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University of South Alabama Assessment Handbook

The assessment handbook is a comprehensive guide to the assessment process at the

B Measuring student learning: **Assessment helps to determine what students know and can do, and identifies areas where they may need additional support**

University Assessment Advisory Committee

The University of South Alabama is committed to demonstrating the effectiveness and Ÿ Š • ž Ž 1 ˜ • 1 • ' Ž 1 ™ › ˜ • › Š – œ 1 Š — • 1 œ Ž › Ÿ ' Œ Ž œ 1 • ' Š • 1 Œ ˜ — • › ‹ ž • Ž 1 • ˜ 1 • ' its goals and fulfill its mission.

Representatives from each college, school, ad various academic and support service units serve on the University Assessment Advisory Committee (UAAC) and act as assessment liaisons for communicating assessment expectations, deadlines, and updates.

Charge of the Committee

1. To be a knowledgeable point of contact for their division/unit regarding information about institutional effectiveness.
2. To review assessment data and provide guidance regarding the extent to which the University is progressing towards its goals and the continued appropriateness of • ' Ž 1 — ' Ÿ Ž › œ ' • ¢ œ 1 • › Š • Ž • ' Œ 1 • Š — 1 • ˜ Š • œ 1 Š — • 1
3. To review data and provide guidance regarding the extent to which the — ' Ÿ Ž › œ ' • ¢ œ 1 Š œ œ Ž œ œ – Ž — • 1 ™ › Š Œ • ' Œ Ž 1 ' œ 1 Ž • • Ž Œ • ' Ÿ Ž 1 Š
4. To assist in identifying and recognizing exemplary assessment practices across the University.

Planning and Self-Study

OIE now utilizes Watermark's Planning and Self -Study (P&SS) to document assessment reports, program reviews, and plans. This platform has replaced the previous software, Nuventive Improve. Watermark's Planning and Self-Study (P&SS) is a tool designed to assist institutions in the process of self-assessment and planning.

Note: ž Ÿ Ž — • ' Ÿ Ž 1 ' • • 1 › Ž – Š ' — 1 ˜ ™ Ž › Š • ' ˜ — Š • 1 œ ' ˜ ž • • 1 • ' Ž 1 — ' Ÿ Ž › œ ' • contributors need to retrieve historical assessment reports. However, direct assistance from Nuventive Improvement   œ 1 • ž Š š • ˜ › • will not be available.

The P&SS platform offers a range of features and capabilities, including:

- # Customizable templates for self-study reports: The platform provides customizable templates and forms for institutions to use in creating their self - study reports, ensuring that they meet the requirements of accrediting bodies and other stakeholders.

- # Integrated data collection and analysis: The P&SS platform enables institutions to collect and analyze data from a range of sources, including student surveys, course evaluations, and institutional assessments.P&SS allows integration from other platforms, such as LMS and other Watermark products.

- # Collaboration and communication tools: The platform contains tools for collaboration and communication among stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and external reviewers.

- ” Reporting and analytics: The P&SS platform includes reporting and analytics tools that enable institutions to g enerate reports and visualizations of their data, and to use that data to inform decision -making and assessment

Units

Administrative Units

The administrative unit assessment process focuses on the University of South Alabama's activities related to regular planning, goal setting, and evaluation of the extent to which it is accomplishing its mission.

As its mission, USA strives to make a difference in the lives of those it serves through promoting discovery, health, and learning. To achieve that mission , administrative units are responsible for identifying desired outcomes related to the University's Strategic Plan and analyzing the efficacy of steps taken to achieve those goals.

The assessment schedule will differ depending on the reporting period for the administrative unit. The administrative units will report either on a Fiscal Year (FY) or the Academic Year (AY), according to classification (see calendar). The Fiscal Year at the University of South Alabama operates from October 1st to September 30th. The Academic Year at the University of South Alabama comprises three teaching periods: Fall Term, Spring Term, and Summer Term.

Administrative Units reporting on an Academic Year	Administrative Units reporting on a Fiscal Year
” Business Office/Accounting/Budget ” Diversity and Community Engagement ” Facilities ” Governmental Relations ” Graduate School ” Institutional Effectiveness ” Institutional Research ” Legal Affairs ” Research and Economic Development ” Research Innovation ” Whiddon College of Medicine	” Alumni and De velopment ” Audit ” Continuing Education & Conference Services ” Human Resources ” Safety & Environmental Compliance

Academic Program Review

Academic program review (APR) is an opportunity for faculty and staff of programs, without discipline -specific accreditation or approval, to have a clear picture of how their student s are doing and what might improve their success. APR is conducted every 7 years by non-accredited programs and is a 12-month process. APR is a reflective study • ' Š • 1 ˜ ž • • ' — Ž œ 1 œ • Ž ™ œ 1 • ' Š • 1 Œ Š — 1 ‹ Ž 1 • Š ” Ž — 1 • ˜ 1 ‹ ˜ • œ • Ž › 1 Š 1 ™ ˜ α is an essential component of maintaining the standards and ensuring that the program is meeting its intended goals and objectives. Academic program review typically involves a comprehensive evaluation of the program, including its curriculum, faculty, intend ed learning outcomes, and resources. At the end of the study, program leadership will incorporate their knowledge of existing strengths to support those steps.

