A Guide to Academic Assessment for Program Directors

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

2019-2020
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Introduction

All academic programs at Goodwin University (Associate’s, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Degree programs) are assessed on a regular basis to ensure that the university is adequately preparing its students to pursue careers in their chosen fields, and to ensure the academic integrity and the overall quality of certificate and degree programs at the university.

To that end, each program must submit an annual program review summary to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, which will be reviewed and discussed by the University Committee on Assessment.

In addition, each program will submit a formal 5-year review, in accordance with the formal review schedule created with the Department Chairs and provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. For those programs with professional accreditation, site visit reviews are acceptable in place of a formal 5-year review. After the Office of Institutional Effectiveness receives the formal review, it will be reviewed by the University Committee on Assessment. Just as with the annual reviews, each program will receive a formal letter acknowledging receipt of the review and will contain comments and suggestions.

For both annual and five year reviews, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will serve as a resource for program directors and department chairs.

Figure 1. Program-Level Assessment.
http://www.uky.edu/ie/office-planning-institutional-effectiveness
The Annual Program Review Process

Introduction

All academic departments at Goodwin University complete an annual review process that culminates in a written report submitted to OIE. A summary of the reports is provided to the University Committee on Assessment by August of each year. Review of the assessment reports is one way that the university evaluates the learning outcomes of its educational programs; collects evidence as to whether those outcomes are achieved; and develops plans for improvement based on the analyses.

Process

Typically, a department will complete the annual report in two stages. Each department begins by assessing the current situation and deciding how to select and gather evidence on at least one student learning outcome (report section 1-3) and then, upon completion of the assessment activity, the department discusses the results and develops an action plan (report section 4 through 8).

Annual Program Review Report

This document describes the information contained in the report sections.

Section One: Assessment Plan

1. Program and Contact Information
2. Student Learning Outcomes Being Assessed
3. Data that to be collected
4. Methods for Assessment

Section Two: Assessment Report

5. Reflection on Assessment Results
6. Department’s Plan to Address Results
7. Appendices (include curriculum map)

Figure 2. Program-Level Assessment.
http://www.uky.edu/ie/
Section 1: Assessment Plan Steps to Complete (due October 2019)

1. Program and Contact Information
   Indicate the pertinent information, such as the date and department being reviewed, as well as the name of a contact person, his/her phone number and e-mail address.

2. Student Learning Outcomes Being Assessed
   In this section, identify two-three specific outcomes that are the focus of the review.

3. Data that to be Collected
   In this section, complete the description of what evidence will be used in order to complete the review. For example, in order to better assess your strengths and weaknesses, what information will need to be gathered to answer the following three questions in the next section:
   A. Who will be assessed?
      - Summarize the evidence you already have to answer the questions.
   B. What student work/assignment(s)/activities/course(s) will be used for the assessment?
   C. Describe the sample set and how you plan to determine it?
      - How will the sample set be identified?
      - What are the limitations to the sample set?
      - What are the limitations to the data collected?

4. Methods for Assessment
   Here, describe how you will collect evidence to complete the review. How will you gather the data based off of the variables identified in the section below? You will need to answer the following to questions:
   A. What methods will be used?
      - Are methods direct (e.g., reviewing student products) or indirect (e.g., soliciting student reflections on how they think they achieved outcomes)?
      - What instrument will you use to assess? Will you use rubrics?
      - What are limitations to your methodology?
   B. Describe the scoring team and process plan.
      - Who will be part of the scoring team?
      - If using a rubric, will it be normed with the scoring team?
      - Is scoring blind?
Section 2: Report Steps to Complete (due August 2020)

5. Reflection on Assessment Results
   By this time, you should have completed your assessment project, gathered your data and analyzed it. Now that you have completed your assessment, discuss what was learned as a result of your assessment efforts.
   - Concisely analyze the results of the assessment project.
   - According to your results, what are the students’ strengths and what does the program do well?
   - According to the results, what are the challenges in the program that need more support?
   - What are the program’s trends in relation to the two program outcomes?

6. Department’s Plan to Address Results
   This section answers the question “What do we want to work on to better achieve program goals and outcomes?”. This section asks more information on how you are going to close the loop.
   - How will you use results from this year’s analysis to make adjustments to the courses/curriculum?
   - How will you use results from this year’s analysis to change teaching methods or pedagogy?
   - How will you use resources to re-direct or request resources, including budget allocation?
   - What are opportunities for change and innovation?
   - If you are planning to make no changes, explain why no changes are needed.

