



COLLEGE *of* CHARLESTON

Assessment Guide

The College of Charleston Assessment Guide was developed under the auspices of the College's Office for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning (OIEP) and is intended to provide current and accurate information regarding assessment reporting. The new Center for Assessment and Continuous Improvement (CACI) is now responsible for Assessment and works collaboratively with faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders, and welcomes feedback and suggestions.



College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Contents

Assessment at the College of Charleston	2
Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
College of Charleston Assessment Feedback Process	6
The Assessment Cycle at College of Charleston.....	6
Steps in Building an Assessment Report (Plans and Results)	7
1. Begin with a brief statement of the program/unit mission and document how the program/unit mission supports the College of Charleston Institutional Mission.....	7
2. Describe the assessment process.....	8
3. Identify outcomes for the program or unit.	10
4. Map outcomes for a program/unit.	13
5. Identify useful and feasible methods of measurement with performance targets.	14
6. Analyze and report assessment results.	16
7. Use assessment results for continuous improvement.....	17
Appendix A	20
Appendix B.....	23
Appendix C.....	24
Appendix D	25
Appendix E.....	26
Appendix F	27
Appendix G	28
Appendix H	29
Appendix I.....	30
Glossary of Terms	33

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Assessment at the College of Charleston

Assessment is an ongoing process of systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well outcomes are being achieved and expectations are being met. The resulting information is used to enhance the learning environment, improve student learning, and improve services. Academic, administrative, and educational support services are all integral to the assessment process and aligned with the mission. The College of Charleston Mission Statement and the Strategic Plan's Purpose, Values, Goals and Strategic Initiatives are found in [<here>](#).

The College of Charleston Assessment model defines two broad categories: academic programs and administrative units. Academic programs include undergraduate and graduate educational programs, stand-alone minors, certificates, and the general education program. Administrative units include administrative support services, academic and student support services, centers and institutes, and units with community/public service focus.

The primary function of assessment is to improve educational programs and practices. Assessment feedback is essential to helping faculty and staff identify what is and is not working and what changes, if any, are warranted (Suskie, 2009)¹. Assessment is also mandated by federal and state government systems as well as regional and professional accrediting agencies. Sections 7 (Institutional Planning and Effectiveness) and 8 (Student Achievement) of the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement directly describe the requirements of institutional assessment².

Section 7: Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

1. The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission. (Institutional Planning) [CR]
2. The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on

¹ Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

² Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, ed. College Delegate Assembly (Decatur: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2018 Edition), 7-8.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

- improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement. (Quality Enhancement Plan)
3. The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved (Administrative effectiveness)

Section 8: Student Achievement

1. The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success. (Student achievement) [CR]
2. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:
 - a. student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs. (Student outcomes: educational programs)
 - b. student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student outcomes: general education)
 - c. academic and student services that support student success. (Student outcomes: academic and student services)

Higher education institutions accredited by SACSCOC must demonstrate:

- that specific assessment initiatives are implemented to measure designated student learning outcomes;
- that assessment results are shared with appropriate persons; and
- that results of specific assessment initiatives are used to improve student learning.

College of Charleston assessment plans include learning outcomes and/or program outcomes and the assessment strategies used to measure achievement of student learning and program outcomes. A description of assessment strategies might include methods, instrumentation, rubrics, targeted performance levels, locus of responsibility, timing of the assessment, and data analysis among others. A multiple method assessment is considered

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

best practice and often involves the use of both direct and indirect assessment methods to measure a single learning outcome. Using the results from multiple methods of assessment leads to action plans for improving the program services or operations.

Roles and Responsibilities

The College of Charleston's assessment model engages broad-based participation and encompasses several key faculty, staff, and administrator roles. The assessment model is an ongoing, broad-based process and involves collaborations between assessment coordinators, the Deans' Assessment Committees (DACs) members at the school level, the Administrative Assessment Committees (AACs) members at the division level, the chairs of the DACs and AACs who comprise the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC), the Provost or Executive Vice Presidents, and the President.

Assessment coordinators (faculty and staff members) work collaboratively with colleagues in their programs or units to develop an assessment plan and report and coordinate their program's or unit's ongoing assessment process.

The DACs are school level assessment committees that exist for each school or college (School of Sciences and Mathematics; School of Professional Studies; School of the Arts; School of Humanities and Social Sciences; Honors College; School of Languages, Cultures and World Affairs; Graduate School; School of Education, Health, and Human Performance; School of Business) and the General Education Program. The DACs consist of faculty across the varying disciplines. These committee members serve as mentors and work collaboratively with their programs to assist the assessment coordinators in their assessment efforts and to provide a review of the quality of the assessment reports based on established criteria provided in the Assessment Review Rubrics. The rubrics replaced reviewer rating scales that were in effect from 2015-2019. The DAC members use rubrics to focus discussion on the rubric indicators for increasing quality of assessment plans and results. The chair of each DAC serves on the IAC.

The AACs are division level assessment committees that exists for each of the 9 divisions (Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, Enrollment Management, Facilities Management, Information Technology, Institutional Advancement, Marketing and Communications, the President's Division, and Student Affairs) and consist of staff members and administrators from the respective divisions. These committee members serve as mentors and work collaboratively with their units to assist the assessment coordinators in their assessment efforts and to provide a review of the quality of the assessment reports based on established criteria provided in the Institutional Assessment Rubrics. The chair of each AAC also serves on the IAC.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

The IAC is an institutional-level committee that consists of the DAC and AAC chairs, which ensures the quality of the reviews conducted by the DACs and AACs through its oversight of the review process.

The IAC supports the process of continual self-evaluation and improvement across all academic programs and administrative units. Annually, each member of the IAC presents a DAC or AAC report to IAC about the quality of the results and plans. The presentations contain examples of use of results to make improvements in student learning, services and operations. This quality assurance model is also followed for distance education and off-campus locations.

Additional responsibilities of the IAC include:

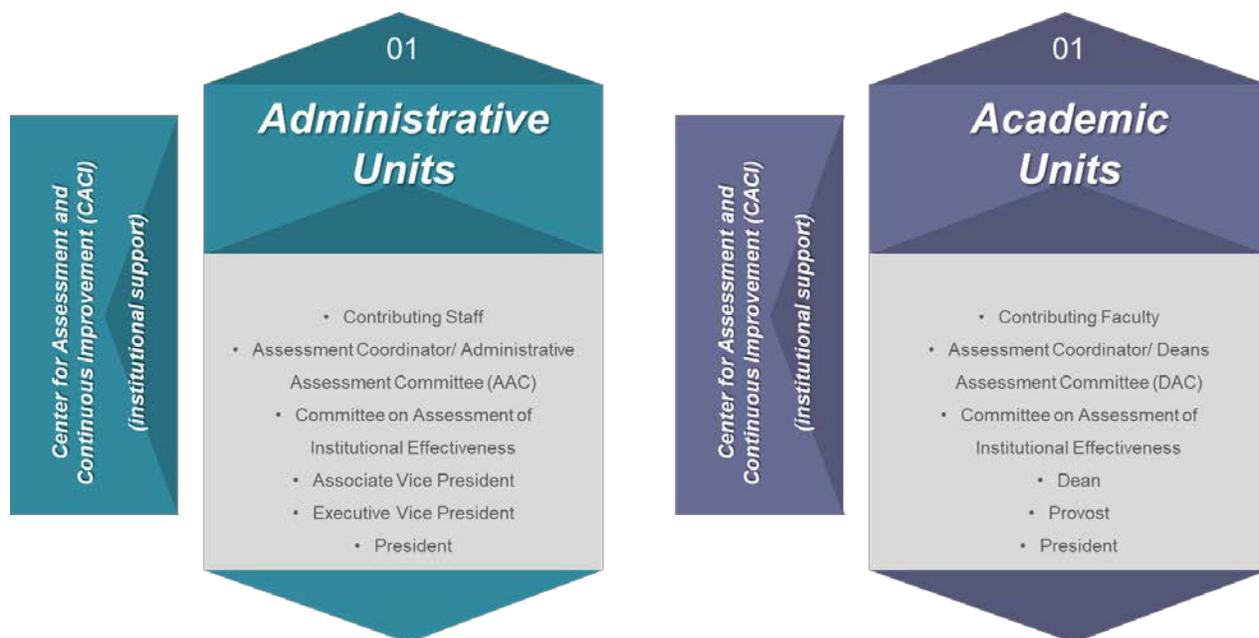
- Helping to create and maintain a culture of assessment at the College of Charleston.
- Ensuring the use of assessment results to make improvements.
- Motivating faculty and staff participation in all steps of the assessment process.
- Providing feedback on assessments to promote continuous improvement.
- Involving students by promoting awareness of institutional measures.
- Coordinating assessment efforts.
- Generating ways to involve external stakeholders in meaningful assessment activities.
- Working with other campus entities to incorporate institutional data.
- Coordinating and collaborating to provide faculty/professional development.
- Ensuring that new faculty and staff receive information about assessment.

