Amarillo College

A Guide for Academic & Student Support Services (Non-Instructional) Assessment

Adopted by the Assessment Committee: April 2021

Academic and Student Support Services
Assessment Plan Guide

Introduction
The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for assessing the College's academic and student services that support student success. This aligns with SACSCOC standard 8.2.c-Student Outcomes: Academic and Student Services. The intent of the annual assessment plan for AC's academic support units is to:

1) Ensure the institution identifies expected outcomes,
2) assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and
3) provides evidence of seeking improvement based on the analysis of the results.

Amarillo College Principles of Assessment
AC's process for assessing the effectiveness of administrative and learning outcomes is guided by the following principles:

1. In alignment with the mission of Amarillo College, the intent of assessment is to improve the processes that help our learners identify and achieve their educational goals.

2. Outcomes assessment is data-driven and focuses on achieving continuous improvement in educational and administrative programs and educational support services rather than identifying these programs' successes or failures.

3. Outcomes assessment of student learning, educational support, and administrative support will be a collaborative process involving faculty, staff and students.

4. Outcomes assessment results will not be used for evaluation of faculty or staff. Assessment results will be used to illuminate areas of opportunities for improvement and serve as a celebration of teaching and student learning. The demonstration of self-reflective assessment of our educational support services and academic programs ultimately leads to institution success.

5. Whenever possible, the methodologies for assessing outcomes will be inconspicuous to students or others who are being assessed.

6. Whenever possible, submissions used for assessment will come from existing assignments instead of ones specially created for outcomes assessment. We will honor and assess the work we already do.

7. The assessment process itself will be evaluated by the Assessment Committee to ensure our continued alignment with AC's Strategic Plan and in our own efforts for continuous improvement.

8. Amarillo College's Strategic Plan includes evaluating student success by establishing and assessing an institutional outcomes assessment program. The President's Cabinet supports these outcomes assessment efforts.

Academic and Student Support Service Departments

As of the 2020-21 Academic Year, the following academic and student support service areas provide documentation and evidence of annual assessment and improvements:

Academic Advising
Academic Outreach-CTL
Academic Outreach-Dual Credit
Advocacy Resource Center (ARC)
Career & Employment Services
Career Ready You (CRU)
Counseling Center
DisAbility Services
Enrollment Management (Registrar, AskAC)
Financial Aid
Library/Information Services
Outreach Services (Recruiting)
Student Learning Support (Tutoring)
Student Life
Testing Services
Transfer Success

Assessment Plan Components

Each plan must identify the department, persons responsible, and a department mission or purpose statement. The plan must also align with one or more of AC's Strategic Plan Institutional Goals of: Completion, Aligning Degrees with Labor Market Demand, Learning, Equity, and/or Financial Effectiveness.

The annual assessment plan consists of the following 7 components and are documented as such:

Annual Plan:
- Goals (Outcomes)
- Strategies
- Benchmarks
- Analysis of Results
- Action Plan for Seeking Improvement

Closing-the-Loop:
- Documentation of Implementation of Action Plans
- Documentation of Results and/or Improvement based on implementation

Annual Goals	Strategies	Targets (Benchmarks)	Analysis of Results	Action Plan for Seeking Improvement

1) To begin, each department develops S.M.A.R.T Goals. The departments develop a narrative about the goals they are working on each year. The focus is on areas that require improvement. Each department works on a strategy with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness through email or virtual/face-to-face meetings.

Developing S.M.A.R.T Goals for Annual Assessment


S.M.A.R.T goals are:

Specific   What do we want to accomplish?
      Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal
      Who: Who is involved?
      Which: Identify requirements (essential attributes) and obstacles

Measurable   Need to establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the goal

Measurable goals use active verbs (Bloom's Taxonomy) to describe expectations

Measuring progress helps you stay on track, reach target dates, and experience continuous improvement

Guiding questions: How much are we looking for? How many are we seeking? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable   What is the importance of this goal? How to make it attainable may require new skills or a change. Think about this in terms of if you have the tools/skills required for this goal. If not, how do you get there? Question whether this is something you can achieve with your time and resources.