7. Appendices
   Provide a curriculum map pertaining to the learning outcome being assessed and submit any additional supporting documentation.
The Formal Review Process

Introduction

All academic departments at Goodwin University complete a formal review process every five years. Formal program review is one way the university evaluates the learning outcomes from all of its programs; collects evidence as to whether these outcomes are achieved; and develops long-range plans for improvement based on the analyses.

The 5-year process documents the formative, ongoing assessment process for each program over the prior 4 years. The final report lists all program outcomes and indicates the cycle of assessment of each outcome and the methods that were used for assessment. The formal program review results should be used to:

- Review a program’s mission and goals
- Analyze evidence as to whether student learning outcomes and other department goals are achieved
- Revise student learning outcomes and other department goals
- Make long-range program planning and improvement decisions
- Allocate resources (i.e., budget requests)
- Raise awareness and focus campus-wide dialogue on student success

Process

A department completes the program review process in two stages over several semesters: (1) each department begins by gathering evidence of student learning and the achievement of department goals, (2) the department then devises a plan for improvement based on the evidence gathered. The first stage is typically completed in the fall and the second stage in the spring or early summer.

If the program maintains professional accreditation, then a summary of the site visit, report and resulting action plan can be provided to OIE in place of the report outlined below. Such documentation can only be used once in a five-year period (for example, if the professional accrediting body only requires a formal report every ten years, the department cannot use the same report twice to satisfy the five-year formal review requirement. The department will be required to use Goodwin’s formal review process, in that case).

If your department chair uses a more detailed formal review process, then submit the more detailed report in place of the report outlined below. The report format below is suggested based on guidelines from the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA); however, OIE encourages the Program Director to review the formal assessment plan and report format with their Dean or Associate Dean, so that the process and records are useful to the academic department. The requirement of completing a formal program review is not optional; however, there is plenty of flexibility within the process to accommodate each department’s unique needs.

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When the 5-year report is completed, a department representative will discuss it in several venues: during a University Committee on Assessment meeting or a department meeting.

**Formal Program Review Report**

The program review process culminates in a final report due in August. The final report should have a cover page, table of contents, page numbers, and any appendices. This document describes the eleven sections that comprise the report.

1. Department Mission and Background
2. Student Learning Outcomes and Other Department Goals
3. Evidence
4. Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses, Lessons Learned
5. Recommendations and/or Action Plan
6. Department’s Capacity to Support the Plan and/or Resources Needed
7. Appendices (additional material necessary to support findings and recommendations)

**Stage 1: Assessing the Current Situation**

This first stage involves completing sections 1-3 of the final report during the fall semester. These sections describe the focus of the program review and record (a) evidence that the department already has and (b) plans for collecting additional evidence on the achievement of student learning outcomes and other department goals.

1. **Department Mission**
   
   This section describes the department’s mission and how it supports the university’s mission. This section and the next section provide insight into where the department wants to be and what it plans to accomplish. This section should include a cover page with contact information (i.e., date and department/program being reviewed, as well as the name of a contact person, phone number, and email address).

2. **Student Learning Outcomes and Other Department Goals**
   
   This section discusses the program’s goals for student learning and other overarching department goals. For example, you could list the current student learning outcomes in the university catalog, and then identify the goals you will focus on in this program review. Be sure to state goals not as what the department will do, but what the students will do.
   
   - Evidence of Student Learning Outcomes
   - Indirect Assessment Results (Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews)
   - Key Performance Indicator (KPI) History, Trends, and Goals
   - Faculty Professional Development Activity
   - Community Partnerships

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3. Evidence

This section summarizes data used to answer the questions, “How well is the department doing? To what extent are students achieving the program outcomes? How do you know?” To assess the program’s strengths and weaknesses, the department will need to distinguish between what is already known and what additional evidence needs to be gathered as part of the program review. Evidence can come from the most recent existing data or additional assessment activities.

A. Existing Evidence

Summarize the evidence you already have to answer the question, “How well are you doing?” For example, to what extent are students achieving the learning goals identified in Section 2?