The Center for Assessment and Continuous Improvement (CACI) serves as a support office for assessment coordinators, the AAC members, the DAC members, the IAC members, the Executive Vice Presidents and the President.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

College of Charleston Assessment Feedback Process

Figure 1. Assessment Feedback Process



The Executive Vice President (EVP) and the President review a random sample of completed review rubrics for programs and administrative units and provide additional feedback, if necessary.

The Assessment Cycle at College of Charleston

The College follows an annual assessment cycle with plans due in early fall and results reports due at the end of the spring term.

Academic Programs

- **September 1:** Data entry for assessment reports and plans completed by all academic programs and administrative units to Compliance Assist and submission of self-completed rubrics for the plans and results reports. For example, on September 1, 2020 assessment results reports for the 2019-20 and assessment plans for 2020-21 are due.
- **September 1-15:** Independent reviews conducted and rubrics completed by the respective Deans Assessment Committees (DACs) and returned to the respective assessment coordinator(s).

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

- **September 30:** Final edits to plans and reports as well as final rubrics uploaded to Compliance Assist

Administrative Units

- **June 30:** Data entry for assessment reports (plans and results) completed by all administrative units to Compliance Assist and submission of self-completed rubrics for the plans and results. For example, on June 30, 2020 assessment results for 2019-20 and assessment plans for 2020-21 are due.
- **July 1-15:** Independent reviews conducted and rubrics completed by the respective Administrative Assessment Committee (AACs) and returned to the respective assessment coordinator(s).
- **July 30:** Final edits to plans and results as well as final rubrics uploaded to Compliance Assist

Steps in Building an Assessment Report (Plans and Results)

1. **Begin with a brief statement of the program/unit mission and document how the program/unit mission supports the College of Charleston Institutional Mission.**
 - Prepare a brief paragraph describing the purpose of the program/unit. A mission statement should tell the reader what the academic program or administrative unit is about and why the program/unit exists. If the program or unit already has a mission statement, confirm that it is in alignment with the College's mission. See [Appendix F](#) for more information on writing mission statements.

Academic Mission Statement Examples

The Business Administration major prepares students for careers in today's challenging world of business by delivering a comprehensive program of academics, technology, and leadership. A diverse business core and a variety of electives constitute an accredited curriculum that is based on the liberal arts and sciences foundation for which the College is so well known. (Business Administration BS)

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

The Political Science major is dedicated to the rigorous study of politics, power, and place, expanding opportunities for learning and service, career preparation and civic participation locally and globally. (Political Science BA)

Administrative Mission Statement Examples

The Division of Student Affairs at the College of Charleston is dedicated to facilitating the cultural, social, emotional, physical, ethical and intellectual development of all students so that they may become responsible and effective individuals. (Student Affairs)

The mission of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Information Management (IRPIM) is to advance the understanding, planning, operation, evaluation, and improvement of the College of Charleston through the stewardship of College data, accurate and timely reporting, and the provision of clear, consistent, and insightful data analyses for administration, faculty, staff, students, parents and the external community. (Institutional Research, Planning, and Information Management)

2. Describe the assessment process.

- Detailing the assessment implementation process involves answering the following basic questions: Who will be involved in each aspect of the assessment? When will specific tasks be completed? Program/unit coordinators are responsible for providing deans or unit directors with the implementation details.
- Program/unit coordinators or their designees enter plans into Compliance Assist for review by the unit director/college dean, CACI, the Provost and the President. Program personnel will receive feedback regarding outcome alignment and measurability from the deans/institutional directors, and CACI as appropriate. The process is repeated annually.

Academic Example

Who is conducting assessment? What are they doing?

Four faculty members (may change from one semester to another) are involved in data collection process from the core courses designed for the major. These faculty members are listed in Participants Section.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

What do you want to assess (what are your outcomes)? How do you plan to assess it (strategies, tools, measures)?

Assessment consists of three outcome goals with two specific measures for each goal. These goals and measures are explicitly stated here in outcomes and measures section.

How will you review and analyze the data?

Data are collected using a combination of scores in embedded exam questions, essays, in-class essays, oral presentations, and a standardized international exam (The Goethe Institute Exams), and their scores are used for assessment). The department chair/program director prepares the assignments in consultation with the faculty whose courses are targeted for data collection.

How are you going to use the assessment results to improve your program/unit? How will you communicate the results to other faculty or staff members?

Assessment plans and results are discussed in a department meeting of all German roster faculty and suggestions for improvement are incorporated in plans. Data are reviewed and analyzed to see if there is any improvement when compared with data obtained from previous semesters. Assessment results are often used by instructors to identify such factors as teaching strategy, assignment and exam methods, overall course attendance, grading policy, etc., that may lead to an improvement of student learning.

Administrative Example

Who is conducting assessment? What are they doing?

The assessment process is conducted by department staff. In particular the Office of the Dean of Students' operations assessment is conducted by Dean's Office Staff in the areas of student concerns, sexual misconduct, and student support services. Staff collect and share data with internal staff in Student Affairs, and the Title IX Coordinator. Additionally, other institutional sources and outside institutions may provide data.

What do you want to assess (what are your outcomes)? How do you plan to assess it (strategies, tools, measures)?

The primary areas of assessment (outcomes) are: student complaints, Sexual Assault Committee and Committee on Student Concerns. These areas are assessed through a variety of strategies and tools. Student complaints are measured through an electronic application. Other tools and strategies include surveys, focus groups, and intake forms.

How will you review and analyze the data?

Data is reviewed and analyzed by administrators and staff in each of the respective areas. Reports are provided to the Assessment Coordinators who perform additional analysis and review to then synthesize the plans/results reports.

How are you going to use the assessment results to improve your program/unit? How will you communicate the results to other faculty or staff members?

With the completion of each cycle assessment coordinators will analyze results/plans to identify potential items for change/improvement. These items will then be shared with area leaders and Dean's Office administrators to further identify opportunities for improvement and to decide which (if any) changes should be made.

