

# Guidelines for Preparing the TWU Academic Institutional Improvement Assessment Plan

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## Introduction

These guidelines serve to assist program faculty and component administrators in facilitating the development of the new *Academic Institutional Improvement (II) Assessment Plan* that will be implemented beginning summer or fall 2012. As we begin developing this plan, we transition from *Institutional Effectiveness* (providing evidence that documents the “effectiveness” of our academic programs) to continuous *Institutional Improvement* (continually working to improve student learning over time). In addition to these “Guidelines”, I am available and ready to assist as needed in this process. Please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss possible options.

## Section I: Alignment of Department/Program Mission to the TWU Mission Statement

The purpose of this section of the assessment plan is to ensure that the department/program mission is clearly aligned with the TWU Mission statement. The TWU Mission statement should drive all that goes on within the University. As such, it is important to be able to explicitly state how the Department/Program Mission relates to the university mission.

The TWU Mission statement is embedded in the shaded portion of the Section I table. The Department/Program Mission statement should be inserted into the left-hand column of the table. If desired, the College and/or School Mission statement may also be included. If you choose to include more than the Department/Program Mission, please identify each mission statement clearly.

The right-hand column of the table will be used to show how the Department/Program Mission aligns with the Institutional Mission by identifying those elements from the TWU Mission statement that directly relate with *the intent* of the Department/Program Mission. This may be accomplished by bulleting a list of the elements from the Institutional Mission that clearly relate to the Department/Program Mission. Alternatively, you may choose to provide a text description that documents the alignment.

## Section II: Alignment of Program Student Learning Outcomes to Department/Program Mission

The second phase of alignment involves documenting how program student learning outcomes (SLOs) are directly aligned with the Department/Program Mission. Similar to the Institutional Mission, the Department/Program Mission should drive all that goes on in the academic program (and/or department).

Begin by inserting the Department/Program Mission into the shaded portion of the Section II table. Next, list all program SLOs in the left-hand column of the table. ***Academic programs are expected to have a minimum of three program SLOs***; however, programs may certainly include additional SLOs. ***All program SLOs must be measurable.*** These SLOs will represent the essential higher *knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions* that students will possess upon *successful completion* of the academic program.

Program SLOs are to be written using *action verbs* (Bloom’s Taxonomy) that convey the level of knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions that students will possess upon degree completion. Consider what students will be able to do with the knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions they gain (exit competencies) when revising current or creating future program SLOs. In addition to the use of action verbs, SLO statements are to include *conditions* that clarify the

context/setting in which students will be able to perform the stated actions/behaviors. A few good examples of measurable program SLOs are provided below. *By the end of the program of study students will be able to:*

- Identify salient features of a variety of movement styles, repertory, and partnering work and articulate these physically in various performance contexts at the intermediate-advanced level. [BA – Dance, TWU]
- Plan and implement evidence-based teaching practices for successfully educating children with hearing loss by creating effective lessons, evaluating current teaching practices, and implementing a variety of lessons for students who are DHH. [MS – Deaf Education, TWU]
- By the end of the program of study, students will be able to produce literary analyses that cross disciplinary boundaries, add to scholarly understanding, or provide challenging perspectives. [MA – English, Florida Gulf Coast University]
- By the end of the program of study, students will be able to accurately interpret symptoms and select appropriate interventions to manage patient fear, anxiety, and/or pain in a nursing clinical setting.

### Section III: Alignment of Program SLOs to the Curriculum

This section of the Academic II Assessment Plan shows the *depth and breadth* to which the program SLOs are integrated or threaded throughout the curriculum. This is a great tool to use in curriculum redesign/development as well. We know that our students are not going to be able to achieve the SLOs unless they are sufficiently developed during the program of study. Mapping out how the SLOs are addressed in various courses and/or experiences and the depth to which they are addressed provides intentional planning on the part of the program faculty to ensure that each SLO is addressed and assessed at various points in time within the curriculum. Similarly, it is also important to know when students are assessed either formatively (*ongoing* while developing/practicing knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions) or summatively (*toward the end* of the program of study) on the program SLOs as well.

