Why Assess?

Institutional effectiveness is a priority at the University of South Florida (USF). The University’s chief accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) requires that all units providing administrative or education support services identify goals and objectives, assesses the extent to which the unit achieves these goals and objectives, and provide evidence of improvement based on the analysis of the results. (Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.2)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for developing an assessment plan for an administrative or educational support unit that will satisfy SACSCOC requirements and USF’s standards for continuous improvement. It also includes information on the process for submitting an annual report of the assessments to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Academic Planning and Review (OIE) through our System for Assessment Management (SAM).

Completion Calendars:

Assessments are due on a rotational schedule in two phases: Planning and Reporting. The entire phase for administrative plans are on a fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

Planning phase: During the planning phase, each program should enter or revise their projected plan, which includes Objective Statement, Method of Assessment, and Performance Targets. These will be reviewed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and comments will be provided. The program can change the plans at any time during the process.

Reporting phase: This phase opens in August and closes at the end of July. Programs should revise their plans (if necessary) and enter their results into Assessment Results and Use of Assessment Results. The final reports will be reviewed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. During the Reporting phase, the information gathered should
be used to determine the subsequent year’s assessment goals which should be entered by (approx.) September 30.

### Administrative Assessment Reporting

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<th>Plan Year</th>
<th>Plan Due Dates</th>
<th>Plan Approval Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>August 31, 2016</td>
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<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>September 30, 2017</td>
<td>October 15, 2017</td>
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### System for Assessment Management (SAM):

Each administrative has a plan in the **System for Assessment Management (SAM)**, which is an internally developed database available online. Access to SAM is granted through the office of Institutional Effectiveness, and uses each person’s Net ID/university system password to log in.

SAM is set up so each plan is customizable. Each administrative unit is individual and, on occasion, some administrative units may be combined in one single report. Please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness regarding specific questions you may have about your administrative assessment.
Annually, participants are required to complete a plan which includes a Mission Statement, Goals, Objectives, Objective Statement, Method of Assessment and Performance Target. These specific fields are populated from the previous year’s report for the convenience of the participants. They may be deleted, modified, and additional ones may be added as needed by the participant. During the Reporting phase, the final two sections are completed: Assessment Results and Use of Assessment Results.

**Mission Statement:**

The mission is a broad statement that reflects the aim of the administrative or educational support unit. Once entered in SAM, it may remain unedited. A mission statement should:

- Be concise
- Be linked directly to USF’s mission statement
- Include the major functions of the unit

**Goals:**

The goals of administrative and educational support units should be aligned to the goals of the institution. Goals are broad/general assertions that describe the overarching long-term intended direction of the unit. Goals may or may not be measurable and usually need to be further developed as separate/distinct objectives, that, when measured appropriately, provide evidence of how well you are accomplishing your goals. Under each goal there should be at least one objective.

**Objective:**

Objectives are measurable statements that describe the expected or intended quality relative to timeliness, responsiveness, accuracy, etc. Objectives often describe how well a unit intends to function or to what degree it will improve its functioning or the services provided. The important question in this section is: “What is the office trying to accomplish?”

Client satisfaction is the most common type of administrative outcome/objective. Less common, but equally acceptable administrative outcomes/objectives are those that focus on the ability of clients once services have been provided (e.g., staff’s ability to process a requisition after training has been provided).
Administrative-level objectives must be:

- Linked to the university goals and mission statement
- Realistic in terms of the resources and support currently available within the college
- Measurable – feasible to collect accurate quantitative and/or qualitative data usable for making improvements to process or unit

Example:

“Expand use of purchasing cards (P-Card) for commodities and services utilized by the university”

It is important to note that some university units may have an objective that directly aligns with a student learning outcome. For instance, non-academic units may be responsible for teaching a course, etc. In this case, the objective should be worded in a way that corresponds to an academic learning outcome. Please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to gain the Components of an Academic Assessment Plan.

Method of Assessment:

This is the most important section of the SAM report. It describes how unit will be assessed on the objective. There are many methods that can be used. Each goal must have a clearly stated method of assessment specific to the objective.

The method of assessment should be as specific as possible. Aspects of the method that should be included are as followed:

1. **A description of the situation being assessed including baseline data** (current level of success, etc.).

2. **A statement on how the assessment specifically measures the unit objective**
   Unlike academic assessment, indirect measures and inter-rater reliability are not necessary to address, unless student learning outcomes are included.

3. **The means by which the program will measure the objective** (alumni surveys, questionnaires, email correspondence, focus groups, statistical information, etc.).

4. **A brief description of the tools being used** (5-question online survey, post-service student survey, focus groups, etc.)
Example:

“[Unit] will give the [Assessment] to a random sample of students in the Global Citizenship Program and a sample who have not participated in the program.”

“A survey will be provided to all students who participate in the Tunnel of Oppression Survey. The Survey contains 10 likert-type questions, and 4-open ended questions.”

“Students who use the Tutoring Center will be provided a survey once per semester upon entering their tutoring session. The survey contains 15 likert-style questions and 5 open-ended questions.”

Performance Target:

Performance targets are internal predictions made by the program regarding the level that will indicate success of meeting the objective. It is an important distinction that the prediction is not necessarily what the unit believes their performance will be, but instead the ultimate goal that will indicate success. This section can be short and must only include a numerical prediction.

Example:

“[Unit] will consider an improvement of 5% meeting the objective.”

“At least 75% of students responding to the Tunnel of Oppression survey will indicate that the experience changed their thinking about oppression.”

Assessment Results:

The Assessment Results section should mirror the wording in the performance target section, but include the results of the assessment. The numerical information should be provided, including the number of individuals responding to a survey, the actual percentage improvement, etc.

Example:

“Alumni surveys were sent to approximately 2000 alumni of the program. Of those, the goal of receiving 10% was achieved (n = 202). Approximately 95% indicated that they were working in the field.”

“Student surveys were provided to all student post-service. The student pool included approximately 300 students, of which 20% (n=62) responded. Of the surveyed students, 85% indicated they were pleased with the service provided.”
Use of 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 is to be the area that describes intended improvements at the unit level and should include actionable plans for improvement.

Units should look at and think about what improvements or developments will be implemented at the unit level in light of the assessment results. In some cases, the unit may find that it did not meet the objective, and will indicate what changes will be made and how it will assess success in the next year. If, however, the unit meets the objective, a new course of action should be indicated (possibly a completely new assessment objective) for the next year.

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 unit is asked to develop goals and objectives that improve new areas aside from what has already been “perfected.”