3. Identify outcomes for the program or unit.

Academic Programs

For academic programs, student learning outcomes focus on **what students will know and be able to do** when they successfully complete their particular academic programs at the College. Habits, attitudes, and dispositions students demonstrate may also be measured. The list of outcomes may include those that distinguish one program's graduates from other students.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs):

- Help students learn more effectively.
- Make clear what students should expect from their educational experience.
- Encourage students to be intentional learners who direct and monitor their own learning.
- Help faculty design courses, curriculum, and programs.
- Make graduates' skills and knowledge clear to employers, accrediting agencies, etc.

Questions that student learning outcomes address:

- What knowledge, skills, abilities, and values should the ideal student graduating from our program demonstrate?
- How well does our program prepare students for careers, graduate school, professional study, and/or lifelong learning?

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

- What evidence can be used to demonstrate growth in students' knowledge, skills, abilities, and values as they progress through our program?

Program student learning outcomes:

- Describe what students will learn, rather than what faculty will do.
- Are framed in terms of the program and not individual courses.
- Are observable and/or measurable.
- Align with school and institutional mission.
- Rely on verbs that specify definite, observable behaviors ([Appendix G](#)).
- Focus on the central abilities of the discipline. Incorporate or adapt professional organizations' outcome statements when they exist.
- Are collaboratively authored and collectively accepted.

Student Learning Outcome Examples

Students will demonstrate writing proficiency at the B1 level, as defined by the Common European Framework for Foreign Language Proficiency, by the completion of the major. (German BA)

Students communicate effectively in writing using APA (American Psychological Association) style, the accepted publication style of the discipline. (Psychology BS)

Students can list and explain three revision exercises/strategies that they can apply to their own drafts in order to improve their work. (Creative Writing minor)

Students explain how science impacts society. (General Education)

Administrative Units

For administrative units, operational outcomes focus on **critical functions, services, and processes that impact the unit**. Level of satisfaction may also be measured. The list of outcomes may include those related to timeliness, accuracy, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, etc.

While no upper limit is set on the number of operational outcomes and student learning outcomes required, **all programs and units should be assessing at least three outcomes with two measures for each outcome**.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Administrative outcomes:

- Lead to improvements in what the unit is doing.
- Focus on critical functions, services, and processes that impact the unit.
- Define as statements that describe the desired quality (timeliness, accuracy, responsiveness, etc.) of key functions and services within the administrative unit.
- Rely on verbs that specify definite, observable behaviors and are observable/measurable ([Appendix G](#)).
- Define level of satisfaction clients have with services offered.
- Contributes to the development and growth of students.

Questions that administrative assessment address:

- Is the outcome related to the unit mission?
- Does the outcome lead to improved services? Do the results potentially provide data the unit can use to improve services and/or what aspects of services need improvement?
- Is the outcome worded in terms of what the unit will accomplish or clients think, know, and do following the use of services?
- What and how does an administrative unit contribute to the development and growth of students?

Operational Outcome Examples

Business and Auxiliary Services units will provide exceptional customer service through accurate and timely services.

Institutional Advancement will develop programs that inform and engage alumni in the life of the College in order to increase their participation through volunteerism and philanthropy.

The Center for Assessment and Continuous Improvement will work with the campus community to effectively integrate assessment into all aspects of college operations to improve student learning and operations.

The Office of Admissions will use expanded support and staff to increase the visibility of College of Charleston in international communities and expand enrollment of international students in India.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Marketing and Communication will implement a print and digital marketing campaign (developed in spring 2016) to enhance the College’s image and reputation among prospective students (traditional, nontraditional, transfer, graduate and international) and parents to increase the enrollment of a more diverse and higher quality student population.

4. Map outcomes for a program/unit.

Mapping of curriculum/functional areas is an exercise that identifies outcomes are properly assessing the program/unit’s mission. This exercise should be conducted collaboratively with faculty/staff to identify possible gaps in assessment.

Academic Programs – Curriculum Map

The curriculum map identifies *where* in the curriculum the students obtain the knowledge and skills associated with the learning outcome. This can include specific classes as well as any extra or co-curricular opportunities that provide students with the opportunity to gain knowledge or skill in the outcome area. See [Appendix H](#) for more information on curriculum maps.

Table 1. Sample Curriculum Map

	Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 3	Learning Outcome 4	Learning Outcome 5
Course # 101	I			I	
Course # 201	R		I	R	I
Course # 230		I	R		
Course # 310		R		R	
Course # 360	D	D			R
Course # 401				D	D
Course # 480			D		D
Internship		D		D	

*Note: I, R, and D describe the students’ experiences with the learning outcome. I = Student **Introduction** to the learning to occur; R = Student **Reinforcement** of the learning; D = Student **Demonstration** that learning has occurred. Every course should contribute to at least one learning outcome.*

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Administrative Units – Functional Map

The functional map identifies which of the unit’s functional areas are being assessed against the operational outcomes.

Table 2. Sample Functional Map

	Functional Area 1	Functional Area 2	Functional Area 3	Functional Area 4
Outcome 1	X		X	
Outcome 2		X		
Outcome 3		X	X	
Outcome 4				X

5. Identify useful and feasible methods of measurement with performance targets.

- Each outcome must have at least two measures, one of which is a direct measure.
- To inform improvement efforts, select measures that will identify relative strengths and weaknesses among students’ (aggregate) achievement of the learning outcome, or a unit’s achievement of an operational outcome. For an academic example, by using oral presentations as a measure of students’ communication skills, faculty may learn that collectively, students’ skills are weaker in the areas of delivery and organization, and stronger in content and adaptation to audience. For an administrative example, surveys may measure students’ satisfaction with support services to indicate to staff areas for improvement.
- Use rubrics to score subjective assessments. For programs, rubrics provide detailed descriptions of what is being learned and students’ collective strengths and weaknesses. For units, rubrics provide granular evidence of strengths and weaknesses of the services. A rubric bank is available on the [CACI/Assessment Website](#).
- One assessment activity may be used to assess multiple outcomes. For a program example, a thesis defense could assess both content knowledge and oral communication skills. For a unit example, a survey could assess both awareness as well as satisfaction with the service. If using a single measure to assess multiple outcomes, it is best to use a rubric that evaluates the outcomes independently
- **Remember: course grades are poor measures of program learning outcomes** because they do not reflect the students’ strengths and weaknesses in specific areas.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Table 3. Sample Direct and Indirect Measures for Student Learning Outcomes

Direct Measures	Indirect Measures
standardized exams locally developed exams embedded questions external examiners/judges oral exams minute papers portfolios (with rubrics) behavioral observations videotape simulations project evaluations performance appraisals	exit and other interviews focus groups written surveys and questionnaires: student perception alumni perception employer perception

Table 4. Sample Direct and Indirect Measures for Operational Outcomes

Direct Measures	Indirect Measures
staff time cost materials equipment other resources cost per unit output reliability accuracy courtesy competence reduction in errors audit, external evaluator	written surveys and questionnaires: stakeholder perception students staff/faculty interviews focus groups

- Each outcome must set a performance target for each associated assessment measure; acceptable levels of performance need to be established for aggregate performance for each measure (not for individual student performance, but for students as a group). Examples: 80% of students will score 8 or higher on a 10-point rubric; 85% of students are satisfied or very satisfied.
- Targets should be both ambitious and attainable. It is okay if all targets are not met; the point of assessment is to improve the program and student learning. **Unreached outcomes often provide direction for program change and renewal.**

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Performance Target Examples

Target for a comprehensive exam: At least 90% of students earn a 7 or better (on a 10-point scale) on each of the following dimensions of the comprehensive exam: basic knowledge of general _____; basic knowledge of _____; application of knowledge to a given problem.

