

***Key Elements in
The University of Texas
at Tyler
Planning and Evaluation Process***



Linking the planning process to budget decisions and continually assessing the effectiveness of the process itself ensures that planning and evaluation are meaningful.

Prepared by
The Office of Planning and Institutional Research

The University of Texas at Tyler

Planning/Effectiveness Timetable

Date by:

Planning Activity or Operational Activity

AUG	Strategic Planning Committee	Planning Conference/Retreat to set Strategic Plan priorities, review institutional mission, planning assumptions, goals, strategies and performance objectives for the upcoming year. Discussion and review of emerging challenges and opportunities.
SEPT	Academic department chairs and department heads	Meet with their faculty or staff to develop or review student outcomes and/or administrative goals for program or unit.
SEPT	Academic department chairs and department heads	Meet with their faculty or staff to develop or review methods by which to measure expected student or administrative outcomes.
SEPT	Academic programs and nonacademic department units	Create 1 st two columns on unit effectiveness plans: objectives/outcomes and effectiveness indicators.
DEC	VPBA	Budget instructions distributed to deans and budget authorities.
JAN	Budget Authorities	Budget Request forms completed and returned to Business Affairs office.
FEB-APR	President, VPAA, VPBA	Budget hearings conducted.
MAY	Academic programs and nonacademic department units	Finish IE unit "results of assessment" and "use of results" (columns three & four) on unit effectiveness tables.
MAY	Academic department chairs and department heads	Review "use of results" columns on unit effectiveness tables.
JUNE	Academic department chairs and department heads	Submit Annual Report for dean or director review.
JULY	Deans and Directors	Synthesize Annual Reports from academic department chairs and department heads into one consolidated College or non-academic Department Annual Report.
JULY	Deans and Directors	Submit consolidated Annual Report to their respective vice president or administrator.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Institutional effectiveness is the demonstration that an institution is accomplishing its purposes. It is based on the philosophy that institutions that engage in a comprehensive, systematic, and conscientious assessment will become stronger and more effective. Engaging in this process increases the likelihood that members of an institution will share a sense of its mission, that programs and resources will be effectively directed to meeting the mission, and that academic programs and administrative services will continuously self-examine in order to create the most effective learning environment and experiences for students.

Institutional effectiveness seeks to encourage honest assessment and creative effort to make program improvements without fear of failure or personal retribution. Each major/program is evaluated on the quality of its mission statement, objectives, assessment activity, and effort to make program improvements. Within institutional effectiveness, departments are not held accountable for failure or success, only for having in place a process to measure effectiveness. This process is separate from the personnel evaluation process.

Academic assessment is a key component of *institutional effectiveness*. It refers to the measurement of student knowledge, skills, competencies, values, and other outcomes expected of the educational process. It is a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of institutions, departments, and programs in meeting the educational goals that they have established for themselves. The primary purpose of academic assessment is to improve student learning and development by linking outcomes assessment with curriculum review and revision.

Good assessment does change the focus of attention from what professors teach to what students learn.

Academic assessment enables departments and programs to be more “intentional” in the education of students. It stimulates explicit reflection, discussion, and consensus-building of learning objectives for students, systematic measurement of the extent to which objectives are being met and meaningful efforts to use this information to make improvements in program structure, course content, and pedagogy.

Academic assessment is a natural part of teaching. Conscientious teachers continually reflect on what they want their students to learn, how well current techniques lead to these objectives, and what they can do to enhance the learning process. Academic assessment includes this traditional process but moves it to the department (or program) level and makes it more systematic. But the essential questions are the same: **“Are our students learning what we want them to learn?”** and **“Are there ways that we can do better?”**

Good assessment does change the focus of attention from what professors teach to what students learn. Traditionally, higher education has emphasized “processes” and “inputs”

as a means for assessing quality. For example, teaching is traditionally judged to be effective if the instructor knows his or her subject, has a carefully prepared syllabus, incorporates new technologies into the classroom, and stimulates meaningful discussion. Yet, if challenged on the point, most professors and students would probably acknowledge that, while “teaching inputs” are extremely important, they are not perfect indicators of the amount of “learning” that has actually occurred. Teaching and learning are two sides of the same process, but they are not the same thing. The “means” of higher education (i.e., instruction) are not the same thing as the “ends” or “outcomes” of higher education (i.e., changes in student knowledge or capabilities or attitudes). Academic assessment highlights this conceptual distinction and leads to a focus not only on the teaching process but also on the learning outcome.

