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**Introduction**

Assessment at Appalachian is a natural extension of the institution’s commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. It is a process of critical self-examination with the aim of program improvement.

**Goals of Assessment**
1) Gain insight into student learning so that we can speak with authority about the value of an Appalachian education.
2) Support the efforts of faculty and staff to identify those activities that have the greatest potential for success in fostering student learning.
3) Develop a process for encouraging and maintaining a culture of data-based decision making
4) Establish an ongoing system to demonstrate institutional effectiveness of the type required by programmatic and regional accrediting bodies.

**Background**

**National emphasis**
Since the early 1990’s there has been a growing movement in higher education toward assessing the outcomes of the higher education experience rather than its process. Prior to this time the quality of programs or institutions were judged by looking at their inputs i.e. the quality of the incoming students, the qualifications of the faculties, the value of the physical plants and endowments etc. Assessment efforts now are focused on defining what students learn in higher education and collecting evidence to demonstrate that learning is really taking place.

This shift has been driven largely by state and federal government calls for more accountability by higher education. Regional accrediting bodies like the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), to which Appalachian belongs, have picked up on this call for accountability and modified their approach to accreditation to emphasize the outcomes of higher education rather than the process. Program accreditors are making similar shifts and are increasing calls for evidence of student learning.

**SACS**
The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is the regional accrediting agency for Appalachian. As noted above, SACS has been using the accreditation process to introduce and foster a culture of learning outcomes assessment and institutional effectiveness within its member institutions. Below are portions of the SACS publication *Resource manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* that speak most directly about SACS expectations regarding outcomes assessment.
CR 2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

Rationale and Notes:
Institutional effectiveness is the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against mission in all aspects of an institution. The purpose of this Core Requirement is to assure that the institution has an appropriate approach to effectiveness that supports its mission. A commitment to continuous improvement is at the heart of an ongoing planning and evaluation process. It is a continuous, cyclical process that is participative, flexible, relevant, and responsive. The approach to institutional effectiveness includes all programs, services, and constituencies and is strongly linked to the decision making process at all levels, including the institution’s budgeting process.

While the requirement does not imply that all elements of the system must be undertaken simultaneously or even annually, the various activities of the institution’s planning and evaluation system are scheduled at periodic intervals that make sense for the institution and its mission. The results of diverse assessment efforts can be integrated to provide a sound basis for plans aimed at institutional improvement.

Because the process used for institutional effectiveness permeates all facets of the institution, it is appropriate that a review of this Core Requirement includes the institution’s mission and effectiveness, the commitment of leadership to integrate planning and continuous improvement, and its approach to documenting the evidence of its process.

Note: Even though the concept of institutional effectiveness may not be explicitly referenced in all of the comprehensive standards, the accreditation process assumes that all programs and services wherever offered within the context of the institution’s activity are reviewed as part of the institutional effectiveness process.

Note: CR 2.5, CS 3.3.1, and CS 3.4.1 all relate directly to institutional effectiveness but each addresses a different aspect. CR 2.5 requires that an institution have an effective process for producing improvement and accomplishing its mission. CS 3.3.1 requires that an institution identify outcomes (resulting from the process required in CR 2.5), evaluate achievement of those outcomes, and demonstrate improvement based on the results of that evaluation. This applies to all educational programs and all administrative and support services. CS 3.4.1 requires
that each educational program offered for academic credit establish and evaluate student learning outcomes.

**Relevant Questions for Consideration:**
- What are the institution’s processes for systematic, ongoing, integrated, research-based reviews that result in continuous improvement?
- How does the institution demonstrate a sustained, documented history of planning evaluation cycles, including the use of results for improvement, to accomplish the institution’s mission?
- Is there appropriate institutional research and budgetary support for assessment programs throughout the institution?
- What is the evidence that data from various sources concerning the effectiveness of programs and services are being used to make decisions for improvement?
- How is the institutional effectiveness process related to the budget?
- Are appropriate internal and external constituents and stakeholders involved in the planning and assessment process?

