.	Student course evaluations	
10.	Internship evaluation	
11.	Focus group discussions	
12.	Alumni surveys reporting satisfaction with degree program and career success	
13.	Tracking of alumni honors, awards, and achievements at local, state, and national levels	
14.	Identification and assessment of at-risk students	
15.	Analysis of student grade distributions	
16.	Examination of information contained in department's own database	
17.	Other evaluations of course instruction (e.g., chair or peer review)	
18.	Curriculum/syllabus analysis (e.g., analysis of transfer student preparation)	
19.	Community perception of program effectiveness	
20.	Community service/volunteerism participation	
21.	Other:	

Part III. Other Information

- Has your department used any of the indicators listed above to improve departmental programs, services, and operations? Yes No

If yes, please identify some examples:

- What resources (i.e., training, personnel, technology, etc.) does your department need to develop better methods for assessing student outcomes and improving program effectiveness?
- Please list any additional comments or concerns.

Completed by:

Date:

From Ronco and Brown, 2000

Appendix E: Institutional Effectiveness Checklist Administrative and Academic Support Units

[Please click here to access the electronically fillable version](#)

Division:

Unit:

Part I. Does your unit have:

4. A formal statement of mission or purpose which supports UTA’s mission and goals?

Yes No

If yes, please attach a copy

5. Statements identifying Core Functions? Yes No

(Core Functions are statements describing the major responsibilities of the unit stated in a few succinct statements)

Part II. Assessment of Outcomes:

During the past year, has your program used any of the following for assessment of outcomes?

Indicate if “**Currently Used**”; “**Not Currently Used, but Interested in Using**”; and “**Not Applicable**”.

1.	Measures of volume of activity	Specify:	
		Specify:	
2.	Measure of efficiency	Specify:	
		Specify:	
		Specify:	
3.	Measures of service quality	Specify:	
		Specify:	
		Specify:	
4.	Client satisfaction surveys	Specify:	
		Specify:	
		Specify:	
5.	Other methods to obtain client feedback	Specify:	
		Specify:	
		Specify:	
6.	Staff discussions/evaluations of services to clients	Specify:	
7.	Review of existing data	Specify:	
		Specify:	
		Specify:	
8.	Standards/guidelines provided by professional associations	Specify:	
9.	Standards set by federal, state, county, city or UTA regulations	Specify:	
10.	External evaluators/auditors	Specify:	
11.	Benchmarks/comparisons with peer institutions	Specify:	
12.	Other	Specify:	
		Specify:	

		Specify:	
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Part III. Other Information

4. Has your department used any of the indicators listed above to improve departmental programs, services, and operations? Yes No

If yes, please identify some examples:

5. What resources (i.e., training, personnel, technology, etc.) does your department need to develop better methods for assessing service outcomes and improving service quality and effectiveness?

6. Please list any additional comments or concerns.

Completed by:

Date:

From Ronco and Brown, 2000

Appendix F: Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Assessment Methods

