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Introduction

Our Mission

The mission of the Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP) unit in USF’s System Office of Decision Support is to promulgate good assessment and evaluation practices across the university and to align these assessment and evaluation activities with other quality monitoring and continuous improvement activities, including strategic planning, college reviews, program reviews, administrative unit reviews, budgeting, and the development of accountability plans. By providing faculty and staff with guidance about how to generate methodologically sound information about student learning and development so that they may identify and implement curricular and programmatic enhancements, the unit maintains a focus on continuous improvement of teaching, learning, and student development.

Assessment

Assessment is ongoing at USF and is linked to the broader enterprise of continuous quality improvement, which is driven in part by requirements of our regional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and the Florida Board of Governors (FLBOG). The Institutional Effectiveness and Planning unit oversees and facilitates the process of assessment, including the integration of assessment into annual administrative unit reviews and annual reporting and budgeting processes.

System for Assessment Management (SAM)

SAM is an online assessment management system used to enter, edit, and manage all assessment plans and reports for academic programs (undergraduate, graduate, certificate), and academic and student support services. Please note that the system is optimized for use with Google Chrome only.

Using this Handbook

This handbook will explain and illustrate why we assess and how to access, navigate, and input information into SAM.

Contact Us

Please send any questions or comments to assessment@usf.edu.
Part 1: Quality and Compliance

Assessment Overview

What is Academic Assessment?

1. The systematic, reported evaluation of student learning outcomes for demonstrating effectiveness and improving offerings.
2. Academic program assessment consists of the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. It is a continuous process focused on understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance (Angelo, 1995; Palomba & Banta, 1999).


Why Assess? Regulations and Requirements

SACSCOC Requirement 8.2
The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results.

BOG Regulation 8.016
Each baccalaureate program:

- Outlines expected core student learning outcomes in domains of content/discipline knowledge and skills, communication skills, and critical thinking skills.
- Lists the types of assessments students may encounter in the program (e.g., capstone projects, juried performances, embedded exam questions, written reports or essays, etc.)
- Develops methods for assessing student achievement of the core student learning outcomes within program context.
- Uses program evaluation systems to evaluate whether program graduates have achieved the expected core student learning outcomes.
- Uses the evaluation results to improve student learning and program effectiveness.
USF Policy 10-060

Every academic and student support program at each USF System institution must have an active assessment plan on file in the institutional assessment management system. All undergraduate academic programs must meet the requirements of BOG Regulation 8.016, Academic Learning Compacts. This Regulation requires the ongoing assessment of critical thinking skills, communication skills, and content/discipline knowledge and skills. Institutions may have Academic Learning Compacts (ALC) requirements beyond these three content areas.

Completion Calendars

Assessments are due on a rotational schedule in two phases: planning and reporting.

Planning phase: During the planning phase, each program should enter or revise their projected plan, which includes the student learning outcome statement, method of assessment, and performance target(s). These will be reviewed by IEP, during which comments will be provided. The program may change the plans at any time during the process.

Reporting phase: During the reporting phase, programs should revise their plans (if necessary) and enter their results into the “assessment results” and the “use of assessment results” sections. The final reports will be reviewed by IEP.

Each year, final assessments are used to submit required reports to the deans, the provost’s office, and the Board of Governors (BOG). They are also gathered for five-year accreditation requirements submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Plans Due</th>
<th>Reports Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 Calendar Year</td>
<td>January 31st, 2019</td>
<td>December 15th, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 Calendar Year</td>
<td>January 31st, 2020</td>
<td>December 15th, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020 Academic Year</td>
<td>August 31st, 2019</td>
<td>May 31st, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020 Fiscal Year</td>
<td>August 15th, 2019</td>
<td>June 1st, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3-Year Academic Assessment Cycle

The University of South Florida is on a three-year assessment cycle. This means that stated Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) should be assessed over the three-year period. Please note that plans and reports are still required each year; however, the focus of the plans and reports will shift from year to year. After year three, you may revise your SLOs and repeat the process beginning with a new year one.

**Year One**
- Establish program specific SLOs based on the goals of the program.
- Develop a curriculum map showing the courses in which learning outcomes are introduced, reinforced, mastered, and assessed.
- Identify methods that will be used to assess SLOs and a plan for assessing them.
- Collect assessment data, use the collected data to pilot test the feasibility of the assessment measures and processes described in the plan, and (if needed) revise the assessment plan.

**Year Two**
- Collect additional data (or improved data if measures were changed based on the pilot test results from Year One)
- Analyze the data and produce a report that summarizes the assessment findings. The assessment report must include an action plan for using the assessment results to improve curriculum or instruction.

**Year Three**
- Implement the action plan to improve curriculum or instruction that was developed during year two.
- Assess the impact of the curricular or pedagogical changes that were made.
- Begin developing the assessment plan for the next three-year cycle.
IEP and ATLE Partnership

Institutional Effectiveness & Planning (IEP) recently established a partnership with the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE). The IEP unit ensures that the program meets minimum compliance requirements, while ATLE helps improve the assessment practices beyond minimum compliance. The common problem for faculty and program directors is translating the assessment process already in place into SACSCOC and FLBOG compliant language. While all programs have well developed exams, essays, performance evaluations, etc., IEP generally works with faculty to help create a compliant assessment plan/report whereas ATLE focuses help in designing sound assessment processes or ensuring that existing evaluation methods adhere to academic assessment standards.

The flowchart below demonstrates the assessment submission and review process.
Components of an Academic Assessment Plan/Report

Overview

Each curricular offering (i.e., major or certificate program) has a plan in the System for Assessment Management (SAM), which is an internally developed online database. Access to SAM is granted by IEP, and is integrated with the USF single sign-on network security allowing each user to login with Net ID and password.