Target for a national exam: The average _____ score of all students who take the national _____ examination, administered twice each year, will equal or exceed the national average for the _____ section.

Target for an employer survey: Based on an employer survey, which is administered once every two years, at least 80% of the employers will be satisfied with the knowledge of ethics and conduct of our student interns.

Target for a course evaluation: At least 90% of students who complete the _____ course evaluation will report that the course was “beneficial” or “very beneficial” in enhancing understanding of self and others and the ability to work with others.

6. Analyze and report assessment results.

After assessment data are collected, scored, and analyzed, the results need to be summarized, presented to program faculty, staff, and administrators, and discussed in useful ways with **findings used to improve student learning policies, procedures, teaching, and learning practices.**

Patterns, predictions, problems, and questions should become apparent while summarizing the data.

Questions to Address in Reviewing Results

Did students meet defined standards, criteria, and/or expectations?

Why did some students learn X but not Y?

Have students' knowledge and skills increased over time?

Is the assessment tool (rubric, test) valid and reliable? In other words, did the methods used measure what you intended to measure (validity) and are the methods likely to yield the same findings each time they are employed (reliability)?

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Program assessment results should be reported in the assessment template in Compliance Assist and available to deans and unit directors. Anticipated changes to an existing program are included as part of these results. The annual assessment reports are summarized and used for institutional planning.

7. Use assessment results for continuous improvement

Participants (including students and staff) should discuss the results of the assessment, review original outcomes, and make programmatic decisions based on the findings.

Table 5. Examples of Closing the Loop at the Program Level

Changes to Curricula, Pedagogy, or Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise course content.• Revise course objectives.• Revise course sequence.• Modify program offerings.
Changes to Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modify frequency or schedule of course/program offerings.• Revise advising processes.• Create co-curricular activities.• Implement training or workshops.

Table 6. Examples of Closing the Loop at the Administrative Level

Changes to Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alter scheduling or frequency of services.• Add new programs.• Revise content area of services or programs.
Changes to Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise training/workshop content.• Modify manual procedures toward automated systems.• Alter staff scheduling or availability.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Quality Assurance Process

To demonstrate quality assurance and provide a feedback process, DACs and AACs members use rubrics to review assessment plans and results to improve student learning and operations. Two institutional assessment rubrics are used that have five progressively advanced levels of development: establishing, emerging, developing, proficient, and exemplary.

The assessment plan rubric has 9 indicators used in determining the level of development:

1. clear, concise mission statement;
2. an assessment process that summarized the strategies to assess the outcomes, a plan for using data to improve student learning and/or operations, and the process by which data is shared; clearly defined curriculum or functional map included.
3. outcomes: a minimum of three outcomes; outcomes are specific, attainable and results-oriented and time bound, they are clearly aligned of outcomes to the School/Division/College Strategic Plan;
4. clear assessment methods: two appropriate, quantitative measures with performance targets defined; relevant assessment instruments included;
5. measures describe specific strategies to achieve the target based on results from previous years
6. the assessment plan promotes continuous quality improvement by having formative outcomes and measures.
7. closing the loop by linking new strategies to previous assessment results.

The assessment results rubric has 8 indicators used in determining the level of development:

1. complete, aggregated, and relevant data are provided for each measure;
2. data reporting is complete, concise, and well presented;
3. results clearly specify whether performance targets were met/expectations for each measure have been met;
4. results provide evidence that findings informed discussion and improvements;
5. results included at least one applied and/or planned change based on the data;
6. relevant assessment instruments are included;
7. closing the loop is demonstrated by assessing the impact of applied changes; and
8. impact of closing the loop with an improvement is demonstrated.

DAC or AAC chairs and members use the rubric to support efforts of programs and units whose Assessment work is rated at an early developmental stage and to increase the use of results to improve student learning and operations. Based on DAC or AAC feedback, assessment

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

coordinators improve their results and plans and resubmit to the DAC or AAC members. The results and plans go through this iterative review process, until the DAC or AAC chair accepts the results and plans.

Assessment Support

Table 7 represents the online resources that have been developed, disseminated, and posted by OIEP to encourage understanding of the assessment process.

Table 7. OIEP Online Resources

Steps in the Assessment Process	Resources
1. Develop program mission that aligns to the College's Mission.	How to Write a Mission Statement
2. Describe the assessment process.	Examples of Assessment Process
3. Identify outcomes for the program.	Writing Student Learning Outcomes Writing Administrative Outcomes Bloom's Taxonomy for Categorizing Outcomes
4. Map the outcomes through the program (may not apply to all administrative units)	Mapping Student Learning Outcomes Through The Curriculum
5. Identify useful and feasible methods of measurement.	Direct vs. Indirect Assessment Measures Guide Recommended Assessment Sample Sizes Developing a Survey Designing and Conducting Focus Groups
6. Tabulate, analyze, and report assessment results.	Rubrics Repository
7. Use assessment results for continuous improvement.	Ways to Close the Loop

OIEP plans, coordinates, administers, and publishes results from several national and enterprise level surveys conducted at the College of Charleston. For example, the Annual Enterprise-level Senior Exit Survey provides assessment measures related to senior students' future plans (employment, graduate school, and seeking employment) and satisfaction with academic experience (instruction in major, preparation for continuing education, preparation for professional development, etc.). Results from the Annual Institutional Alumni Surveys, CIRP Surveys from the University of California Los Angeles (The Freshman Survey, Your First College Year, College Senior Survey), National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the Annual Enterprise-level Senior Exit Survey are communicated via emails and presentations, and previous and current survey reports are published on the Assessment website

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix A College of Charleston Mission Statement

Founded in 1770, the College of Charleston is a public university grounded in the principles of the liberal arts and committed to developing ethically centered, intellectually versatile, and globally fluent citizens who create innovative solutions to social, economic, and environmental challenges.

The Mission Statement (also called the Statement of Purpose) has been approved or revised by the State College Board of Trustees or the College of Charleston Board of Trustees on May 7th, 2020.

The College of Charleston Strategic Plan: Purpose, Values, Goals, and Strategic Initiatives

In order to achieve its envisioned future the College has identified the following goals that will enable it to combine the personalized, student focus of a small teaching institution with the breadth of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities of a research university.

Vision

The College of Charleston will be a transformative national university redefining liberal arts education through innovation.

Core Values

Integrity: We take accountability for our actions and adhere to the highest ethical standards in all our professional obligations and personal responsibilities. We demonstrate respect for self, others, and place.

Academic Excellence: We are committed to a dynamic intellectual community, high academic standards, strong academic programs, exceptional teacher-scholars, engaged students and lifelong learners.

Liberal Arts Education: We encourage intellectual curiosity and foster each student's ability to think creatively and analyze, synthesize, apply, and communicate knowledge from many sources.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: We create and nurture a diverse and inclusive community demonstrated through our thoughts, words, and actions. We value and respect the unique perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences every individual has to offer.

Student Centeredness: We are devoted to nurturing thriving scholar-citizens through the intellectual, ethical, and social development of each individual student.

Innovation: We act with an entrepreneurial spirit to imagine and implement creative, bold, and sustainable solutions in our pursuit of excellence and continuous improvement.

Public Mission: We demonstrate social responsibility in meeting the educational and professional needs of our community, our state, our nation, and the world.

Mission: Founded in 1770, the College of Charleston is a public university grounded in the principles of the liberal arts and committed to developing ethically centered, intellectually versatile, and globally fluent citizens who create innovative solutions to social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Vision: The College of Charleston will be a transformative national university redefining liberal arts education through innovation.