In most cases, this assessment goes beyond the course level and focuses on the *program* level.

Institutional effectiveness assessment should answer four basic questions:

1. What are we trying to accomplish through education? (Learning goals)
2. How do we plan to evaluate our success? (Measures)
3. What did we find? (Outcomes)
4. How will we use it? (Improvement)

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

In order to conduct a meaningful and systematic program of institutional effectiveness, four essential tasks must be completed for all academic majors and programs:

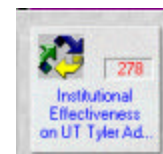
- TASK A** The formulation of a *Unit Effectiveness Plan*, including a department mission statement, linkage to one or more university goals, learning outcomes/objectives, and means of assessment;
- TASK B** The conduct of an annual assessment;
- TASK C** The use of assessment results to improve academic programming;
- TASK D** The integration of assessment activities within the University's planning and budget processes.

TASK A ***FORMULATE A UNIT EFFECTIVENESS PLAN***

Each academic major and program should have a Unit Effectiveness Plan that includes

- articulation of a mission statement for the major/program,
- linkage to one or more university goal statements,
- learning outcomes/objectives for the major/program, and
- a brief description of means of assessment to be used to determine progress in meeting the objectives.

A carefully written Unit Effectiveness Plan serves as the foundation for all academic assessment activity. Nevertheless, it can be modified at any time as decisions are made to sharpen or extend the mission and/or as program objectives and means of assessment are modified. The Unit Effectiveness Plan for each academic major is maintained in the Lotus Notes *Institutional Effectiveness Database*.



PREPARATION OF SOUND ACADEMIC UNIT EFFECTIVENESS PLANS

(This is a **departmental** brainstorming activity conducted before effectiveness tables are created.)

The formulation of a sound unit effectiveness plan for any academic major or program is a fairly straightforward process that involves three specific activities:

STEP 1 – Development of a unit/department mission statement.

[The mission statement should be reviewed and updated yearly or as necessary]

The statement should follow these guidelines:

1. The mission statement should specify the purpose of the major/program within the overall university context; it should make clear the contribution of the major/program to the institution.
2. The mission statement should be an extension of the University Mission Statement and University Goals; it should make clear how the major/program contributes to the mission and goals of the University.
3. The mission statement should be succinct but should be sure to include the essential mission of the major or program (rather than the mission of any individual faculty member). Most statements are about 1—3 paragraphs in length.

Academic majors and programs should begin with the University's Mission Statement and University Goals—these are statements about what the University values and what it intends to offer to students. These statements should guide the objectives and activities of academic majors and programs.

While some academic majors and programs may work directly from these University statements, most will prefer to prepare an individual and specific purpose statement. These specific statements are consistent with the University statements but may add to them and tailor them to the specific major or program. Just as the University statements influence all programs at the University, the purpose statement of each academic major and program should influence all related activities.

STEP 2 – Development of 3 to 5 specific student outcomes/learning objectives for this year’s focus.

Timetable: Do this at the beginning of each academic year (September)

What should students completing this program **DO, THINK, OR KNOW?**

(These will ultimately be displayed in column 1 of the effectiveness table in the database)



Each academic major and program should identify specific student outcomes or learning objectives for students in that field. The following steps facilitate this process.