SAM is set up so each plan is customizable.

Academic programs must input their mission statement and program goals, which may be edited at any time. These carry forward from year-to-year.

Under each program goal, there can be one or more student learning outcomes (SLOs). These carry forward from year-to-year; however, programs are expected to update and adjust these on an annual or triannual basis depending on assessment cycle. Undergraduate programs MUST have three program goal areas: content/discipline specific knowledge and skills, communication skills, and critical thinking skills.

Each student learning outcome has five sections: student learning outcome statement, method of assessment, performance target, assessment results, and use of assessment results. IEP reviews these five sections for compliance with the SACSCOC requirements and the BOG regulation.

Contributors from all academic programs are required to input data and update in each section of each student learning outcome on an annual basis.
Mission Statement

This section should contain the department of the degree program’s mission statement. Mission statements can be usually found on the degree program’s website. Double check that what is entered in SAM matches the department or degree program’s mission. If both align, then no edits are required.

Program Goals

Program goals should comprise the knowledge, skills, and competencies each program expects its graduates to have mastered by graduation. Program goals are broad, over-arching statements that are central to each program’s curriculum. They are not intended to be and should not be measureable outcomes. Florida BOG requires undergraduate programs to have program goals related to at least the following three areas:

1. Mastery of content/discipline-specific knowledge and skills
2. Demonstration of critical thinking skills
3. Demonstration of communication skills.

Undergraduate programs are free to add more program goals. Graduate programs need to provide their own program goals with a minimum of at least one program goal for each graduate program. Each certificate program, both graduate and undergraduate, must also have a minimum of one program goal.

Under each program goal there should be at least one student learning outcome.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Statement

The statement of the student learning outcome is the first subsection of the five-part student learning outcome section, and is a specific statement about what students will be able to demonstrate after a certain level of instruction. Student learning outcomes are organized under a program goal and are measurable outcomes of that goal. In turn, each student learning outcome has a specified method of assessment.

Example: under the ‘communication’ program goal, a program may have the following student learning outcome statement: “Students will be able to orally present and defend their original research projects”.

Student Learning Outcome Checklist:

a. Does it describe an expected change in students' knowledge, attitude, and/or behavior?

The assessment process looks at what the program does to facilitate learning and knowledge acquisition for students, not what students do in the program. The SLO should describe what happens to the students’ set of skills, beliefs, and knowledge over the course of the program; in other words, how effective is the program in what it claims to do?

Incorrect SLO statement: Students will write a thesis.

Correct SLO statement: Students in the (name of the program) will demonstrate the ability to present defensible conclusions based on an investigation of pertinent primary and secondary sources.
In the example above, the SLO specifically refers to the ability that students will acquire from the program: “the ability to present defensible conclusions”. Then, in the method of assessment section you may state that students will write a thesis to demonstrate the above SLO.

b. Does it refrain from stating the assignment?

This standard is an extension of the previous one. Do not state what students will do in the program.

Incorrect statement: Write a thesis, complete a course, or take an exam.

These are assessment instruments and belong in the Method of Assessment section. In the SLO section, state skills students will acquire from the program.

For example, a thesis is not an end goal of getting a degree. The end goal of the degree program includes the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students take with them when they successfully complete a program. A thesis may serve as a tool to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits of mind.

c. Is it unique to the program?

The SLO should be specifically tied to the program. If you have two programs with identical SLOs, the implication is that these are identical programs. If students learn identical things in programs A and B, then program A is identical to program B; and thus, one of the programs should be eliminated.

Each program is designed to give students a unique set of skills and abilities. For example, although undergraduate degrees in biomedical science and chemistry have a majority of shared courses, these degrees prepare students for different careers; therefore, they should have different content knowledge learning outcomes. Communication skills and critical thinking skills may be shared.

d. Is it observable and measurable?

The SLO should be stated in a manner that facilitates measurement by students demonstrating some skill, behavior, and/or knowledge.

Incorrect statement: Students will be good citizens.

The above example is an example of a degree goal. Consider instead the following example.

Correct statement: Students will be able to apply the Amendments to the Constitution of the United States in various situations.

This skill constitutes the fact of being a good citizen, but it is also observable and measurable. As a result, this outcome naturally lends itself to the assessment method. You may ask students to write an essay asking students to apply their knowledge of the amendments to their life; or you may design embedded exam questions that present a case and ask students how amendments can be applied to that case.

e. Does it employ a verb from Bloom's taxonomy? https://www.usf.edu/atle/teaching/blooms-taxonomy.aspx

Bloom’s taxonomy is the hierarchical model of classifying cognitive skills in terms of complexity.
Understanding the material is better than just knowing the facts; being able to apply the knowledge is better than having the understanding of the material, and so on. Choose the most appropriate cognitive skill for the level of your program (Bachelor’s vs. Master’s vs. Doctorate), and for the level of the class within the program (introductory course vs. capstone course). Students in the beginning of their education may focus more on knowing and understanding the material, while more advanced students should apply, analyze, and synthesize the material; not the other way around!

Please select the most appropriate verb from Bloom’s taxonomy.

Correct statement: Undergraduate students in physics in their freshman year will demonstrate knowledge of basic laws of electricity and magnetism.

Correct statement: Undergraduate students in physics in their senior year will be able to apply laws of electricity and magnetism to a wide range of situations.

Correct statement: During their third year, doctoral students in physics will be able to produce a scientific paper of a publishable quality that constitutes an original contribution to their chosen field of specialization.