For Section III, begin to complete the matrix by briefly listing all program SLOs within the shaded columns at the top. Next, in column 1, list all courses that students must take to complete the program. For undergraduate programs, you may choose whether it's important to list the Texas Core (general education) courses as well. It is suggested that you do so only if the course(s) relate(s) directly to one or more of the program SLOs. Courses for undergraduate programs should also be listed in order of the course prefix from lowest to highest (e.g., 1000-level, 2000-level, 3000-level, and 4000-level). Follow this same procedure for listing graduate program courses.

Some academic programs' (undergraduate or graduate) focus is predominantly *interdisciplinary* in nature; and therefore, several courses are typically taken outside of the department in which the academic program resides. In these cases, the program faculty will need to determine the extent to which courses residing outside the department play a critical role in helping students to be able to develop and/or achieve one or more program SLOs. If the courses reside outside the department, but are directly related to one or more program SLOs, those courses should also be listed on the Section III matrix.

Column 1 should also include program-designated experiences that are essential in helping students to attain one or more program SLOs that are not tied to specific courses. You may or may not have program experiences that meet this criterion.

Once SLOs and Courses/Experiences have been listed, use the key below the matrix to identify those courses/experiences where a program SLO is addressed and/or assessed.

- Key:**
- AD/P – SLO is addressed as a *primary* focus
  - AD/S – SLO is addressed as a *secondary* focus
  - AD/C – SLO is addressed as a *cursory* focus
  
  - FA – SLO is assessed (formative assessment of developing knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions)
  - SA – SLO is assessed (summative assessment of knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions)
  - CEPA – Course-embedded program assessment specific to the SLO

For example, if UNIV 1xxx only introduces SLO 1, then one would list AD/C in the appropriate cell. Or, if I'm an instructor in UNIV 2xxx, I might address that SLO as a secondary focus, meaning that some dedicated time is spent on it, but it is not a primary focus in the course. In this case, one would list AD/S in the corresponding cell. Additionally, the instructor may also *assess* the SLO. If that's the case, it is necessary to determine if the assessment measure(s) is/are formative or summative as it relates to the development of the program SLO. Formative assessment occurs when students are *developing and/or practicing* the skills, knowledge, or dispositions associated with the program SLO. Summative assessment occurs *toward the end* of the academic program.

A *course-embedded program assessment* (CEPA) designation will also be listed for any summative course assessment that the program faculty select to use as an assessment measure for a program SLO (in the Academic II Assessment Plan). While not required, course-embedded program assessments can serve as direct measures of assessment when they occur *at or toward the end* of the program of study; and therefore, these types of program assessments are encouraged for use in the academic assessment plan. An abbreviated example for Section III is provided below:

<b>COURSES/EXPERIENCES</b> [List in order of course prefix number from lowest to highest. Include abbreviated course title. If appropriate, include program experiences that are essential but are not tied to a specific course.]	<b>SLO 1</b> [Briefly state here.]
UNIV 1013	AD/C
UNIV 1903	
UNIV 2103	AD/S
UNIV 2273	AD/S; FA
UNIV 3543	AD/P; FA
UNIV 3802	
UNIV 4113	AD/P; SA
UNIV 4873	AD/P; SA; CEPA

## Section IV: Projected Program SLOs Assessment Cycle

The purpose of Section IV is to document that program faculty members have a projected plan in place by which they address *and* assess all program SLOs over a period of years by conducting assessments that document student

performance on the SLOs at designated points in time. This plan should be *tentative* and *flexible* because decisions on when to shift from the current SLO to a new program SLO will be dependent (at least in part) based on the SLO program assessment data and the types of changes that program faculty have/will implement to improve student learning as a result. The general guideline provided is to continue working on the current program SLO until changes implemented reflect improvement in student learning over time—documentation of “*closing the loop*”. Therefore, each program SLO must be assessed for 2 or more consecutive years. The program faculty will need to determine how long to continue to focus on a specific SLO before transitioning their attention to another program SLO.

