Assessment Overview

Office of Assessment

Sam Houston State University

Contents

Assessment Staff

Who are we?

Assessment Staff

The Office of Assessment includes three full-time staff members and is housed within the Division of Academic Affairs. We serve as a resource in supporting the institution's mission of providing quality higher education.

Associate VP for Academic Affairs/
SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

Director of Assessment

Associate Director
of Assessment

Assessment Coordinator

Services & Resources

What can we do to help you?

Assessment Services & Resources

- Anthology Planning training

- Presentations and workshops

- Personalized assistance: consulting, curriculum mapping, and assessment plan brainstorming

- Assessment Mini-Grants

- Core Curriculum projects and results

- Digital and print resources on our webpage

Assessment Mini-Grants

- Competitive grant funding available to faculty/staff for assessment-related activities

- Up to **$1,000** may be requested by eligible recipients

- Application available around mid-January each year at the Assessment Mini-Grants webpage

- Timeline:
    - February 1st: application period opens
    - Late May (Friday before Memorial Day): application deadline
    - July 1st: applicants notified by e-mail of award status
    - September 1st: funding available to spend
    - August 31st of the next year: final reports due

Assessment Defined

What is assessment?

What does assessment involve?

Why is assessment important?

Assessment is the "process of providing credible evidence of resources, implementation actions, and outcomes undertaken for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of instruction, programs, and services in higher education."

(Banta & Palomba, 2015, p. 2)

Assessment is:

- internally driven
- the process of self-reflection for self-improvement

Assessment involves:
- identifying goals
- identifying objectives
- measuring the attainment of objectives
- using the results to develop actions for improvement

Assessment is important because:

- **students benefit** when we improve degree programs, activities, and services
- **departments and programs benefit** when they identify areas for improvement and take needed actions
- **the university benefits** when it shows stakeholders that we are serious about ensuring our students receive the best possible educational experience

Creating a Plan

Who is responsible for creating the assessment plan?

What elements are included in an assessment plan?

Who is responsible for the plan?

- Plans should not be completed by just one person.

- Collaborative effort leads to meaningful assessment.

- Involving everyone in the process of creating goals and objectives helps create buy-in and leads to a cohesive team working toward common goals.
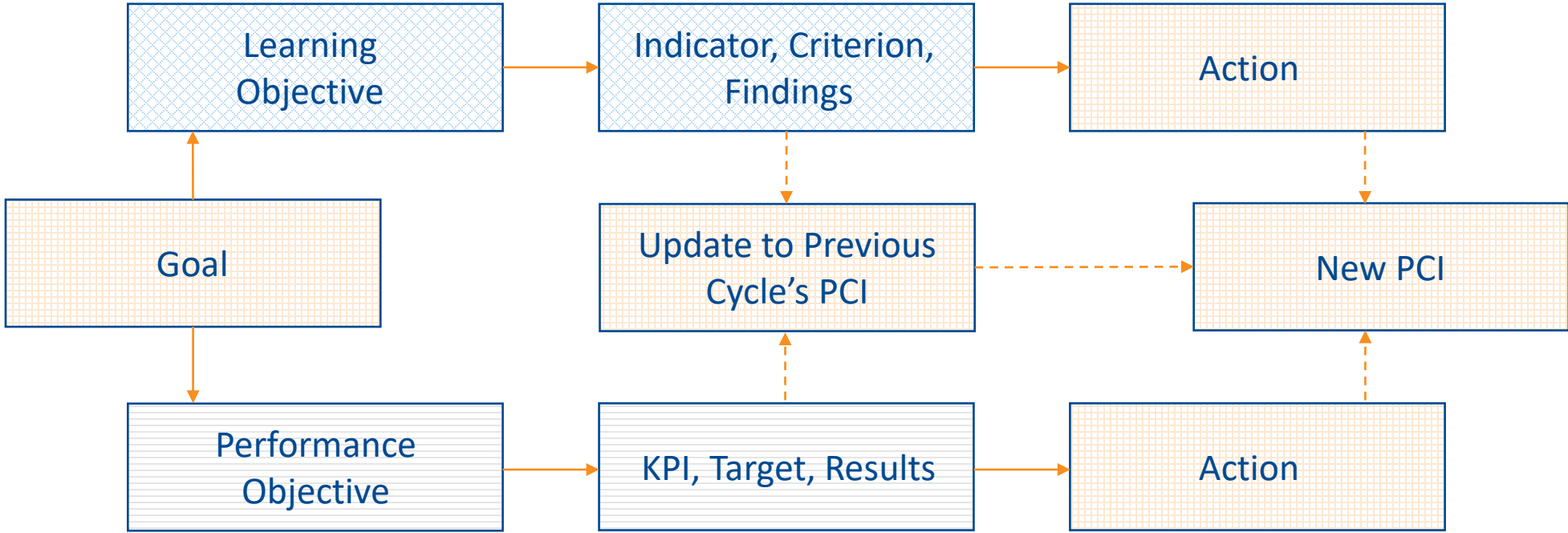
Effective program assessment should answer these questions:

- What are you trying to do?
- How well are you doing it?
  - You won't know for sure unless you're assessing/measuring it.