Note that as students advance through their educational careers, they are required to demonstrate cognitive skills of higher complexity; advancing from knowledge to application, and eventually to synthesis of new knowledge.

f. Does it state specific group of students who will perform the SLO?

Students achieve different learning outcomes and skills at different points of time during their educational career, and some learning outcomes are stepping stones for others. For example, there is a difference between assessing graduating students and assessing students entering their junior year. If you assess graduating students, you only obtain a summative snapshot of their progress over the course of the program. You may only get the following information: 20% of graduates could not apply some specific skill. On the other hand, if you assess students entering junior year, or in other words, students who are about to take upper level courses, you will get different kinds of information. It may turn out that students do not get sufficient training in the lower courses, and that is why they fail in upper level courses! Having this kind of information will give faculty an opportunity to intervene, make changes to the lower level curriculum, and make sure that students understand the basics before taking upper level courses.

Indicate to which students the stated SLO is directed. For example: sophomore students, graduating students, students taking a required capstone course, students completing core sequence of the courses, students entering their senior year, etc.

Method of Assessment

This is the most important section of the SAM report. It describes how students were assessed on the learning outcome. There are several methods that can be used. Each method has a criteria of what should be included in the section. Each learning goal must have a clearly stated method of assessment specific to the learning outcome.
The method of assessment should be as specific as possible. Aspects of the method that should be included are as follows:

1. **A description of the critical assignment assessment type** (essays, comprehensive exam, internship evaluation, embedded test questions, presentations, discussion board entry, etc.)

2. **A statement on how the assessment specifically measures the task, information, or competency stated in the student learning outcome.**

3. **A statement which delineates the course(s) in which the assessment was administered. If administered outside of a course, under what circumstances was the assessment administered?**

4. **Which students in the program will be assessed** (first year students, graduating seniors, all students in the program, etc.)? Remember that assessment methods cannot be reliant on external determinants such as the acceptance to a journal or conference proceedings, and must be designed so that all students within the program are represented in the assessment.

5. **If a sample of student work will be analyzed in lieu of all students, include information on the sample** (percentage of the total number of students, the process of collecting it, etc.)

6. **If employing a rubric, provide specific information on how it was developed and validated.** We encourage the use of previously established and validated rubrics. However, many programs design their own rubric to specifically match the criteria of the assessment. If using a previously validated rubric, include where it was originated. If developing a rubric internally, include a statement on how its validity and reliability were addressed.

7. **Information on who will be reviewing and rating the assessment.** Provide information on the number of raters and how they are related to the program. Raters should be professionals (preferably faculty), with some experience or training in how to use the rubric. Peers (students) are not appropriate individuals to be included as raters. Note: most forms of assessment require multiple raters.

8. **How inter-rater reliability will be addressed.** Almost all assessment types require multiple raters and therefore inter-rater reliability (IRR) should be considered. Assessments that use open-ended responses, written, oral presentations, portfolio review, or are performance-based need multiple faculty raters to review each student’s submission. From these independent faculty scores, a final score must be produced. A statement of how differences in scores between raters was addressed (e.g., a third rater was utilized, scores were averaged). The method of assessment section should include a statement on IRR.

Note: the following assessment types **do not** need inter-rater reliability.

- Standardized tests
- Embedded test questions that are multiple choice, or are structured so that only one, true answer exists.

For example: If the program is using a sample of essays from qualifying courses to assess critical thinking skills, then the method of assessment section should include:

1. **A statement on the type of assessment: essay format, from what class, etc.**
2. **Information on how the student papers will be evaluated to assess critical thinking skills and information on the prompt of the papers.**
3. How the sample of student work was obtained (from what classes, was it by random selection, stratified random selection, etc.).

4. Percentage of the program’s students to be included in the sample.

5. How many faculty members will rate each student paper (must be two or more).

6. How faculty scores will be tabulated to produce a final score for each student (how IRR will be addressed).

7. Information on how the rubric was developed and validated.

The simplest way to address inter-rater reliability (IRR) is to count the number of times when evaluators assign identical scores to students and divide it by the number of all scores; this is known as percent agreement. The following example may help clarify the matter:

*Imagine that there are ten students and two evaluators scoring students on a Likert scale between 1 and 5. The following table displays the hypothetical scores evaluators assigned to each student.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Score Assigned by Evaluator No. 1</th>
<th>Score Assigned by Evaluator No. 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student No. 10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that scores for Students Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 are consistent between evaluators; while scores for student Nos. 2, 4, and 8 are different. In other words, evaluators agree 7 out of 10 times; therefore, percent agreement for this assessment is 70%. You may establish a minimum required percent agreement target, falling below which would make you revise the rubric (e.g. percent agreement below 70%).

*Note: you may define agreement to be within ±1 point; meaning, that in the above example scores for student #2 would also be considered in agreement, but not for students # 4 and 8.*

There are other more robust ways to determine inter-rater reliability such as Cohen’s kappa, Scott’s pi, Fleiss’ kappa, inter-rater correlation, concordance correlation coefficient, intra-class correlation, and Krippendorff’s alpha; however, ensuring percent agreement is the minimum for SACSCOC compliance.
Method of Assessment Checklist:

a. Does it state and describe the assessment instrument?
   
   In as much detail as possible, describe assignment, activity, etc., that will be used to assess the stated learning outcome. Common assessment instruments include: essays, written student work including discussion board responses, theses/dissertations, presentations, oral reports, performances, portfolios, open-ended (or multiple choice) embedded test questions, lab reports, internship or practicum evaluation forms, exams or standardized tests.

b. Does it indicate how the instrument specifically measures the stated SLO?
   
