



Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

Guidelines For Administrative and Educational Support Units Assessment Plans

The purpose of this document is to provide suggestions for developing an assessment plan for administrative and educational support units. The document reflects guidelines for designing and tailoring assessment plan aligned with the needs and purposes of various administrative and educational support units at USF.

Developing Administrative Unit Assessment Plans

The principal aim of developing an assessment plan is to clarify the focus and content of your plan, which should be based upon the needs of your administrative or educational support unit. Approach to developing the plan should be determined by the mission of the unit.

Below are specific steps to assist in developing an effective assessment plan. The steps align with the assessment plan templates:

Step 1: Define the mission of the unit

The mission is a broad statement that reflects the aim of the administrative or educational support unit. Mission statement should:

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

Step 2: Define the Goals of the Administrative or Educational Support Unit

The goals of administrative and educational support units should be aligned to the goals of the institution. Goals are broader/general assertions that describe the overarching long-term intended objectives of the college. 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.

- a) Example of a goal (administrative unit): *"To improve USF's budget process"*
- b) Example of a goal (educational support unit): *"To provide leadership skills to students and student leaders"*

Step 3: a) Define Intended Objectives (Administrative Units)

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

b) Define Intended Learning Outcomes (Educational Support Units)

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are statements that target the intended knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes students are meant to be able to demonstrate after participating in a given activity and/or after using services within an educational support unit.

Student learning outcomes must be specific to the unit and measurable.

Example of a student learning outcome: *“Students participating in Learning Communities will express higher levels of personal interaction and satisfaction with the learning environment in the residence halls than other resident students”*

Step 4: State the Method of Assessment and Performance Targets

Method of Assessment refers to the *“measures”* your unit intends to use to reach the objectives (e.g. surveys, focus groups). Description of your assessment method(s) should include *baseline* data/information which focuses on *“the current state of the college”* regarding a given objective whereas *“Performance Target”* refers to *“where the college would like to be”*. The statement(s) should briefly state how you will define success based on the defined objectives.

It is important that the methods chosen enable the unit to evaluate its effectiveness in terms of services offered. A primary objective of assessment is to illuminate strengths and weaknesses in your unit that that can lead to improvement.

a) Examples of Methods of assessment and Performance Target (Administrative Units):

i) *"Comparison of this year's spending with last year's spending"*

ii) *"Customer satisfaction survey will indicate that more than 80% (15% more than last year) of respondents are satisfied with our services"*

b) Examples of Methods of assessment and Performance Target (Educational Support Units):

i) *"Students participating in the EBI multiculturalism and diversity test will score a mean of 5.5 or above on all questions."*

ii) *"At least 75% of students responding to the Tunnel of Oppression survey will indicate that the experience changed their thinking about oppression."*

Step 5: Assessment Results

This section, which forms the first part of the assessment report, requires actual data/information based on the previously stated objectives/outcomes, methods of assessment and performance targets. The data gathered must be analyzed and formatted in a way that it provides useful information for identifying strengths and weaknesses and improving processes and services.

Step 6: Action Plan - Use of Results Improvement

This section, commonly referred to as "closing the loop", requires an action plan of the unit based on the achieved results. Administrative and educational support units are required to review assessment results with a focus toward uncovering services or parts of services that need to be improved. Since the express purpose of assessment is to use what is learned in the process to improve performance of units, it is important that annual assessment report contain a description of the actions or "steps" that were taken in response to the assessment results to improve the unit's services (e.g., enhance services, add personnel, enhance technology, etc).