**Sample Documentation:**
- Evidence of linkage of institutional effectiveness to institutional mission
- Institutional plans and budgets that demonstrate the linkage of assessment findings to planning at all levels
- Minutes of appropriate unit, committee, task force meetings related to the coordination of institutional effectiveness and evidence of broad-based involvement of faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders in the institutional effectiveness process
- Documentation that relates to institutional effectiveness, such as budget preparation instructions, minutes of budget presentation meetings, annual reports, annual assessment updates, institutional effectiveness reports
- Samples of specific actions taken to improve the institutional effectiveness process and/or results from that process

**CS 3.3.1** The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

**Rationale and Notes:**
This standard addresses the process of assessment that supports the institution’s administrative and educational support services and serves as the cornerstone of institutional effectiveness. For academic programs and for administrative and educational support services, institutional effectiveness focuses on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning.
Note: CS 3.3.1 focuses on the full range of programs, services, and activities offered by the institution to include educational programs. CS 3.4.1 specifically requires an institution to establish and evaluate learning outcomes for each educational program for which academic credit is offered. CS 3.3.1 underscores the overarching expectation for a comprehensive approach to planning and evaluation in all aspects of an institution. (See also the note under CR 2.5)

Relevant Questions for Consideration:
• How are expected outcomes clearly defined in measurable terms for each educational program as well as for administrative and educational support services?
• What is the evidence of assessment activities for each educational, administrative, and educational support unit?
• What is the evidence for broad-based participation in assessment activities?
• How are periodic reviews in which programmatic outcomes such as retention, graduation rates, employer and alumni satisfaction, and the like assessed, reviewed, and used for improvements?
• How does the institution’s use of assessment results improve educational programs and administrative and educational support services?

Sample Documentation:
• Documentation of goals and expected outcomes for educational programs and for administrative and educational support services
• Documentation of the evaluation of those outcomes
• Documentation of the use of the findings from assessment to improve the institution

CS 3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes.

Rationale and Notes:
The tradition of shared governance within American higher education recognizes the importance of both faculty and administrative involvement in the approval of educational programs. Approval by the faculty ensures that programs contain appropriate courses reflecting current knowledge within a discipline and that they are appropriate for the students enrolled. Approval by the administration affirms that educational programs are consistent with the mission of the institution and that the institution possesses both the organization and resources to ensure the quality of its educational programs.
The expectation is that the institution will engage in ongoing planning and evaluation to ensure that, for each academic program, the institution develops and assesses student learning outcomes. Program and learning outcomes are grounded in the faculty’s knowledge of the content and coherence of the discipline as well as in the learning process and reflect expectations for performance consistent with the level of the program and the mission of the institution. Program and learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes students are expected to attain in courses or in a program. Methods for evaluating the extent to which students achieve these outcomes are appropriate to the nature of the discipline and consistent over time to enable the institution to evaluate cohorts of students who complete courses or a program. Shared widely within and across programs, the results of this evaluation can affirm the institution’s success at achieving its mission and can be used to inform decisions about curricular and programmatic revisions. At appropriate intervals, program and learning outcomes and evaluation methods are evaluated and revised as appropriate.

Note: CR 2.5, CS 3.3.1, and CS 3.4.1 all relate directly to institutional effectiveness but each addresses a different aspect. CR 2.5 requires an institution to have in place an effective process for producing institutional improvement and for accomplishing its mission. CS 3.3.1 requires that an institution identify outcomes (resulting from the process required in CR 2.5), evaluate achievement of those outcomes, and demonstrate improvement based on the results of that evaluation. This applies to all educational programs and all administrative and support services. CS 3.4.1 requires that each educational program offered for academic credit establish and evaluate student learning outcomes.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

• What is the process for developing and approving educational programs and who is responsible?
• What are the program and learning outcomes for all educational programs, including majors, minors, general education and other institution-wide programs, including distance-learning programs?
• How has the institution evaluated the extent to which students are achieving expected outcomes?
• How has the institution used the results of evaluating student achievement?
• What evidence exists that the institution has established student learning outcomes in all settings, including distance learning, and that they are assessed within the institutional mission?

Sample Documentation:

• Policies and procedures for approving educational programs
• Minutes from faculty and administrative meetings
• Representative examples of program and learning outcomes for each educational program.
• Descriptions of methods for evaluating student achievement of these outcomes
• Reports of the results of evaluation, examples of how the results have been used for program improvement, and examples of how methods of evaluation have been improved over time

**Accountability**

Appalachian’s assessment efforts go beyond meeting the expectations of SACS and various programmatic accreditors. Sound assessment practices will allow programs to speak to institutional stakeholders authoritatively about the impact of their efforts and present evidence that a reasonable person would accept as proof that their claims are accurate.