   Justify how selected assessment instrument specifically addresses stated SLO. Is it a criterion in the rubric? Are there specific embedded questions?

   Example: The SLO states that the student will be able to do x, y, z. If the assessment instrument is a multiple-choice test, please provide the statement that aligns x, y, z to specific questions in the test. If the assessment instrument is term paper and rubric is used to assess the paper, please specify which rubric components measure x, y, z.

c. Is it distinct from grading?
   
   Grades are inappropriate for continuous quality improvement; they summarize overall performance of the student (and include unneeded information such as attendance and class participation). This type of assessment will not necessarily yield data that can be used for improvement. A student with a 70% overall test score may fail in one objective which may need to be improved. One option is to measure each aspect separately, report those ratings, and then average them together.

   Example of an unacceptable assessment: Students will write theses and the professor will then assign grades to each thesis.

   A year later you will see the following distribution: 20 students received an “A”, 40 students received a “B”, 15 students received a “C”. What can you do with this information? How can you improve the program? What are common problems? What difficulties do students encounter while writing a thesis? Which skills are underdeveloped? Is it writing, research skills, ability to defend an argument, or gaps in the knowledge of the discipline? If there are gaps in discipline specific knowledge, then in what area? **Letter grades do not give useful information that can be used to make adjustments to the curriculum.**

d. Does it describe the assessment context?
   
   Provide a statement which delineates the course(s) in which the assessments were administered. If administered outside of a course, describe under what circumstances the assessment was administered.

   The context for the assessment can be divided into two types: (1) Course-embedded assessment and (2) assessment outside of the course. Examples of the former include a project in a capstone course, final exam in one of the core courses; examples of the latter include qualifying oral exam at the end of the program, portfolio of student work drawn from multiple classes, internship evaluation forms,
licensure exam administered outside of the coursework. Regardless of what assessment type is selected, please provide an explanation of the assessment context.

Example of an assessment outside of the course: “The assessment instrument is an oral qualifying exam that students have to pass to complete a degree program. An Oral Examination Committee comprised of three professors drawn from the student’s core courses [ABC XXXX, ABC XXXX, ABC XXXX, ABC XXXX] and elective [varies year to year] coursework will conduct the evaluation.”

Example of a course-embedded assessment: “Final project in the ABC XXXX capstone course will be used as an assessment instrument.”

e. Does it indicate the sample?

Will you assess all the students or sample of the students? Please provide all the relevant statistical information and sampling techniques employed. **Note:** if you do not indicate use of a sample in the planning phase, you should not be using one in the reporting phase; this creates misalignment between the Method and Results sections.

f. Does it address all the rubric's requirements (if used)?

i. What are the criteria of the rubric?

For example, the criteria in the Oral Communication VALUE Rubric are: Organization, Language, Delivery, Supporting Material, and Central Message. When a student gives a presentation, the criteria stated above are all assessed separately; scoring student work on a single scale is unacceptable, as it does not show a full picture.

ii. What is the range of the rubric score and what does each rating mean?

Example: if you state that students will be evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5, please elaborate what is meant by each rating (getting 1 means this, getting 2 means that, and so on). A rubric is a subjective assessment instrument and should be rigorously defined.

iii. Who will be evaluating the students?

Compared to the use of test questions that can be either right or wrong, the use of rubrics has some degree of subjectivity. One rater may think that the student deserves a 3 out of 5 on this criterion, another rater thinks that the student deserves a 4 out of 5; different raters may interpret aspects/criteria of scoring differently. Multiple raters are needed to improve the reliability of the measurement.

Please state who are the raters, as well as the number of raters (at least two). Due to the fact that rubrics are inherently subjective, only individuals who know the subject area well should evaluate the students. Usually, these individuals are faculty members; sometimes professionals outside of the university are allowed, however, you need to justify it. Students are not permitted to serve as evaluators.

iv. How is inter-rater reliability (IRR) addressed?

Inter-rater reliability is the degree of agreement between raters. In other words, the method of assessment needs to state how drastic differences in scores (if any arise) between two reviewers
would be addressed. Common methods of addressing the inter-rater reliability include: (1) raters discuss until they reach agreement regarding the rating, (2) if raters cannot agree on the rating, then a third rater is utilized. SACSCOC requires percent agreement stemming from rubric calibration to ensure reliability in rubric scoring across multiple raters.

Performance Target:

Performance targets are internal predictions made by the program regarding the level of student achievement for that learning outcome. This section may be short and must only include a numerical prediction. The prediction should be stated in terms of the rubric’s parameters. For example, if the rubric rates students on a scale of 1-5 for that learning outcome, the performance target should include a percentage of students and a predicted achievement rate:

For example: “Program implementation will be considered a success if 90% of the sample will achieve a final score of 4 or higher for this assessment.”

Performance Target Checklist:

a. Is it quantifiable?

Performance target should be stated in terms of the assessment instrument. For rubrics, it should be stated in terms of the overall rating or components score. For embedded questions, it should be stated in terms of number of questions answered correctly.

b. Does it specify the threshold of success and indicates the percentage of students that will reach the threshold?

Performance targets are internal predictions made by the program regarding the level of student achievement for that SLO. For example: “Program implementation will be considered a success if 90% of the sample will achieve a final score of 4 or higher for this assessment.” This is the extension of the previous standard. In addition to specifying the benchmark result, specify how many students (percentage) will reach that threshold.

c. Does it align with SLO and method of assessment?