- Licensure and certification examination rates
- Student survey results
- Results of employer surveys or focus groups
- Assessment of learning outcomes by scoring key assignments

B. Additional Evidence to be Gathered and/or Planned Assessment Activities

- What additional evidence needs to be gathered to see how well are students achieving the program’s learning goals?
Stage 2: Planning for Change or Improvement

At this point, the department analyzes the assessment data gathered from the last five years, identifies strengths and weaknesses, makes recommendations, designs a related action plan, and determines the capacity of the department to support the action plan.

4. Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses, Lessons Learned
   This section answers the question “How well are we doing?” As a department, discuss and evaluate the results of the assessment data gathered from the last five years. Describe when the discussion took place, who participated and what you discovered that works and does not work?

   Now that the program review process is complete, what are some of the “lessons learned”? For example, what will you do differently next time? Indicate how your formal program review results will be linked to next year’s annual review process.

5. Recommendations/Action Plan
   In this section, answer the question “What do we want to work on to better achieve the goals?” Describe 1-3 actions the department plans to undertake. For each action, indicate who is responsible and give a timeline for action.

6. Department’s Capacity to Support the Plan and/or Resources Needed
   In this section, evaluate the capacity of the department to achieve its goals, especially the action plan. For example, summarize and analyze information about your faculty, technology, space, and other resources. Give a realistic estimate of the additional internal and external resources needed to support the department’s action plan.

   A. Faculty and Staff Resources
      Describe the staffing complement for the department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Credentials</th>
<th>Relevant characteristics, accomplishments, and/or milestones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   B. Technology, Space, and Other Resources

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Describe how the department uses technology to improve its operations or to enhance student learning. How does it stay current? How well does the existing space configuration meet the department’s needs? What reallocation or renovation could be done to aid the department in accomplishing its goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space and lab</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Budget Adequacy

Provide a summary of budget allocations and expenditures. What is the decision-making process for the distribution of funds? Should the department make adjustments so that it may operate more efficiently?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prior Year</th>
<th>Current Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is the program budget adequate to meet the program needs? __ Yes __ No, please explain:

5. Executive Summary

The final section is an Executive Summary that serves as a concise presentation of the program review process. The summary should be able to stand alone and should provide the reader with an overview of the process, relevant findings, resulting action plans, and resource analysis.
Appendix

Levels of Assessment and Department Responsibilities

**Course-Level Assessment**: Program directors are responsible for course-level assessment.

**Program-Level Assessment**: Program directors, in conjunction with deans, are responsible for program-level assessment.

**Institution-Level Assessment**: The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for institution-level assessment.

**Special Assignments**: Assessment Coordinators/Liaisons in every department can choose a project to work on, under the direction of the Program Director/Department Chair, to assess certain areas of the program/department. The liaisons would report to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the University Committee on Assessment.

**Department Responsibilities**

Each department is responsible for assessing the data it collects. OIE can assist program directors with this assessment.

Program directors are responsible for compiling annual and formal reviews and submitting them to OIE.

OIE will send reviews to the University Committee on Assessment.

OIE will send a summary of the program reports to the Provost, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Department Chairs.

OIE will compare Goodwin’s program assessment process and data with national and peer data, in order to understand where the university stands in relation to similar schools/programs.
Knowing What to Assess

According to Program-Based Review and Assessment: Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement, the first step in determining which assessment methods you will use in your annual and formal reviews is knowing what you want to assess. When assessing student learning, the following areas are examined: 1. Knowledge of the discipline (What do students know?), 2. Skills (What can students do?), 3. Values (What do students care about?).

“When developing assessment methods, make sure your selections:

- Answer questions that are important to you;
- [Think of which program or student learning outcome you want to measure];
- Are manageable, given available resources (including time and money), and
- Result in useful feedback that highlights accomplishments and identifies areas requiring attention.”