→ Standardized Exams (Commercial)		
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient • Can be adopted and implemented quickly. • Reduces or eliminates faculty time demands in instrument development and grading. • Are scored objectively. • Provide for external validity. • Provide reference group measures. • Can make longitudinal comparisons. • Can test large numbers of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures relatively superficial knowledge or learning. • Unlikely to match the specific goals and objectives of a program/institution • Norm-referenced data may be less useful than criterion-referenced. • May be cost prohibitive to administer as a pre- and post-test. • More summative than formative (may be difficult to isolate what changes are needed). • Norm data may be user norms rather than true national sample. • May be difficult to receive results in a timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be selected carefully based on faculty review and determination of match between test content and curriculum content. • Request technical manual and information on reliability and validity from publisher. • Check with other users. • If possible, purchase data disk for creation of customized reports. • If possible, select tests that also provide criterion-referenced results. • Check results against those obtained from other assessment methods. • Embedding the test as part of a course's requirements may improve student motivation.
→ Locally Developed Exams		
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be tailored to match program and institutional objectives. • Specific criteria for performance can be established in relation to the curriculum. • Can be used to develop locally meaningful norms. • Can obtain results more quickly. • Cheaper than commercial exams. • Easier to use in a pre- and post-test approach. • May be embedded in specific course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex and time consuming to develop psychometrically valid exams. • More costly in time and effort. • Requires considerable leadership and coordination. • May hinder curriculum change if it means that exam would have to be revised. • Vulnerable to student theft and distribution. • Results cannot be generalized beyond the program or institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development requires strong cooperation by program faculty. • Use on-campus experts to assist with test construction and validation. • Include outside experts and stakeholders in development and grading process. • Consider embedding within a course common to all students in the program. • Check results against those obtained from other assessment methods.
→ Performance Measures		
<p>Essays - Oral presentations - Oral exams - Exhibitions - Demonstrations - Performances - Products - Research papers - Poster presentations - Capstone experiences - Practical exams - Supervised internships & practicum</p>		
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used to assess from multiple perspectives • Using a student-centered design can promote student motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually the mostly costly approach • Time consuming and labor intensive to design and execute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be intimidating to students • Develop specific, measurable criteria for observing and appraising

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used to assess transfer of skills and integration of content • Engages student in active learning • Encourages time on academics outside of class • Can provide a dimension of depth not available in classroom • Can promote student creativity • Can be scored holistically or analytically • May allow probes by faculty to gain clearer picture of student understanding or thought processes • Can provide closing of feedback loop between students and faculty • Can place faculty more in a mentor role than as judge • Can be summative or formative • Can provide an avenue for student self-assessment and reflection • Can be embedded within courses • Can adapt current assignments • Usually the most valid way of assessing skill development 	<p>for faculty and students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be carefully designed if used to document obtainment of student learning outcomes • Ratings can be more subjective • Requires careful training of raters • Inter-rater reliability must be addressed • Production costs may be prohibitive for some students and hamper reliability • Sample of behavior or performance may not be typical, especially if observers are present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, use criterion-referenced rating approach instead of simple checklists • Develop rubrics for greater consistency between raters • Must clearly articulate expectations to students prior to initiation and provide models or performance criteria • Consider possible award strategies for enhancing student motivations (best of show, etc.) • Performances could be videotaped • If possible, base assessment on range of products or performances instead of on single items • All raters should be trained and inter-rater reliability checked • Consider training peers, alumni, and community members as raters
<p>Capstone Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A well thought-out project that is comprehensive in nature and allows students to demonstrate a range of abilities.” (Palomba & Banta, 1999) • Need to be carefully planned to provide useful information for assessment of specific learning outcomes and cap off a student’s college experience • Can be designed to provide information about SLOs related to the major and general studies • Should be designed and evaluated by all of the program’s faculty and not just course instructor • May be a specific requirement outside of a course or as part of a designated capstone course • Capstone course could also be used to administer standardized or locally developed exams or surveys • Clarify effect of student’s grade 		

