Amarillo College
Planning and Evaluation Tracking (PET) Methodology

Division of Planning & Advancement
Office of Outcomes Assessment

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Overview

Purpose

Each Amarillo College program operates with the assistance of a Planning and Evaluation Tracking (PET) form. The PET system is based on the expectation that each area of the college has goals and objectives/outcomes that are in alignment with the college's Strategic Plan and the college's mission statement. Each PET form identifies objectives/outcomes and measures the results. The results are analyzed and used to make recommendations, revisions, and improvements.

Historically, PET forms have been due in May, August, or mid-fall. Regardless of the due date, it is expected that the PET forms will be used as a means of reflection for historical data and practices and be used as a planning vehicle for future improvements.

Designation of PET Areas and People Responsible

The most up-to-date version of Amarillo College's organizational chart is used as a guide in determining which areas of the college need to complete a PET form. Next, the program director, coordinator, or supervisor of each identified area is designated as the "person responsible" for their program's PET form. Even though one person is identified as the primary person responsible for each PET form, it is highly encouraged that any stakeholder associated with a program participate in the PET process.

When appropriate, one PET form may be submitted for multiple programs as long as each program meets the minimum PET requirements (e.g. the Assessment & Development PET form includes goals/outcomes for grants, institutional research, and assessment in one PET form, but each area meets the criteria outlined by the PET process).

The President's Cabinet will make the final determination on which areas of the college will be responsible for completing a PET form and which individuals will be responsible for submitting each PET form.

Requirements

Instructional (academic programs) and Non-Instructional (Academic and Student Support, Administrative Support, and Community and Public Service Areas) programs are all held to the same PET requirements.

1990s – 2009

The PET system was initiated at AC in the late 1990's and departments first officially submitted PET forms during the 2001-2002 (2002-2003 PET Forms) academic year. Beginning with the 2004-2005 academic year, programs were encouraged to identify at least one direct outcome in the PET template's "Objectives/Outcomes" column and to focus on the use of results.

2010-Current Year

In 2010, efforts were initiated to better align all of AC's various goals and initiatives. As a result the 2011-2012 PET forms (submitted in 2010) required that programs link one PET goal and objective/outcome to at least one Strategic Plan strategy and task. The 2012-2013 submission year brought one additional change when programs were also asked to link at least one PET objective/outcome to a "No Excuses" goal.

The most up-to-date PET training that includes PET guidelines will always be housed on the main PET Web page.

Trainings

1990s – 2010

Training on writing and assessing outcomes is an on-going process. Online trainings are available for both the instructional PET process and the non-instructional PET process. Historically, one-on-one instruction for struggling departments was the most common training method. However, over the past 10 years, campus-wide trainings have also been periodically offered. At least one training session is typically offered on an annual basis and an attendance log demonstrates the utilization of each training. Additionally, PET training PowerPoints and materials have always been available on the Planning & Advancement (formerly Assessment & Development) Web site.

2011-Current Year

From 2012-2013 (2011-2012 academic year) forward, a minimum of two workshop-style training opportunities will be available to both instructional and non-instructional personnel.

Information Request Process

The person responsible for each PET form is annually sent an e-mail regarding the PET process and is asked to complete that year's PET template. Should PET planning data be sent to the wrong person, the e-mail requests that the Assessments Coordinator be notified of the correct person responsible for that program.

Once the correct people responsible for PET forms are identified and trainings have been conducted, periodic e-mail reminders are sent until the PET form due date. For those who do not complete a PET form by the due date, follow-up e-mails are sent to non-submitters on a bi-weekly basis up until the end of the academic year.

The supervisors of each person designated as responsible for a PET form will be notified of who has and has not submitted a PET form and will receive a copy of the final PET form.

How to Complete a PET Form

The PET templates and trainings serve as a guide that will help all those who are associated with the PET process create meaningful goals, meaningful objectives/outcomes, and implement meaningful changes based on a reflection of the objective/outcome results. However, this section of the methodology will highlight the biggest barriers people encounter when completing a PET form.

How to Write Objectives/Outcomes

Defining Objectives/Outcomes:

- Objective: Something worked toward or striven for; a goal. (thefreedictionary.com).
- Outcome: An end result; a consequence (thefreedictionary.com).

Because understanding the difference between an objective and outcome is not intuitive, Amarillo College does not require that the person responsible for each PET form make a distinction between what areas of their PET form are an objective and what areas of their PET form are an outcome. Instead, programs are allowed to include any desired outcomes, outputs, processes, and inputs on their PET form as long as the PET form follows the criteria set by the PET template and PET PowerPoint trainings.