The performance target should be related to the method of assessment and learning outcome. Please verify that there is a common thread throughout your assessment plan. This is what we want students to know, here is how we will measure it, here is the numerical target that would indicate the program is actually successful in providing knowledge and skills to its students.

d. Is it stated in realistic terms?

Setting performance targets is up to the program; however, the benchmark should be meaningful and appropriate for making decisions regarding the program. Saying that 100% of students will reach the threshold may not be realistic. Additionally, stating that 30% of students should get at least passing results may be too low. Please note, the assessment process should produce results that will help improve curriculum and/or instruction. The goal is “continuous quality improvement.”
Assessment Results

The assessment results section should mirror the wording in the performance target section, but include the results of the assessment. The total number of students assessed on each learning outcome should be indicated in this section. If using a sample, the final number included in the sample should be indicated, as well as the adjusted percentage of the total number of students in the program. For assessment methods that require multiple raters, the final scores are sufficient for this section instead of including the independent scores, statistical analysis and final numbers for each student.

Assessment results can be reported in terms of percentage of students achieving at each category of the rubric. For example if a program used a rubric that assessed students on a scale of 1-5, they might report the results as:

Students achieving a final score of 5/5 was approximately 75% (n = 30).
Students achieving a final score between 4-4.9/5 was 20% (n = 8).
Students achieving a final score of 3-3.9/5 was 5% (n = 2).
No students achieved a final score lower than a 3.

Assessment Results Checklist:

a. Does it mirror the wording of the performance target section?
   

b. Does it include total number of students assessed?
   

c. Does it include the number of student that reached the benchmark?
   

d. Does it provide sufficient statistical information about the results?
   

Use of Assessment Results

The use of assessment results section is very important, and the portion of the assessment plan that is most commonly completed incorrectly. This portion describes intended improvements at the program level. It is an important distinction to note that this is an assessment of the program, not its participants.

Using the assessment results, programs should look at and think about what improvements or developments will be implemented at the program level. This section is not for programs to describe how they will change their assessment plan to yield greater levels of student achievement, or to elaborate on the assessment results in any way. In addition, this section is not meant for programs to relay how they will work with students differently to achieve greater results (e.g., advising students to seek tutoring).

Assessment is not linear and finite. It is continuous and seeks to assess program development on an annual basis. If all performance targets have been met within a plan, the program is asked to develop learning outcomes that improve new areas aside from what has already been “perfected.”
Example 1: If the critical thinking assessment resulted in a significantly lower number of students achieving at the performance target, then the use of results section could include how and where the program will reinforce critical thinking skills, what adjustments will be made to the curriculum, how program faculty will address the deficiency, and other future improvements or developments.

Example 2: If the critical thinking assessment resulted in sufficient scores to indicate that the measured learning outcome had been met, then the program should include a statement that the program is functioning well in this area, and a statement of the projected area of concentration for the subsequent year’s assessment.

Use of Assessment Results Checklist:

a. **Does it interpret and analyze the results? Does it provides reflection?**

   This is the most important section of the assessment – this is the reason why assessment is required by regional and specialized accreditors throughout the world. As a university, we should continuously improve. Each program should look for weak areas in the curriculum and address them. **This is an assessment of the program, not its participants.**

   For this section, please look at your results and interpret them. What do the data show? Are there any anomalies? Does anything stand out? Provide as much narrative as possible. What insights arose from this process? What did you learn?

b. **Does it include actionable “next steps” the program will take?**

   Based on the interpretation of the results, state actionable changes.

c. **Does it refrain from using the phrase such as “we will continue to monitor…”?**

   The use of the above phrase violates the continuous quality standard found in most accreditation principles. Assessment is not linear and finite; it is continuous and seeks to assess program development on an annual basis (continual improvement). If all performance targets have been met within a plan, the program is asked to develop SLOs that improve new areas aside from what has already been “perfected.”
Part 2: System for Assessment Management (SAM)

Accessing SAM

Locating SAM

In order to access SAM, follow the instructions below.

1. Open your web browser
2. Go to usf.edu/ods
3. Click the “About ODS” tab at the top of the screen
4. In the drop down menu, click “Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP)”

5. Click “Assessment”
6. Click “SAM Reporting”

7. Click “Log In”. You will be prompted to enter your NetID and password.
   - Note: If you never accessed SAM before, you may not have access. In order to request access to SAM click the “Request Access” link. Please see the following section on how to use the Request Access page.
Requesting Access

On the Request Access page, you will need to input the following information:
NetID, First Name, Last Name, Email, Period/Assessment Type, Campus, College/Div.

Assessments are organized by assessment and period types. There are four assessment types:

- Academic
  - All the academic programs (excluding certificates) fall under this category.
- Certificates
- Institute and Centers
- Academic and Student Support Services

There are also three time period types (Please see the “Assessment Due Dates and Timeline” section to learn where your program(s) falls):

- Academic Year
- Calendar Year
- Fiscal Year

Once all the required information is selected, you will see a list of assessments appear in the section titled “Available Assessments”. Please select the assessments to which you need access, then click “Add”. Use Ctrl-Click or Shift-Click to select multiple assessments. Enter any unlisted assessments you need access to in the “Other Assessments” area.