To complete Section IV, after discussion with program faculty, list all program SLOs again in the table provided. A cut and paste from Section II is the easiest way to accomplish this task. Secondly, determine the semester and years in which each of the SLOs is projected to be assessed. Program faculty should strategically plan the program assessment cycle (rotation); taking into consideration other variables that may impact its implementation (such as accreditation self-studies and academic program reviews). See example provided below. It is recommended that program faculty tailor the assessment cycle so that it coincides with other submission timelines/reporting schedules, particularly those related to academic program review and/or accreditation self-study. The program faculty should *streamline* their work in academic assessment so that it *contributes* to other reporting mechanisms concurrently; thereby, eliminating duplication or redundancy that may otherwise occur. Refer to the *BS Biology* example provided below.

Program SLO Description <i>By the end of the academic program, students will be able to:</i>	List the <b>academic years</b> in which the <b>SLO</b> will be assessed
SLO 1 - Define, explain, and analyze basic biological content including: diverse structures and functions on the organismal, tissue, cellular and molecular levels; regulation of biological functions; and the integration between organisms and their environment.	2012-2013; 2013-2014
SLO 2 – Using principles of scientific inquiry, students will reason analytically and critically evaluate scientific literature.	2014-2015; 2015-2016
SLO 3 – Apply scientific techniques and effectively interpret and communicate scientific results.	2016-2017; 2017-2018

Program faculty will determine the timeframe over which this assessment plan will be implemented. If revisions or changes become necessary that deviate from the original assessment plan, a “change form” will be available for program faculty to complete; subsequently, serving as an addendum to the originally submitted assessment plan.

## Section V: Program SLO(s) to be Assessed during 2012-13

Section V moves into the heart of the assessment plan for the next academic year (2012-2013). Completion of the table in this section will provide detailed information about the assessment measures, assessment method, and various indicators of individual student, and overall performance expectations specific to the targeted program SLO which serves as the focal point for SLOs assessment during the next academic year. Implementation of this plan begins either summer 2012 or fall 2012 and continues through spring 2013 or summer 2013.

The expectations for academic assessment of program SLOs are as follows. *For each academic degree program:*

1. A minimum of one program SLO must be assessed each year.

2. Two assessment measures are required per SLO assessed, one of which must be a direct measure of assessment.

The Section V table provides category information (cells) for *up to two* program SLOs. The second part of the table will remain blank for program faculty who choose to work on a single program SLO during the next academic year.

To begin completing the table, insert the program SLO that faculty selected as their focus for the 2012-13 academic year in the space provided in the top section of the table. Use the first column on the left to list each assessment measure by name and include a sufficient description of the assessment that indicates the nature of the assessment and its major components. These assessment measures will be used to document student performance on the selected program SLO; and therefore, they should *directly align* with the *intent* of the program SLO. At least one of the two assessment measures listed must also be a direct measure of assessment. The assessment measures used must be conducted toward or at the end (preferable) of the program of study, since we wish to determine how well students are able to achieve the program SLOs at the end of the program of study.

In the second column, for each assessment measure listed, indicate whether the measure provided is a *direct* or *indirect measure* of assessment. Use the following definitions and examples to determine the type of measure:

- Direct measure – Students demonstrate mastery of the SLO by *an actual performance/product*, assessed by individuals *considered to be experts/professionals* (i.e., course instructor, juror, clinical/field supervisor, etc.) in the content/discipline. Examples of direct measures of assessment include projects, exams, papers, clinical assessments, performances, exhibitions, etc.
- Indirect measure – Students (or others) report *perceptions or opinions* of how well students have achieved an SLO. Examples of indirect measures of assessment include student surveys, satisfaction surveys, pre-post surveys (change in perception over time), qualitative data (focus groups, in-class group discussions, exit interviews) or institutional data (participation in activities, and post-graduation employment placement rates), etc.