and/or graduation eligibility (be aware of issues associated with high stakes assessments)		
→ Surveys & Questionnaires (students, alumni, employers, public)		
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to administer • Can cover a variety of topics in a brief amount of time • Helps to establish relationship with stakeholders • Easier to communicate results to stakeholders • Can be used to gather information from individuals who would be difficult to include in other assessment methods • Demonstrates concern about gathering feedback/information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on student learning (perception and opinion) considered to be indirect data • Good surveys and questionnaires are difficult to develop • Voluntary participation may result in biased results • Forced-response choices may not allow individuals to respond as they wish • Low response rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot all instruments • Use as a supplement to direct methods of assessment • Include open-ended items with forced-choice response surveys
Portfolios		
Learning Portfolios - Assessment Portfolios - Marketing Portfolios - Job Portfolios - Showcase Portfolios - Performance Portfolios - Personal Portfolios - Proficiency/Competency Portfolios - Process Portfolios - Developmental Portfolios - Hybrid Portfolios		
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows sophistication in student performance • Illustrates longitudinal trends • Highlight student strengths • Identify student weaknesses for remediation, if timed properly • Can be used to view learning and development longitudinally • Multiple components of the curriculum can be assessed (e.g. writing, critical thinking, technology skills) • Samples are more likely than test results to reflect student ability when planning, input from others, and similar opportunities common to more work settings are available • Process of reviewing and evaluating portfolios provide an excellent opportunity for faculty exchange and development, discussion of curriculum goals and objectives, review of criteria, and program feedback • May be economical in terms of student time and effort if no separate assessment administration time is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio will be no better than the quality of the collected artifacts • Time consuming and challenging to evaluate • Space and ownership challenges make evaluation difficult • Content may vary widely among students • Students may fail to remember to collect items • Transfer students may not be in the position to provide complete portfolio • Time intensive to convert to meaningful data • Costly in terms of evaluator time and effort • Management of the collection and evaluation process, including the establishment of reliable and valid grading criteria, is likely to be challenging • May not provide for externality • If samples to be included have been previously submitted for course grades, faculty may be concerned that a hidden agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear expectations about the purpose and collection responsibilities will help students succeed in using the portfolio method. The works that student select will be more satisfying if the student can compare to established criteria. If the faculty wants student portfolios to represent student development over time, they will need to be scrupulous about setting forth the performance demand of collecting and examining works throughout the student's career. • The success of the portfolio may be enhanced when students reflect on how all the pieces work together to express their learning or meet department criteria. • Consider having portfolios submitted as part of course requirements, especially a capstone course at the end of a program • Use portfolios from a representative sample of

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater faculty control over interpretation and use of results • Results are more likely to be meaningful at all levels (student, class, program, institution) and can be used for diagnostic and prescriptive purposes as well • Avoids or minimizes test anxiety and other one-shot measurement problems • Increases power of maximum performance measures over more artificial or restrictive speed measures on test or in-class sample • Increases student participation (selection, revision, and evaluation) in the assessment process • Could match well with Morningside's mission to cultivate lifelong learning • Can be used to gather information about students' assignments and experiences • Reflective statements could be used to gather information about student satisfaction 	<p>of the process is to validate their grading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security concerns may arise as to whether submitted samples are the students' own work or adhere to other measurement criteria • Must consider whether and how graduates will be allowed continued access to their portfolios • Inter-rater reliability must be addressed 	<p>students rather than having all students participate (this approach may save considerable time, effort, and expense but be problematic in other ways)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop specific, measurable criteria for observing and appraising • When possible, use criterion-referenced rating approach instead of simple checklists • Develop rubrics for greater consistency between raters • Have more than one rater for each portfolio, establish inter-rater reliability through piloting designed to fine-tune rating criteria • Provide training for raters and check inter-rater reliability • Recognize that portfolios in which samples are selected by the student probably represent their best work rather than typical work • Cross-validate portfolios with more controlled student assessments for increased validity • The conceptual framework for a student learning portfolio needs to be based on (1) agreed upon student learning goals and objectives, (2) consideration of what faculty want to learn from the portfolios, and (3) consideration of what students should learn from the process
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From Morningside College, n. d., *Assessment Handbook*, section Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Assessment Methods, pp. 1-7.

Glossary

This glossary contains terms and names that you may encounter during the UEP. Most entries are defined based on their user in the UEP. All definitions from Sweeny, 1994 unless otherwise cited.