5

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Goals

1. **Student Experience & Success:** Ensure an affective support system that increases retention and graduation rates and enables students to learn and grow in every aspect of their College experience, preparing them to work and lead in a globally connected world.
2. **Academic Distinction:** Become ranked as a national university distinguished by our innovative liberal arts core and high-achieving students and alumni.
3. **Employee Experience & Success:** Create an inclusive workplace that inspires excellence and innovation resulting in a thriving faculty and staff community.

Strategic Initiatives

Student Experience & Success	Academic Distinction	Employee Experience & Success
Enhance and provide easy, centralized access to academic support resources (e.g., advising, mentoring, career prep, workshops, scholarships)	Establish an integrated, interdisciplinary, experiential liberal arts core that equips every student to succeed academically and professionally in a globally connected world.	Address compensation, salary compression and cost of living.
Bolster quality of and access to physical, emotional, social and financial wellness services.	Attract and enroll more highly-qualified, civic-minded and intellectually curious students.	Recruit, retain, and promote more women and underrepresented populations into faculty, staff and management positions.
Upgrade and maintain physical facilities to enable and foster effective learning and well-being.	Identify and develop signature undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs and institutes that will advance our profile as a national university.	Invest in faculty and staff learning and development to foster professional growth, leadership and lifelong learning.
Recruit, retain and graduate greater numbers of underrepresented minority and first-generation students.	Make experiential learning a differentiator of the College of Charleston educational experience.	Recognize and encourage efficiencies and innovations in programs, processes and procedures.
Create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students feel they belong.	Support and incentivize faculty to lead the way in implementing innovative teaching models and practices and contributing to cutting-edge thought leadership and research in their respective fields.	Create a sense of purpose and belonging for all.

This statement was approved by the State College Board of Trustees in May 7th, 2020.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix B

Compliance Assist Assessment Quick Reference Guide Entering Assessment Plans

Compliance Assist is a web-based tool for documenting, tracking and reporting unit assessment efforts. The following is a brief step-by-step summary with video tutorials for entering/updating assessment plans.

Steps for Completing an Assessment Plan

Step 1: Accessing Compliance Assist

1. Use the link on Assessment Website: assessment.cofc.edu or directly type in a browser: cofc.campuslabs.com (Google Chrome is the preferred browser)
2. Login with your CofC Username and Password
3. Select Planning(to the far right)
4. Select the organizational chart button at the top left 
5. Select the appropriate year (using drop down menu)
6. Select Assessment Plan (using drop down menu)
7. Select program/unit name using organizational on the left



Step 2: Updating Program Information and Assessment Process (Plan items tab)

You will use this template to update information about the assessment coordinator, the academic program or administrative Unit Mission Statement, Unit/School/College Mission and very important, to update the Assessment Process. Usually, the unit's organizational chart is uploaded as Attachment as well as other important documents.

1. Select the program name to open that item
2. Click on the name of the program above the "Program Information and Assessment Process"
3. Enter or update appropriate fields by typing information directly in each field
4. To add supporting documentation, select the "+File", select your file, and then select Open
5. Select Done when all work is completed



Step 3: Entering and Updating Outcomes (Plan items tab)

1. To enter a new outcome, select "+ Plan Item," then Outcome
2. To update an outcome, select the outcome name
3. To enter/update an outcome, enter/update necessary fields
4. To add supporting documentation, select the "+File" or "+Folder," then select your file, then select Open



Step 4: Relating Outcomes College of Charleston Strategic Plan (Related tab within an outcome)

1. Select the related tab at top right within an outcome
2. Select the "+ Supports" link for the Connected Up option
3. Change the drop down from Assessment Plan to Strategic Plan
4. Select the appropriate Strategic Initiatives by clicking the blue plus
5. Once you have selected appropriate Strategic Initiatives, select the Back to Plan Item box on the right-hand side (under the Supported by section)
6. Complete this step foreach outcome
7. On the main dashboard, the double arrows indicate that the relationship is present



College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix C Compliance Assist Assessment Quick Reference Guide Entering Assessment Results

Steps for Entering an Assessment Results

STEP 5: Entering Assessment Results and Use of Results (Plan Items tab)

1. Select the outcome name
2. To enter/update Assessment Results, enter the information in the appropriate fields
3. From the drop-down lists, select if the targets were met and if the results demonstrated improvement from previous assessments
4. To enter/update description of selections for each measure, enter the information in the appropriate field
5. To enter/update Use of Assessment Results, enter the information in the appropriate field
6. To enter/update Budget Changes, enter the information in the appropriate field
7. To add supporting documentation, select the "+File" or "+Folder," then select your file, then select Open
8. Complete these steps for each outcome

STEP 6: Assessment Report Summary (Plan Items tab)

1. To enter assessment report summary, select "+ Plan Item," then Assessment Report Summary
2. Enter Assessment Report Summary title (program or unit name)
3. To enter/update Summary of Assessment Results, enter the information in the available text box
4. Enter Assigned Assessment Committee Member review and date of review, DAC/AAC review and date of review, Dean/AVP/EVP approval and date of approval, and President approval and date of approval
5. Select Done when all work is completed

STEP 7: Viewing an Assessment Report (Reports tab)

1. Select Reports tab at top of page next to Plan Items tab
2. Select program name using organizational chart on left
3. Select View Report link from Assessment Report (2016 Forward)
4. To change year, use drop-down arrow associated with View Report link, and select Customize Dates, then select View Report
5. Select Print to save as PDF file to print hard copy

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix D

College of Charleston Review Assessment Plan Rubric

Academic Unit: Academic Year:
 Reviewer: Date Completed: Reviewed with Assessment Coordinator (AC Initial):

RATING:

ALL SHADED CELLS MUST BE COMPLETED TO SHOW A RATING

Instructions: Please complete all spaces shaded. The other cells will be completed automatically. In the table below, assign "1" (without quotations) for successful completion, "0" for wrong or blank, "0.5" for partial completion or needs improvement but they show a good start. The level will automatically generate once all spaces are filled.

Possible Values:

0 to 1	1. Program/Unit's mission statement concisely defines the purpose, functions and key constituents. [The Program/Unit's mission is aligned to the School/Division/College Strategic Plan]
0 to 1	2. The assessment process describes: Strategies to assess the outcomes (A strategy is a plan of action intended to accomplish a specific outcome/measure) A plan to use the data for improving student learning and/or operations. How the data will be shared within the Program/Unit and the College Clearly defined curriculum or functional map is provided (courses/functions are listed and linked to the Clear levels of learning are defined for all outcomes at all levels (Introduce, Enhance, Reinforce)
0 to 1	3. Outcomes: Administrative Units Min of 3 outcomes; Academic Units min of 3 student learning outcomes Outcomes are specific (short in length but of high meaning) Outcomes are attainable and results oriented Outcomes are time bound Outcomes are clearly related to the mission and focus on activities of the Program/Unit
0 to 1	4. Assessment Methods Minimum of 2 measures (one of them direct measure) per outcome The assessment method for each measure is clear and concise (specifics about data collection: 1. how-specify relevant assessment instruments- and 2. when-final exam, midterm, etc) Each measure has a specific performance target. Relevant assessment instruments (e.g. rubrics, survey instruments, reports, etc) attached (as links or attached files). Do NOT type them in the text box.
0 to 1	5. Measures clearly describe specific strategies to achieve the target based on results from previous years.
0 to 1	6. The Assessment Plan promotes continuous quality improvement by having formative outcomes and measures. Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback that can be used to improve student learning and operations. <i>[The primary purpose of Assessment is to collect data to identify gaps in student learning and operations. This is demonstrated when assessment data presents an opportunity for improvement and a new strategy is implemented to remove the gap. For best practices, when a measure has a performance target of 100%, or is constant for 2-3 assessment cycles, it is advisable to conduct a granular (disaggregate) analysis to identify gaps in learning and/or operations.]</i>
0 to 1	7. The assessment plan "closes the loop" by linking new strategies (changes) to previous assessment results. <i>[Program/Unit collects data to evaluate the impact of an implemented change to improve student learning and/or operations. The use of prior year's results to improve student learning and operations demonstrate a "closed loop" process.]</i>