**Program Improvement**

Most importantly, the assessment process at Appalachian is not about keeping score; it is about getting better. The assumption is that programs will craft assessment plans to address that which is most important to student learning in their disciplines. It is also expected that during this process programs will find areas that need improvement, address them, and reassess until the program is functioning up to faculty expectations. This process of program improvement is best depicted in the diagram below. A few assumptions of the model should be noted.

• Programs have assessment plans that list all the student learning outcomes for their programs.
• Programs do not measure all their outcomes every year. Evidence is collected only in a manageable amount each year.
• Programs can wait until they are ready to collect evidence to plan the means of assessment for each outcome they plan to address. Each outcome should have two or three means of assessment.
• Programs will define, before collecting evidence, the acceptable levels of performance for each means of assessment.
• Programs will continue to implement improvement strategies and collect evidence on an outcome until they achieve an acceptable level of performance.
Appalachian’s Approach to Assessment

Student-Centered
Student learning outcomes will be the primary focus for academic programs assessment efforts. What program faculty do or assign to students will not serve as evidence of student learning. Faculty will decide what students will be able to do, know, believe as a result of participating in their program.

Programmatic focus
The unit of interest in this approach to assessment will be the program. The university’s assessment system will not be used to evaluate the performance of individual students or faculty. Faculty will be expected to summarize the performance of the students as they are nearing graduation to better understand the effectiveness of the program in promoting student learning. For the purpose of assessment at Appalachian, a program is defined as that grouping of courses and experiences that is assigned a unique Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. CIP was originally developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) as a
taxonomic scheme to support the accurate tracking, assessment, and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity. CIP codes for Appalachian’s programs can be found in the Academic Program Inventory (API) on the Registrar’s website.

Grass roots/Faculty managed approach
What is assessed and how it is assessed is solely determined by program faculty. Ideally, all faculty members within a program would participate in discussions regarding all the components of the program assessment plan. Faculty compose the mission and vision statements for the program, define learning goals and learning outcomes, determine the means of assessment, and establish performance criteria. Program faculty members are also responsible for collecting assessable artifacts, analyzing results, and developing and implementing program improvement strategies.

College-directed
Academic programs at Appalachian look to the dean’s office in their respective colleges for supervision regarding the assessment process. It is the academic deans that provide feedback to programs about their plans, provide deadlines for reporting results, and provide the necessary resources to sustain the assessment process. The dean may choose to delegate the supervision of the assessment process to an associate dean, a research associate, and/or to a committee.

Centralized training and support
The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (IRAP) provides training and consultation to programs regarding planning and implementing their assessment activities. Staff are available to consult individually with program assessment coordinators or lead sessions where whole departments work through a process of goal setting and assessment planning. IRAP also consults with college committees regarding their efforts to oversee the various programmatic assessment efforts.

Centralized reporting
To facilitate the organization and reporting of programmatic assessment efforts, Appalachian purchased TracDat, a web-based assessment management program developed by Nuventive. Academic programs use templates within TracDat to record their assessment plans and results. TracDat allows programs to relate their goals and outcomes to those of their college, to the outcomes of General Education, or to the Strategic Priorities of the institution. In this way programs can demonstrate how their efforts are supporting those of their college and the institution at large. This centralized database for assessment activity means that programs generally do not need to submit reports of their assessment activity and findings. They only need to record their assessment activities and results in a timely manner. Those who normally would call for such reports have access to programmatic data and can produce their own reports as needed in real-time.

How to develop an assessment plan
The purpose of an assessment plan is to describe the process a program uses to understand and document its effect on students. The emphasis is on assessing the effectiveness of the program, not of individual students, courses, or faculty members.

An assessment plan has two main components:

Mission/Goals/Outcomes. This section answers the question, “What claims would a program like to be able to make regarding the impact of its efforts?” Arriving at consensus among program faculty regarding the mission, goals and outcomes of a program is often the hardest part of the assessment process.

Measurements/Criteria. This section answers the question, “What evidence is required to convince a reasonable person that those claims are accurate?” This part of the assessment plan focuses on the collection of evidence. This evidence may be criterion referenced (focused on students achievement of an objective criteria) or value-added (measuring how students have changed over time).

Mission Statement
This is simply the mission statement for the program. The purpose of a unit mission statement is to convey to others, both internal and external to the University, an understanding of why a unit (department, college, office, center) exists and what it does. The major points that should be addressed in a unit mission statement are:

- The fundamental purpose for which a unit exists, its reason for being (e.g., to change people, to provide specific services).
- The philosophy or values or point of view espoused by a unit with respect to its purpose. (For academic departments and colleges, this might include relative emphases on teaching, scholarship, and service; undergraduate and graduate education; general education and professional education.)
- The constituency or clientele of a unit, those whom it serves and with whom it works.
- The organizational setting in which a unit operates, the major area in which it is located organizationally and to whom it reports.
- The major activities in which a unit engages or the services it provides in order to carry out its mission. Wherever possible, there should be an indication of relative emphases and priorities among the various activities.