A

<i>Administrative Outcomes</i>	Operational and specific statements derived from a unit's core functions that describe the desired quality of key services within an administrative unit and define exactly what the services should promote (modified from Selim et al., 2005, p. 19).
<i>Aggregated Scores</i>	The combined scores for a population of students often expressed as an average. Aggregating scores requires that all the scores be based on the same or equivalent assessments administered in uniform ways.
<i>Alignment</i>	The process of assuring that learning outcomes, local curriculum and instruction and the system of assessment all support and match each other.
<i>Analytic Scoring</i>	The use of specific criteria or features to evaluate and assign points to each essential part of a product or performance. Analytic scoring is diagnostic, allowing planning for specific remediation. (See Holistic Scoring for the alternative approach.
<i>Annotated Rubric</i>	The notes from an assessment development group, often after a field test and initial scoring, which explain the meaning of criteria or distinctions between the criteria on a rubric. Annotation is an important tool to increase scoring reliability and to train others to score consistently.
<i>Anchors</i>	Actual samples of student work, which illustrate the essential characteristics of work typical for each scoring level on a scoring rubric. Anchors can also be captured on video or audio tapes of performances or may be video or photographic images of a larger product. The top anchor is often called an "exemplar" as it represents exemplary work.
<i>Assessment</i>	A systematic and ongoing process of gathering and interpreting information to discover if programs/services are meeting intended outcomes/objectives and then using the information to enhance the programs/services (adapted from Virginia Commonwealth University, 2002 & Marchese, 1987).
<i>Authentic</i>	A characteristic of assessments that have a high degree of similarity to tasks performed in the real world. The more authentic the assessment, the less inference required to predict student success after graduation.

B***Benchmark***

A standard by which something can be measured or judged (Lexico Publishing Group, n. d.).

C***Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools***

The regional accrediting body of higher education institutions in the Southern States (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX and VA).

Complex-Generated Response

An assessment that asks a student to perform or produce in order to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Such assessments will not have one right answer, but instead will result in student work, which is across a range of quality. The assessment requires that the student engage in a task of multiple parts or steps. Scoring of the assessment involves teacher judgment based on stated criteria for performance. See Performance-Based Assessment.

Comprehensive

All dimensions of a learning goal with regard to scope, content, specificity, skills, and types of thinking required are addressed.

Consultative

Conducted in a manner that solicits input from various groups, but does not require actual participation in decision-making.

Core Functions

The major responsibilities of the unit stated in a few succinct statements (also known as Primary Functions).

Competency

See Student Competency

Core Requirement

With regard to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, a basic qualification that an institution must meet to be accredited with the Commission on Colleges.

Course Mapping

See Curriculum Mapping

Course-Level Assessment

Assessment to determine the extent to which a specific course is achieving its learning goals. (For comparison, see [Program Assessment](#) and [Institutional Assessment](#).)

Criterion-Referenced Test

A measurement of achievement of specific criteria stated as levels of mastery. The focus is performance of an individual as measured against a standard or criteria rather than against performance of others who take the same test. See Standardized, Norm-referenced Tests.

	<i>Curriculum Mapping</i>	A matrix showing the coverage of each program learning outcome in each course. It may also indicate the level of emphasis of each outcome in each course (from Bridgewater State College, n. d. as Course Mapping).
	<i>Cut Score</i>	The number of points needed which represents the criteria for successful completion of an assessment task, such as eight out of 10, or the percent that must be attained to be determined as successful in performing an assessment task (e.g., 80%). Cut score also refers to the critical point for dividing scores into two groups in reference to some criterion. It is possible to set multiple cut scores from differing criterion (e.g., meets, does not meet and exceeds).
D	<i>Direct Assessment</i>	Method of gauging student achievement of learning outcomes through evaluation of student work products (Bridgewater State College, n. d.). For comparison, see Indirect Assessment .
	<i>Direct Measure of Learning Outcome</i>	Students demonstrate an expected learning outcome (California Polytechnic State University, n. d.).
	<i>Disaggregated Group</i>	Any group of students within a population from which a group score is computed as a group separate from the total assessed population.
	<i>Documentation</i>	Written descriptions, reports or summaries of the steps taken and the rationale for those actions.
E	<i>Exemplar</i>	Actual samples of student work that illustrate the essential characteristics of work typical of exemplary student work at the top scoring level on a scoring rubric. Several exemplars are desirable to promote creativity so that students see multiple products/performances are possible.
	<i>Embedded Assessment Methods</i>	A method in which evidence of student learning outcomes for the program is obtained from assignments in particular courses in the curriculum (Bridgewater State College, n. d.).
	<i>Expectation</i>	An estimate of the percent of students who will meet the defined standard for a learning outcome.

