

Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Documentation Terms

Term	Definition/Meaning	Question(s) Answered
Assessment:	A structured investigation that allows a unit or institution to discover what it is accomplishing.	
Unit	A unit is an office or department that provides services or products to beneficiaries. Beneficiaries may include students, faculty, staff, administrators, the Austin community, employers, etc.	
Cluster Group	A Cluster Group is a collaborative body composed of one or more units that are collectively responsible for a broad, college-wide functional area. Cluster Group units include administrative units that provide services which maintain the institution and are essential to its operations or educational support units that contribute directly to student learning eventhough their services are not primarily instructional in nature.	
Unit-Level Assessment:	Assessment is a systematic process of gathering, interpreting, and using information to enhance the functioning of the unit. Assessment provides programs valuable feedback about overall performance related to curriculum or learning success. It provides cluster groups feedback on how well the function is supporting the mission of the College and meeting the needs of those it serves.	How well is the unit currently delivering services and what can the unit do to improve in the future?
Purpose Statement:	The purpose statement is a description of what the unit provides to further the mission and goals of the College. It focuses attention on the consumers of the unit's services and the major products/services the unit is responsible for providing them. It makes the unit's function explicit.	1) Who benefits from the services of the unit? 2) What services/products does the unit provide to support the College's mission?

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Assessment plan:	At ACC, an assessment plan is the structured documentation of the activities the unit will perform to measure its effectiveness and identify where it needs to make improvements. It increases insight into curriculum, processes, and operations by requiring the unit to identify the objective it plans to achieve and define performance measures to determine whether the objective was achieved.	What does the unit plan to do to examine how well it is delivering its services/products and how it can improve its performance?
Objective:	An objective is a statement of what the unit wants to accomplish . It translates the unit's purpose into operational terms and thereby provides a means of investigating the unit's effectiveness.	What does the unit plan to do to improve benefits to those it serves?
Performance Measure Definition:	A performance measure is a quantifiable indicator of the unit's achievement that includes the outcome statement, standard, and methods for gathering data.	What evidence will the unit use to judge whether it has achieved its objective?
Outcome:	An outcome is a description of the intended result of the unit's efforts in terms of its constituents and should describe constituent behaviors that prove the unit has delivered its function. There are three types of outcomes: learning outcomes (what students will know or be able to do), process outcomes (accomplishments of the unit's function), and satisfaction outcomes (ratings of how well the unit is meeting the needs of those it serves). An outcome must be specific enough to be measured.	Who will benefit from the objective being achieved and what will the specific benefit be?
Standard:	The standard is a definition of the unit's expected level of performance for successful achievement of the outcome, including who will demonstrate achievement of the outcome, when, under what conditions, and to what degree. The standard also must identify the data that will be used to determine achievement of the outcome.	What level of performance must be demonstrated to prove the intended benefit of the objective was received?

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Method:	The method is a list of the actions the unit will take to gather the data needed to determine whether the outcome has been achieved. The method directs the measurement of the unit's performance, and should include what data will be collected, when it will be collected, and who is responsible for collecting it.	How will the unit gather and analyze evidence that the intended benefit was received?
Improvement Report:	The improvement report is a description of the findings of the unit's assessment plan. It demonstrates the unit's commitment to quality by requiring the unit to document the results of its measurements and identify specific adjustments the unit intends to make to enhance the quality of its performance.	How well is the unit currently delivering services and what can the unit do to improve in the future?
Results of Assessment:	The results of assessment is a description of the unit's performance relative to the outcome that was assessed.	What does the gathered evidence indicate about the unit's delivery of its services? Did the unit achieve its objective?
Improvement Actions:	Improvement actions are a description of the unit's intended adjustments to its processes, curriculum, or method of assessment to enhance the quality of the delivery of its function.	What changes does the unit plan to make to improve the delivery of its services in the future?
Annual Assessment Summary	The Annual Assessment Summary is a review of the unit's performance on the objectives that it planned to achieve for the year. The Annual Assessment Summary documents, through the unit's assessment activities, the strengths, improvements that were needed and implemented, and accomplishments, as well as challenges that still face the unit in delivering its services. By documenting these it provides data-based information the unit can use as the basis for the its planning activities for the next year.	What has the unit learned about its strengths and weaknesses? What has it done with this information? What issues must it address in the future?
Closing the Loop	The demonstration of the use of assessment results to improve programs (both instructional and functional).	How is the unit's performance different?