Assessment Fundamentals

Institutional Assessment and Research

February 2017
What is assessment?

- The systematic process of establishing outcomes, explaining how those outcomes will be measured, collecting data, and analyzing/reviewing those data to make changes and improvements.

- Think about a Fitbit!
What’s the purpose of assessment?

- **To inform** – The assessment process should inform department heads and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the unit to the development and growth of students.

- **To improve** – The assessment process should provide feedback to determine how improvements can be made.

- **To prove** – The assessment process should encapsulate and demonstrate what the unit is accomplishing to students, faculty, staff and outsiders.

- **To support** – The assessment process should provide support for campus decision-making activities such as unit review and strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.
Why is assessment important?

• Receive accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

• Show progress towards UNC mission, UNC strategic goals and WSSU strategic plan

• Accomplish WSSU’s mission

• Serve our student body to the best of our ability

• Obtain funding
SACS Core Requirement 2.5

The institution engages in on-going, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that

(1) incorporate a systematic review of institution mission, goals and outcomes;
(2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and
(3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.
SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves those outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas (Institutional Effectiveness):

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2 administrative support services
3.3.1.3 educational support services
3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate
We’re All Learning!

• Assessment is as much art as science.

• It’s okay to be different.

• You’re experts in your area.

• We’re here to support you!
Assessment is Most Effective When …

- It is viewed as a comprehensive, systematic and continuous activity.

- Measures are meaningful.

- It is efficient and manageable.

- It utilizes multiple measures and multiple sources.

- Results are valued, and are genuinely used to improve units’ structure, services, and processes.

- It is coordinated by one person or a team and reviewed by a committee.
Assessment should be...

- Iterative
- Incorporated in daily routine
- Useful

Assessment should NOT be...

- Time consuming
- Overly stressful
What is the “Assessment Cycle”?

- Assessment audits occur annually

Plan—Establish outcomes and assessment methods

Assess—Gather, review and share data to measure progress towards goal

Use Results—Make changes to improve institutional effectiveness

Demonstrates “closing the loop”
Essential Components of Assessment at WSSU

• Outcomes

• Assessment Method
  • Criterion/Target
  • When and How Often

• Results

• Actions and Follow-Ups

Assessment plans and reports are stored in TracDat, WSSU’s assessment management system.
What is TracDat?

- WSSU’s online assessment management system
- Stores assessment plans, reports and related documents
- Contains Major, Department and Administrative assessment units
- Has reporting units for WSSU strategic plan, WSSU student learning outcomes (general education outcomes)
- Users are assigned to enter and review TracDat information
What is an “outcome”?

• A statement of intention to achieve a specific result
• Expression of the desired, measurable end results

Examples:

• Overall cash giving to the university will increase from one fiscal year to the next.

• The department will increase the number of courses that incorporate high impact practices.

• Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate and use information effectively and responsibly to increase understanding.
Outcomes are SMART!

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time bound

Outcomes should be...

- Concrete and observable
- Singular, not “bundled”
- Under the control of your unit
- Oriented towards specific results, explicit

Outcomes should focus on the “big things” that are important to your unit.
What should outcomes address?

- Units should always be assessing 3-5 outcomes that are relevant for their unit.

### Academic Units

| Major-Level: Student Learning (incorporate WSSU SLOs and match academic catalog) |
| Department-Level: Process-oriented outcomes (faculty productivity, advising, service, etc.) |

### Administrative Units

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Customer Service
- Student Learning
- Data Quality
- Strategic Plan

Where applicable
How can we determine outcomes?

1. Think about your client(s). This could be students, staff, faculty members, prospective students, members of the larger community, etc.

2. Consider what you would like your client to experience, receive or understand (or know, think, or be able to do) as a result of a service that your area provides. Also, consider what impact you would like for your functions, processes and services to have on your client.

3. Use this information to create effective outcome statements.
What are “Assessment Methods”?

- The strategies, techniques, tools and products used to determine the extent to which the outcome was met

Direct assessment methods are based on the sample of work that someone produced.