F	<i>Feasibility/Reasonableness</i>	A characteristic of scoring criteria ensuring that the judging of student work is appropriate for the conditions within which the task was completed.
	<i>Formative Assessment</i>	The assessment of student achievement at different stages of a course or at different stages of a student’s academic career. The focus of formative assessment is on the documentation of student development over time. It can also be used to engage students in a process of reflection on their education (modified from Bridgewater State College, n. d. & California Polytechnic State University, n. d.). For comparison, see Summative Assessment .
	<i>Forced-Choice Assessment</i>	Testing where responses to an item, questions or prompts are placed against a set answer key. Scoring does not require judgment on the part of the scorer because there is one right answer to the item. Multiple choice, true/false, cloze, and matching are examples of forced choice/short answer assessments.
G	<i>Generalizable</i>	The results of an assessment are generalizable when the score on one assessment can accurately predict a student score on a different assessment covering the same knowledge or skill. Generalizability across time is promoted by ensuring that assessments focus on general level concepts or strategies, not on facts, topics, or skills, which are found only at one level or in one class.
	<i>Goals</i>	The general aims or purposes of a program and its curriculum. Effective goals are broadly stated, meaningful, achievable and assessable. Goals provide a framework for determining the more specific educational objectives of a program, and should be consistent with program and institutional mission.
H	<i>Holistic Scoring</i>	Scoring based upon an overall impression (as opposed to traditional test scoring, which totals specific errors and subtracts points based on them). In holistic scoring, the rater matches his or her overall impression to the point scale to see how the portfolio, product or performance should be scored. Raters usually are directed to pay attention to particular aspects of a performance in assigning the overall score.
I	<i>Indicator</i>	A statistic that reveals information about the performance of a program or a student. For a statistic to be an educational indicator there must be a standard against which it can be judged. Educational indicators must meet certain substantive and technical standards that define the kind of

information they should provide and the features they should measure. The primary educational indicator is student performance; other secondary indicators include attendance, graduation, mobility, and dropout rates.

Indirect Assessment

Assessment that deduces student achievement of learning outcomes through students' reported perception of their own learning. May also be the opinions or thoughts of others about student knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences, and perceptions. Examples of indirect measures include student surveys about instruction; focus groups; alumni surveys; employer surveys (modified from Community College of Aurora, n. d., California Polytechnic State University, n. d., & Bridgewater State College, n. d.0). For comparison, see [Direct Assessment](#).

Indirect Measure of Learning Outcome

Students or others report their perception of how well a given learning outcome has been achieved (California Polytechnic State University, n. d.).

Institutional Assessment

Assessment to determine the extent to which a college or university is achieving its mission. (For comparison, see Course-level Assessment and [Program Assessment](#).)

Institutional Effectiveness

A continuous set of the processes of planning, assessment and review aimed at ongoing improvement (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2004).

Item

An individual question or exercise in a test.

J

K

L

M

Map

A chart that summarizes the major elements of a system and shows the relationships between the parts of a system.

Measurement

The process of gathering information, in assessment of student learning, about student characteristics. Educators use a wide variety of methods such as paper and pencil tests, performance assessments, direct observation, and personal communications with students. See Evaluation.

