

QUICK START GUIDE TO ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT ASSESSMENT PLANNING

STEP 1 - ORGANIZE FOR ASSESSMENT

Before developing an assessment plan for your unit, we recommend that you identify key staff members that will take the lead in designing and implementing assessment efforts. Additionally, your unit should create an inclusive process that encourages unit staff to participate in and contribute to assessment planning and decision-making activities.

STEP 2 - WRITE THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT MISSION STATEMENT

Establish a mission statement that describes **the purpose of the department/unit** as well as reflect the mission of the university. Mission statements should clearly and effectively communicate WHAT you do, for WHOM, WHY you do it, and HOW you do it. It gives the department/unit a **unique identity**.

STEP 3 - WRITING ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Clearly outline your unit's essential operations and responsibilities, as it relates to your departmental mission. Think about whether and to what extent these operations detail the functions of a normal operating year for your unit. This information will help your unit establish measurable objectives.

Note: If your unit is not prepared to submit a mission statement, you may choose to focus on the unit's essential functions instead to carry out your unit's assessment activities. All units will greatly benefit from identifying a list of essential functions in addition to the unit's mission statement as it may provide guidance during the assessment planning process.

STEP 4 - WRITING OBJECTIVES

Identify at least one objective for each of the functional responsibilities of your unit. Objectives should be directly related to the mission, purpose, and key functional responsibilities of the unit. Make sure that each objective is **measurable and actionable**. In other words, your objectives should allow your unit to monitor changes in the unit or its beneficiaries, and you have to have some degree of controllable influence on the outcomes. It is also important to remember that you should be tracking and measuring things here that will actually tell you where you can improve your operations. An objective should lend itself to improvement, be singular and not bundled, be meaningful and not trivial, and not lead to a yes/no answer.

STEP 5 - WRITING TARGETS

For each objective, describe methods (e.g., survey) you are using or plan to use and the measurement (e.g., satisfaction) to measure how well your department/unit is actually performing in relation to the outcome.

Start by taking an inventory of the kinds of tools your department/unit is already using. What information are you already collecting? What kinds of assessments are you already using or are already familiar with? Other departments on campus, such as the Strategic Analysis and Institutional Reporting, may be collecting data that you can incorporate into your methods/measures. The data collected should be representative of the whole year. You may want to collect data continuously or you may want to take "snapshots" at regular intervals. You may want to sample systematically, rather than collect data on every event/person/day.

Determine what standards are expected from services provided by your administrative unit. For some outcomes, you may want to achieve a satisfaction level of "excellent" from the students who utilize the administrative unit's services. However, for other outcomes, this expectation may be unrealistic because other factors may affect student perception (e.g., students' satisfaction rating of the financial assistance office).

Note: Assessment measures can be direct (any process employed to gather data which requires subjects to *display* their knowledge, behavior, or thought processes) or indirect (any process employed to gather data which asks subjects to *reflect upon* their knowledge, behaviors, or thought processes), qualitative or quantitative, objective or subjective, and multiple measures should be used. An assessment method and measure can be used to assess progress towards more than one objective.

STEP 6 - WRITING ACTION STEPS

Identify all available approaches and procedures that can be used to achieve your unit objectives and help execute your plan. In particular, identify the methods and information needed to assess your unit's functional operations. Make sure to establish a schedule and identify key personnel to achieve these steps.

STEP 7 – SUBMIT UNIT ASSESSMENT PLAN

Ensure that you have access to MS SharePoint and follow the instructions to submit your plan online.

STEP 8 – IMPLEMENT ASSESSMENT PLAN

Implement the assessment plan, collect data, review data at appropriate intervals and continue to update where needed.