

ASSESSMENT MATTERS

ASSESSMENT PLAN REVIEW: WHERE DID THOSE SCORES COME FROM?

“*But Professor*, I just don’t understand this grade on my paper? Why did I get this score?” Ever hear those words? Yup, so have we! Right after we released the scores of our annual review of the submitted Assessment Plans from 2017-2018. Just like our students, some programs did not pay attention to the rubric (Review Method) that is attached to most sections of the Taskstream workspaces to see just what we are looking for in each section. Therefore, we wanted to use this month’s newsletter to highlight the rubric and identify some of the areas that we consistently scored up or down.

Program Learning Outcomes: Average score *Excellent* (4.02/5)

Program Learning Outcomes	Outstanding	Excellent	Achieving	Needs Development	Inadequate
Student learning outcomes identify the intended knowledge, understandings, or abilities that students will acquire through the academic program. The majority of these outcomes are at a high cognitive level.	Outcomes are included and the majority of them explicitly describe what students can analyze, evaluate, or create.	Outcomes are included which explicitly describe what students know, understand, or are able to do.	Outcomes are included, but do not explicitly describe what students know, understand, or are able to do.	Outcomes are included that describe course level evaluation. No program level outcomes are included that explicitly describe what students know, understand, or are able to do.	Outcome are absent. Rather, the program learning outcomes section describes program goals and objectives rather than student learning outcomes.

We have seen great development of Program Learning Outcomes over the last several years, with most programs achieving a score of *Excellent*. To achieve an *Outstanding*, programs need to use language at a higher cognitive level with regards to student learning; e.g., analyze, evaluate, or create.

Curriculum Map: Average score *Achieving* (3.22/5)

Curriculum Map	Outstanding	Excellent	Achieving	Needs Development	Inadequate
The curriculum map provides an overall view of the assessment plan. The map includes a list of measures aligned with the appropriate learning outcomes. Measures are clearly described, and there is at least one direct and indirect measure for each outcome. In addition to assessment points, identifying where the outcomes are introduced and practiced is encouraged.	The curriculum map contains a complete list and clear description of assessment measures aligned with outcomes. Map includes where learning outcome concepts are introduced, practiced and assessed. Each outcome has at least two assessment measures, one direct and one indirect.	The curriculum map contains a complete list and clear description of assessment measures aligned with outcomes. Map includes at least one direct and indirect assessment measure per outcome.	The curriculum map contains at least one assessment measure for each outcome, however activities are not clearly described. Map does not include at least one direct and one indirect measure for each outcome.	The curriculum map does not contain at least one assessment measure for each outcome.	Curriculum map is absent, or no activities have been added.

This was a new area for the 2017-2018 cycle. The curriculum map can be used as a great planning tool for assessment. As per the rubric, many programs received an *Achieving* because they did not have an indirect measure (such as a student survey) listed on the map. We expect to see at least one direct and one indirect measure per outcome.

Process of Assessment: Requirement *48% Met/52% Not Met*

Process of Assessment	Yes	No
Standing Requirement: Ways in which faculty and staff are involved in the development, implementation, and use of student learning outcomes assessment	The ways in which faculty and staff are involved in the development, implementation, and use of student learning outcomes assessment are described.	The ways in which faculty and staff are involved in the development, implementation, and use of student learning outcomes assessment are NOT described.

This area was another new area and one of great misunderstanding. Many programs put their actual assessment plan in this standing requirement, but that is not appropriate here. This area is to simply describe how you and your faculty/staff work to bring assessment to life. When do you discuss findings? When and how do you go about designing an action plan for change? How often do you review your learning outcomes and measures? Use this section to document everything about your assessment process, so your successors can continue seamlessly.