Indirect assessment methods are based on individuals’ thoughts and perceptions of their experiences.

All outcomes should have at least one direct assessment method.

Use multiple assessment methods for each outcome.

Always establish a “Criterion/Target,” which is the threshold that indicates success. Make sure to describe “When and How Often” you’ll collect and report data to TracDat.
Direct Assessment Method Examples

- Quizzes or tests (internal or external)
- Using a rubric (NOT grades)
- Audit Reports
- Case study
- Pre/post assessment
- Reviewing a sample of work with an evaluation form
- Tracking Logs
- Annual Reports
- Annual Reports
Indirect Assessment Method Examples

Focus Groups

Course Evaluations

Surveys

Exit Interviews

Survey data available on IAR’s website:

- Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
- UNC Graduating Senior Survey
- UNC Sophomore Survey
- Course Evaluations
- WSSU Faculty Survey
- WSSU Staff Survey

**Consult with IAR before you administer a survey!**
Outcomes with Assessment Methods

**Outcome**: Patrons will be satisfied with library services.

**Assessment Method**: In an annual survey, 80% of respondents will respond that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with library services. Data will be collected and reported annually.
Outcomes with Assessment Methods

**Outcome:** Efficiency will be increased by utilizing available technology (e.g., RamTech).

**Assessment Method:** The RamTech tracking system will show that the time between RamTech ticket submission and completion will be reduced from 5 business days to 3 business days for at least 70% of all tickets for academic year 2015-2016. Data will be reviewed and reported every quarter.
Outcomes with Assessment Methods

Outcome: Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate and use information effectively and responsibly to increase understanding.

Assessment Method: In FLM 4886, students complete a 30 page research paper on an approved topic. The WSSU Information Literacy rubric will be used. At least 85% of students will score at least a 3 on all components of the WSSU Information Literacy Rubric. The research paper is due at the end of FLM 4886 (spring semester). Data will be collected annually and analyzed/reported every 2 years.
Don’t spend all your time planning! Collect, analyze and use your data!

**Typical**

- Plan
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Data Utilization
- Follow-up

**Desired**
What are “Results”? 
The data collected for a particular assessment method

Set a cycle that makes sense for you & report data accordingly

Results should be recorded in language that aligns with the assessment method’s criterion/target.

If your target is that 80% of students will score at least a 3 out of 4 for each rubric component, don’t report that 7 students got a “B.”

Instead, report that 70% (n=10) of students scored at least a 3 for component 1, 90% scored at least a 3 for component 2, 80% scored at least a 3 for component 3, etc.

Audits occur annually
Report your data (even if you don’t reach your target)!

- The importance of assessment is to make sure that there’s a documented process in place for establishing outcomes, measuring against those outcomes, and using the results to make improvements.

- If you missed your target, you’ll have an opportunity to ask WHY?, take action and hopefully improve the next cycle.

- SACSCOC is all about improvement!!
Outcomes, Assessment Methods & Results

Outcome: Patrons will be satisfied with library services

Assessment Method: In an annual survey, 80% of respondents will respond that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with library services. Data will be collected and reported annually.

Results: In 2014-2015, 100 people completed the annual library survey. Among those, 85 (85%) indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with library services.
Outcomes, Assessment Methods & Results

**Outcome**: Efficiency will be increased by utilizing available technology (e.g., RamTech).

**Assessment Method**: The time between RamTech ticket submission and completion will be reduced from 5 business days to 3 business days for at least 70% of all tickets for academic year 2015-2016. Data will be reviewed and reported every quarter.

**Results**: The RamTech tracking system showed that 50% of all tickets were completed within 3 business days for every quarter in AY 2015-2016.
**Outcome:** Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate and use information effectively and responsibly to increase understanding.

**Assessment Method:** In FLM 4886, students complete a 30 page research paper on an approved topic. The WSSU Information Literacy rubric will be used. At least 85% of students will score at least a 3 on all components of the WSSU Information Literacy Rubric. The research paper is due at the end of FLM 4886 (spring semester). Data will be collected annually and analyzed/reported every 2 years.