Number of Objectives/Outcomes: It is suggested that the number of total objectives/outcomes be limited to 3-7 per department or office so that the PET process does not become too cumbersome. However, there is no minimum or maximum number of objectives/outcomes that departments are allowed to include on their PET submission.

Questions to Ask When Writing Outcomes:

- Is the objective/outcome consistent with AC's mission?
- Does the objective/outcome describe a reasonable or achievable result?
- Is the objective/outcome clear and measurable?
- Does the objective/outcome specify a time frame?
- Who are you teaching/serving or planning to teach/serve (if applicable)?
- What specific changes do you expect to make in the lives of students that you teach/serve (if applicable)?
- So what? It is obvious why your objective/outcome is important?

How to Write Direct Outcomes

The A-E method can assist a person responsible for a PET form in writing direct outcomes. An Amarillo College outcome can be considered direct when it meets the following criteria:

- It demonstrates a specific change in the student/client knowledge, expertise, attitude, or behavior.
- There is an answer to what the student or client will learn, know, or do as a result of the intervention.
- It is something the program responsible for the form is actually doing to enact change. Avoid setting benchmarks, timelines, etc. for other departments to achieve your goals—others can be involved in your objective/outcome, but your role and involvement should also be obvious.

For **non-instructional** programs, the above criteria is solely used to determine whether or not a direct outcome has taken place. However, in the instance of **instructional** programs that focus on student learning outcomes, it needs to be determined that the student has learned with reliable methods that transcend grades so a chart/guide was created that illustrates indirect versus direct student learning assessment methods (see table on next page).

Direct Assessment Methods

- <u>Definition:</u> A direct assessment is based on an analysis of student behaviors or products in which the students demonstrate how well they have mastered learning outcomes.
- <u>Purpose of Requiring Direct Assessment Methods:</u> Direct assessment methods accurately evaluate the knowledge, skill, expertise, attitude, or behavior of each student. Direct assessment methods are not subjective and are not based solely on grades or participation. Direct assessment offers proof that learning or a change has occurred.

Direct Assessment Tools and Methods of Measurement
Direct assessment tools must be utilized for assessment unless measures are used where personal bias is impossible. **<u>Examples of Direct Assessment Tools</u>** • Assessment Team Evaluation • Checklist • Embedded Questions • External Entity Evaluation/Juried Evaluation • Pre-Post Test • Rubric (Analytic or Holistic) In the instance of exams, personal bias is not possible. However, if exams are used as a method of measurement for a course, then the method must be consistently used across all course sections and/or variations must be approved by the department head or program coordinator. **<u>Examples of Measurement by Exam</u>** • Capstone Exam • Competency-Specific Exams • Comprehensive Exams • Locally Developed Exam • Standardized Exam (State, National, Etc.) **If bias is a possibility, the assessment method you select will be labeled as indirect.**

Samples of Activities/Measures that Can Be Direct or Indirect	
Example of Some Activities that <u>Could Be</u> Direct When Paired with Direct Assessment Tool	**Indirect Outcome Examples (Typically Related to Process, Output, or Input)**
Behavioral Observations	Awards
Case Studies	Comparisons (Admission, Graduate, and/or Retention Rates)
Class Projects/Homework (Individual or Group)	Course Grades (Grades are **always** indirect unless specifically linked to a locally developed or objective exam that is linked to a specific competency).
Clinical Experiences	
Exhibitions	
External Student Evaluations	Completion (Project or Program Completion)
Interviews (**<u>Only</u>** Content-Knowledge Oriented)	Course Quality Information (e.g. Program Satisfaction)
Interview of Employers or Internship Supervisors where Student Evaluated Based on Set Content/Behavior-Specific Criteria	Focus Groups
	Honors
Oral Examinations/Oral Defenses	Interview of Current/Former Students
Online Discussions	Journals
Outcome Surveys (**<u>Only</u>** Content-Knowledge Oriented)	Participation (Nothing but Participation Required)
Performance Appraisals	Program Accreditation or Program-Related Goals
Portfolios (E-Portfolios or Traditional Portfolios)	Public Recognition
Presentations (Individual or Group)	Pre-Test for Placement Purposes (No Post-Test Given)
Professional/Content-Related Experiences	Quantitative Data (Admission, Graduate, Transfer Data, etc.)
Project Evaluations (Individual or Group)	Questionnaires of Students, Faculty, or Employers
Research Papers	Retention/Persistence Goals
Score Gains (Related to Pre-Post Tests)	Scholarship and/or Grant Information
Service-Learning Projects/Experiences	Survey of Community or Employers (Closed/Open Ended/Likert)
Simulations	Survey of Faculty (Closed/Open Ended/Likert)
Speeches	Survey of Students (Unless Content/Knowledge Based)
Survey of Employers or Internship Supervisors (**<u>If</u>** conducted as specific content/skill/behavior evaluation)	Survey of Transfer Institutions (Closed/Open Ended/Likert)
Video, Audio, and/or Web-based Evaluations	Transfer Data
Writing Samples	Unregulated Homework, Quizzes, Exams (No Shared Criteria of Student Expectations Across All Classes)