By default everyone is given a “Contributor” role; however you may request another role, if needed. There are three roles in SAM that a faculty or staff member may request:

- Contributor – This role is given to the faculty or staff member who is responsible for editing and submitting assessments; the person in this role receives updates, emails, and notifications regarding the assessment.
- Supervisor – This role is for someone who supervises the assessment, but is not directly involved with monitoring every single assessment plan/report (i.e. a Dean or a Chair); the person in this role may edit or submit the assessment information, but they will not receive updates, emails, and notifications regarding the assessment.
- Viewer – This roles gives permission only to view the assessment, without the ability to edit or submit them; the person in this role does not receive updates, emails, and notifications regarding the assessment.
You will receive an email as soon as you have been granted access to the requested programs.
Navigating SAM

Homepage and Assessment List

When you have successfully logged into SAM, you will see the homepage with announcements about important information regarding upcoming due dates, changes to the assessment requirements, and other important information.

In order to see assessment plans/reports to which you have access, click “Assessments” as shown on the picture above and select assessment type along with the period type from a drop down menu as shown above (this is a managerial view; contributors will have access only to those programs to which they are assigned); after you select the appropriate assessment type, you will see a list of assessments as shown below:
Status Columns

The first six columns are populated by IEP (Campus, College, Major, Degree, Level, CIP Code); however, please take a look columns seven through ten (four rightmost columns), which reflect the current status of the assessment.

1. **Status Column** shows the last action conducted on the assessment.
   a. **Not Started** – no assessment has been submitted to the system for the current cycle.
   b. **Edited** – the assessment was edited by the unit, but not yet submitted.
   c. **Submitted** – the assessment has been submitted and awaits IEP review.
   d. **Reviewed** – the assessment has been reviewed. You may go in and make adjustments, if needed.
   e. **Reopened** – the assessment was viewed by the department, but there have been no edits made.

2. **Review Status Column** shows status of the review by IEP.
   a. **Plan/Report Not Reviewed** – the assessment was not reviewed; either it was not submitted, or we have not yet been able to review it.
   b. **Plan/Report Not Approved** – the assessment is not in compliance with SACSCOC and/or BOG standards, therefore adjustments to the assessments are needed.
   c. **Plan/Report Approved** – the assessment meets minimum SACSCOC and BOG standards.
   d. **In Review** – IEP is in the process of reviewing the assessment. You cannot make edits if the plan/report is marked “In Review”.

3. **Last Review** shows the degree of compliance and granted exceptions.
   a. **Compliant** – the assessment meets minimum SACSCOC and BOG standards.
   b. **Non-Compliant 1** – minor edits are needed to bring the assessment into compliance.
   c. **Non-Compliant 2** – major issues with the assessment (e.g. missing elements).
   d. **On Hold** – the assessment was granted an extension or an exception.

4. You may perform the following actions with the assessment.
   a. **View Assessment** (Paper Symbol (1st icon in redlined box below))
   b. **Edit Assessment** (Pencil Symbol (2nd and middle icon in redlined box below))
Assessment Cycles

At the top-right corner you will see the cycle selection. There are two concurrent cycles that you can work with in SAM at any given moment:

1. **Planning Phase**
   During this phase you are submitting a plan for an upcoming year. Required assessment sections are:
   a. Student Learning Outcome Statement
   b. Method of Assessment
   c. Performance Target

2. **Reporting Phase**
   During this phase you are submitting a report for the year that has passed. Required assessment sections are:
   a. Assessment Results
   b. Use of Assessment Results

*Note. Whenever you are submitting an assessment, make sure you are submitting it into the correct cycle.*

Academic Learning Compacts

BOG Regulation 8.016 requires each SUS institution to develop a process that ensures that program faculty:

- Develop and publish an Academic Learning Compact (ALC) for each baccalaureate program. At a minimum, the ALC must contain a list of core student learning outcomes (SLOs) in the areas of content/discipline knowledge and skills, communication skills, and critical thinking skills (and examples of assessment students might encounter).

SAM automatically extracts SLOs, the curriculum map, and common assessment methods and publishes it on the public-facing web page; you can access and see the ALCs from the “Assessments” menu.
Working with the Assessment Plan/Report

Editing Goal/Outcomes

In order to edit a goal or an outcome, click the edit button that is directly to the right of the object you wish to edit. Please note, if “Assessed this cycle” is unchecked, all the sections beside the Student Learning Outcomes Statements will be hidden (e.g. Methods of Assessment, Performance Targets, Assessment Results, and Use of Assessment Results). Contributors will not be able to edit these sections. Nor will IEP will able to review them. If you intend to assess an outcome, make sure that “Assessed this cycle” is checked.

“Assessed this Cycle” checkbox

This feature was introduced into SAM to help academic programs conform to SACSCOC and FL BOG requirements stating that every program “…identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement…” The checkbox feature allows the programs to list all of their SLOs, but only assess a few of them per period. The idea is for external evaluators to be able to see all of the SLOs of any given program, and not only those assessed in a given period.

The following program listed three different outcomes under the “Communication Skills” goal, therefore demonstrating the outcomes students will achieve as a result of the program. However, the program decided to assess only the second outcome this period, therefore they checked “Assessed this cycle” for that outcome.
Goal Type

One of the features is the ability to select “goal type” when creating a new goal or editing an existing one. When you are creating or editing a goal, there is a drop down menu that allows users to select one of the four “goal types”. These types are:

1. Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Skills;
2. Communication Skills;
3. Critical Thinking Skills;
4. Other (Non-ALC).

All undergraduate programs are required to have at least one outcome for the goal types one through three. It is possible to have additional goals that do not fit the ALC framework; in this case select “Other (Non-ALC)” and enter a goal statement. Some examples of possible Non-ALC goal types are laboratory skills, information literacy, ethical reasoning, civic engagement, etc.

Graduate programs are not required to use any of the three ALC goal types. They may select “Other (Non-ALC)” goal type and state goal(s) that represent their specific program.