- Using the answers to the first two questions, how can you improve what you are doing?
- Additional guidance found at:
  - https://www.shsu.edu/dept/assessment/learning-objectives
  - https://www.shsu.edu/dept/assessment/performance-objectives

Assessment Plan Items

Learning Objective → Indicator, Criterion, Findings → Action

Goal → Learning Objective

Update to Previous Cycle's PCI → New PCI

Goal → Performance Objective

Performance Objective → KPI, Target, Results → Action

Items required for all units

Items required for academic programs (degree, certificate, minor) but optional for all other units

Items required for all units except academic programs (student/academic/administrative support)

Goal

A broad statement of mission or purpose that serves as the guiding principle of a unit; not necessarily measurable

- Should state the intentions, aspirations, or ambitions of the unit
- No "magic" number, but goals should be appropriate for the size of the unit
- Re-evaluate goals each year to make sure they are relevant and meaningful.

Example Goal

(Academic Unit: *Basket Weaving BFA)*

Students completing a degree in basket weaving will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to gain employment as a professional basket weaver.

Example Goal
(Academic/Student Support Unit:
*University Writing Center***)**

The University Writing Center will help students become better writers and develop more confidence in their writing abilities.

Objectives

Learning Objective (LO)

- Specific, detailed, and measurable statement of the expected knowledge or skills someone should gain as a result of receiving instruction or training

- Degree programs must have learning objectives as the primary focus, and generally, two or more per goal would be reasonable.

Performance Objective (PO)

- Specific, detailed, and measurable statements of the expected attainment of non-learning tasks (i.e., satisfaction with service, attendance or participation levels, general administrative functions, etc.)

- Generally, these are found within units not directly engaged with student instruction.

Example LO
(Academic Unit: *Basket Weaving BFA)*

Demonstration of Basket Weaving Techniques

- Upon completion of the Basket Weaving BFA, students will be able to accurately demonstrate the four different basket weaving techniques: coiling, twining, plaiting, and wicker.

Example PO

(Academic/Student Support Unit: *University Writing Center*)

Increase in Confidence of Writing Abilities

- As a result of working with Writing Center tutors, students will report an increase in confidence in their writing abilities.

Indicator/Criterion (LO)

Indicator

- The instrument, process, or evidence (direct and indirect) used by a unit to assess a learning objective

- Should be detailed and clearly explain how it was developed, implemented, and used to gather useful results

- Include an attachment of the instrument used, when applicable.

Criterion

- The specific and detailed level of expected attainment for a learning objective. It should include all relevant information about how it was established and determined to be appropriate.

- It is okay if a criterion is not met. That means that you have identified an area for improvement.

Example Indicator
(Academic Unit: *Basket Weaving BFA)*

Measuring Success in Capstone Course

- Students will take a capstone course during the last semester of the Basket Weaving BFA. By the end of this semester, students will participate in a hands-on demonstration. They will create baskets using the four techniques, along with choosing the correct traditional materials used for each technique. Up to 100 points will be awarded for accuracy of materials and techniques used. Each technique is worth up to 25 points. See attached locally-developed rubric for additional details.

Example Criterion

(Academic Unit: *Basket Weaving BFA)*

Measuring Success in Capstone Course

- 80% of students will score an 80% or better. Last year, only 75% of students scored an 80% or better, due to confusion about the types of materials used for each technique. Additional time will be spent teaching this topic, so criterion will remain the same as the last assessment cycle.

KPI/Target (PO)

KPI

- The instrument, process, or evidence (direct and indirect) used by a unit to assess a performance objective

- Should be detailed and clearly explain how it was developed, implemented, and used to gather useful results

- Include an attachment of the instrument used, when applicable.

Target

- The benchmark, value, or result that will represent success at achieving a performance objective

- Should be measurable

- Should include contextual information to explain how the target is appropriate and how it was selected (e.g., accepted standards, past results)

- It is okay if a target is not met. That means you have identified an area for improvement.