- a. Start with individual reflection and group discussion. Think through the various types of objectives that might be selected. Individuals should reflect on:
 1. The *knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors* expected of students in the program
 2. The achievements (education and career accomplishments, lifestyles, citizenship activities, aesthetic and intellectual involvements) reasonably to be expected of students in and graduates of the program
- b. The temptation to compile individual course objectives could result in a list of unmanageable length. In this case, faculty members should work to identify common themes (bodies of knowledge), abilities, and attitudes that can be discerned among those submitted for consideration.
- c. Draft a set of well-written learning outcomes/objectives for each academic major/program. Learning outcomes/objectives should have the following characteristics:
 1. Include an action verb and a statement of ability. Use meaningful verbs: better objectives use action verbs like *paraphrase, compute, describe*, and *construct*; poorer objectives use verbs that are too general like *understand* and *appreciate*.
 2. Involve objectives that can be operationalized and are empirically verifiable/directly observable.
 3. Are attainable or feasible given the resources of the department.
 4. Clarify or establish a link between what students accomplish in the program and what they do after they graduate.
 5. Permit multiple paths of demonstrating mastery of program objectives.
- d. The outcomes/objectives should be **outcome- or result-oriented** rather than statements of process, and they should be specific. This is contrary to the tradition of both administrative and academic departments, which are more accustomed to identifying “what we will do.” This model is based on identification of “what will occur” as a result of what we do. Thus, “offering sound courses in core areas of the discipline” is too process-focused. Think about what the objectives are (in other words, why do we offer core courses? What are we trying to accomplish? How will students who take these courses be different?)

Examples of outcomes/objectives that might be used by sociology departments for what they would want their graduates to be able to do:

- Explain what makes an explanation sociological
- Analyze current social issues from the three dominant theoretical perspectives
- Interpret quantitative data and abstract models as presented in tables, graphs, charts, and diagrams
- Identify and explain the primary strengths and weaknesses of survey research, experimental research, observational research, and content analysis
- Formulate a sound design for a social research project and carry out the project
- Present a summary of a research project at an on-campus or off-campus forum
- Consider self well-prepared for graduate school

The statements must be clear and well understood by faculty in the department.

STEP 3 – Development of means of assessment

Timetable: Do this at the beginning of each academic year (September)

(These will ultimately be displayed in column 2 of the effectiveness table in the database)

For each intended outcome/objective, provide at least one valid means of assessment to determine the accomplishment of that outcome.



Potential Assessment Mechanisms

From Current Students

Performance in senior capstone course
 Major papers and projects
 Analyses of theses, portfolios, and recitals
 Awards/grants/publications/presentations/honors
 In-house examination administered in the capstone course or
 In-house essay administered early and late in major
 Surveys
 Focus groups

From Graduating Seniors

Senior exit interviews
 Results of admissions tests for students applying to graduate or
 professional schools
 Results of licensing examinations
 Graduating student survey

From Alumni

Placement records (education, employment) of graduates
 Evaluations by employers
 One-year and five-year alumni survey
 Focus groups

Whenever possible, Means of Assessment should specify

- **what** data will be collected,
- by **whom**,
- from what **sources**,
- using what **methods**,
- in what **time frame** (annually, every 3 years, etc.), and
- performance **standard**: what level of attainment is required
The performance standard is the *criteria for success* that indicates the level of achievement necessary in order for the objective to be judged accomplished and successful.



Assessment must evaluate the extent to which the outcome is achieved, not whether or not the step was completed.

The *SACS Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness* suggests that both qualitative (portfolio reviews, reviews of public performances or oral examinations) and quantitative (standardized achievement tests, licensure examinations, professional/graduate school admissions tests) means for evaluation should be employed: “Neither is necessarily preferred; but the use of only quantitative or only qualitative evaluation procedures would likely diminish the effort.”

TASK B CONDUCT AN ANNUAL ASSESSMENT, GATHER ASSESSMENT DATA

Timetable: Do this at the end of the academic year (May) or when assessment data become available.

(This information will ultimately be displayed in **column 3** of the effectiveness table in the database)

When you measured (or observed, or surveyed, etc.) what did you find? Document assessment results. Don't stop at simply stating the results. Include the relevant interpretation of the results.

TASK C *The use of assessment results to improve academic programming;*

Timetable: Do this at the end of the academic year (May) or when assessment data become available.

(This information will ultimately be displayed in column 4 of the effectiveness table in the database)

The end product of assessment activities is the improvement of academic programming based upon the use of assessment results. Without being able to demonstrate such use of assessment results, all previous activities fall short of their intended purpose.