Unit mission statements should be brief (no longer than one page). They need not follow any specific format as long as they address the points suggested above and are consistent with the University's mission statement.

Goals
These are broad statements meant to relate the aims of the program stated in terms of what you want students to know or do. They should all be clearly related to the program’s mission. Learning goals are not held to the same standard of measurability as student learning outcomes. They act as a link
between the mission statement and the outcomes and provide an organizing structure for the assessment plan. There should probably be at least three in number and no more than six.

**Several Examples of Learning Goals**

Students should understand the utility of sociological knowledge and skills in the social world. (Sociology)

Students communicate effectively and thoughtfully critique the communicative practices of others (Communication Studies)

Physical education teacher candidates utilize assessments and reflection to foster student learning and inform instructional decisions. (Physical Education Teacher Education)

**Outcomes**

These are concise descriptions of the impact of the programs efforts. They should each be clearly related to a program goal. There are two kinds of outcomes: learning outcomes, which focus on what students will be able to do as a result of participating in your program, and program outcomes, which are changes in the program that you want to occur as a result of your efforts. A good rule of thumb is that each goal should have three to five outcomes. For academic programs most of the outcomes should be learning outcomes.

Determining the learning outcomes for a program can be the most difficult and time-consuming part of writing an assessment plan. The process requires a “meeting of the minds” among program faculty as to what knowledge, skills and attitudes students will gain while in the program. This discussion could begin surveying course syllabi for required courses in the major. By noting which topics are introduced, reinforced and applied throughout the curriculum, faculty will begin to see what knowledge, skills and attitudes are currently taught. This information will be the basis for a discussion among faculty as they work to define what they want the program to be about.

To be functional for assessment purposes, learning outcomes must be specific and measurable. Non specific statements such as “Students will understand...”, “Students will appreciate...”, “Students will know...” should be avoided. Instead program faculty should decide what specific behavior students will exhibit that would make one recognize that students “understand” “appreciate” or “know”. Specific action verbs such as “explain”, “appraise”, or “apply” are more potentially measurable and thus more useful in assessment plan. A worksheet that suggests action verbs grouped by cognitive complexity is in Appendix A.

**Several Examples of Learning Outcomes**

Apply sociological concepts and principles to institutions, situations and her/his own life (Sociology)

Students can effectively distinguish between effective and ineffective communication practices (Communication Studies)
Select or create appropriate assessments that will measure student achievement of goals and objectives (Physical Education Teacher Education)

Means of Assessment
The second part of the assessment plan focuses on the collection of evidence. This evidence may be criterion referenced (focused on students achievement of an objective criteria) or value-added (measuring how students have changed over time).

For each outcome you should plan two or more ways to measure it. At least one of these measures should be a direct measure that requires students to demonstrate achievement of the outcome. Others measures may be indirect. These may include student self-reports of learning or faculty ratings of students. Ideally the measurement activities would course embedded, that is integrated into regular graded class work. This eliminates the need for special assessment sessions and also assures that students will be motivated to put forth their best efforts.

For each measurement, program faculty will set satisfactory performance criteria. In some cases faculty will need to establish rubrics that describe acceptable student performance. Because the assessment focus is on programs and not students, program faculty will set a minimum number of students who will exhibit acceptable performance to judge that the program has achieved a specific outcome. At Appalachian, this threshold of acceptable program performance is called the criteria.

Dealing with Assessment Results

Though very important, defining and then collecting evidence about program learning outcomes is just the beginning of the program improvement process. Program faculty need to draw conclusions about the meaning of the evidence, develop a plan to improve student performance, and then collect more evidence to determine the effect of the changes. This process is often referred to as “closing the loop.”

Action plans
Eventually the evidence collected around a learning outcome might indicate that the program is underperforming in relation to the faculty’s expectations. If this occurs, the faculty will develop an action plan to improve student performance. This may involve changing the curriculum, changing pedagogy, adjusting a course, changing the criterion, etc.

Follow up
Once the action plan is implemented and given time to have the desired effect, program faculty use the means of assessment to once again determine if students are learning at the desired level. If not, they develop another action plan, implement it and assess it. That cycle continues until the criteria are met.

