

Office of Academic Planning and Assessment

Assessment Plan Items Definitions

Goal

A Goal is a broad statement of mission or purpose that serves as a guiding principle for a unit. By their nature, Goals are not necessarily measurable. Although there is not a magic number of Goals a unit should have, most units will find 3-5 Goals to be reasonable.

Learning Objective (Related to Goals)

Learning Objectives are specific and detailed expressions of the expected knowledge or skills someone should gain as the result of receiving instruction or training. Objectives must be measurable and are aligned with a unit's Goals. There is no magic number of Learning Objectives, but most units will probably find 2-4 Objectives per Goal to be reasonable.

Performance Objective (Related to Goals)

Performance Objectives are specific and detailed expressions of the expected level of attainment of non-learning tasks (e.g., satisfaction with service, attendance/participation levels, student recruitment and enrollment, general administrative functions). Although there is no magic number of Performance Objectives, most units will probably find 2-4 Objectives per Goal to be reasonable.

Indicator (Related to Learning Objectives)

Indicators are the instruments, processes, or evidence, both direct and indirect, used by a unit to assess a learning objective. Indicators should be described in detail. It should be clear what the instrument/process is, how it was developed, how it was implemented, and how it is being used to gather assessment results that are useful to the program. Units are encouraged to have multiple Indicators per objective in order to triangulate their assessment results.

Criterion (Related to Learning Objectives)

Criterion are utilized with Indicators to assess Learning Objectives. Criterion are the specific, and detailed, level of expected attainment for an Objective. The Criterion description should include all relevant information about how that Criterion was established and determined to be appropriate. If the Criterion is derived from professional standards, required licensure passage rates, etc., then those standards should be referenced as part of the Criterion description.

It is perfectly okay if a Criterion is not met. Assessment is not about punishing units when they do not meet their objectives; rather, it is about identifying areas for continuous improvement. If a Criterion was not met it just means that a unit has identified an area in which they should take action for improvement.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI) (Related to Performance Objectives)

KPIs are "Key Performance Indicators," and are the instruments, processes, or evidence, both direct and indirect, used by a unit to assess a performance objective. It should be clear what the instrument/process is, how it was developed, how it was implemented, and how it is being used

to gather assessment results that are useful to the program. KPI descriptions should also include information that outline expected levels of attainment/success.

It is perfectly okay if a KPI is not met. Assessment is not about punishing units when they do not meet their objectives; rather, it is about identifying areas for continuous improvement. If a KPI was not met it just means that a unit has identified an area in which they should take action.

Findings (Related to Learning Objectives)

Findings are the collected data and information resulting from the unit's assessment measures and are used to determine whether an Objective was successfully met. Findings should be detailed, breaking down what a unit has discovered as a result of its assessment, in order to identify areas for potential improvement.

Results (Related to Performance Objectives)

Results are the data and information resulting from the unit's assessment measures and are used to determine whether an Objective was successfully met. Results should be detailed, breaking down what a unit has discovered as a result of its assessment, in order to identify areas for potential improvement.

Action (Related to Performance and/or Learning Objectives)

Actions are the next steps to be taken by a unit in response to specific assessment Findings or Results. Actions are associated with specific Findings or Results. A unit's Actions should be clearly driven by assessment results for that particular Indicator/Criterion or KPI, and should clearly relate to improving that Objective. Within meaningful, mature, and well-developed assessment plans it is very rare for a unit to meet all its Objectives and have nothing on which it can improve. Even when an Objective is met, units may find some reason for action when they analyze their assessment results.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI)

This element provides the unit an opportunity to provide an update of their progress towards completing the action-items identified in their previous year's Plan for Continuous Improvement.

Plan for Continuous Improvement

Although the Actions represent specific steps to be taken for a single Objective, the Plan for Continuous Improvement provides units with an opportunity to combine all these Actions together into a coherent and detailed plan. The action-items included within the Plan for Continuous Improvement should be clearly based on a unit's assessment results, and should include details about what they are, how and when they will be implemented, and who will be responsible. The Plan for Continuous Improvement also provides a mechanism for providing context around the finding, result, or action item.

NOTE:

Learning Objectives, Indicators, Criterion, and Findings are REQUIRED by Degree Programs, and OPTIONAL for Academic Support, Student Support, and Administrative Support Units. Performance Objectives, KPI's, and Results are REQUIRED by Academic Support, Student Support, and Administrative Support Units, and OPTIONAL for Degree Programs.