	<i>Methods of Assessment</i>	Tests and procedures used to measure student performance in meeting the standards for a learning outcome. These assessments must relate to a learning outcome, identify a particular kind of evidence to be evaluated, define exercises that elicit that evidence and describe systematic scoring procedures. Methods of assessment are classified as either forced choice/short answer or complex generated (performance-based) response.
	<i>Mission Statement</i>	Define the purpose or broader goal for being in existence (Wikipedia, n. d.).
N	<i>Non-Discrimination</i>	Evidence that differences of race or ethnicity, gender, or disability do not bias results of assessment instruments or procedures.
	<i>Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)</i>	Standard scores with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of approximately 21. The use of a NCE is an attempt to make different assessments comparable.
O	<i>Objective</i>	Precise statement that specifies the performance or behavior a student is to demonstrate relative to a knowledge or skill. Objectives typically relate to lessons or units, not "big ideas" such as described by an outcome.
	<i>Observer Effect</i>	The degree to which, the presence of an observer influences the outcome (California Polytechnic State University, n. d.).
	<i>Outcome</i>	An end result; a consequence (Lexico Publishing Group, n. d.). See Administrative Outcome and/or Student Learning Outcome.
	<i>Overall Performance Level</i>	A combination of the cut-scores or proficiency levels of the various assessments used to determine whether students do not meet, meet, or exceed the standard set for a whole learning outcome. Different assessments may be given greater weight when determining an overall performance level. See Weighting.
P	<i>Performance Based Assessments</i>	A methodology requiring reasoning about recurring issues, problems and concepts that apply in both academic and practical situations. Students

actively engage in generating complex responses requiring integration of knowledge and strategies, not just use of isolated facts and skills. See Complex Generated Response.

Pilot A large-scale administration of an assessment, usually with several classes of students if not all students in a program. The purpose of the pilot is to detect any flaws in the assessment before the assessment is considered "done" and is fully implemented. See Field Test for contrast.

Portfolio A purposeful collection of artifacts that demonstrate a student's development or achievement. Using portfolios as an improvement assessment tool requires the ability to score both individual works and the whole portfolio against a standard for each modified form (Sweeny, 1994 & Bridgewater State College, n. d.).

Primary Functions See Core Functions.

Proficiency Level The equivalent of a cut score (on a forced-choice assessment) but for a performance/complex assessment. The proficiency level for a performance assessment is set by determining the required performance criteria (such as the required level on a rubric) for a specific grade level. Such a proficiency level could be achievement of all the criteria required for a scoring level, or it could be a set number of points achieved by combining scores for each feature on the rubric.

Program Assessment Assessment to determine the extent to which students in a departmental program can demonstrate the learning outcomes for the program. For comparison, see Course-level Assessment and [Institutional Assessment](#).

Program Review The process of evaluating the quality and effectiveness of a program (University of Texas at Arlington, 1998).

Prompt In a narrow sense, a prompt is a statement to which a student responds in an assessment, often a reading passage, picture, chart or other form of information. In the fullest sense, a prompt is the directions that ask the student to undertake a task. Prompts should include the context of the situation, the problem to be solved, the role the student takes, and the audience for the product or performance.

Q

R

Rationale Written statements providing the reasons for steps taken and choices made.

Raw Score The number of items that are answered correctly out of the total possible.

Reliability Consistency or stability of assessment results. Of particular importance for performance assessment is inter-rater reliability. It is the estimate of the consistency of the ratings assigned by two or more raters because they agree on the criteria used to evaluate the performance.

Representativeness A factor of performance tasks and of scoring criteria ensuring that the task and criteria focus on the significant elements, concepts and strategies in the outcome(s) assessed.

Rubric A set of criteria specifying the characteristics of a learning outcome and the levels of achievement in each characteristic (Bridgewater State College, n. d.).

S

Score The result obtained by a student on an assessment, expressed as a number. Each score is recorded as a positive number, with a larger numerical value implying a better result.

Scoring Rubric A set of related scoring scales used for judging student work and awarding points to reflect the evaluation of the work.