Additionally, APR:

- x Assesses student satisfaction
- x Provides a broad view of your program throu gh the eyes of:
    - o Students
    - o Faculty
    - o Staff
    - o Administrators
    - o Alumni
- x Allows for the establishment of long -term and short-term program goals
- x Contributes to planning at department and university levels
- x Supports completion of annual assessment reports

A comp lete APR is derived from two components, the self-study, and the external review.

- x Self-study: The program conducts a comprehensive self-study to evaluate its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- x External review: An expert is typically brough t in to provide an objective evaluation of the program. This can include individuals from other institutions, professional organizations, or industry experts. The external review can be conducted either in person or remotely.

x   Defining outcomes: The first step in assessment planning is to identify the learning outcomes that will be assessed. Learning outcomes should be specific, measurable, and aligned with program goals and objectives. Academic units are required to report 3-5 intended learning outcomes. Non-academic units are required to report 2-3 outcomes/goals.

x   Selecting assessment methods: Once learning outcomes have been defined, the next step is to select appropriate assessment methods. Assessment methods can include exams, quizzes, essays, projects, presentations, or other forms of assessment.

x   Developing assessment tools: After selecting assessment methods, the next step is to develop assessment tools that will be used to evaluate student learning. Assessment tools may include rubrics, scoring guides, or other evaluation criteria.

x   Collecting data: Once assessment tools have been developed, the next step is to collect data on student learning. This may involve administering exams, reviewing student work, or collecting other forms of data.

x   Creating a schedule for assessment is an important step in ensuring that assessments are conducted regularly and consistently. A well-planned assessment schedule helps to ensure that assessments are aligned with program goals and objectives, that data is collected at regular intervals, and that feedback is provided in a timely manner from the Assessment Team.

x Creating: This involves the ability to generate new ideas and create original work. Assessment strategies for this category may include creative writing tasks, project-based assessments, and multimedia presentations.

Remember

Indirect Measures

- x Exit Interviews
- x Survey of recent graduates
- x Focus Groups
- x Course Evaluations
- x Presentations

- x Student participation in faculty research, publications, and conference presentations
- x Case Study Analysis

Data Collection

- x Reflect on how the program can gather assessment data regularly and consistently.
- x Determine the most appropriate time to measure and collect data.

It is advisable to be strategic and realistic in selecting the timing for data collection. Establish an assessment cycle that aligns with both external (accreditation) and internal (academic program review) commitments to improve and support program quality.

Use of Results for Improvement

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Curriculum Mapping

Link goals/objectives to the curriculum: **Curriculum mapping is the process of documenting and analyzing the structure and content of a curriculum to ensure that it is aligned with program goals and objectives and meets the needs of students. Curriculum mapping typically involves creating visual representations of the curriculum that show the relationships between various components, such as courses and learning outcomes.**

Expectations for Assessment

x Alignment: **Program-level assessments should align with the program's stated learning outcomes and objectives, ensuring that students are acquiring the knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of them. Non-academic units and department assessments should align with its goals, ensuring that the unit and department are meeting its mission and contributing to the overall success of USA.**

x Validity and reliability: **All assessments should be valid, measuring what they are intended to measure, and reliable, providing consistent results over time.**

x Data-driven decision-making: **Assessment data should be used to make informed decisions about improvements, including curriculum development,**

Terms	Description
Course-level Assessment	Course-level Assessment refers to methods of assessing student learning within the classroom environment, using course goals, outcomes, and content to gauge the extent of learning that is taking place.
Curriculum Map	A curriculum map is a visual representation of what you do in your program to foster desired knowledge, skills, and values. It shows the Š • ' • — – Ž — • 1 ‹ Ž • Ž Ž — 1 Š 1 ™ › ˜ • › Š – œ 1 Œ ž › › ' Œ ž œ ž of the program.
	Curriculum Mapping is an analytical approach that allows faculty to identify important components of program curricula, place them in relation to each other in a visual format, and then capture an overarching curricular structure to supp ort cognitive scaffolding for further analysis. A curriculum map is a visual tool that can be used to introduce new students and faculty to the program, curriculum discussion, and accreditation requirements, and provides an approach to systematically study the curriculum. Curriculum mapping is especially helpful in implementing an assessment plan. (Cuevas, Matweb & Feit, 2009)
Direct Assessment of Learning	Direct Assessment of Learning occurs when measures of learning are based on student performance or demonstrate the learning itself. Scoring performance on tests, term papers, or the execution of lab skills are examples of direct assessment of learning. Direct assessment of learning can occur within a course (e.g., performance on a series of tests) or could occur across courses or years (comparing writing scores from sophomore to senior year).
Direct Measures	Direct measures evaluate student work products in light of learning outcomes for the program. Examples of direct measures include exams and rubrics f or capstone projects, portfolios, papers, and performances.

Terms	Description
	Formative Assessment aims to understand and improve learning along • ' Ž 1 ™ › ˜ • › Ž œ œ ' ˜ — 1 ˜ • 1 œ • ž • Ž — • œ 1 œ • ž • ' Ž œ ï 1 •
Formative Assessment	

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