Receipt of assessment results usually results in one of the following actions:

- a. Restructuring the student outcomes/learning objectives, or improvement of means of assessment;
- b. The decision to take no action based on findings that outcomes have been accomplished
- c. Use of assessment data to change and improve the program. These changes most often are of two types:
 1. Changes in “what we teach” (ex: closer alignment of course offerings with the requirements of the world of work, or restructuring of the sequence of the curriculum to lead more logically from one subject to another)
 2. Changes in “how we teach” (ex: instructional techniques resulting in more active student participation)

CLOSING THE LOOP

Without being able to demonstrate use of assessment results, all previous activities fall short of their intended purpose.

COMPLETING THE INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS TABLES ON LOTUS NOTES DATABASE



Double-click this icon to find your college or administrative office. Then double-click on your program.

An annual Unit Effectiveness Plan must be conducted for each academic major and program. The plan used at UT-Tyler is based on a model constructed by James Nichols, Ph.D., of the University of Mississippi.

To facilitate entry and accessibility, effectiveness tables have been added to Lotus Notes in a database called “*Institutional Effectiveness on UT Tyler Admin.*” The plan begins with university mission statement and university goals, followed by academic department mission statement, learning outcome/objectives, means of assessment, results of assessment, and use of results to improve program. The documentation of plans involves annual development of a four-column grid (below is a hypothetical example from English):

Linkage to University Goal Statements and Unit/Department Mission Statement:

Identify the program’s linkage to one or more of the University’s goals (located in the pop-up on the screen), and the major/program’s own mission statement. These and the first two columns are completed/updated each September (beginning of academic year).

Examples are offered in red:

University Goal Statement: Goal 4. Create an exciting community of learning throughout the University that fully and actively engages all students.

Unit (Dept) Mission Statement:

The Department of Literature and Languages seeks to give English majors a critical understanding of and appreciation for literature and the development of the English language. The department seeks to teach its majors how to read critically, how to analyze an argument in a text, and how to respond intelligently to that argument in writing.

EXAMPLE:

Column 1: Academic Outcome. The first two columns are completed each September, at the beginning of the academic year. The objectives selected may or may not change from year to year.

(Hypothetical data)

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
<p>Academic Outcome/Objective - OR - Unit (Dept) Objective 3-5 major outcomes for each degree program or administrative unit recommended</p>	<p>Means of Assessment</p> <p>How will you measure this outcome? At what level, or to what degree, do you expect these outcomes to be present?</p>	<p>Results of Assessment</p> <p>When you measured (or observed or surveyed, etc.) what did you find?</p>	<p>Use of Results to Improve Program</p> <p>What impact did this have on the program or unit and how will it be used for program or unit improvement? (This should lead to your next year's plan)</p>
<p>Students completing the baccalaureate program will be capable of writing a brief journal article and having it published.</p>			

EXAMPLE:

Column 2: Identification of the means of assessment (*see below) that will be used to examine the selected objectives. Each means should contain a criterion or threshold of success; this is the level at which faculty would conclude that the objective has been reasonably met. In the following example, “all”, “80%” and “20%” establish this threshold. The criterion should be set at whatever level is appropriate and meaningful.

(Hypothetical data)

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
<p style="text-align: center;">Academic Outcome/Objective - OR – Unit (Dept) Objective</p> <p>3-5 major outcomes for each degree program or administrative unit recommended</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Means of Assessment</p> <p>How will you measure this outcome? At what level, or to what degree, do you expect these outcomes to be present?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Results of Assessment</p> <p>When you measured (or observed or surveyed, etc.) what did you find?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Use of Results to Improve Program</p> <p>What impact did this have on the program or unit and how will it be used for program or unit improvement? (This should lead to your next year's plan)</p>
<p>1. Students completing the baccalaureate program will be capable of writing a brief journal article and having it published.</p>	<p>1a. All graduates of the baccalaureate level program in English will prepare a journal article for submission and forward it to the English department.</p> <p>1b. Eighty percent of those journal articles submitted will be judged acceptable for publication by a jury of English department faculty from an institution comparable to UT Tyler.</p> <p>1c Twenty percent of those articles submitted will be published in student or other publications.</p>		

