

Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a **direct measure** for assessment?

Direct measure for academic assessments requires students to produce work so that reviewers can assess how well students meet expectations. Examples include:

- Capstone projects
- Case studies
- Certification exams, licensure exams
- Comprehensive exams
- Course-embedded assessment (e.g., homework assignment; essays, locally developed tests)
- External examiners/peer review
- Grading with criteria or rubrics
- GRE subject exams
- Internal/external juried review of performances and exhibitions
- Internship and clinical evaluation
- National Major Field Achievement Tests
- Pre and posttests
- Portfolio evaluation
- Reflective journals
- Senior thesis or major project

Direct measure for administrative assessment requires the unit to produce logs, records, reports, or other tracking data that identifies the performance of the unit.

2. What is an **indirect measure** for assessment?

There are two types of indirect measures: perception-based measures and general frequency measures. The first type of indirect measure of assessment includes the documented perceptions of students, faculty, staff and other constituents. The second type of indirect measure of assessment includes non-performance tracking data. Indirect measures are not as useful in identifying specific knowledge and skills of any particular group. Examples include:

- Alumni survey
- Departmental survey
- Employer survey
- Exit interviews
- Focus groups
- Job placement statistics
- Graduation and retention rates
- Percentage of students who study abroad

For a more information, refer to the MIT Grid on Assessment here: [MIT GRID](#)



Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

3. How do I write a quality student learning outcome?

The student learning outcome should meet the following criteria:

- Detailed
- Specific
- Measurable
- Goal Connected (the SLO should be easily aligned with the course syllabus and course goals.)
- Skill-focused (the SLO should be structured as a way to identify what the aim of the course, activity or process is.)

Consider this: when a student is given directions for an assignment, the directions should contain identifiers on what is expected by the instructor/professor. The expectations should be measurable, with measurement assessing the demonstrated knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes expressed by the student.

4. How do I write a quality program objective?

A program objective focuses on the end result of what a program hopes to achieve. Objectives for a program can range from the basic assessment of tracking the completion of a project or task, to the more advanced assessment of program effectiveness in service delivery and quality. Program objectives should be a) measurable, b) manageable, and c) meaningful to the process of continuous quality improvement.

5. The language* used in assessment is a bit confusing, please clarify.

*Source: James Madison University's online Dictionary of Student Outcome Assessment
<http://people.jmu.edu/yangsx/>

Assessment-The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development

Assessment Unit Plan - A document which identifies unit objectives, measures, achievement targets, findings, action plans, and subjective analysis of the unit's progress

Benchmark - A criterion-referenced objective performance datum that is used for comparative purposes. A program can use its own data as a baseline benchmark against which to compare future performance. It can also use data from another program as a benchmark. In the latter case, the other program often is chosen because it is exemplary and its data are used as a target to strive for, rather than as a baseline

Detailed Assessment Report - An annual document compiled from the documentation entered in the Assessment Unit Plan. The document presents the unit's current performance level, as defined by the findings documents, and how the results of the assessment are being used to improve the academic and or administrative processes of the assessed unit.

Formative- An assessment which is used for improvement (individual or program level) rather than for making final decisions or for accountability.



Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

Goals – The long-term aims, or aspirations, of a division or unit.

Longitudinal- Data collected on the same individuals over time for use in a longitudinal study. A study that investigates development, learning, or other types of change in individuals over time.

Measurement- The systematic investigation of people's knowledge, skills or other attributes.

Mission Statement - A concise statement outlining the purpose of an institutional program. The mission statement of a program should be in alignment with the overall mission of the institution.

Norm- An interpretation of scores on a measure that focuses on the rank ordering of students - not their performance - in relation to criteria.

Objective - A specific, measurable and/or identifiable aim or achievement of a unit, focusing on the end result, rather than the process. Objectives have shorter timeframes than goals. The accomplishment of an objective leads the way to accomplishing a unit's long-term goals.

Percentile- The percentage of examinees in the norm group who scored at or below the raw score for which the percentile rank was calculated

Performance Based- Assessment technique involving the gathering of data through systematic observation of a behavior or process and evaluating that data based on a clearly articulated set of performance criteria to serve as the basis for evaluative judgments.

Qualitative- Data in which the values of a variable differ in kind (quality) rather than in amount.

Quantitative- Data in which the values of a variable differ in amount rather than in kind.

Summative- A sum total or final product measure of achievement at the end of an instructional unit or course of study.

Triangulation- The building of multiple sources of information or ideas to support a central finding or theme.

Value Added- The effects educational providers have had on students during their programs of study. The impact of participating in higher education on student learning and development above that which would have occurred through natural maturation, usually measured as longitudinal change or difference between pretest and posttest; A comparison of the knowledge, skills, and developmental traits that students bring to the educational process with the knowledge, skills and developmental traits they demonstrate upon completion of the educational process.



Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

6. Explain how a rubric is to be used in assessment.

Rubrics are the paper trail/ auditing process of analytical grading by means of breaking down the assignment into specific measurable criteria, using a dichotomous or multi-point scale.

Rubric examples have been included here: [RUBRIC EXAMPLES](#)

7. Please provide examples on Bloom's Taxonomy.

A great action-verb chart is provided here: [Bloom's Taxonomy Chart](#)

8. What is a curriculum map?

A matrix representation of a program's learning outcomes showing where the outcomes are taught within the course. Example of a typical curriculum map can be found here: [Curriculum Map](#)

9. What is a student learning outcome matrix?

A matrix representation of a student learning outcomes showing where the learning opportunities for each student learning outcome are taught throughout the program or college. An example of a SLO matrix can be found here: [SLO Matrix](#)

10. How many objectives are required for a discipline or department unit plan?

The Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness suggests no more than 6 objectives for a major degree program or department, and no more than 3 objectives for a minor, certificate or licensure program. Assessment plans are intended to guide the unit in their improvement efforts. If too many procedures, processes, or other components are assessed all at once it becomes difficult for the unit to implement meaningful changes all at once.

11. What if a unit wishes to assess more than the recommended number of objectives?

The unit should prioritize their objectives and establish a rotational cycle of assessment. Objectives with greater priority are scheduled for assessment first, with a gap year to allow for any necessary changes. During the gap year, the objectives with lesser priority are assessed. A two year cycle (even and odd years) would allow for up to 12 objectives to be assessed, with changes implemented in off assessment years. When the objective come up for review again the assessment can focus on if the changes implemented made any impact towards continuous quality improvement.



Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

12. How long is an assessment cycle?

The assessment cycle for Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi covers a standard fiscal and academic calendar year (September 1 through August 31).

13. When are Assessment Unit Plans due?

Unit plans are due October 1st. Vice Presidents and Deans overseeing major divisions, as identified in the executive level organizational chart, are required to produce their annual report summaries on October 15th.

The Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness recommends following the suggested timeline for unit plan documentation: [TIMELINE](#)

14. How do I get access to WEAVEonline?

A unit supervisor must formally request a WEAVEonline account for any employee designated as a unit plan writer and/or reviewer. The WEAVEonline Permission Request form must be completed electronically and submitted by email to Dr. Bridgette Hardin for processing: [WEAVEonline PERMISSION FORM](#)