ADELPHI UNIVERSITY
GUIDELINES FOR BIENNIAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Program assessment is a process that enables faculty to answer the following key questions: *What are we trying to accomplish and why? How well are we doing what we intend to do? Do we use the information we collect to improve and to celebrate our successes? How do we know that improvements we initiate are working?* Asking and answering these questions allows us to make strategic decisions and to use our valuable resources to their best advantage. This Biennial Program Assessment Summary will set the stage for the more detailed periodic program self-study and will help enhance our academic offerings, ensuring that they are linked to the mission and vision of the University.

1. **IDENTIFY WELL ARTICULATED GOALS AND OUTCOMES**
The Program faculty should collectively identify well-articulated program goals and outcomes in areas such as student learning; enrollment; faculty growth and development; curriculum development and revision; and any others that the faculty assert are important for the success and improvement of the program.

A. **Student learning goals** can be broad, and written in terms of what we want students to know or be able to do. Where appropriate, such goals should incorporate professional organization expectations. Consider also how the program learning goals relate to the University’s general student learning goals (*Communications, Critical and Integrative Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, Information Literacy, Global Citizenship, and Artistic Understanding and Expression*.)

Specific **learning outcomes** should describe what students should be able to *demonstrate* or *produce* at given points in, or at the completion of, their studies. These may lend themselves to either quantitative or qualitative assessments. Use benchmarks, when available, and establish targets to be achieved. (For example, 85% of graduating students should pass a licensing exam, 75% of students should successfully conduct and present a research experiment, 20% of students should perform with distinction on a particular analytic or artistic assignment, student candidates should score at least a three in six areas of a student teaching observation system, be at or above the national average on some indicator, etc.)

Be realistic; do not indicate more than three or four leaning goals to assess in any one year.

Some questions to ask in establishing learning goals and objectives:

- **What do we expect students to know at different points or by the end of the program?** (e.g. specific facts, concepts, principles, theories, how to cite sources, the scientific method, different approaches to portrait artistry, distinctive values of different schools of thought, the various components of patient care, best practices in a field, etc.)
- **What should students be able to do at different points or by the end of the program?** (e.g. solve problems, read and speak in a foreign language, apply knowledge to different situations, analyze information, research a problem, employ particular technology, identify, appraise and use pertinent information, identify relationships and organizing principles, evaluate the strengths of different arguments, create a work of art, direct a performance, pass licensure examinations, demonstrate the capacity to consider a range of ideas, etc.)

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B. Curriculum plans/goals should describe any plans to extend or substantially change curriculum (for example, add a new concentration, major, or graduate program; significantly change requirements for the major; meet external accreditation requirements; or redesign a number of courses), set enrollment targets, provide offsite instruction, etc.

C. Academic program faculty goals should relate to general, not individual, faculty. Examples of such goals might be professional training in instructional technology or active learning (e.g. to present blended or online coursework), collaborative scholarship, more presentations at national meetings to bring visibility to the program, expertise in new or expanded areas, widespread introduction of discipline specific technology, or new or replacement faculty lines to focus on a new degree level or concentration.

Specify targets and timelines for achievement of all program goals (e.g., for enrollment, curriculum development, use of off-campus sites for program offerings, professional development or new expertise for program).

Please note that goals are not expected to necessarily change from year to year. Only when Next Steps suggest modification, or additional goals are identified, should goals change.

2. Use Assessment Measures That Relate To The Goals
Where possible, assessments should be direct measures of goals. Student learning assessment, for example, may be based on proficiency examinations, demonstrated work, survey results, career placement, oral examination or presentation, etc. In some instances, it may be worthwhile to develop rubrics for scoring student work in relation to mastery of learning goals. Some measures may be useful in assessing multiple learning goals. Indicate how the assessment tool is incorporated into the program – for example, is it part of a lab assignment, a capstone paper, an oral presentation, a standardized test for the discipline, a licensing or qualifying examination, an exhibit, or a performance.