Adapted from California State University, Bakersfield, PACT Outcomes Assessment Handbook (1999)

Methods

The following methods are taken from Program-Based Review and Assessment:

1. The evidence you collect depends on the questions you want to answer
2. Use multiple methods to assess each learning outcome
3. Include both direct and indirect measures
4. Include qualitative as well as quantitative measures
5. Choose assessment methods that allow you to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program
6. Be selective about what you choose to observe or measure
7. Include passive as well as active methods of assessment (e.g., the student database information, attendance and course selection patterns, employer survey results, transcript analyses)
8. Use capstone courses or senior assignments to directly assess student learning outcomes
9. Enlist the assistance of assessment and testing specialists when you plan to create, adapt, or revise assessment instruments, and
10. Use established accreditation criteria to design your assessment plan.
Glossary

Curriculum Mapping – “Curriculum mapping provides an inventory of the link between your objectives and the curriculum. It can also serve as a catalyst for discussions about the proper sequencing of courses, the degree to which the curriculum really supports student learning, and the extent to which core objectives are appropriately addressed within the curriculum.” Curriculum maps will detail the courses in which learning objectives/program outcomes are: introduced (I), reinforced (R), and evaluated (E).

Direct Assessment – involves looking at student work: objective tests, essays, presentations, and classroom assignments. Direct assessment should be used as much as possible when assessing the effectiveness of student learning outcomes.

Indirect Assessment – involves looking at student reflections on their own learning, such as surveys and interviews.

Formative Assessment—involves assessing student learning as the semester goes on. For example, you may assess how students are learning a concept learned in class and may do a quiz to see how students are retaining information and which topics may have challenges.

Summative Assessment—involves assessing students’ performance after the end of a semester course. This kind of assessment could be a final project.

Qualitative Data—this kind of assessment gathers information that cannot be easily translated into numbers. This kind of information might be anecdotes from interviews, focus groups, or open-ended survey questions.

Quantitative Data—this kind of assessment collects data that can easily be analyzed using numbers. This kind of data includes key performance indicators, number of students that responded to a specific option on a survey, etc.
Annual Academic Program Review Form

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

Assessment of Student Learning, Annual Program Report 2019-20

Program/Department: ____________________________
Division: ______________________________________
Director/Chair: _________________________________
Degree: _______________________________________

Please submit Section 1 of the report electronically to the appropriate Chair of your department and to the Director of Assessment no later than October 31, 2019. Please retain a copy for program records. Section 1 of report should generally be 1-3 pages in length and should follow this format.

Notes and guidelines for writing this report are in blue text below each question. PLEASE DELETE the text in blue before submitting your report.

Section 1: Report (Due October 2019)

1. What two to three program learning outcomes are you planning to assess this year?
   a. Identify the specific program learning outcomes you plan to assess.
   b. Note how the outcomes are linked to department, if applicable, and/or Institutional Learning Outcomes.
   c. Describe why the outcomes you choose are important (to the program, institution and student learning).

2. What data/information (student work, etc.) are you planning to use to assess these outcomes?
   a. Who will be assessed?
      • e.g. graduating senior class, sophomore students in the major, associate, bachelors, milestone seeking students
   b. What student work/assignment(s)/activities/course(s) will be used for the assessment?
   c. Describe the sample set and how you plan to determine it?
      • How will you identify your sample set?
      • Provide rationale for the sampling methodology (e.g. work from all students will be selected; or the work sample will be selected at random; indicate if sample will be taken from a number of sections or courses, etc. and explain why.)
      • Be transparent and honest about this process.
      • Try to identify any limitations or weaknesses, but provide rationale for why the assessment and data you plan to collect is still important and valid.

3. How are the program learning outcomes going to be assessed?
   a. What methods will be used?
Describe the specific evaluation methods (direct and/or indirect)
Identify what instrument(s) will be used in assessing student learning.
   - Describe your rubrics: Do they have 4 or 5-scales of performance measures (1-4)?
   - Do you plan to use one rubric for each outcome? Or not?
Identify any limitations to your assessment methodologies, and ideally provide rationale for why assessment and the data collected is still valid.

b. Describe the scoring team and process plan.
   - Who will comprise the scoring team?
   - If you using a rubric, will the rubric normed with your scoring team?
   - Will the scoring be blind? In other words, did you know the student’s work? Or was it anonymous?
   - If not blind scoring, note it as a limitation (or not ideal) and include a rationale, such as the small size of the program, etc.

Please submit Section 2 the report electronically to the appropriate Chair of your department and to the Director of Assessment no later than August 30, 2020. Please retain a copy for program records. Section 2 report should generally be 1-3 pages in length and should follow this format.

