

Program Assessment Cycle at Angelo State University

Both SACS and the THECB require that ASU engage in and report on [program level assessment](#). The following is an outline of the assessment cycle at ASU. This cycle is intended to produce continuous improvement across the programs at ASU in regards to student learning. ASU places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty, in accordance with university best practices and in compliance with SACS comprehensive standard 3.4.10.

Planning

Step 1: Articulate program learning goals

- Program learning goals state the knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes and/or values that students are expected to have when they complete an academic program. Learning goals must be clear, include action verbs, and be measurable.
- An appropriate number of learning goals for a typical program is between three and five, though programs may include more because of external accrediting needs.
- In addition to the program learning goals created within academic programs at ASU, other sets of learning goals exist for externally accredited programs, ASU's Quality Enhancement Plan, and the state mandated core curriculum. It is satisfactory to use externally mandated program goals and supporting assessment data for institutional effectiveness reporting.
- Program goals should be tied to appropriate college and university learning goals.
- Programs choosing to revise their locally generated learning goals for the upcoming academic year must do so by **July 1**. Revised learning goals should be submitted to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and to the appropriate college dean by this date for final approval.

Step 2: Program Assessment Map

- Program assessment mapping is used to determine how current course offerings cover the various program learning goals. Mapping helps to ensure that learning goals are sufficiently covered by course offerings and by the assessment activities planned in those courses.
- It is not necessary to assess every learning goal in every year, though programs may choose to do so. However, every learning goal must be assessed by a direct measurement at least once within a **two year period**.
- Course mapping is automatically accomplished in SPOL when courses are tied to program learning goals, but can also be done in a Word table or Excel spreadsheet.

Assessing

Step 1: Select assessment tools

- Assessment tools can be [direct](#), [indirect](#), [formative](#), and [summative](#)—at the program level, emphasis will be on summative assessment.
- Types of direct assessment at the program level include projects in capstone courses, course-level embedded assessment, discipline-specific certification and licensure exams, exhibits, portfolio reviews, and

standardized tests such as major field tests.

- Only aggregate data needs to be reported for State of Texas and SACS purposes. The Office of IPPE does not need data at the individual student level for the purpose of institutional academic assessment.

Step 2: Develop assessment rubrics

- Rubrics identify the characteristics of the outcome and specify levels of mastery in each characteristic. Examples of rubrics include the [VALUE rubrics](#) created for 15 of the AAC&U [Essential Outcomes](#).
- Care should be exercised in setting benchmarks – attention must be given as to why a certain score is expected on a MFT, a locally developed exam, and similar items.

Step 3: Analyze the results

- Analysis of assessment results occurs at all levels, from the individual faculty member to the department chairs and program coordinators.
- The most basic element is to compare the actual results with the intended results.
- All analyses must be done with the goal of continuous improvement.
- The use of results for these analyses for each learning goal must be submitted in SPOL by **Oct. 1 of each year**. This includes the program learning goals as well as the core curriculum.
- Typical summaries for each learning goal should be about one or two paragraphs in length.

Improving

- Academic programs are required to analyze all assessment data as a normal part of departmental and program functioning.
- Assessment data gathered for each program learning goal should be analyzed and evaluated on an annual basis by department chairs, program coordinators, and faculty committees, as appropriate.
- Any changes considered must be made with the goal toward continuous improvement within the program.

Relevant questions might include:

- Are different assessment methods needed?
- What strengths and weaknesses in student learning were found?
- Do benchmarks need to be increased or lowered?
- Are curricular changes needed in the program?
- Is professional development needed for faculty in the program?
- Do learning goals or student learning outcomes need to be revised?
- Do rubrics need to be revised?
- Are additional resources required?
- Plans for improvement (use of results—the answers to those questions above which apply, for example) must be submitted in the assessment module of SPOL by **Oct. 1 of each year**.
- If a program's assessment results and plans for continuous improvement influence the program's strategic planning and operational objectives, these plans should be tied to one or more operational objectives in the planning module within SPOL. Conversely, new operational objectives may be entered into SPOL based on the analysis of the assessment results.
- Unit level planning should align with TTU System priorities, ASU's master goals, any college goals or initiatives, and other aspects of ASU's strategic plan—strategic/operational planning and academic assessment should intersect within a program.

- Feedback on these improvement plans and program assessment in general will be provided to department chairs and program coordinators on a multi-year cycle by the Office of Institutional Planning, Policy & Effectiveness and the Coordinator of Academic Assessment
- The results from assessment of student learning outcomes will not be used for the evaluation of faculty or administrators.