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix E

College of Charleston Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Results Rubric

Academic Unit: Academic Year:
 Reviewer: Date Completed: Reviewed with Assessment Coordinator (AC Initial):

RATING: **Establishing**

ALL SHADED CELLS MUST BE COMPLETED TO SHOW A RATING

Instructions: Please complete all spaces shaded. The other cells will be completed automatically. In the table below, assign "1" (without quotations) for successful completion, "0" for wrong or blank, "0.5" for partial completion or needs improvement but they show a good start. The level will automatically generate once all spaces are filled.

Possible Values:

0 to 1	0	1. Complete, aggregated, and relevant data are provided for each measure. [If there are extenuating circumstances that lead to missing data, an explanation must be provided. Missing data for extenuating circumstances is only permitted for one assessment cycle. If appropriate, data should be disaggregated by distance learning, off-site locations, and mode of delivery]
0 to 1	0	2. Data reporting is complete, concise, and well presented.
	0	Reported data are aligned and appropriate to the outcome and the corresponding measure.
	0	Reported data is concise (no additional unnecessary data is provided)
	0	Reported data is well presented.
	0	Sampling methodology is provided.
	0	Population size (N) and Sample size (n) is provided.
0 to 1	0	3. Results clearly specify whether the performance target/expectations for each measure have been met.
	0	Assessment results are used for comparison of actual vs. expected performance targets.
	0	Data provides evidence of performance targets met, partially met or not met
0 to 1	0	4. Results provide evidence that the assessment findings informed discussion and improvements in the Program/Unit
0 to 1	0	5. Results include at least one applied and/or planned change (s) based on the assessment data to improve student learning, program quality, or unit operations. If no changes are provided, results should identify an area of improvement for the next cycle. [The discussion of the results should specifically identify any curricular/operational/budget changes as a result of assessment]
0 to 1	0	6. Relevant final assessment instruments (e.g. rubrics, data tables, survey instruments, etc) are uploaded in Compliance Assist (e.g., via URL, as attachments, etc., if not proprietary).
0 to 1	0	7. The assessment report demonstrates how data analysis "closes the loop" by assessing the impact of applied changes. [Current year's results are compared to the previous year's results to evaluate the impact of a previously reported change to demonstrate use of results to improve student learning and operations.]
0 to 1	0	8. The impact of "closing the loop" with an improvement is demonstrated by this year's data. [Examples of improvement (s) in student learning, program quality, or unit operations are provided and are directly linked to assessment data. The primary purpose of Assessment is to assess the impact of an implemented change.]

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix F How to Write a Program Mission Statement

Mission Statement of the Program

The *Program Mission Statement* is a concise statement of the general values and principles that guide the program, describe the community the program is designed to serve, and define its standards. Accrediting bodies expect program mission statements to be aligned with the mission statements of the institution, school/division, and department.

A Program Mission Statement:

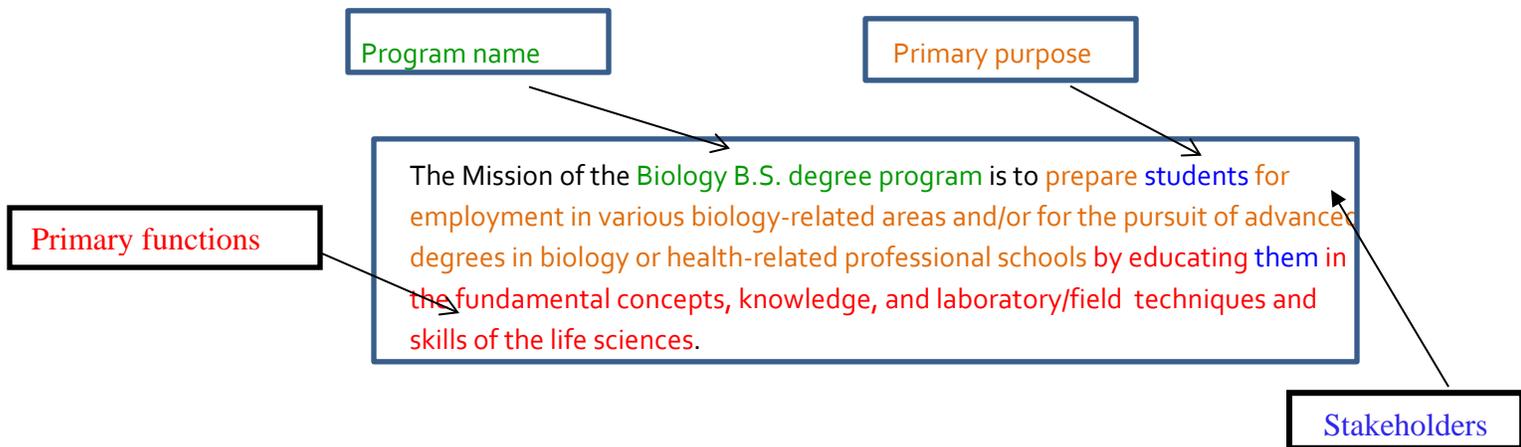
- Is a broad statement of *what the program or unit is, what it does, and for whom?*
- Is a clear description of the *purpose* of the program or unit?
- Reflects how the program contributes to the education and careers of students graduating from the program or how the unit supports its stakeholders.
- May reflect how the teaching, research and/or support efforts enhance the student experience.
- Should be distinctive for the program or unit.
- Explicitly promotes the alignment of the program with college, school/division, and department missions.

Structure of a Program Mission Statement

"The mission of (name of your program or unit) is to (your primary purpose) by providing (your primary functions or activities) to (your stakeholders)." (Additional clarifying statements)

Note: the order of the mission statement may vary from the above structure.

Sample Program Mission Statement



Another simple format:

The _____ (organization) will _____ (for) _____ (by) _____.

This tells *who* the organization is, *what* it intends to do, for *whom* it intends to do it, and by *what means* (*how*).

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix G Bloom's Taxonomy

Benjamin Bloom created a taxonomy with three categories for classifying learning outcomes in educational settings: **cognitive**, **affective**, and **psychomotor**.

Cognitive* (knowing, awareness, insights)	Possible verbs to use
Knowledge (Recalling information)	define repeat memorize list recall name state relate label select
Comprehension (Explaining information)	restate discuss describe identify locate report explain express recognize interpret
Application (Solving closed-ended problems)	translate apply practice illustrate operate discover predict change compute demonstrate
Analysis (Solving open-ended problems)	identify analyze criticize compare differentiate contrast examine test infer distinguish
Synthesis (Creating "unique" answers to problems)	design compose plan create formulate manage construct revise rewrite explain
Evaluation (Making critical judgments based on a sound knowledge base)	judge evaluate value compute assess appraise conclude critique discriminate support
Affective (attitudes, appreciations, relationships)	claim cooperate defend join share avoid assist help select attempt
Psychomotor (action)	create design compose place align follow display move show reproduce

* The cognitive category shows the progression of lower-level skills to higher-level skills.