Section 2: Report (Due August 2020)

4. What was learned from the assessment process?
   - Report results in specific terms and link results to the outcomes assessed.
   - Include a concise interpretation or analysis of the most significant results.
   - Describe the information collected in “scoring results” template. Lead with the positive
   - Include information about your target.
   - Did you reach the target?
   - Explain why your target was ambitious, but achievable. (if it was ambitious)
   - Don’t be too hard on yourself if you did not reach the target.
   - What are students’ strengths?
   - What does the program do well?
   - Identify areas for improvement (weaknesses)
   - Disaggregate the data and identify subcategories of strengths/weakness
   - What results were expected?
   - What surprised the program faculty?
   - Were there unanticipated areas of “bad” results?
   - What does the program need to continue to watch?
   - What is most important?
   - Which area(s) shows greatest gains / results?
   - Which area(s) shows greatest problems with learning and performance?
   - Identify trends v. new findings

5. What will the program do as a result of the assessment process? Assuming the program’s sampling, data collection and scoring methodologies are correct and rigorous, what might the program consider as opportunities for improvement? How do you interpret this from your data?
   - Describe how you will use results from the analysis of the program learning assessment data to:
     a) Make adjustments to courses/curriculum,
     b) Does the curriculum adequately address each learning outcome?
     c) Are courses sequenced in a way to maximize learning?
     Examples:
- Add an additional lecture or expand instruction on a critical topic within one or more courses
- Change sequencing of required courses

b) Change teaching/learning methodologies and pedagogies
   - Are we using the right methods of instruction to maximize learning?
   - Are we providing appropriate individual feedback and support?
   Examples:
   - Change point in term where students receive feedback/participate in conferences
   - Provide information on support resources on syllabi
   - Explore new co-curricular opportunities
   - Invite a librarian to class to discuss research strategies

c) Re-direct or request resources, including budget allocation.
   Consider what actions are feasible?
   - Faculty
   - Resources (time, space, budget)
   - Policies / Processes
   - How has the assessment of student learning identified opportunities for change, collaboration, improvement or innovation?
   Examples
   - New collaborations with other offices/programs/units
   - New integration with support services (tutoring, library services, academic advisement, technology infrastructure).
   - New delivery of courses or course material (online, with technology)
   - New models of support workshops (peer to peer, etc.)
   - Sharing resources across programs
   - Formalizing a learning outcomes audit among programs
   - New faculty development ideas or resources

- Identify any changes or refinements to the assessment process
- If no changes are planned, please describe why no changes are needed.
The purpose of this review is to ensure that the program is adequately preparing its students to pursue careers in their chosen field, and to ensure the academic integrity and the overall quality of the program being reviewed. The five-year review should contain two parts: (1) a summary and analysis of all assessment projects that took place since the last five-year review. This should include a summary of the data, the analysis, the conclusions, and any follow-up information pertaining to the assessments; (2) an overview of the assessment projects that the program plans to implement in the next five years, as well as an explanation of the program’s goals, expected outcomes, and desired results.

This document is meant to serve as a guide for program directors as they complete their five-year review. The sections outlined below are suggestions; program directors are able to construct their own review format during or after the planning meeting with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The review plan is to be signed and submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by October of the review academic year. The formal report should be completed and submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by August of the review academic year.

Cover Sheet

1. The name of the program, department, and contact information for the person completing the review
2. Department Mission
3. The program outcomes and department goals
4. If different from 3, identify the program outcomes that were evaluated since the last formal review.

Assessment Summary

This section should include a summary of the action plans that were put into place since the last formal review. In addition to the summary, provide data trends and/or supporting documentation that explains the assessment action plans that were implemented and that show the results of those action plans. Please also include conclusions and any actions that were taken after reviewing the results of the initial action plans. This section should be a comprehensive overview of all of the assessment activities and the resulting data, conclusions, and actions the program took during a five-year period.

Assessment Plans

This section should describe the assessment plans and goals that the program has for the next five years. This may include any action plans that need to be carried over from previous years in addition to the outline of new assessment projects. Identify the outcomes or department goals that will be assessed in the future, the assessment methods that will be used, any resources that will be needed, and list the individuals who will be responsible for implementing the action plans. Please describe the expected outcomes and desired results.

Conclusion

This section should serve as a reflection on the state of the program: where it was five years ago, how it has changed, the strengths and weaknesses identified through the assessment process, and how it can improve. This is meant to be a concise presentation of the program review process and should be able to stand alone as an overview of the program in its past, present, and future states.

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