Assessment Plan: Average Score *Achieving* (2.48/5)

Assessment Plan	Outstanding	Excellent	Achieving	Needs Development	Inadequate
Measures for assessing outcomes, as well as the target and ideal performance levels, are specified and justified. Measures are appropriate as evidenced by tools (rubrics, exit surveys, etc.) that clearly align with learning outcomes. Direct and Indirect measures are included.	Measures for assessing outcomes, as well as the target and ideal performance levels, are specified and justified. Measures are appropriate as evidenced by tools (rubrics, exit surveys, etc.) that clearly align with learning outcomes. Direct and Indirect measures are included.	Measures for assessing outcomes are listed and described, with the target and ideal performance levels specified. Measures are appropriate as evidenced by tools (rubrics, exit surveys, etc.) that clearly align with learning outcomes. Direct and Indirect measures are included.	Measures are listed and described for each outcome. The activities are appropriate measures of outcomes as evidenced by tools. Plan does not include both direct and indirect measures or the target and ideal performance levels are not specified.	Measures are listed and described for each outcome. Some measures may not be appropriate measures of the outcomes, or no tools are included. Plan does not include both direct and indirect measures.	A discussion of assessment measures is absent or vague.

The Assessment Plan is where the measures for each outcome are identified. As you can see from the average score, most of the programs had some measures, but many of the programs were missing their rubrics or tools used in the measure. This includes things such as the actual survey you send out to seniors, or the criteria by which an assignment is evaluated. Having those attachments is key to evaluating the appropriateness of a given measure. Another area of weakness was only having direct or indirect measures for each outcome, not both.

Assessment Findings: Average Score *Achieving* (2.25/5)

Assessment Findings	Outstanding	Excellent	Achieving	Approaching	Needs Development	Inadequate
Findings describe what was learned from the assessment measures. Findings from ongoing measures are summarized and clearly reported for the years since the last APR or post-APR evaluation.	Findings from direct and indirect assessment measures are summarized and clearly reported and include data since the last APR or post-APR evaluation.	Findings from direct and indirect assessment measures are summarized and clearly reported and include the last 5 years of data or since the last post-APR evaluation.	Findings from direct and indirect assessment measures are summarized and clearly reported for less than 5 years of data or data is incomplete since the last post-APR evaluation.	Program-level findings are presented, but are not linked to learning outcomes.	Findings from assessment measures are summarized and clearly reported for less than 5 years of data. However, findings are only from direct or indirect measures.	No findings from assessment measures are reported.

For the most part, programs that included findings achieved their goal, however, the part that was missing from many plans was the historical information. This goes back to the old assessment website and when it was last updated. One of the issues we had from that website is that programs would erase old data and replace them with new, thus losing the historical record. As the cycles advance in AMS, this will be avoided, as each year is a separate entry.

Changes in Response to Findings (Action Plans): Average score *Achieving* (2.6/5)

Changes in Response to Findings (Action Plan)	Outstanding	Excellent	Adequate	Approaching	Needs Development	Inadequate
The findings are used to inform annual action plans to improve the program. Assessment findings are appropriately used as information that drives improvement in learning, instruction, curriculum or strategic planning. Follow-up assessment measures are included to evaluate the action plan.	Changes, in the form of action plans, are described and justified based on the findings, or no changes are warranted based on the findings so far. Action plan assessment is included. Changes since the last APR or post-APR evaluation are included or referenced.	Changes, in the form of action plans, are described and justified based on the findings, or no changes are warranted based on the findings so far. If necessary, Changes from the past 5 years or post-APR evaluation are included or referred to. Action plan assessment is included.	Changes, in the form of action plans, are described and justified based on the findings, or no changes are warranted based on the findings so far. Action plan assessment is included. Changes from less than 5 years are included or referenced or changes are incomplete since last post-APR evaluation.	Program changes are presented, but are not linked to learning outcomes.	Changes, in the form of action plans, are described but not justified by findings.	No action plans based on findings are reported.

Of all of the sections, the Action Plan was the least submitted. What we saw in this area is that programs had an action or change identified, but it was not based on the Findings for that measure. Also, many areas did not fill out the rest of the details in the template such as timeline and measure. The measure is how you will re-assess this outcome after the change is implemented. There were many programs that felt the findings warranted no change, which is fine, and reported that within this section.

Final Notes:

It is always good to remember that an assessment plan needs to be designed to be simple and sustainable. One direct measure and one indirect measure is expected and best practice. When reporting your plan and findings, we are not evaluating the effectiveness of the degree program, we are simply evaluating how well you assessed your program and whether you used the data to improve or maintain what you are doing. We thank you for your hard work in reporting your assessment and as always, are here to help you in your efforts.

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