**Unit Assessment Plan Guidelines**

*Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs*

In Designing your department’s assessment plan, consider and include the following.

**Learning Goals andObjectives**

**List 3-5 learning goals** for each major (whether you call them goals, objectives or outcomes does not matter for now). What will the student in the major know, value and be able to do upon graduation? Consider using Appendix 1 to guide development of an assessment process, and the “Goal Definition Worksheet” in Appendix 2 to guide your conversation about learning goals.

**Assessment Methods**

By what measure(s) will you know that students are meeting departmental learning objectives? How will learning outcomes be assessed (rubrics, test questions, portfolios, etc.)? From whom, and at what points, will you gather data? Note that not every student needs to be assessed – you can sample student work. How will the information be collected?

**Assessment Processes**

When will you conduct the assessment of each learning objective? Who will be responsible for each component? What is the overall timeline for the assessment plan? Consider using something like the simple table below to map out when each learning objective will be assessed. In this example, each learning objective would be assessed at least once every 5 years. Let your findings guide this plan and update it as needed. For instance, you might revisit a challenging learning objective sooner if you’ve made changes to improve the outcomes.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Objective** | **AY 16-17** | **AY 17-18** | **AY 18-19** | **AY 19-20** | **AY 20-21** |
| LO1 – Students will… | X |  | Revisit |  |  |
| LO2 | X |  |  |  |  |
| LO3 |  | X |  |  |  |
| LO4 |  | X |  |  | Revisit |
| LO5 |  |  | X |  |  |

**Status, Outcomes and Results**

How will you report and discuss your findings in your unit?

**Decisions, Plans and Recommendations**

Describe a general process for transforming analysis into action plans for improvement. Describe how action plans will be revisited and evaluated at some future date.

**Appendix 1**

**Basic Approach to Assessment of Student Learning**

The information below is adapted from Barbara Walvoord’s book: *Assessment Clear and Simple*. The book provides a straightforward approach to assessment and at most you can read two chapters, and save yourself a lot of stress. If you’d like a copy of the book for your department, please contact Ron Bramhall in the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs.

Here is the “Most Basic, Minimal System, Based on Faculty Oral Reports” (Walvoord, 2010; pg 59-62)

1. **List 3-5 learning goals** for your program (whether you call them goals, objectives or outcomes does not matter for now). Consider using the “Goal Definition Worksheet” in Appendix 2 to guide your conversation about learning goals.

2. Conduct a meeting with your faculty. During the meeting ask them to **comment on the students’ strengths and weakness related to the above learning goals** prior to graduation. Take notes while faculty give you an “off the cuff” oral report of their experiences with student work. Discuss the collective strengths and weaknesses that have been listed. Take a vote on the one weakness from this list to pursue for the following year. Document the result of the vote.

3. Assign a committee to **investigate further** (perhaps ask the students for their input via a survey or discussion; look at some student work for examples etc.) and **propose an actionable change to be put in place during the following year** in an attempt to improve student learning in this area. Have the committee document their investigation and their recommendation. **Curriculum mapping** can also be a useful tool to help identify gaps in the curriculum related to learning goals.

4. One year later, conduct another meeting with your faculty. **Discuss whether the faculty noted any changes in the students’ learning based on the changes implemented during the past year.** Take notes. Discuss whether to implement further changes related to this weakness for an additional year, or to select a new weakness to address. It is completely reasonable to spend 2-3 years monitoring the same weakness and making changes to address it.

5. **Continue the above year after year,** and document what you do along the way. This a simple example of an Assessment plan, which identifies the learning **goals**, collects **information**, takes **action,** and is appropriate for a Program Review self-study, or University Accreditation.

**Appendix 2**

**Goal Definition Worksheet**

Each faculty member in the department should complete a copy of this worksheet. Arrange a time for all of you to sit down together to compare notes and discuss results. The final product of this exercise should be a list of three to five broad goals that describe what department faculty believe should be characteristic of graduates in the major.

1. List any department learning outcomes or goals that you know. This information can most likely be found in the course catalog, program brochure, or department mission statement. Some units have already identified learning outcomes and can find those on department or school/college websites, such as in CAS at http://cas.uoregon.edu/learning-outcomes/.

2. Describe your ideal student in terms of strengths, skills, knowledge and values, and identify which

of these characteristics are the result of the program experience.

3. Keeping this ideal student in mind, ask what the student

1. knows
2. can do
3. cares about

4. What program experiences can you identify as making the most contribution to producing and

supporting the ideal student?

*Adapted from OAPA Handbook PROGRAM-Based Review and Assessment • UMass Amherst*