EXAMPLE:**Column 3: Identification of the results of the application of the means of assessment.**

This column describes what has been learned from each means of assessment about performance relative to the corresponding objective. It must contain information that allows determination about whether or not the criterion level has been reached. *This column is completed whenever the results from the means of assessment are available, or in May, at the end of the academic year.*

(Hypothetical data)

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
<p style="text-align: center;">Academic Outcome/Objective - OR - Unit (Dept) Objective</p> <p>3-5 major outcomes for each degree program or administrative unit recommended</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Means of Assessment</p> <p>How will you measure this outcome? At what level, or to what degree, do you expect these outcomes to be present?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Results of Assessment</p> <p>When you measured (or observed or surveyed, etc.) what did you find?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Use of Results to Improve Program</p> <p>What impact did this have on the program or unit and how will it be used for program or unit improvement? (This should lead to your next year's plan)</p>
<p>1. Students completing the baccalaureate program will be capable of writing a brief journal article and having it published.</p>	<p>1a. All graduates of the baccalaureate level program in English will prepare a journal article for submission and forward it to the English department.</p> <p>1b. Eighty percent of those journal articles submitted will be judged acceptable for publication by a jury of English department faculty from an institution comparable to UT Tyler.</p> <p>1c. Twenty percent of those articles submitted will be published in student or other publications.</p>	<p>1a. Article received from all (18) graduates.</p> <p>1b. Fifty-five percent of articles reviewed were found acceptable for publication.</p> <p>1c. Thirty percent of articles were published.</p>	

EXAMPLE:

Column 4: (“Closing the Loop”) Identification of efforts to make program/service improvements based on what has been learned and reported in column 3. If assessment shows that an objective is being met, and no one has ideas for doing better, the fourth column simply reports that. When assessment shows that an objective is not being met and/or ideas are suggested for doing better, then the fourth column reports the changes designed to enhance program performance. This column is completed in May, at the end of the academic year.

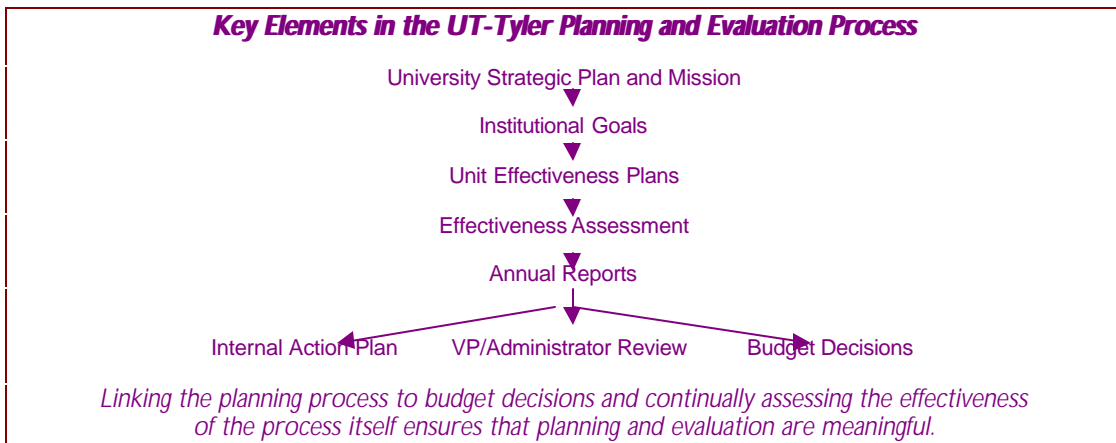
(Hypothetical data)

