

Assessment Glossary
2023 -- 2024

Alignment	Alignment conveys the idea that critical components of a course or program work together to ensure that the desired student learning outcomes or success outcomes are achieved. For example, program desired student learning outcomes should align with desired outcomes of the individual courses.	
Assessment	The ongoing process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data to develop an understanding of student learning or unit processes. Using the resulting information to make plans for improvements in programmatic or department effectiveness.	
Assessment instruments	Instruments that are used in the assessment process to collect data about the outcome(s) being assessed. Some examples of common assessment instruments include rubrics, checklists, portfolios,	

	surveys, focus groups, and tests.	
Assessment Period	Year of the cycle in which assessment is being conducted. Academic programs will express as an Academic Year (August 20xx – May 20xx). Administrative units may express as an Academic Year (July 1, 20xx – June 30, 20xx) or a Fiscal Year, as appropriately matches the period which is used as the assessment cycle.	
Assessor Feedback	During the assessment review process, Review Teams and the Director of University Assessment will review assessment plans and provide relevant and meaningful feedback to the assessors to use to guide development of their next assessment plan.	
Authentic assessment	Authentic assessments are performance assessments using real-world or authentic tasks or contexts.	

Benchmark	The targeted level of a measure that indicates successfully meeting the outcome (see also Target).	
Curriculum map	A chart listing all required courses and experiences in the program with each program addressed at 3 levels: introduce (I), reinforce (R), and master (M). Every course should address at least one outcome at one of the three levels. Assess (A) is added in courses in which the outcome is assessed.	
Data	Factual information (such as measurements or statistics) used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation.	
Direct Assessment	Students are asked to demonstrate what they know or can do with their knowledge. Direct assessments include a variety of forms such as projects, products, papers, exhibitions, tests, and portfolios.	

Findings	Analysis of the data; your explanation substantiating why you say the results demonstrate that you met or did not meet your outcome.	
Formative assessment	Formative assessment is assessment occurring during the course or program, as opposed to at the end of the course or program. The goal of formative assessment is to monitor student learning to provide on-going feedback that can be used by students to identify their strengths and weaknesses so they can address areas that need work. On-going feedback from formative assessments are also valuable for instructors so they can gain meaningful information about where students might be struggling and then instructors can address these issues on a timely basis.	

Goal	Activity planned to be assessed. For academic programs, the goal is assumed to be delivering the program. Administrative units need to specify goals. An example goal from the library: APA Knowledge: Prepare our students for structured, responsible and ethical publication.	
Improvement Plan	Explanation of what you plan to do to improve the results for next year/cycle; indicate specific actions that can be implemented (examples to follow).	
Indirect assessment	Indirect assessments use perceptions, reflections, or secondary evidence to make inferences about student learning. Indirect assessments of student learning may include self-report measures such as surveys which can be used in courses and at the program and institutional levels to gather feedback from students.	

Institutional Level Assessment	Assessment conducted to determine if institutional goals are being met. These are based on Institutional Learning Outcomes or linkage with the Mission or Strategic Plan.	
IRMA (Introduce, Reinforce, Master, Assess)	Introduce – first level of curriculum map, indicating course(s) in which outcome information is introduced to students; indicated on curriculum map by the letter “I” Reinforce – second level of curriculum map, indicating course(s) in which outcome information is reinforced to students; indicated on curriculum map by the letter “R” Master – third level of curriculum map, indicating course(s) in which outcome information is mastered by students; indicated on curriculum map by the letter “M” Assess – indicator on curriculum map of course(s) in which the outcome is assessed; indicated on	

	curriculum map by the letter “A”	
Measure	The data element used to determine the results of the outcomes. The measure could be a rubric, a target group of questions, or responses to a survey.	
Methods	The action employed to assess the outcomes of a program or unit. A method could be giving a test or conducting a survey. It is the type of measure being used to assess an outcome.	
Mission Statement	A statement that articulates an academic program or administrative unit’s means of supporting the university mission and/or strategic plan.	
Outcome Student Learning Outcome Success Outcome	Expected result(s) of an activity. · Student Learning Outcomes (or just Learning Outcomes)– an outcome related to the student learning something from the	

	course, program, or process · “Success” Outcomes – an outcome expected from support of the University Mission or Strategic Plan	
Population/sample	This is who will be assessed. Population would be all students in all sections of a course (or using an administrative process); a sample would be the portion of the whole population you are assessing along with a description of how you selected this sample.	
Portfolio (or e-portfolio)	A portfolio is a collection of student work over a specified period of time that is useful when someone reflects and makes judgments about the contents. When portfolios are used in program assessment, a group of faculty review and evaluate samples of student work that have been collected in the portfolios. When portfolios are used in course assessment, the instructor and the individual	

	student review and discuss the work collected by the student. Students also evaluate their own learning through written reflections which are a central component in portfolios.	
Qualitative Method of Assessment	Assessment method that relies primarily on descriptions rather than numerical scores. Examples: logs, journals, reflective writing, artifacts, images, audio clips, video clips, participant observation, and narrative responses to questions on interviews and surveys.	
Quantitative Method of Assessment	Assessment method that directly generates numerical scores or ratings. Examples: Surveys, inventories institutional/departmental data, departmental/course-level exams (locally constructed, standardized, etc.).	
Reliability	The extent to which an experiment, test, or measuring procedure yields	

	the same results on repeated trials.	
Responsible Personnel	People who will collect data (e.g. course faculty; unit coordinator) and/or who will perform data analysis (e.g. Associate Dean or designate; unit coordinator and area VP).	
Results	As per the assessment plan template, this is the data (quantitative or qualitative) that is collected to measure whether student learning or success outcomes have been achieved.	
Results summary	A narrative description of the results (data)	
Rubric	A rubric is a scoring tool that explicitly documents the performance expectations for an assignment or piece of work. A rubric divides assignment work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each	

	component at varying levels of performance. The value of rubrics is that they make public the key criteria that students can use in developing, revising, and judging their own work. Rubrics also provide faculty with consistent criteria to judge student work.	
SMART goals	A SMART goal is: ● Specific: Well defined, clear, and unambiguous ● Measurable: With specific criteria that measure your progress toward the accomplishment of the goal ● Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve ● Realistic: Within reach, realistic, and relevant to your purpose ● Timely: With a clearly defined timeline, including a starting date and a target date.	

Student Feedback	Students need relevant and meaningful information about the quality of their completed work so that they can improve their performance.
Summative Assessment	Summative assessment is assessment occurring at the end of a course or program at a time in which the student is expected to have mastery of the course or the program outcome(s). The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it to some standard or benchmark.
Target	This is the indication that the outcome has been met (e.g. 80% of the students scored Proficient or better on a rubric; the average class score on rubric element 1 is 13 or better (out of a possible 15 points).
Timeline	Identification of when and how often will you perform this measurement (e.g. Every time the course is offered; every Fall semester; Fall semester of even years; Spring of 2024).
Validity	The quality of being well-grounded, sound, or correct. The rubric or measure being used measures what it is supposed to measure.