**Results:** Spring 2014-2015--16 students completed the assignment. The percentage of students scoring at least 3 (out of 4) are as follows:

- Determining Information Needed: 50%
- Accessing Information: 50%
- Evaluating Information and Sources: 56.3%
- Using Information Effectively: 75%
- Using Information Ethically: 75%
Actions and Follow-Up

Now that you have your results, you need to determine how you are going to use them.

Your results should lead to Actions and Follow-Ups.

Actions and Follow-Ups should lead to Improvements and Increased Institutional Effectiveness.

This is part of “closing the loop” and completing the assessment cycle.
**Outcome:** Patrons will be satisfied with library services

**Means of Assessment & Criterion/Target:** In an annual survey, 80% of respondents will respond that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with library services. Data will be collected and reported annually.

**Results:** In 2014-2015, 100 people completed the annual library survey. Among those, 85 (85%) indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with library services.

**Action:** Because the target was met, we will increase our target to 90% and continue to strive for patron satisfaction.

*Follow-Up: In 2015-2016, 88% of respondents expressed satisfaction (see “results”). We will talk in our next staff meeting about ways to reach our 90% target for next year.*

*Follow-Up: In our September 2016 staff meeting, it was decided that we would offer a comment box at the circulation desk and post responses to selected comments so patrons can see we take customer service seriously. We began this initiative in October 2016. For 2016-2017, 92% of survey respondents were satisfied (see “results”).*
**Outcome**: Efficiency will be increased by utilizing available technology (e.g., RamTech).

**Means of Assessment & Criterion/Target**: The time between RamTech ticket submission and completion will be reduced from 5 business days to 3 business days for at least 70% of all tickets for academic year 2015-2016. Data will be reviewed and reported every quarter.

**Results**: The RamTech tracking system showed that 50% of all tickets were completed within 3 business days for every quarter in AY 2015-2016.

**Action and Follow-Up**: The unit will continue to make progress in efficiency and will strive to meet the target for the next assessment cycle. Meetings will be held to determine if work load can be distributed differently to facilitate meeting the 70% target.

**Follow-Up**: Meetings were held in summer 2016, and it was decided that work study students would be trained to accommodate more “housekeeping requests,” thus freeing up full-time personnel to focus on other projects.
Outcome: Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate and use information effectively and responsibly to increase understanding.

Assessment Method: In FLM 4886, students complete a 30 page research paper on an approved topic. The WSSU Information Literacy rubric will be used. At least 85% of students will score at least a 3 on all components of the WSSU Information Literacy Rubric. The research paper is due at the end of FLM 4886 (spring semester). Data will be collected annually and analyzed/reported every 2 years.

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Using Information Ethically: 75%

Action: It was decided during the annual retreat to incorporate pieces of the capstone project into the fall-semester senior level course (FLM 4626). Students will be required to produce an annotated bibliography in the fall course to help them prepare for the capstone paper. The annotated bibliography and capstone paper will now be presented as two assessment methods in TracDat.
TracDat Login:
https://wssustracdat.wssu.edu/tracdat/

Username: WSSU email prefix
Password: TracDat specific—contact Laura Crist (riddlelb@wssu.edu, x2112) for reset
What Does TracDat Look Like (Home screen)?

- Navigation
- Outcome Titles
- NEW: Alert Flags
- Number of assessment methods, results, actions and follow-ups
TracDat Report Features

Assessment Plan: Outcomes, Assessment Methods, Related Goals/Mapping

Four Column: Outcomes, Assessment Methods, Results, Actions, Follow-Ups

Documents List: List of everything stored in “Documents” section
Assessment: Assessment Plan

Sample Major

Mission: The mission statement for your program goes here.

Unit Notes: This TracDat unit has been developed as a sample to show the different features of the TracDat system and to assist major-level (i.e., student learning outcome) units in developing and reporting data for their assessment plans.

