Western Carolina University Unit/Program Assessment Plan

PREFACE

Two versions of this template are available, one with directions and more detailed guidance, and one without. **This version does NOT contain directions.** Complete the version you feel most comfortable with.

An assessment plan outlines the ways in which educational programs and other units intend to review their effectiveness and determine the extent to which their goals are being met. At Western Carolina University, we define an educational program as any curricular program that offers a degree, certificate, or standalone minor. Other units include (a) administrative support services; (b) academic and student support services; (c) research units, sponsored research programs, degree programs and courses where research is an expected outcome; and (d) centers, institutes, units and formal programs that deliver community and public services.

An assessment plan is evolving, strategic, forward thinking, and tied to the mission of Western Carolina University and the individual program or unit. Assessment plans are most effective when designed to provide your program or unit with actionable information, giving insight into where your operations (and the curriculum in the case of educational programs) are working well and where they could be adjusted. The assessment plan guides the assessment process, which is at the heart of institutional effectiveness.

We recognize there are a number of assessment plan formats and operational definitions that work well for particular units and programs. To improve the consistency and clarity of Western Carolina University’s unique institutional strategic planning processes and enhance institutional effectiveness, we are adopting a uniform structure for unit and program assessment plans. This will enable the institution to more effectively gauge the quality of our overall institutional assessment system, provide support and guidance where needed, and demonstrate internally and externally our continual improvement processes. At the program and unit level, it will enhance the alignment between program review and annual reporting processes, enabling programs and units to use assessment results for multiple purposes.

What follows is a template with embedded directions outlining Western Carolina University’s AY 2016-17 Assessment Plan. Each section begins with a brief over and rationale, followed by a set of suggested best practices and occasionally institutional and/or SACSCOC mandates. Questions, concerns, or comments can be directed to the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, Dr. Stephen Wallace, Director of Assessment, [srwallace@wcu.edu](mailto:srwallace@wcu.edu), 828-227-2580.

The general format for a basic assessment plan is:

**Cover Page**

1. **Mission of the Unit/Program**
2. **Broad Goals**
3. **Measurable Outcomes**
4. **Explanation of Assessment Methods**

**Approval**

The cover page for the assessment plan is on the next page.

Insert Division here

(For Non-Degree Units and Programs)

Insert Office, Unit, or Program name here

(For Degree Programs and Certificates)

Insert College here

Insert Department or School here

Insert Degree Program or Certificate here

Insert Degree or Certificate here

Insert Date of Plan (or revision) here

Insert Name and Title of Person Submitting/Revising Assessment Plan here

**1. Mission of the Program or Unit—Why We Exist**

Insert your mission statement here

**2. Broad Goals—Where We Are Going, Generally Speaking**

| **Number** | **Broad Goal** | **Student Learning or Operational Goal** | **SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard Primarily Addressed a** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | Insert the full text of your first educational program or unit goal here | Indicate here if this goal is primarily a student learning goal or an operational goal | Indicate here the primary SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard this goal addresses |
| 2. |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |
| … |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| *Note:* a SACSCOC Comprehensive Standards focus on five institutional effectiveness areas: 3.3.1.1 (educational programs), 3.3.1.2 (administrative support services), 3.3.1.3 (academic and student support services), 3.3.1.4 (research within our mission), and 3.3.1.5 (community/public service within our mission). Educational programs and units will most likely have goals that address multiple areas (e.g., 3.3.1.1 for student learning goals, 3.3.1.4 for research goals, and 3.3.1.5 for community/public service goals). | | | |

**3. Measurable Outcomes—Where We Are Going, More Specifically**

| **Number** | **Outcome** | **Broad Goal the Outcome Supports** | **Student Learning or Operational Outcome** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | Insert the full text of your first program or unit outcome here | Insert the full text of the broad goal the outcome supports here | Indicate here if this outcome is primarily a student learning outcome or an operational outcome |
| 2. |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |
| … |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| *Note:* All goals need multiple outcomes to ensure an accurate and reliable picture. Educational programs must include both student learning outcomes and operational outcomes. | | | |

**4. Explanation of Assessment Methods—How We Will Know We Reached Our Goals**

| **Assessment Method** | **Explanation** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Program- or Unit-Level Target a** | **When Data Will be Collected** | **Person Responsible** | **Outcomes Assessed** |
| Insert the title of the first assessment method here | Insert a description of the assessment method here in enough detail that internal and external stakeholders can get a good idea of what the assessment method is | Insert the overall program- or unit-level target of performance here | Insert the date(s) this assessment method will be carried out here | Insert the name and/or position of the person responsible for carrying out the assessment method here | Indicate which outcomes this assessment is designed to measure |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| … |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Note.* a Program- and unit-level target is the desired overall target level of performance is to say that the program or unit is meeting the outcome(s). | | | | | |

**Approval**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **REQUIRED SIGNATURES** | **Printed Name** | **Signature** | **Date** |
| **Individual Completing Report** |  |  |  |
| **Department/Unit Head** |  |  |  |
| **Supervisor (Dean, Director, Vice Chancellor)** |  |  |  |