Appalachian does not expect programs to assess all their outcomes every year. During any year a program might be collecting evidence around a small handful of outcomes. Good practice suggests that
a program not move on to assessing many additional outcomes until it has reached the desired levels of performance on the outcomes it is currently assessing.

**General Education Assessment at Appalachian**

The integrated nature of Appalachian’s GenEd program provides unique challenges for assessment. In addition to being crucial for ongoing improvement of the program, a mature GenEd assessment program is necessary for a reaffirmation of out accreditation by SACS. Below is the statement from SACS publication *Resource manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* describing their expectations related to GenEd.

**CS 3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.**

**Rationale and Notes:**

Since the general education core is central to educational programs, this standard assumes that the institution will define specifically which competencies are appropriate to the goals of its general education program and consistent with principles of good practice. The institution is responsible for identifying measures to ensure that students have attained those competencies.

**Note:** This standard addresses college-level competencies within the general education core; it does not require a specific course to address each competency.

**Relevant Questions for Consideration:**

- What are the specific college-level competencies within the general education program?
- What evidence is available to show that students have attained these competencies?
- How does the institution demonstrate that it identifies competencies that are college-level?

**Sample Documentation:**

- Identification of competencies
- Documentation of justification for defining and evaluating the college-level general education competencies
- Evidence that graduates of undergraduate degree programs have attained the college-level competencies

For the purposes of assessment, the General Education program at Appalachian is broken up into assessment units that coincide with the various components of the [GenEd model](#). Each of these assessment units have “claimed” a number of the 21 learning outcomes of the total GenEd program. The components and the outcomes they claim are represented in a curriculum map in [Appendix B](#).
The Perspectives within the GenEd model are made up of Themes. Students will take 2 or 3 courses within a theme to fulfill their requirement for the Perspectives. Each Theme inherits the GenEd outcomes claimed by its parent Perspective. In turn each of the courses which contribute to a Theme claims which outcomes within a Theme it addresses.

Artifacts
In the assessment process, artifacts are the samples of student work produced in response to faculty developed assignments. These assignments are designed to elicit products that serve as evidence as to what degree students have achieved learning outcomes. These artifacts will be evaluated using faculty-developed rubrics. The scores from the rubrics will be averaged across Themes, Perspectives and/or the entire GenEd program to determine the effectiveness of each at fostering student learning across the GenEd learning outcomes.

Collection
Course faculties assign students to use the AsULearn course management system to upload those papers, presentations, artistic works etc. that have been deemed representative of accomplishment of one or more GenEd outcomes. The AsULearn system “tags” these artifacts with identifying information related to what the outcome(s) is representing, in which course and theme it was produced, and the Banner ID of the student who produced it. Though we are not assessing individual students in this process having a student identified with a each artifact will allow us to compare students early works with those produced latter in their careers. These types of longitudinal comparisons will allow us to better understand the effect of GenEd. Instructions for faculty on how to use the artifact collection can be found on the GenEd website.

Review
As in a disciplinary program, only a handful of learning outcomes are assessed in any one year. A multidisciplinary team of faculty reviews artifacts related to each GenEd learning outcome selected for review. After developing the rubric this team uses it to score a sample of artifacts produced within a course, a theme or across all the components of GenEd.

Rubrics
Rubrics are used in assessment to help quantify qualitative work. The following information about rubrics is quoted from: Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement: Handbook for Program Review & Assessment of Student Learning published by Western Washington University

Scoring Rubrics*
Description: Scoring rubrics are typically grids that outline identified criteria for successfully completing an assignment or task and establish levels for meeting these criteria. Rubrics can be used to score everything from essays to performances. Holistic rubrics produce a global score for a product or performance. Primary trait analysis uses separate scoring of individual characteristics or criteria of the product or performance. Strengths and Weaknesses: Scoring rubrics allow the instructor to efficiently and consistently look at complex products or performances and to define precise outcomes and expectations. They also are easily shared with students. However, developing an effective rubric can be time-consuming and often requires ongoing edits to fine tune
criteria and anticipated outcomes. Training raters to use the scoring rubrics in a consistent manner also involves a significant time commitment.

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has sponsored the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project. One of the outcomes of the project is, “a set of rubrics for fourteen essential learning outcomes that reflect broadly shared criteria and performance levels for assessing student learning.” These rubrics serve as models for the rubrics unique to Appalachian’s GenEd program. These meta-rubrics, as they are called can be found at: AAC&U VALUE Project metarubrics.