For the existing goal, click “Edit” next to the goal statement. If you do not see an “Edit” button, scroll to the bottom of the screen and click “Reopen for Editing”/“Unsubmit Assessment”.

You will be able to select the goal type from the drop-down menu, and input the goal statement sentence in the field below:
If you are adding a **new goal**, click “Add Goal” (see redlined box in lower right of box below) and you will be able to select a new goal type and input a new goal statement. Please refrain from using partial phrases, and instead use full sentences to state program goals (i.e. “**Students will demonstrate proficiency with written and oral communication skills.**” in lieu of “**communication skills**”).

Please note that in this case the “Communication Skills” goal type no longer appears on the list. Each assessment plan may only have one of each ALC goal types; however, you may have any number of “Other (non-ALC)” goal types.

The example below is a good way to organize outcomes:

- Goal Type: “Communication Skills.”
  - Goal Statement: “Students obtaining an undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering will be able to communicate effectively and on the level that is necessary for a successful employment within the discipline”.
    - Outcome 1: “Students will demonstrate written communication skills by writing a thesis that presents defensible conclusions, is based on verifiable evidence, demonstrates students’ ability to convey essential discipline-specific knowledge, and employs rules of Standard Written English”.
    - Outcome 2: “Students will demonstrate oral communication skills by giving a presentation using various verbal and non-verbal techniques of effective delivery”.
    - Outcome 3: “Students will be able to communicate effectively as a team, including the ability to plan and organize workflow, manage conflicts, and efficiently share information with each other.”
Uploading a Curriculum Map

The section to upload a curriculum map is at the top of the assessment plan page (see screenshot below). To upload your curriculum map, click on the edit button at the top right of the curriculum box. Two more buttons will appear.

- Chose File: select a file ending in .bmp, .gif, .png, .jpeg, .doc, .xls, .xlsx, .pdf
- Upload File: Upload selected file to SAM. Once uploaded, the document will become a link that when clicked will download the uploaded file.

Important Note: Please make sure that Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) listed in the map and those stated in the assessment plan are perfectly aligned; in other words, (1) there should be an equal number of SLOs, (2) the wording of SLOs should be identical both in the curriculum map and in the assessment plan.

Selecting Common Assessment Methods

In addition to uploading a curriculum map, all undergraduate degree programs are required to select all of the assessment methods that students may encounter in the program. Common assessment methods can be selected at the bottom of the assessment page, above the “Review Submissions” button.
Submitting Assessment

In order to submit an assessment for review by IEP, please scroll to the bottom of the assessment page and click “Review Submission”. Clicking it will take you to a separate checklist page where all the sections are grouped together by section type. On this page the contributor will need to certify that her/his assessment plan/report adheres to the compliance standards. If you are satisfied with your assessment and you attest that the criteria have been met, you may check “Learning outcomes are ready for review” and click “Submit”.

Note: Whenever you make changes to the individual sections within the assessment plan/report, assessment remains in the “Edited” status. In order for IEP to review the assessment, you need to finalize your changes by submitting the report.
Part 3: Assessment Resources

List of Resources

1. Teaching and Learning Assessment Plan Worksheet (see pp. 31-32)
2. Teaching and Learning Assessment Data Analysis Worksheet (see p. 33)
3. Common Assessment Instruments (see p. 34)
4. 3-year Assessment Cycle Rubric sample (see p. 35)
5. Blank Assessment Template (see p. 36)
6. What New Faculty Need to Know About Assessment:
   http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/ABfaculty.pdf
7. Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE):
   https://www.usf.edu/atle/teaching/curriculum-design.aspx
9. Assessment Helpline: Mr. Hennadii Balashov at (813) 974-6881
Teaching and Learning Assessment Question & Planning

Use this document as a tool and first draft for your SAM assessment plan cycle submission. After completing this worksheet, you will have provided all the information needed for an academic assessment plan (SLO statement, Measure, and Performance Target).

1. I want to know the following about my students’ learning:
   - Be sure you know why you’re doing this.
   - Do you expect to find any surprises?

2. Effective research on teaching makes use of data and other gathered information in constructive ways, such as:
   - Development of new courses/modules
   - Curriculum mapping
   - Rubric revision
   - Curricular revisions
   - Faculty development, etc.
   **Things that do not qualify:**
   - Sending students to tutoring labs or writing centers
   - Hiring consultants to change student behavior
   - “Continuing to monitor” without thoughtful reflection and actionable next steps

I will use the information I gather to:

3. My program will use the information I gather to:

4. Which **program outcome/GenEd outcome** is this question most closely related to?

5. Taking all of the above into consideration, how would you update your assessment question into an SLO? [https://www.usf.edu/atle/teaching/curriculum-design.aspx](https://www.usf.edu/atle/teaching/curriculum-design.aspx)
6. Course(s) in which the assessment will take place: __________________________

7. Description of assessment tool:

Think through what you are already doing in the program or course — can current assignments be modified or incorporated?

- Current course activity or assignment:
- Course-embedded assessment
- Culminating assignment
- In-class survey
- Performance review
- Portfolio
- Pre-test/Post-test
- Rubric evaluation
- Standardized instrument

Depending on your assessment tool (i.e. the means to measure what you intend to measure), you may need to use a rubric, address inter-rater reliability, etc. If so, follow these guidelines from the Assessment Resources site. A glossary is also available on the site.

8. Activities (which may include assignments and graded events) in which SLO(s) may be assessed at the course or program level:

9. By this point, you have completed the work to draft an SLO statement and method of assessment, so the final piece of the assessment plan is the performance target. What baseline target would you set to identify whether students are learning at a certain level (common targets are 70%, 75%, etc.)?