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
<p style="text-align: center;">Academic Outcome/Objective - OR - Unit (Dept) Objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3-5 major outcomes for each degree program or administrative unit recommended</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Means of Assessment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How will you measure this outcome? At what level, or to what degree, do you expect these outcomes to be present?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Results of Assessment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">When you measured (or observed or surveyed, etc.) what did you find?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Use of Results to Improve Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What impact did this have on the program or unit and how will it be used for program or unit improvement? (This should lead to your next year's plan)</p>
<p>1. Students completing the baccalaureate program will be capable of writing a brief journal article and having it published.</p>	<p>1a. All graduates of the baccalaureate level program in English will prepare a journal article for submission and forward it to the English department.</p> <p>1b. Eighty percent of those journal articles submitted will be judged acceptable for publication by a jury of English department faculty from an institution comparable to UT Tyler.</p> <p>1c. Twenty percent of those articles submitted will be published in student or other publications.</p>	<p>1a. Article received from all (18) graduates.</p> <p>1b. Fifty-five percent of articles reviewed were found acceptable for publication.</p> <p>1c. Thirty percent of articles were published.</p>	<p>1a. No action required.</p> <p>1b. English 4055 (advanced writing) is being modified to include journal article exercises.</p> <p>1c. No action required.</p>

TASK D *The integration of assessment activities within the University's planning and budget processes*

The assessment process will typically produce plans and activities designed to improve the program or service and to increase the likelihood of meeting the designated objectives. The work involved in making these changes should logically be incorporated into the department's goals for the ensuing year.

Program and/or service changes that require financial support should be incorporated into the department's budget request. The process is implemented by the Annual Report. The purpose of the Annual Report is to demonstrate the use of results of assessment to improve educational programs, services, and operations.



PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report summarizes assessment results, describes recommendations for program improvement, delineates implementation (how, who, what, when) for recommended improvements, and provides justification for budget increases.

Assessment results will typically take one of the following forms:

1. improvement in the means of assessment or restructuring of the statement of intended educational outcomes;
2. the decision to take no action based upon findings indicating accomplishment of intended outcomes; or
3. utilization of the assessment data to change and improve the performance of programs.



- 1 Information for the Annual Report comes from Column 4 of your unit effectiveness table. Wherever you have indicated plans for program improvement based on assessment results, transfer these plans into one of the categories on the Annual Report form (choose “*Create Annual Report*” from the Institutional Effectiveness database.) Pop-ups programmed into the report also facilitate automatic transfer of information from the effectiveness table to the Annual Report form.

Where **budget increases** are required, a copy of the Annual Report should be printed and attached to the **Request for Budget Increase** form at the appropriate time. (Now you have demonstrated a clear linkage of assessment to budget.)

- 2 Academic departments notify Deans that their Annual Report is completed and available for review.

The Office of Planning and Institutional Research will maintain the database containing the tables and Annual Reports.

EXAMPLE
Annual Report
[Unit Name]
20xx-20xx

List the improvements that can be implemented with existing resources. *(These proposals are synthesized from all departments and used as action plans within the college or department.)*
(Example:)

- To raise ExCET scores, C&I will establish ExCET review sessions to help students prepare for exam
-
- Better coordination of scheduled class offerings will avoid students' class conflicts
-
- etc.
-
-

Assistance needed from other units in implementing proposed improvements. *(These proposals are synthesized by Deans or administrators and are forwarded to the appropriate Vice President or administrator)*
(Example:)

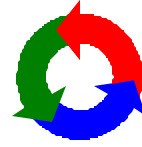
- An additional classroom is needed in the Academic Computing Lab for supplementary class exercises requiring special technology.
-
- Personnel using information technology systems need additional training sessions to do their jobs adequately
-
- etc.
-
-

Proposed improvements requiring additional resources and estimated additional cost
(Input for Request for Budget Increase form)
(Example:)

- Add a masters program in sociology, est. \$50,000
-
- Staff an Office of External Grants/Sponsored Research, est. \$30,000
-
- etc.
-

CONTINUING THE EFFECTIVENESS CYCLE—ON TO NEXT YEAR!

Each September, begin a new effectiveness table for coming Academic Year. Open the *Institutional Effectiveness Database* and complete columns one and two for the new year.



You may want to:

- a) Copy and paste the information from columns one and two of your previous table into the first two columns of your new table for continued assessment; or
- b) Copy and paste the information from column one but modify the performance standard or means of assessment for column two of your new table; or
- c) Discontinue an outcome/objective, or add new ones.