How to Record Results

The PET template requests that numbers and percentages for (at least) the past two years be included on the PET template. The inclusion of multi-year data will aid in the PET analysis process.

When percentages are discussed, the numbers should be included within the results so that the full picture can be assessed (e.g. a 50% success for 1 out of 2 students is quite a bit different than a 50% success for 100 out of 200 students).

In some instances, it is possible that an objective/outcome statement may not always produce results that warrant a number and percent. In these instances, qualitative information may be provided in the result's area.

Regardless of how each program formats their results (numbers, percentages, and/or narrative,) it should be evident whether or not the benchmark identified by the program in each objective/outcome statement was met.

How to Distinguish Between Improvements and Actions

The PET template provides an area for past improvements and actions for each PET objective/outcome.

- **Improvements:** Past efforts a program made in order to achieve each objective/outcome.
- **Actions:** Future efforts a program will make in order to achieve each objective/outcome.

The structure of the improvements and actions section is cyclical in that the actions identified by a program for an objective/outcome during the current year, should fall under the next PET form's improvement's section.

Feedback on PET Forms

Since the initiation of the PET process, the non-instructional assessment sub-committee members have provided one-on-one training to non-instructional PET form submitters who needed assistance with their PET form. The Director of Assessments (prior to 2011) and Assessments Coordinator (2011-Present) have also provided one-on-one assistance to both instructional and non-instructional PET form submitters.

In the 2010-2011 year, a PET response form was developed that acts as a checklist to ensure that each program fulfills the minimum requirements set by the PET process. The response form's comments area also serves as a vehicle for the evaluator to note strengths and areas for improvement.

2010-2011 Year

A PET response form was developed and sent to 18 of the 41 (44%) non-instructional departments in the 2010-2011 year. The feedback was provided by the non-instructional assessment committee and Director of Outcomes Assessment.

2011-2012 Year

In 2011, the form was modified by the assessment's coordinator to match the new PET template and was sent to every person who submitted an instructional or non-instructional PET form. The feedback was provided by the Instructional Assessment Committee, Non-Instructional Assessment Committee, and Assessment's Coordinator.

2012-Current Year
In an effort to make the response form more user friendly to the instructional and non-instructional assessment committees that were designated in the 2012 year to be solely responsible for providing PET assessment feedback, the PET response form was tweaked based on recommendations made by the non-instructional assessment committee.

Even with the shift to committee-based PET form evaluations, the Assessments Coordinator continues to facilitate assessment efforts and fully trains assessment committee members to ensure equality of standards amongst committee members.

Storage

Until 2009, all PET information was stored using Excel Databases. In 2010, Tk20 software was integrated into the PET process. However, it was determined that until Tk20 received additional functionality that each year's collective PET results would continue to be stored in Tk20 and/or and excel spreadsheets.

By the end of the semester following their submission, past PET information including old templates and archived PET forms can be obtained from the Planning and Advancement Web site.

Additionally, PET Results and Reports can be navigated to from the Planning and Evaluation Tracking (PET) information page.

Using PET Findings to Make Improvements

Until 2010, the PET process was largely used as a means of internal reflection within the institution's instructional and non-instructional programs.

However, the Dean's Council began reviewing the Instructional PET forms in December 2011 to identify major themes and make recommendations. The external review of PET forms was extended to the Non-Instructional Assessment Committee for Non-Instructional PET forms in Summer 2012.

Now that the precedent for closing the loop has been set, external committees will continue to review, identify major findings, and create recommendations based off their holistic PET form evaluations. The programs and assessments coordinator will be expected to view the recommendations and make any changes that will improve student success or student/client services.