Scoring Scale Assessment criteria formatted as levels of quality ranging from poorest to best, used to judge student work on a single feature such as "clarity of main idea." Scales may combine several traits within a feature. Scoring levels on the scale are assigned points, each level specifying the characteristics of the quality of content or skills needed to attain the points.

Self-Assessment Students reflect about their own abilities and performance, related to specified content and skills and related to their effectiveness as learners, using specific performance criteria, assessment standards, and personal goal setting. The intent is to teach students to monitor their own learning continuously.

<i>Self-Efficacy</i>	Students' judgment of their own capabilities for a specific learning outcome (Bridgewater State College, n. d.).
<i>Standard for Learning Outcomes</i>	The qualitative and quantitative assessment criteria by which it is decided if students have attained a specified level of performance related to an outcome. The parts of a standard include: a) the learning outcome, (b) the assessment tasks which will measure student learning relative to the learning outcome, (c) the cut-score or proficiency level required to "pass" the assessment and (d) the overall level of performance needed to combine assessments and indicate whether a student has mastered the whole outcome.
<i>Standardized, Norm-Referenced Test</i>	A form of assessment in which a student is compared to other students. Results have been normed against a specific population (usual nationally). Standardization (uniformity) is obtained by administering the test to a given population under controlled conditions and then calculating means, standard deviations, standardized scores, and percentiles. Equivalent scores are then produced for comparisons of an individual score to the norm group's performance.
<i>Standard Score</i>	A score that is expressed as a deviation from a population mean.
<i>Strategic Planning</i>	The process of developing strategies to reach a defined objective (Wikipedia, n. d.).
<i>Student Competency</i>	Statement of broad knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors that program majors should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the degree program.
<i>Student Learning Outcomes</i>	Operational statements of demonstrable knowledge or skill that students will possess upon completion of a program or course. For UEP purposes, these statements may be the student program competencies or more specific statements derived from the student program competencies.
<i>Sufficiency</i>	A judgment on whether an assessment task is comprehensive enough to produce a sample of student work broad enough in depth relative to a body of knowledge or skill to be considered an adequate measure of whether the student has attained the knowledge or achieved the skill. For forced choice assessments, the number of items used to decide this is the crucial issue for sufficiency.
<i>Summative Assessment</i>	The assessment of student achievement at the end-point of their education or at the end of a course. The focus of summative assessment

is on the documentation of student achievement by the end of a course or program. It does not reveal the pathway of development to achieve that endpoint, but rather provides an evaluative summary (Bridgewater State College, n. d.). For comparison, see [Formative Assessment](#).

T

Task

A goal-directed assessment activity or project, which prescribes that the student use their background knowledge and skill in a somewhat long-term process to solve complex problems or answer a multi-faceted question.

Triangulation

Involves the collection of data via multiple methods in order to determine if the results show a consistent outcome (California Polytechnic State University, n. d.).

U

Utility

A characteristic of scoring criteria that ensures the criteria are diagnostic and can communicate information about performance quality with clear implications for improvement.

V

Validity

The degree to which an assessment measures (a) what is intended, as opposed to (b) what is not intended, or (c) what is unsystematic or unstable, thus producing accurate, meaningful, and useful measures of the skills and knowledge it was designed to assess. The primary issue is content validity, which is whether an assessment and instructional program align (match) (Bridgewater State College, n. d. & Sweeny, 1994).

Validation

The process of developing, field testing, refining, piloting and refining assessment items, tasks, scoring tools, directions, etc. to increase validity, reliability, fairness and instructional usefulness.

W

Weighting

A method to combine the results of two or more assessments used in calculating the percent who meet the standard for a learning outcome. If some assessments are deemed more important due to the amount of time for completion or the number of items included in the assessment, etc. the cut-scores on those assessments may be given greater consideration or weight in determining the overall performance level.

X

Y

Z

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