Sometimes, indirect measures, such as self-reported survey findings, are useful in evaluating student learning. Other goals may be measured by actual trend analyses or descriptions of new activities. Multiple assessment measures may be necessary to obtain a balanced picture of progress.

3. Describe Important Findings From The Assessment Measures
Identify key areas of success, as well as areas in need of improvement. Provide actual data that support accomplishments and gains or suggest need for improvement. Examples of this might be: the percentage of students who meet or exceed expectations on a key measure, pass rates on licensing examinations, overall performance on capstone assignments, faculty publications, additional faculty and staff, external review of new concentrations, extent of participation in professional development activities, or the extent of the incorporation of innovative instruction.

Some general questions to ask:
- What evidence do we have that students are learning what they need in order to “know” and “do” what we intend?
- What additional faculty expertise would contribute significantly to the quality of the program or future plans for program expansion?
- What will we do with the information we collect?
4. **Next Steps**

   Develop new targets for improvements and indicate how these will be accomplished, e.g. realigning coursework, adding new material, changing assignments, changing mode of instructional delivery, changes in admission requirements, increased professional activities, plans for new faculty positions justified by increased enrollment. Have changes made in the program improved student learning and success? Where possible, specify particular outcomes (e.g. 85 percent of students will pass a licensure examination, or meet or surpass an established standard). Include a timeline for accomplishing improvements.

**Some Readily Available Resources**


The Association of American Colleges and University (AAC&U) Capstone Assessment Project

*The AAC&U’s Greater Expectations Project on Accreditation and Assessment collected examples of good practice in assessment, most at the senior level. Models were selected in which both major and general education outcomes were integrated during the capstone process. Twelve different models are described in the document at: [http://www.aacu.org/resources/assessment/capstone.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/resources/assessment/capstone.cfm)*

California Polytechnic State University Academic Programs Assessment

[http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/assessment/assessplanguide.htm](http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/assessment/assessplanguide.htm)

*The University of Massachusetts at Amherst Handbook for Program-Based Review and Assessment*


See the Ball State University Assessment Workbook at:

[http://web.bsu.edu/iraa/aa/wb/contents.htm](http://web.bsu.edu/iraa/aa/wb/contents.htm)

Common Terminology in Program Review

**Assessment** – The systematic and strategic gathering, and analyses, of information undertaken for the purpose of improvement; fundamental to the process of program planning.

**Assessment Cycle** – A continuous cycle that (1) starts with the articulation of program mission, goals and objectives, (2) continues with the identification and collection of appropriate direct and indirect measures of the goals and objectives, (3) is followed by the evaluation of performance, based on the identified measures or indicators (4) uses the outcomes to improve the program, (5) and then begins again to re-examine the goals and objectives and outcomes.

**Mission** – The stated purpose of the program.

**Goals** – Goals are general statements of desired ends to be achieved. They describe the intended long-range outcomes and are the basis for the strategic directions of the program.

**Objectives** – In the program review process, objectives are the elements of the goals that are most readily specified for evaluation. These consider the particular knowledge, performance or skill mastery that students should achieve. In other words, objectives comprise the activities that will result in the achievement of (learning) goals.

**Direct Measures** – Procedures that are used to evaluate achievement of learning goals by means of a specifically observable result, i.e. the demonstration of a particular skill or knowledge.

**Indirect Measures** – Procedures that evaluate a program or learning by means of some implied indicator. Indirect measures of student learning, for example, might include surveying students about their learning in a particular course/program/institution or surveys of employer satisfaction.

**Outcomes** – The result of a process that is observable and measurable; the extent to which specified learning goals and objectives are being accomplished.

**Learning Outcomes** – Observable and measurable knowledge, actions, abilities, or competencies that demonstrate evidence of an educational experience.

**Other Program Outcomes** – Measurable program results that may be indicators of program quality, for example, faculty development activities, scholarships and grants, student-faculty ratio, class size.