

Student Affairs Learning Outcomes Assessment

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A Brief Sequence of Assessment Events:

Articulate what it is that you do.

Describe the kind of work in which your area is engaged.

Associate these services, activities, etc., with the learning outcomes.

Compare the list of services and activities of your area to the Student Affairs Learning Outcomes and decide through which of your area's activities you accomplish which outcomes. Some activities might accomplish several outcomes, and others might not map to any outcomes, which is fine.

Review your current assessments.

Consider the methods you are currently using to measure how well you do what you do (e.g., survey tools, databases, Score Card measures, etc.). Knowing the data that you routinely collect makes this assessment process more efficient.

Determine what you should be measuring.

Identify what measurements will show you whether you are succeeding at the outcomes you have associated with your activities. (You might have data that you already collect but have not put to use assessing Learning Outcomes.)

- Determine the “**Outcome**” measures -- these are the measures to which you turn for a way to describe how well the students are expressing the learning outcomes in their knowledge, their skills, their behavior, or their values. Self-reported learning isn't as compelling as direct evidence that the students have learned (i.e., observed behavior, demonstrated knowledge, and a performance of skills are more compelling than students *saying* that they've learned something or even *self-reporting* that they are engaging in particular behaviors).
- Determine the “**Changeable Factors**” -- these are the things that you could change about what you are doing so that more students will succeed at reaching these outcomes (e.g., more students participating in a program; information being communicated in a particular medium; services being provided in a particular way).

Locate the Outcomes and Changeable Factors in your current measurement methods.

Consider your current assessments and whether you are measuring everything you need for determining students' success in reaching the Learning Outcomes through the efforts of your area.

Develop new measurement methods, if needed.

If the assessments you have in place aren't measuring everything you need, determine how best to measure the Outcomes and Changeable Factors and then design ways of collecting the information so that it takes a practical, useable form.

Administer the measurements.

Conduct the studies or collect the data. This research could consist of anything from a survey to a download from the student information system.

Process and analyze the data.

The Office of Assessment and Data Analysis can assist in this process when quantitative analysis is needed to draw conclusions from the data.

Present results to those people responsible for taking action.

In a format that makes sense to stakeholders, present the findings of this assessment research.

Determine policy to further enhance success.

For assessment to be worth the energy spent conducting the research, concrete action steps need to follow any report of findings. Given what you have learned from the research, decide how best to allot time and resources to guarantee the greatest success for as many students as possible.

Implement policy.

Take action on the decisions made.

Review the assessment practice and potentially revise the methods.

Assessment should never take place without an analysis of whether the research proved valuable, whether it measured what needed to be measured, and whether it could be interpreted for action to follow. With objectivity, determine whether there may be more effective ways of measuring your success, analyzing the data, and generating findings upon which policy decisions can be based.

Re-administer the assessments, or create and administer new assessments, to examine the success of the implemented policy.

After changes have been made, research needs to be conducted to determine whether the policy had the desired influence on the relevant Learning Outcomes. After a reasonable amount of time for potential effects to occur, you can either conduct the same research project (perhaps on an annual or semi-annual basis) or undertake another project that best adapts to the new environment created by the policy.