Example KPI
(Academic/Student Support Unit:
University Writing Center)

Writing Center Survey

- Students will complete the attached survey prior to their appointment to answer questions regarding their confidence in their writing abilities. The questions will be on a Likert scale from 1 (very unconfident) to 5 (very confident). They will then complete the same survey at the end of their first appointment and after each subsequent appointment during the semester.

Example Target

(Academic/Student Support Unit:

University Writing Center)

Writing Center Survey

- The expectation is that 90% of students will report an increase in confidence by at least one point on the Likert scale following the first appointment, and they will report an increase of at least three points by the end of the semester. This is the first time we are implementing this survey, so this KPI will be used as a benchmark for future assessments.

Findings (LO) and Results (PO):

A clear and concise summary of the data/information gathered from the assessment indicators and/or KPIs, which are used to determine whether an objective was successfully met; written in past tense

- Provide a clear explanation that targets were met, partially met, or not met.
- Provide detail highlighting what was discovered as a result of the assessment or provide explanation if there were no findings/results.
- Identify areas for potential improvement.
- Include supporting documentation, if applicable (e.g., completed rubrics, survey results).

Example Findings
(Academic Unit: *Basket Weaving BFA)*

Increase in Students Meeting Requirements

- Criterion was met. Overall, 85% of students scored 80% or better. This was a 10% increase from the prior year. We found that the increased instruction helped them to better understand the correct types of material to use. However, when disaggregating data, students were losing points by confusing two of the techniques: twining and plaiting.

Example Results
(Academic/Student Support Unit: *University Writing Center*)

Increase in Confidence Partially Met

- Target was partially met. Although 95% of students reported at least a one-point increase in confidence following the first appointment, only 80% of students reported a three-point increase by the end of the semester (see attached breakdown of results; student identifying information is redacted). Upon further investigation, we found that most students only attended two appointments, allowing little time to work with them on their writing skills. Students who attended at least three appointments reported higher confidence.

Actions

The specific steps to be taken to improve a program or unit based on analysis of the assessment findings or results; written in future tense

- Even when an objective is met, units may find some reason for action when they analyze their assessment results.
- Actions related to learning objectives should be mostly focused on pedagogical and/or curricular changes to affect student learning.

Example Action (LO)
(Academic unit: *Basket Weaving BFA)*

Add Mid-Term Project

- Since students lost points due to confusion between two of the basket weaving techniques, a mid-term project will be added to the capstone course. Students will be given one week to create four items using each of the techniques and appropriate materials. Since they can complete this at home and are able to use references, it will be worth fewer points, but it is expected to help with accurately completing the final in class demonstration.

Example Action (PO)
(Academic/Student Support Unit: *University Writing Center*)

Encourage Increase in Appointments

- When students attend the initial appointment, they will be encouraged to return for at least two follow-up appointments within the semester. The tutor will offer to schedule those visits before the student leaves, and the tutor will email and text appointment reminders to the student. The pre-post survey will not be changed and the 90% target will remain for the next assessment cycle.

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

Narrative updating the unit's progress toward completing the action items identified in the previous cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

- Be sure to address each action item from the previous PCI; clarify whether items were completed or not, and to what extent.
- The PCI update should be in past tense.

Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI)

Narrative summarizing all actions to be implemented together into one coherent and detailed plan

- Action items included should be clearly based on findings/results.
- Include any new initiatives or other items that will be assessed in the next cycle.
- Provide contextual information or details about what the actions are, how and when they will be implemented, and who will be responsible.
- The New PCI should be in future tense.

When might an objective change?

- After continuously meeting the outcome over multiple assessment cycles

- When changing the direction of the program mission or curriculum

- When introducing or incorporating a new element within the discipline or type of outcome

- In response to an update or revision to disciplinary or professional standards

"Focus on improvement and you get compliance for free!"

~Dr. Jillian Kinzie~

Indiana University School of Education

Anthology Planning

Anthology Planning is the web application used to input annual assessment plans.

- Access <u>Anthology Planning</u> via the Assessment webpage.
- Contact our office to schedule a training or attend a group training session.

Assessment Cycle Timeline

The specific dates will vary each year, but the table below shows the general timeframe.

Date	Assessment Plan Elements Due
December 1	Goals, Objectives, Indicators, Criterion, KPIs, and Targets
August 1	Findings and Results
September 1	Actions and Plan for Continuous Improvement Elements
September 15	Cycle Closes for Entry

Questions?

Visit our webpage:
https://www.shsu.edu/dept/assessment

Contact our team via email:
assessment@shsu.edu

References

Banta, T. W., & Palomba, C. A. (2015). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.