

Assessment Language Glossary for Academic & Support Services

Actions

This refers to the specific measures and strategies a program should consider and implement to enhance student learning, streamline program operations, and potentially improve the assessment process. Focus on one or two action items each year and decide when the action will be implemented and who will be responsible for follow-up. After implementing the action, reassess the outcome to determine the effectiveness of the action.

Analysis of Results

Analyzing or interpreting results means looking closely at the information gathered during assessments. This step-by-step process helps find important insights, spot patterns, trends, and connections, and then come to clear conclusions.

Artifact

Something provided by the department to indicate assessment activities; for example, providing us with the file of a survey you conducted, a meeting minutes document, or any other materials utilized for assessment purposes. It is often used as the associated evidence of the assessment method.

Assessment Cycle

The sequence in which assessment is performed (in an ongoing loop):

1. Plan and identify outcomes
2. Collect data
3. Analyze data
4. Share results
5. Identify & implement changes
6. Assess the impact of change
7. Repeat

Assessment Method

They should reflect the efficiency or quality-based outcome identified in the previous intended outcomes section to assess the extent to which it is achieved. They are appropriate for the department and are often consistent over time in order to enable

USA to evaluate the outcomes for potential trends. They should be methods that provide information that can be directly controlled by the department.

Compliance

The assessment report is compliant if it is in line with the Principles of Accreditation put forth by SACSCOC (standard 8.2.c). The purpose of determining compliance is to ensure educational quality, improve the effectiveness of USA, and fulfill requirements for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Criterion

Criteria are established targets of success for each assessment method. These are standards that provide evidence of achievement of the intended outcome. The criterion must be appropriate for the outcome, assessment method, and department that it pertains to.

Criterion Met/Not Met

This indication reports whether your department achieved the intended outcome as defined by your established criteria. It should inform your results and use of results statements.

Direct Assessment

Evidence demonstrates achievement of the intended outcome based on department performance (e.g., behavior observation, etc.).

Indirect Assessment

Reflection about learning or secondary evidence of its degree of performance (e.g., surveys distributed to students).

Intended Outcome

Intended outcomes specify efficiency or quality-based outcomes that are expected from your department. They are appropriate for, representative of, and relevant to the department and include active verbs (i.e. develop, implement, provide, etc.). Equally important, intended outcomes must be measurable through an assessment method.



Source: Shults Dorime-Williams Support Outcomes Taxonomy

Outcome Year(s)

The outcome year is the academic year(s) in which the intended outcome was assessed. For example, the outcome year 18-19 would include the semesters Fall of 2018, Spring of 2019, and Summer of 2019.

Results

Your results should describe how your findings compare to the established criterion for each assessment method. If applicable, your results should also describe any trends over time that you have noticed with the data as well as any relevant subscale data. The date of your results should be in accordance with the date during which you analyzed and drew conclusions about your data.

Supplemental Documentation

This can be included in the assessment methods or results sections of your report and provides a clearer picture of your methods and/or findings. Most commonly, documentation will include rubrics, deidentified data, a copy of a survey, visualizations of data, and more.