



How to Create an Assessment Plan Administrative & Support Units

Before You Begin

It is strongly recommended to complete your assessment plan in a word processor or use the Office of Assessment's planning template before entering it into Blackboard Planning. Developing the plan as a whole allows you to review alignment, make revisions, and collaborate with colleagues easily. Blackboard Planning works best as a repository for your finished plan rather than a rough drafting space. Once your plan is complete, simply copy and paste the components into the system template.

Note: When copying content into Blackboard Planning, paste as plain text. Bullets, tables, and other formatting may need to be recreated manually.

Step 1—Plan to Collaborate

Assessment should reflect the collective work and priorities of the unit rather than the work of a single individual. Although one person may coordinate the assessment process or enter information into the assessment plan management system, all appropriate unit personnel should participate in the development, review, and use of the assessment plan.

1. Ensure that staff are aware of the assessment plan and understand its purpose.
2. Identify who will participate in developing, reviewing, and implementing the assessment plan and how they will contribute.
3. Establish opportunities to review assessment results and discuss their implications.
4. Determine how improvement decisions will be made and communicated.

Step 2—Review the Unit Mission or Purpose

The unit's mission or purpose provides the foundation for the assessment plan. Before developing Goals, review what the unit is intended to accomplish and the broader purpose it serves.

1. Review the unit's mission or purpose and identify its major priorities, services, or intended contributions.
2. Consider other responsibilities, strategic priorities, or expectations that should inform the assessment plan.
3. Identify the major areas that should be represented in the assessment plan and use them to develop the unit's Goals.

Step 3—Develop Goals

A **Goal** is a broad statement of mission or purpose that serves as a guiding principle of the administrative or support unit. Goals describe the unit's larger intentions, aspirations, or ambitions and provide direction for the Performance Objectives that will be developed in the next step.

1. Review the unit's mission or purpose and identify the major areas that should be reflected in the Goals.
2. Develop more than one Goal, with the number appropriate for the size and scope of the unit.
3. Ensure that each Goal broadly states an intention, aspiration, or ambition of the unit and addresses its larger impact.
4. Review the Goals together to ensure they appropriately represent the overall purpose of the unit.

Step 4—Develop Performance Objectives

A **Performance Objective** is a specific, detailed, and measurable statement of the expected attainment of a non-learning task. Performance Objectives describe the desired quality or improvement of a unit's services and identify what the unit intends to accomplish in support of its Goals.

Note: Focus on creating meaningful outcomes (measuring impact and behavior change) as opposed to outputs (measuring activity and volume) when possible. Outputs prove your unit is busy; outcomes prove your unit is valuable.

1. Review each Goal and identify the specific services, processes, functions, or other areas of performance that should be addressed in support of the Goal.
2. Develop more than one Performance Objective for each Goal.
3. Ensure that each Performance Objective focuses on a single behavior or service and clearly describes the desired quality or improvement of the unit's services.
4. Use one precise, measurable, and observable action verb (e.g., increase, decrease, reduce) rather than verbs that do not clearly identify measurable performance (e.g., enhance, promote, support, encourage, foster).
5. Review each Performance Objective to ensure that it clearly aligns with the related Goal and meets the definition of a Performance Objective.

Step 5—Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)** is the method, instrument, process, or technique used to measure and evaluate a Performance Objective and gather evidence of unit performance.

Note: Direct methods measure actual performance data by examining tangible outcomes, such as participation rates, processing times, or usage data. Indirect methods focus on perceptions and experiences, and are typically gathered through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

1. Review each Performance Objective and identify appropriate methods for measuring the service, process, function, or other area of performance the unit intends to improve.
2. Develop more than one KPI for each Performance Objective using direct measures as the primary source of evidence and indirect measures to complement them.
3. Ensure that each KPI clearly aligns with the related Performance Objective and will provide data that can be used to improve unit performance.
4. For each KPI, identify:
 - the source of the data;
 - how the data will be gathered, by whom, and from whom;
 - when or how often the data will be gathered;
 - who will evaluate or score the data;
 - the evaluation scale that will be used (e.g., percentage, rating scale, Likert scale); and
 - who will review the Results and when they will be reviewed.
5. Review each KPI to ensure that it meets the definition of a KPI and contains sufficient information for someone to understand how unit performance will be measured and evaluated.