Relevant   Does this align with your department's mission? Does it align with Amarillo College institutional goals?

Timely   Set milestone dates and targets for completion. You need realistic timelines when accomplishing and assessing your goal. Ask Institutional Effectiveness regarding deliverables and a timeline if you are unsure. It's useful to define at the onset of goal-setting, the time constraints (if any) that you are dealing with.

2) Strategies must be developed. This answers how we will accomplish our goals. What strategies or activities are involved? What personnel are involved?
3) Targets or benchmarks must be described, stated, and typically are represented by a number, since your goal can and should be measurable. Some exceptions do exist for plans that are more qualitative in nature.
4) An analysis of the results at year end (each August) must be documented. This is your data based on your expected benchmarks for the year. Did you meet your benchmarks?
5) An action plan must be identified. This is your story of whether you reached your expected outcomes and what comes next in terms of improvement. Did you reach, exceed or fall short of your benchmarks? Will you be revisiting this goal for next year's plan? How do we continuously seek improvement?
6) In the following year, implement your action plans and document progress.
7) This progress documentation is submitted as "Closing-the-Loop" documentation each August.

Defining Closing-the-Loop* for Non-Instructional Assessment Plans
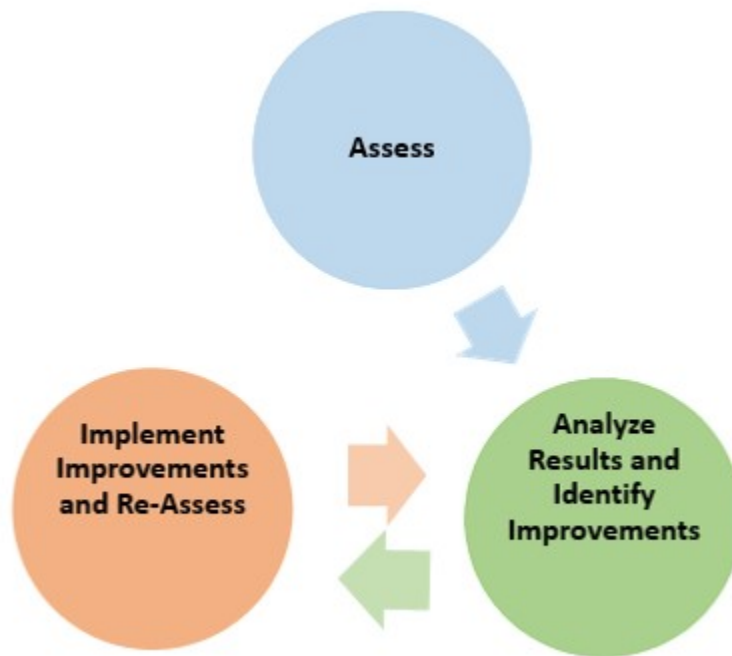
The assessment cycle in the above diagram meets the definition of SACSCOC standard 8.2.c.

Annual Assessment Plan Timeline

October 15   Submission of Parts I-III (Goals, Strategies, Benchmarks) to Institutional Effectiveness via the online repository: www.actx.edu/sacs

November 15   Institutional Effectiveness provides feedback to each department on Parts I-III and requests revision (if applicable) for clarity

February 15   Institutional Effectiveness has a mid-point check in with all departments to provide guidance for ongoing plans

August 15   Submission of Parts IV-V (Analysis of Results and Action Plans for Seeking Improvement)

September 15 Institutional Effectiveness provides feedback to each department on Parts IV-V to assist in the strategic planning of next year's goals and strategies

Closing-the-Loop Timeline

August 15   Submission of Closing-the-Loop document for prior year's assessment plan. For example, 2019-20 Annual Assessment Plan Action Plans are to be implemented in 2020-21 with closing documentation due August 15, 2021.