Learning Outcome: Information Literacy

Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate and use information effectively and responsibly to increase understanding (WSSU SLO—Information Literacy)

Learning Outcome Status: Currently being assessed

Learning Outcome Type: Learning

Assessment Methods

Capstone Assignment/Project - In FLM 4626, students must submit an annotated bibliography of at least 25 appropriate sources related to their capstone project. The WSSU Information Literacy rubric will be used. (Inactive)

Criterion-Target: At least 85% of students will score at least a 3 on the "determining information needed," "accessing information" and "evaluating information and sources" component of the WSSU Information Literacy Rubric.

When and How Often: The senior-level capstone project takes place across two courses—FLM 4626 and FLM 4886. The annotated bibliography is due at the end of the fall semester course (FLM 4626). Data will be collected at the end of each fall semester and reported/analyzed every 2 years.

Related Documents:
Information Literacy_Rubric.pdf

Capstone Assignment/Project - In FLM 4886, students complete a 30 page research paper on an approved topic. The WSSU Information Literacy rubric will be used. (Inactive)

Criterion-Target: At least 85% of students will score at least a 3 on the "using information effectively" and "using information ethically" components of the WSSU Information Literacy Rubric.

When and How Often: The senior-level capstone project takes place across two courses—FLM 4626 and FLM 4886. The research
Sample Major

Mission: The mission statement for your program goes here.

Unit Notes: This TracDat unit has been developed as a sample to show the different features of the TracDat system and to assist major-level (i.e., student learning outcome) units in developing and reporting data for their assessment plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Literacy</td>
<td>Capstone Assignment/Project</td>
<td>Action Developed</td>
<td>Action: It was decided during the annual retreat to incorporate pieces of the capstone project into the fall-semester senior level course (FLM 4626). Students will be required to produce an annotated bibliography in the fall course to help them prepare for the capstone paper. The annotated bibliography and capstone paper will now be presented as two assessment methods in TracDat. (08/21/2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome Type: Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result Status: Action Developed

Result Type: Criterion/Target Not Met

Spring 2014-2015 -10 students completed the assignment. The percentage of students scoring at least 3 (out of 4) are as follows:

- Determining Information Needed: 40%
- Accessing Information: 50%
- Evaluating Information and Sources: 60%
- Using Information Effectively: 70%
- Using Information Ethically: 70% (06/26/2013)

Follow-Up: Two classroom
TracDat Tips

• The system will record the date that you enter data into the system.
  • It is recommended that you describe the timeframe to which the information applies when you are entering the data.

• TracDat has a “Related Documents” option.
  • Upload meeting minutes, survey instruments, tracking logs, audit forms, promotional materials or any other supporting evidence you have.
  • You can run a list of all documents uploaded into your TracDat shell.
**TracDat Tips**

- When you run a four column report, you want to see information in every column.
  - This helps demonstrate that you’re “closing the loop.”

- Don’t delete “old” information you have in TracDat!
  - It is needed to show progress and assessment at work.
  - If you are not assessing an outcome currently, change the outcome status to “No longer a desired outcome” or “Not currently being assessed.”
Assessment Audit Process

• Occurs on an annual basis
  (Spring for academic units, summer for administrative units)

• Information available on Institutional Assessment & Research website:
  http://www.wssu.edu/administration/assessment-and-research/audits.aspx

• Components of the Audit Form
  • Data Quality (administrative)
  • Review of
    • Outcome Statements
    • Assessment Methods
    • Results and Use of Results
  • Comment Boxes
  • Signature Lines: NEW--1st Reviewer submits directly to IAR
If you’re entering data into TracDat, you should NOT be the person completing the audit form!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TracDat Data Entry</th>
<th>Major-Level Audit</th>
<th>Department-Level Audit</th>
<th>Administrative Audit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Designated faculty member (serves on Academic Assessment Committee)</td>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Designated staff member (serves on Administrative Assessment Committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Reviewer/Signature on Audit Form</td>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Associate Dean/Dean’s Fellows</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Reviewer/Signature on Audit Form</td>
<td>Dean (or Dean’s Designee)</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Associate Vice Chancellor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others should review TracDat reports to show that we have checks-and-balances in place and that assessment responsibilities occur at multiple levels.
Contact Us!

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