Step 6—Develop Targets

A **Target** is the benchmark, value, or result that will represent success in achieving a Performance Objective as measured by a KPI. Each KPI should have one corresponding Target.

1. Review each KPI and determine the level of performance that will represent successful achievement of the related Performance Objective.
2. Develop a Target for each KPI that is measurable and quantifiable (e.g., a percentage, score, rating, response time, number, or amount of increase or decrease).
3. Ensure that the Target represents a feasible and reasonable level of success that is ambitious but achievable.
4. Include contextual information explaining why the Target was selected and demonstrate that it is ambitious yet achievable. Context may include:
 - prior assessment results;
 - professional or industry standards; or
 - institutional benchmarks.
5. Review each Target to ensure that it clearly aligns with the related KPI and Performance Objective and meets the definition of a Target.

Step 7—Report Results

Results are a clear and concise summary of the data gathered from a KPI and evaluated against its corresponding Target.

Write the Results after the KPI has been implemented and the performance data have been collected and analyzed, and write them in the past tense.

1. Review the data collected through the KPI and compare the data to the corresponding Target.
Clearly state whether the Target was met, partially met, or not met.
3. Summarize the Results in a concise and well-organized manner, providing enough information to clearly inform decisions about improvement.
4. Compare the current Results to past trends, previous results, and/or existing standards, as appropriate.
5. Include supporting documentation (e.g., survey results, reports, or other relevant data), when applicable.
6. Review the Results to ensure that they clearly align with the related KPI and Target and meet the definition of Results.

Note: It is acceptable for a Target to be partially met or not met. These results provide opportunities to identify areas for improvement. Any assessment data submitted as supporting documentation must be anonymized.

Step 8—Develop Actions

An **Action** is a specific step the administrative or support unit will take to improve unit performance or the assessment process based on analysis of the Results. Actions describe what the unit will do during the next assessment cycle.

Note: An Action should be included for every Result unless the unit explains why the Result will not be assessed in the future. Write Actions in the future tense because they describe what the unit will do during the next assessment cycle.

1. Review each Result and identify an area that should be monitored, remediated, or enhanced.
2. Develop an Action that clearly follows from the Result and describes the logical next step the unit will take.
3. Focus Actions primarily on specific changes or improvements to the unit's services, processes, operations, or other areas of performance. Changes to the assessment process may also be appropriate when supported by the Results.
4. For each Action, identify:
 - the specific improvement or change that will be made;
 - the person or group responsible for implementation; and
 - the anticipated completion date.
5. If the unit decides that a Result will not be assessed in the future, then the Action should explain why.
6. Review each Action to ensure that it clearly aligns with the related Result and meets the definition of an Action.

Step 9—Update the Previous Cycle’s Plan for Continuous Improvement

The **PCI Update** is a narrative describing the unit’s progress in completing the previous cycle’s Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI).

Note: Write the PCI Update in the **past tense** because it describes what occurred during the current assessment cycle. New units that did not have a PCI from the previous cycle will not complete a PCI Update.

1. Review the previous cycle’s PCI and identify all Actions, initiatives, and other items that were planned for implementation.
2. Provide a progress update for each item included in the previous PCI.
3. Clearly indicate whether each item was completed or not completed, and to what extent.
4. Provide relevant contextual information explaining the progress made on each item.
5. Include specific details about implementation, as appropriate, such as who was involved, what was accomplished, when and where implementation occurred, and why decisions or changes were made.
6. Review the PCI Update to ensure that it addresses all items from the previous PCI and provides a clear and accurate account of the unit’s progress.

Step 10—Develop the New Plan for Continuous Improvement

The **New Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI)** is a narrative that brings together all Actions identified in the current assessment plan into one coherent plan for the next assessment cycle.

Note: Write the New PCI in the **future tense** because it describes what the unit intends to implement during the next assessment cycle.

1. Review all Actions identified in the current assessment plan.
2. Summarize all Actions in the New PCI, explaining how they will contribute to continuous improvement.
3. Include any new initiatives or other items the unit plans to assess during the next cycle.
4. Provide relevant contextual information about each Action or initiative, including:
 - what will be implemented;
 - how it will be implemented;
 - when it will be implemented; and
 - who will be responsible.
5. Review the New PCI to ensure that it includes all Actions and other initiatives the unit intends to implement and assess during the next cycle and provides a clear, coherent plan for improvement.