Review process
Faculty interdisciplinary teams use the rubrics they devise to review artifacts that have been selected to assess a Theme, Perspective, or other component of GenEd such as First or Second-Year Writing, First Year Seminar, or Quantitative Literacy. The team members receive electronic “packets” of artifacts which they review online through AsULearn. Through the AsULearn interface they assign a score to each artifact. Three team members read each artifact and their scores are averaged to assign a composite score to the artifact.

Reporting
The scores that are complied in AsULearn are analyzed by GenEd component. The results are compared to predetermined criteria that are part of the GenEd Assessment plan, shared with program faculty and if necessary an action plan is devised to improve student performance.

Managing the assessment process at Appalachian

TracDat
Once a program has developed their assessment plan, it must be entered into TracDat, a database designed to organize the assessment reporting process. The program is administered by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning. It is the responsibility of programs to update their assessment activities in TracDat as they occur, report their results, and describe their program improvement plans.

Entering Assessment Plans
Directions for entering assessment plans can be found in Appendix D

Entering Results
Directions for entering assessment results can be found in Appendix E

Reporting
To be written
Appendix A

Writing a Student Learning Outcome
Writing a Student Learning Outcome

1. **Opening**

“Students will . . .”

2. **Choose an active verb from one of Bloom’s cognitive domains** (or write one in at the bottom of the appropriate category)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Synthesis</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<td>analyze</td>
<td>arrange</td>
<td>assess</td>
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<td>sketch</td>
<td>solve</td>
<td>propose</td>
<td>value</td>
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3. **Complete the outcome with content**

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

4. **Review your outcome. Does it meet the SMART test?**
   - Specific
   - Measurable
   - Attainable
   - Realistic
   - Timely
Appendix B

General Education Curriculum Map
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>General Education Curricular Components</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1: Thinking critically and creatively</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Recognize, differentiate, and effectively employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated strategies to collect and interpret information</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Successfully integrate disparate concepts and information when interpreting, solving problems, evaluating, creating, and making decisions</td>
<td>X X X X X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Examine and evaluate how their own personal, historical, and cultural perspectives affect the discovery and generation of knowledge</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Construct persuasive arguments in increasingly complex contexts</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Apply theories from a variety of disciplines and advance convincing reasons to connect as well as differentiate theories from different domains of knowledge.</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2: Communicating Effectively</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Articulate and comprehend effectively, using verbal or non-verbal communication suitable to topic, purpose, and audience</td>
<td>X X X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Use writing effectively to discover and develop ideas and to articulate positions in contexts of increasing complexity</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Make rhetorical decisions appropriate to topic, purpose, and audience while correctly using the conventions of standard written English</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Determine the scope of information needed in specific research contexts and successfully identify, locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information from various media</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Read actively and analytically at the college level and synthesize and apply information and ideas from their reading across disciplines</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Know, apply, and communicate college-level quantitative concepts and methods</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Select and use hardware, software applications, databases, and</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>General Education Curricular Components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Year Seminar</td>
<td>Semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>First Year Seminar</td>
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<td>First Year Seminar</td>
<td>Semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>learning outcomes</td>
<td>First Year Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Making Local to Global Connections</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>B.</strong> Evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>C.</strong> Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>D.</strong> Demonstrate knowledge of contemporary issues related to cultural diversity in the United States and other areas of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>E.</strong> Employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated means for communicating with people of other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Understanding Responsibilities of Community Membership</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Identify potential consequences that personal choices as well as political, economic, and other social forces may have on individual, societal, and environmental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>B.</strong> Apply moral reasoning skills to an array of ethical issues confronted by individuals, groups, and communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>C.</strong> Collaborate effectively with others in shared processes of inquiry and problem solving</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>D.</strong> Apply principles of responsible community membership within and beyond the campus community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The local to global perspectives must address Goal 3, Learning Outcomes C and E and one additional learning outcome under Goal 3.*
Appendix C

Entering Academic Program Assessment Plans into TracDat
Entering Academic Program Assessment Plans into TracDat

This guide will walk you through the process of entering a program assessment plan into TracDat.