For questions about the SAM assessment and SACSCOC requirements, contact Institutional Effectiveness. If you’re seeking help with questions about effective assessment practices, please connect with an ATLE Learning & Development Facilitator at atle@usf.edu or (813) 974-1841.
Teaching and Learning Data Analysis Worksheet

Use this document as a tool and first draft for your SAM assessment report cycle submission. After completing this worksheet, you will have provided all the information needed for an academic assessment report (Results, Use of Assessment Results).

Faculty Discussion Points:

1. Any patterns? Does anything leap out? Apparent conclusions? (Be sure to think about this through the lens that students have learned.)

2. How does the data align with experiences in the classroom? Does it corroborate/substantiate witnessed events while interacting with students?
   - List areas that the data do not address
   - Anything additional you’d like to know?

3. Does this data suggest any connections to external entities, programs, or ideas?
   - Trends in the discipline?

4. Any there any anomalies (unexpected, unintended data) or provocative data? If so, are there external factors that impacted the data (e.g. hurricane, tornado, etc.)?

5. Gathering this sort of data is only useful if it can be used to improve instruction. This can take the form of:
   - Adjusting assessment
   - Attempting new pedagogies
   - Implementing new strategies
   How might your data lead you to assess practices?

For questions about the SAM assessment and SACSCOC requirements, contact Institutional Effectiveness. If you’re seeking help with questions about effective assessment practices, please connect with an ATLE Learning & Development Facilitator at atle@usf.edu or (813) 974-1841.
# Common Assessment Methods for SAM and their Reporting Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Essays, written student work including discussion board responses, theses/dissertations</th>
<th>Presentations, oral reports, performances</th>
<th>Portfolios</th>
<th>Open-ended (not multiple choice) embedded test questions</th>
<th>Lab reports</th>
<th>Internship or practicum evaluation form</th>
<th>Exam/Test</th>
<th>Standardized tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Method Statement</td>
<td>Clear statement of assessment type</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to learning goal</td>
<td>A statement on how the assessment specifically measures the task, information or competency stated in the Learning Outcome</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indication of Sample</td>
<td>A sample can be used for any assessment type. Indication of whether a sample was used, partial students or all students were used in the assessment is required for all methods.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of Sample</td>
<td>A statement on how the sample was obtained</td>
<td>Yes, if using a sample</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of Data</td>
<td>A statement on assessment context; what courses the assessment will be conducted in. Or, if not in courses, what were the circumstances of the assessment?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubric description and development</td>
<td>A statement on how the rubric was developed and measures taken to reinforce its validity/reliability</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of raters</td>
<td>Needs multiple raters</td>
<td>Indicate number of raters, needs multiple</td>
<td>Indicate number of raters, needs multiple</td>
<td>Indicate number of raters, needs multiple</td>
<td>Indicate number of raters, needs multiple</td>
<td>Indicate number of raters, needs multiple</td>
<td>Indicate number of raters, needs multiple</td>
<td>Does not need multiple raters</td>
<td>Does not need multiple raters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-rater reliability statement</td>
<td>Statement of how inter-rater reliability is addressed</td>
<td>IRR statement is needed</td>
<td>IRR statement is needed</td>
<td>IRR statement is needed</td>
<td>IRR statement is needed</td>
<td>IRR statement is needed</td>
<td>IRR statement is needed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument reliability and validity</td>
<td>Statement of instrument reliability/validity</td>
<td>No statement needed, included in rubric statement</td>
<td>No statement needed, included in rubric statement</td>
<td>No statement needed, included in rubric statement</td>
<td>No statement needed, included in rubric statement</td>
<td>No statement needed, included in rubric statement</td>
<td>No statement needed, included in rubric statement</td>
<td>Statement needed if instrument was internally developed</td>
<td>Yes, include information from the developers/exam manual on the instrument reliability and validity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Academic Program Assessment Rubric - Year 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Summary Ratings</th>
<th>Compliance Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On Hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Overall Rating For Undergraduate Assessments</td>
<td>IE has approved a delay in the submission of a plan/report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Rating For Graduate Assessments (ALC requirements do not apply to Graduate Programs)</td>
<td>IE has approved a delay in the submission of a plan/report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Component Ratings</th>
<th>Compliance Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing Element(s)</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Learning Outcome Statement</td>
<td>Should be actionable and realistic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Method of Assessment</td>
<td>Should include type of assessments, how the program is being measured, and should provide information specific to the stated measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance Targets</td>
<td>Should be thought of as PROGRAM benchmarks. Specify what numbers would indicate that the program has met its programmatic goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Discussion of Results</td>
<td>Include specific findings, including number of students included in the assessment, and interpretation of results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of Assessment Results</td>
<td>Should include actionable items for PROGRAM improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name of the Program:

CIP Code:

Cycle:

Program’s Mission Statement:

Program Goal 1 (What is the program trying to achieve? What does an ideal graduate look like?):

1a. Student Learning Outcome Statement, or SLO statement (Is it a specific skill or knowledge that can be measured? Is it a specific part of the goal?):

1b: Method of Assessment (How does the program measure the achievement of the stated SLO?):

1c: Performance Target (Achieving what specific numerical target will signify program’s success in delivering its program goal?):

1d: Assessment Results (What are the actual numerical results of the assessment?):

1e: Use of Assessment Results (Based on the results, what actions is the program going to take to improve its performance? What can the program do differently to ensure that students are learning?):

***Note that program may have multiple goals, and each goal may have multiple outcomes. Please use this template to include additional goals/outcomes.