Column 3, *Assessment Method*, is used to provide detailed information concerning how each assessment is conducted and scored. This will vary from assessment to assessment, dependent upon type and characteristics associated with each. The content in this section will indicate the strength/robustness of the program assessment system. The questions below will guide assessment method content:

1. How will the assessment be scored?
2. What tool(s) will be used to delineate various levels of student performance (i.e., scoring rubric)?
3. By whom will the assessment be scored?
4. Will disaggregated (category/major component/domain) data be tabulated in addition to an overall score?
5. What will be done to ensure the assessment results are trustworthy (validity and reliability)?

Column 4, *Criterion for Success* will designate the acceptable level of individual student performance on the selected assessment measure. For example, an exam score of 75 (out of 100 points) might serve as this indicator. Or, if the assessment measure is a capstone project (worth a total of 250 points), an overall score of 187.5 points might be designated as the criterion for success. Again, with this and all other decisions made relative to academic program assessment, the program faculty will determine this indicator of acceptable performance.

Similarly, Column 5, *Realistic Program Goal*, will serve as a second standard of performance. Program faculty will use their professional judgment and/or related student performance data to establish a *reasonable/realistic goal* for the percentage of students in the program that will achieve the previously set *criterion for success*. If we look at one of the above examples (exam scores), what percentage of students would it be *reasonable* to expect a score of 75/100 or better on the exam?

The final column in Section V is a *Stretch Program Goal*. This type of goal, asks faculty to push beyond what may be reasonable in order to raise the standard of performance on the program SLO. This goal could take up to several years to accomplish, not one that could be reached in a short period of time—thus the term “stretch” goal. Here, program faculty will set a challenging/stretch goal that indicates the *desired, yet potentially attainable* percentage of students that will achieve the designated criterion for success over a period of time. An example is provided below.

### BS Psychology

<b>SLO 1: By the end of the academic program, students will be able to:</b> Identify major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and historical trends in psychology.					
<b>Assessment Measure*</b> [Insert name of each assessment measure and corresponding description below.]	<b>Direct or Indirect Measure?</b>	<b>Assessment Method</b> [Indicate how the assessment measure will be scored. By whom? Will disaggregated (category/major component/domain) data be tabulated, in addition to an overall score? Etc.]	<b>Criterion for Success</b> [List the <i>acceptable</i> level of <u>individual student performance</u> on the selected assessment measure.]	<b>Realistic Program Goal</b> [List a <u>reasonable/realistic goal</u> for the percentage of students that will <i>attain</i> the set criterion for success.]	<b>Stretch Program Goal</b> [List a <u>challenging/stretch goal</u> that indicates the <i>desired, yet potentially attainable</i> percentage of students that will achieve the set criterion for success.]
<b>Assessment 1</b> ACAT (National Standardized Assessment)	Direct	As a standardized test, the assessments are sent to ACAT where the tests are scored and compared to a national sample. The department receives an overall percentile score for the cohort as well as percentile scores for each subtest (e.g. abnormal psychology, clinical/counseling psychology, developmental psychology, human learning/cognition and social psychology). In addition, each student score is reported as a percentile.	Scores above the 40 <sup>th</sup> percentile (NOTE: the 40 <sup>th</sup> percentile is one standard deviation below the national average)	60% of students score within one standard deviation of national average.	60% of students score above the national average

<b>Assessment 2</b> Departmental theoretical perspective assessment (DTPA)	Direct	The multiple choice assessment will provide a single score on a 100 point scale of student's awareness of the theoretical perspectives (past and present) in psychology. The assessment will be scored by the program director.	Scores of 80% or above	70% of students score 80% or above	90% of students score 80% or above
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## Section VI: 2012-13 Assessment Plan Implementation Coordination

This is the final section of the Academic II Assessment Plan. Section VI communicates how the assessment plan will be implemented and coordinated during the 2012-2013 academic year. Several aspects specific to the actual implementation and administration of the program assessment plan are delineated within the table provided. Determining assessment plan implementation coordination in advance will help to ensure that each aspect of this process has been identified prior to the start of the assessment period. All responsibilities and expectations are determined in advance, hopefully in a manner that *spreads the wealth*, rather than putting all responsibility on one or two individuals.