To get into the TracDat software, you will need the following information:

Website: [http://tracdat.appstate.edu/tracdat/](http://tracdat.appstate.edu/tracdat/)
Username: your ASU username
Password: assess (please change after initial log in)

If you cannot get in, contact Pete Wachs (wachspm) (262-4097). TracDat is inside the University’s firewall. Consequently you need to utilize a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection to access it from off campus. Establishing a VPN connection is a simple process. Just go to: [vpn.appstate.edu](http://vpn.appstate.edu)

After logging in, you should see a page with your program listed in a drop-down menu at the very top. See example below.
If there are multiple programs reporting to you, use the right arrow in the drop-down box to select the program you want to work with.

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**Entering Mission and Vision Statements**

The first step in entering a plan is to enter the program’s mission and vision statements. Click on the Assessment Unit tab below the drop-down box. If the mission and vision page does not appear, click on the General sub-tab situated below the main tabs. See example below.
You can cut text from existing documents and paste it into the corresponding boxes on this page. Make sure you click on the “Save Changes” button at the bottom of the page before moving to another page.
**Entering Goals**

Goals are broad statements describing what your program is about. Programs should aim for at least three goals and probably not more than six. For assessment purposes, it is not necessary to claim everything students learn in the program. Only the most important skills, content, behaviors, or attitudes need to be addressed. Additionally, you should not try to address every activity of your office, but rather choose those most important to supporting the mission of the University.

To enter program goals click on the Goals sub-tab under the Assessment Unit tab. Click on the Add New Goal button on the bottom of the page.
In the drop-down box at the top of the page, choose “Goal Type” you are entering. Learning goals are general statements regarding what students will be able to do as a result of participating in your program. Program goals are general statements of what the faculty and staff of a program will do. Most of the goals for an academic program will be learning goals. Type (or cut and paste) the text of your goal into the box labeled “Goal”. Then scroll down the page and associate your goal with other goals of the organization. If your goal supports one of the institutional priorities of the University’s strategic plan, click on the appropriate box. Likewise, if your goal supports one of the general education or internationalization outcomes, click in the appropriate box. Be sure to click on “Save Changes” before moving on to a new page. *See example below.*

### Entering Outcomes

Outcomes are the primary substance of an assessment plan. In the case of Learning Outcomes, they are specific, measurable statements detailing what students will know and what they will be able to do as a result of participating in a program. Program Outcomes are specific statements about what faculty and/or staff will accomplish. You should develop 3 to 5 outcomes for each goal. To enter outcomes click on the “Plan” tab and the “Outcomes” sub-tab. *See example below.*
On the Outcomes page click on the “Add New Outcome” button on the bottom of the page. See example below.

In TracDat any box that has an asterisk next to the title must have content in it. On the “Add New Outcome” page, “Outcome Name” and “Outcome” both must be filled out. The “Outcome Name” is just a short two or three word title that is descriptive of the outcome. Enter the full text of the outcome in the “Outcome” box. This should be a specific, measurable statement (in the case of a learning outcome) of what students will be able to do as a result of participating in a program. It should relate to one of the program’s goals. A program outcome should also be specific and measurable; however, it states what program faculty and staff do. Next, identify the outcome as either a learning outcome or a program outcome by selecting either in the drop down box.

You do not want to assess all of the outcomes every year. Choose which outcomes you want to collect data on first. Then, under “Outcome Status” choose “Currently Being Assessed”. For all other outcomes choose “Not Currently Being Assessed”. For those outcomes which are currently being assessed, choose a “Start Date”. Do not choose an “End Date” until you are finished assessing the outcome. Click “Save Changes”. Repeat for every outcome. See example below.
Relating Outcomes to Goals

Each outcome should be conceptually linked to one of the goals of a program. An outcome could also be linked to one of the priorities of the Strategic Plan, goals of General Education, or goals of the Internationalization effort of the University. Begin this process by clicking on the “Related Goals” button. See example below.
Next, select an outcome from the “Outcome Name” drop box. Then click in the check box for one or more goals that are conceptually related to the outcome. Click on the “Save Changes” button before moving on to the next outcome. See example below.

Relating Outcomes to Courses

TracDat also allows you to relate program outcomes to courses in a program’s curriculum. First click on “Plan” and then on “Related Courses”. See example below.
On the “Related Courses” page, a list of courses within a program should be displayed. Click the check box of the courses you want to relate to the selected outcome. If a course from a program is not displayed, call Pete Wachs in Institutional Research (4090). Click on the “Save Changes” button before proceeding. See example below.