In 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl revised the taxonomy to include active verbs that are well suited for outcome-oriented language and workable objectives.

Remember:	Understand:	Apply:	Analyze:	Evaluate:	Create:
Arrange	Classify	Apply	Analyze	Appraise	Arrange
Define	Convert	Change	Appraise	Argue	Assemble
Describe	Defend	Choose	Categorize	Assess	Combine
Identify	Distinguish	Compute	Compare	Conclude	Compose
Label	Explain	Demonstrate	Contrast	Defend	Construct
List	Estimate	Dramatize	Criticize	Evaluate	Create
Match	Interpret	Employ	Diagram	Judge	Design
Outline	Infer	Illustrate	Differentiate	Justify	Develop
Recognize	Paraphrase	Manipulate	Discriminate	Support	Formulate
Recall	Summarize	Modify	Distinguish	Value	Generate
Repeat	Translate	Operate	Examine		Plan
Reproduce		Practice	Experiment		Synthesize
		Produce	Question		Write
		Solve	Model		

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix H

Mapping Student Learning Outcomes through the Curriculum

A curriculum map tells *where* in the curriculum the students obtain the knowledge and skills associated with the learning outcome. This includes specific classes as well as any extra-curricular opportunities that provide students with the opportunity to gain knowledge or skill in the learning area.

Develop a curriculum map

1. List the program outcomes in the columns and (required) program courses -- in the order in which they are generally taken -- in the rows.
2. As a faculty, examine each outcome in the context of each course to determine if the course addresses the outcome in a meaningful way. There are 3 ways a course might be related to an outcome:
 - I = Student **Introduction** to the learning to occur;
 - R = Student **Reinforcement** of the learning;
 - D = Student **Demonstration** that learning has occurred.
3. In building a map, place an I, R, or D in the table cell for each course that meaningfully assesses something related to the outcome at one of those levels. Simply touching on a topic is not sufficient; the topic related to the outcome should be covered in some depth and assessed (e.g., by a paper, test, presentation) in some way in the class. Every course should contribute to at least one learning outcome.

Sample curriculum map:

	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
Course # 101	I			
Course # 201	R		I	I
Course # 230		I	R	
Course # 310	D	R		R
Course # 401		D		
Course # 480			D	D
Internship		D		D

Assess the overall alignment of the curriculum with the learning outcomes

1. Each learning outcome (each column) should be introduced, reinforced and demonstrated at least once across multiple courses.
 - If every cell in a column is filled, the outcome might be over-covered in the curriculum.
 - If few cells are filled or an I, R, or D is missing, the curriculum might not be covering the outcome completely.
2. Each course (each row) should support at least one and ideally more than one learning outcome.
 - Meaningfully addressing all learning outcomes in a single course is difficult, unless it is at an introductory level in a survey course.
 - If a required course does not seem related to any program learning outcomes, address whether the course should still be required or whether an important learning outcome has been missed.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Appendix I Assessment Template

Unit Name

Program/Unit Name:

Program Type:

Start:

End:

Assessment Coordinator:

Coordinator's Email:

Coordinator's Phone:

Coordinator's Office Address:

Assigned AAC or DAC Member(s):

IAC Member(s):

Administrative Unit Head receiving assessment updates:

Program follows specialized accreditation standards:

Name of accrediting organization:

Date of last program review for the accrediting organization:

Date of next program review:

Academic Program/Administrative Unit Mission Statement

[The Program/Unit Mission Statement is a concise statement of the general values and principles that guide the program/unit, describe the community the program/unit is designed to serve, and define its standards. Accrediting bodies expect program/unit mission statements to be aligned with the mission statements of the institution, school/division, and department.]

Unit/School/College Mission

[Provide the mission statement of the next level.]

Assessment Process: The assessment process description should present a clear understanding of how the program/unit utilizes assessment data for continuous quality improvement.

[Who is conducting assessment? What are they doing?

What do you want to assess (what are your outcomes)? How do you plan to assess it (strategies, tools, measures)?

How will you review and analyze the data?

How are you going to use the assessment results to improve your program/unit? How will you communicate the results to other faculty or staff members?]

Comments and Attachments

Rubric Rating (plan): Proficient

Rubric Rating (results): Exemplary

Program Assessment Coordinator:

Related Items

1: [Outcome]

1. Outcome: The outcomes are specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound. The outcomes are clearly related to the mission and focus on activities of the Program/Unit.

[A specific, measurable statement that describes desired performance. Outcomes should be specific, measureable, agreed upon, realistic, and time framed.]

2. Assessment Methods: The measure matches the outcome, uses appropriate direct and indirect methods, indicates desired level of performance, helps identify what to improve, and is based on tested, known methods. Please enter at least 2 measures.

Measure 1:

Performance Target:

Measure 2:

Performance Target:

3. Assessment Results: Reported data are aligned and appropriate to the outcome and the corresponding measure. Sampling methodology, population size (N), and sample size (n) must be provided.

Measure 1:

Measure 2:

Target met for measure 1?: Yes

Did results for measure 1 demonstrate improvement from previous assessments?: No

Target met for measure 2?: No

Did results for measure 2 demonstrate improvement from previous assessments?: Yes

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Please describe your selections above for each measure

[Provide information for why the selections above were choose.]

**4. Use of Assessment Results: Reflect on the data. What do the data mean for your unit?
What changes/strategies were implemented based on the results?**

Measure 1:

Measure 2:

Implemented Strategies:

Planned Strategies:

5. Budget Changes

Comments and Attachments

Research:

Community/public service:

Related Items

Assessment Report Summary

7. Summary of Assessment Results with Focus on Program Improvement: Describe evidence-based changes that have taken place within the last few assessment cycles because of assessment. Statements must be supported by evidence from the assessment report(s).

Assigned Assessment Committee Member:

Review Date:

DAC/AAC Member:

Review Date:

Dean/AVP/EVP:

Approval Date:

President:

Approval Date:

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Glossary of Terms

The Glossary of Terms contains a number of definitions adapted from assessment resources developed by other institutions and entities. The major resources listed below were used to compile the present glossary. The resources listed below are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive.

- Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. 2007. *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*. Ed. College Delegate Assembly. Decatur: Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- Eaton, Judith S. 2009. *An Overview of U.S. Accreditation*. Washington DC: Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
- Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance. Assessment Glossary. University of South Carolina, <http://www.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/toolbox/glossary.htm>
- Office for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning. Glossary of Assessment Terms and Links to More Information. College of Charleston, <http://oiiep.cofc.edu/>

Accreditation – A certification awarded by an external, recognized organization, that the institution or program meets certain requirements overall, or in a particular discipline. The SACSCOC accreditation process assumes that all programs and services are reviewed as part of the institutional effectiveness process.

Accrediting Organization – Decision-making bodies (commissions) made up of administrators and faculty from institutions and programs as well as public members. These commissions may affirm accreditation for new institutions and programs, reaffirm accreditation for ongoing institutions and programs, and deny accreditation to institutions and programs.

Aggregated Data – Statistics which relate to broad classes, groups, or categories, so that it is not possible to distinguish the properties of individuals within those classes, groups, or categories. Aggregated data should be collected for program or unit level assessment.

Assessment – The ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning and operations; the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs and administrative units undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning, development, and institutional effectiveness.