In column 1, list each of the assessment measures selected to assess the targeted program SLO. Indicate the month and year in which the assessment measure will be conducted or administered in column 2. Next, identify who will administer and/or collect the assessments in column 3. Data management and initial analysis is then indicated in column 4. Who will input the data and conduct the initial data analysis? And, when does the initial data analysis occur?

Activity in column 5 represents one of the most critical steps in academic SLOs assessment. Once the initial data analysis is available, program faculty must get together to interpret the data, and based on the interpretation, initiate specific changes (actions) that will be put into place in order to continue to improve student learning within the program of study. Program faculty will need to determine the best time to conduct this portion of academic assessment. Should it occur at the end of the academic year, during the summer, during a departmental retreat prior to beginning the next academic year, or during some other designated point in time? Next, what faculty need to be involved in this decision making process? Some faculty may only teach in the graduate program. Is it necessary for them to also be involved in decision making for an undergraduate program within the department as well (or vice versa)? Typically, faculty members most actively engaged in the ongoing implementation of an academic program need to be the key players in developing and formulating any changes that will be put into place based on program assessment data.

Finally, in the last column identify when the actions/changes developed in column 5 will actually be implemented in order to improve student learning. Refer to the *MSW Social Work* example provided on the next page.

Assessment Measure [Insert name of each assessment measure below.]	Administration Period (Month/Year)	Who will administer/collect assessment?	Who will input data/ conduct initial data analysis and when?	When will interpretation of the data and development of changes to improve student learning occur? What program faculty will be involved?	When will changes to improve student learning be implemented?
SLO 1/Assessment 1 Field Instructor Evaluation	Field Instructor Evaluations are administered at the end of the Field Practicum, December, May, and August of each year	Field Instructors will complete the evaluation and submit the results to the Director of Field Education	Director of Field Education will submit individual level results for each of the 10 competencies to the Program Director the month following administration (June, January, and September). The Social Work Program Secretary will maintain an Excel spreadsheet of scores.	Each Fall, the faculty of the Social Work Program will meet to review the data and determine what, if any, changes are needed.	After a two consecutive cycles of failure to meet stated goals, faculty will develop course and/or curriculum changes to be made. Course changes may be made immediately, curriculum changes will be implemented during the beginning of a new academic year.
SLO 1/Assessment 2 ACAT Exam	ACAT exams will be administered during the final senior semester, April, November, and July of each year	Program Director will be responsible for administering the 3 hour exam	Exams are scored by ACAT and the scores are reported individually and aggregated. Scores are received by the Program Director and will be entered in an Excel spreadsheet by the Social Work Program Secretary.	Each Fall, the faculty of the Social Work Program will meet to review the data and determine what, if any, changes are needed	After a two consecutive cycles of failure to meet stated goals, faculty will develop course and/or curriculum changes to be made. Course changes may be made immediately, curriculum changes will be implemented during the beginning of a new academic year
SLO 1/Assessment 3 Research Project	Research projects are completed during the Field Practicum final reports are submitted in May, December, and August of each year	Director of Field Education	The Director of Field Education will submit the scores to the Program Director for review and to the Social Work Program Secretary for entry into an Excel spreadsheet	Each Fall, the faculty of the Social Work Program will meet to review the data and determine what, if any, changes are needed	After a two consecutive cycles of failure to meet stated goals, faculty will develop course and/or curriculum changes to be made. Course changes may be made immediately, curriculum changes will be implemented during the beginning of a new academic year

## Final Comments on the Plan & Process

Determining what must be done in an academic program to continue to improve program quality and student learning requires dedicated time and *intentionality*. Systematically assessing our academic programs based on what we've determined that students should be able to do by the end of their program of study and making appropriate changes and/or decisions based on program assessment data of student learning will help us to move forward in the name of continuous improvement.

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