Adding an Assessment Method to an Outcome

We suggest that you not attempt to collect data on every outcome, every year. Instead, begin by focusing on a small number of outcomes that you are most curious about. Collect evidence on those outcomes, determine from the evidence if improvements to the program need to be made, make the improvements, and then assess those outcomes again to see if the improvements had the desired effect. Repeat these processes until you are satisfied that the program is operating effectively in relation to those outcomes and then move on to other outcomes.

To enter an assessment method for a particular outcome, click on the “Plan” tab and then the “Means of Assessment” sub-tab. From the “Outcome Name” drop-down box select an outcome then click on the “Add New Means of Assessment” button. See example below.
Good practice suggests that every outcome have more than one assessment method. The process for entering a means of assessment is the same for each method. Select a category for the assessment method from the “Assessment Method Category” drop-down box. This is a list of methods that have been developed by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning. If you will be using an assessment method that is not on this list, contact Pete Wachs (4090) to add your method to the list. In the “Assessment Method” text box, describe in a few sentences the method you will use to collect evidence for the selected outcome. In the “Criteria” text box briefly describe the level of performance which you decide will indicate that the program is successful in achieving the outcome. In the “Timetable” text box describe when you are going to collect the evidence related to this outcome. Make sure to click on the “Save Changes” button before proceeding. See example below.
The Assessment plan is complete when you have: 1) entered a full set of goals and outcomes for a program and 2) entered two or more measurement methods for each of the outcomes being actively assessed during the coming year.
Appendix D

Entering Assessment Results into TracDat
Entering Assessment Results into TracDat

You have now followed your measurement plan and have collected artifacts related to your outcomes. Now what?

You make meaning out of the collection of artifacts according to your plan. It might be judging papers or recorded performances using a rubric. It might be summarizing the results of a survey. It might be analyzing customer sales. In every case you will want to prepare some sort of report that documents your findings and your conclusions.

Once that is done you will want to record your results in TracDat.

To get into the TracDat software, you will need the following information:
Website: http://tracdat.appstate.edu/tracdat/
Username: your ASU username
Password: assess (please change after initial log in)
If you cannot get in, contact Pete Wachs (wachspm) (262-4097).

TracDat is inside the University’s firewall. Consequently you need to utilize a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection to access it from off campus. Establishing a VPN connection is a simple process. Just go to: vpn.appstate.edu

After logging in, you should see a page with your program listed in a drop-down menu at the very top. See example below.
If there are multiple programs reporting to you, use the right arrow in the drop-down box to select the program you want to work with.

You then click on the Results tab. See below

![TracDat interface](image-url)
You then indicate with which outcome these results are associated.

You will likely have more than one assessment method for each outcome. Consequently you will need to indicate for which assessment method you will be entering a result.
In the “Results” text box enter a short statement indicating the results from the chosen means of assessment. Be sure to state the results in the same terms as the criterion. In the “Result Type” drop down box indicate “Criterion Met” or “Criterion Not Met”. This is a required field. In the “Result Status” drop down box indicate what the program is going to do in regard to the Result Type. This is also a required field. Click on the “Save Changes” button before moving on.
Entering an Action Plan

When the results you obtain do not meet or exceed the criterion you have set for a particular measurement you will need to develop an action plan stating what changes you will make to improve program performance. Once you save your results an “Action Plan” tab and a “Related Documents” tab appear at the bottom of the page. Click on the “Action Plan” tab then the “add Action Plan” link.
In the “Action Plan” box enter a brief statement describing what changes you plan to make in your program. Once the Action Plan screen is open this is a required field. Click on the “Save Changes” button before moving on.
Using the Document Library

Though the textboxes in TracDat will accept an almost unlimited amount of text, for the purpose of keeping reports concise you want to limit textbox entries to no more than several sentences. The Documents Library in TracDat is designed to easily file and share documents (rubrics, reports, surveys, spreadsheets) that support your assessment process but do not lend themselves to inclusion in a text box.

You can upload documents to the Documents Library in two ways. In the first way you begin by clicking on the “Documents” tab from any of the main pages of your assessment site.

Once in the document library you use a folder and file system to organize your documents in a way that makes sense to you.
You add documents to the library by browsing to a document on your computer and clicking on “save”.

An alternative method for uploading a document is by using the “Relate Document” button that is presented in a number of pages in the site. On the page where you enter a new indicator a “Relate Document” button exists to upload possible supporting documentation related to measuring the accomplishment of an activity. This could be a copy of a survey, a data entry form, etc. See example below.
You have the option to relate a document on several scenarios within TextML. Click on the "Relate Document" button. Then click on one of the three choices.