Assessment Plan – The document that presents the program information (coordinator, assessment committee members, mission, and assessment process), student learning or operational outcomes, how those outcomes will be measured, and the performance targets for each outcome.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Assessment Process – Describes how and when the outcomes will be assessed, and who will conduct the assessment; describes how assessment data will be disseminated to faculty and staff as appropriate.

Assessment Report – The document that presents both the assessment plan and results for a given academic year.

Assessment Results – The section of an assessment report that presents data and discusses how assessment results will be used to change curriculum, pedagogy, programs, services, and/or assessment procedures for the coming year.

Assessment Template – The form that demonstrates how the academic program or administrative unit will assess the upcoming year’s assessment activities. [Appendix I](#)

Benchmark – A criterion-referenced objective. Performance data can be utilized to create a baseline of acceptable performance or to create a standard when setting target levels of performance.

Best Practice – Compares your results against the best of your peers.

Bloom’s Taxonomy – Six levels in which cognitively related objects can be categorized by levels of increasing complexity; the revised levels are Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create.

Closing the Loop – Using assessment results for academic program or administrative unit change and improvement.

Coherence – A critical component of a program which should demonstrate an appropriate sequencing of courses, so that the student learning is progressively more advanced in terms of assignments and scholarship required and demonstrates progressive advancement in a field of study that allows students to integrate knowledge and grow in critical skills.

Cohort – A group whose progress is followed by means of measurements at different points in time. A group of persons sharing a particular statistical or demographic characteristic.

Competency – Level at which performance is acceptable.

Compliance Assist – The online tool adopted by the College to track and report planning, assessment, and accreditation efforts for the College of Charleston.

Course Assessment – Using direct and indirect measures to determine if the student outcomes at the course level have been met and using this data to enhance student learning.

Course Embedded Assessment – A means of gathering information about student learning that is built into natural part of teaching-learning process. Course embedded assessment can assess an individual student performance or aggregate the information about the course or program. For example, tests, portfolios, papers, etc.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Criteria – Describes relevant measures that will be used; states precisely what student or support unit will be doing; explains the conditions under which student learning outcomes and program goals should be accomplished; states an acceptable level of aggregate performance.

Criterion-referenced – A test or other type of assessment designed to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of a clearly defined and delimited domain of learning tasks. Criterion-referenced assessments report how well academic programs and administrative support units are doing relative to a pre-determined performance level on a specified set of program goals or student learning outcomes.

Curriculum Map – Demonstrates where in the program’s curriculum learning outcomes are being addressed. Mapping program outcomes to course outcomes shows how students develop skills and knowledge in courses that are required for their programs of study.

Direct Assessment Measures – Requires demonstration of student knowledge or skills against measurable learning outcomes.

Effectiveness – How well an approach, a process, or a measure addresses its intended purpose. Extent to which an institution/division/department meets its unique mission.

Focus Group – A carefully planned discussion to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately 7-12 people by a skilled interviewer.

Formative Assessment – It is in progress assessment, feedback loops intended to improve teaching and learning or operations.

Functional Map - Demonstrates where in the unit’s outcomes are being addressed. Mapping operational outcomes to functional areas shows how unit or students coordinate assessment strategies across the unit or division.

General Education – A collegiate level general education program should 1) be a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, 2) ensure breadth of knowledge, and 3) be based on a coherent rationale. It is essential to understand the general education component of the degree program within the context of the institution’s mission and within the expectations of a college-level institution. Through general education, students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge: humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics.

Goal – General statements that define how the institution/division/department expects to fulfill its mission. Typically, multiple goals are drawn from the mission statement.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Graduate Program Rigor – From an accreditation perspective, rigor is the demonstration that post-baccalaureate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs.

Indirect Assessment Measures – Assessment methods that involve perceptions of learning rather than actual demonstrations of learning. For example, a student survey about whether a course helped develop a greater sensitivity to diversity or an employer survey asking for feedback on graduate’s skills. Compare with direct measures.

Institutional Assessment – Assessment of the institutional mission and goal statements including student services, financial stability, business and industry training, as well as academic programs.

Institutional Effectiveness – The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.

Integrity – As it relates to accreditation, integrity functions as the basic contract defining the relationship between the Commission and each of its member and candidate institutions to deal honestly and openly with their constituencies and with one another.

Longitudinal Assessment – Assessments that collect data from the same population at different points in time.

Measures – The specific methods by which outcomes are assessed through the planned and systematic collection of data.

Mission Statement – The mission statement is usually a short, one paragraph general explanation of what the program is, and why the program exists.

Norm-reference – A test or other type of assessment designed to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of a student or support unit’s relative standing in some known group. A norm-referenced test is designed to highlight achievement differences between and among students or administrative support units to produce a dependable rank order across a continuum of achievement from high achievers to low achievers.

Operational Outcomes - A statement that describes the measurable action or service that units should be able to do, demonstrate, or provide as a result of their processes. Operational outcomes frequently relate to functions, resource allocation, quality, and efficiency, and should be specific, measureable, agreed upon, realistic, and time framed.

Outcome - A specific, measurable statement that describes desired performance.

Performance Target - The expected or predicted success level of an individual, unit, school, or division.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Peer Review – An review conducted primarily by faculty and administrative peers in the profession. These colleagues review the self-study and serve on visiting teams that review institutions and programs after the self-study is completed. Peers constitute the majority of members of the accrediting commissions or boards that make judgments about accrediting status.

Portfolio – Collections of multiple student work samples usually compiled over time and rated using rubrics. The design of the portfolio is dependent upon how the scoring results are going to be used.

Program Assessment – Program outcomes based on how well courses and other experiences in the curriculum fit together and build on each other to improve student learning.

Program Review – A cyclical process for evaluating and continuously enhancing the quality and currency of programs.

Qualitative Assessment – Assessment that relies on description rather than numerical scores or ratings. The emphasis is on the measurement of opinions, reflections and/or judgments. Examples include interview, focus groups, and observations. Compare with quantitative assessment.

Qualtrics – The online-based tool adopted by the College for design and implementation of surveys.

Quantitative Assessment – Assessment that relies on numerical scores or ratings. The emphasis is on the use of statistics, cumulative numbers, aggregated data, and numerical measurements. Compare with qualitative assessment.

Random Sample – A sample drawn from the population such that every member of the population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample.

Reliability – Reliability is the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same result on repeated trials.

Rubrics – A set of categories that define and describe the important components of the work being completed, critiqued, and assessed. It evaluates performance and quality of work in attaining learning outcomes; assists in identifying strengths and weaknesses in performance based on department expectations or standards.

Self-study – Institutions and programs prepare a written summary of performance, based on accrediting organizations' standards.

Site visit – Accrediting organizations normally send a visiting team to review an institution or program. The self-study provides the foundation for the team visit.

Student Learning Outcomes – A statement that describes the measurable skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students should be able to do or demonstrate as a result of the course or program. Learning outcomes should be specific, measureable, agreed upon, realistic, and time framed.

College of Charleston Assessment Guide

Summative Assessment – An assessment that is done at the conclusion of a course or some larger instructional period (e.g., at the end of the program). The purpose is to determine success or to what extent the program/project/course met its goals and learning outcomes. Compare with formative assessment.

Use of Results – Explains how specific results from assessment activities will be used for decision-making, strategic planning, program evaluation and improvement; assists in documenting changes and the reasons for the changes.

Validity – Degree to which a method or study accurately reflects or assesses the specific outcome that the institution/division/department is attempting to measure.

Value-added (growth or pre-post) – Compares results against student scores when they started or entered the program to the end of the program or course of study.

Variable – Observable characteristics that vary among individual response.