

Assessment Planning Tips for Assessment Coordinators

Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning, WSU | January 2018

In the effort to optimize faculty time and energy, carefully planning program assessment activities is essential. A detailed, comprehensive plan can be both a document to guide activities and a way to clarify roles for faculty, students, and program leadership. Much like a research plan, an assessment plan should include a realistic timeline of activities, as well as enough flexibility to allow a program to address any pressing questions or issues that might arise during the academic year. This tip sheet describes some steps that assessment coordinators might take to plan for assessment.

PART 1:

Consider your program's past activities

While planning assessment may seem like a daunting task, it need not be. Among your first steps:

- ❖ **Take stock of what your program has done so far.** Consult your program's assessment archives. It should include a [curriculum map](#), analysis of assessment data, as well as annual assessment reports submitted to ATL/WSU. It may also include the latest version of your program's assessment plan. Review the archive for information about past activities, as well as any lingering questions about student achievement. Importantly, what data do you already have? What assessment was done – or attempted – recently? Get a sense of the extent of which the [key elements of assessment](#) are in place.
- ❖ **Meet with your chair/director** to clarify [roles and responsibilities](#), as well as support and infrastructure (associated committee, administrative support in department, and the like). Find out what questions about the curriculum or student learning the chair/director wants assessment to focus on, and any direction the chair/director suggests for the coming year.
- ❖ **Identify members of the program assessment or undergraduate studies committee.** Program assessment is not the task of one person.
- ❖ **If you are new to the assessment coordinator role, meet with the previous assessment coordinator**, if possible, so he or she can orient you to what was done recently, as well as successes, concerns, logistics, and where assessment activities ended.
- ❖ **Contact ATL.** *After completing the steps above*, your [program's ATL assessment specialist](#) is a resource to discuss what your program has done with assessment, to explore assessment basics and options, and learn about our services. The [Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning](#) (ATL) offers many resources to assist faculty in planning their annual assessment activities. We are here to help.

Identify any assessment challenges and opportunities your program faces

In addition to considering what your program did in recent years, it is also helpful to examine any assessment challenges and opportunities your program faces:

- ❖ **Program assessment activities should provide results that faculty find meaningful.** Is there a pilot initiative in place that needs to scale up? Does the program need to rethink its approach? If you are a new assessment coordinator, did you inherit a smooth operation or one that might improve with modifications or a change in direction?
- ❖ **Identify information program faculty would like to know about student learning.** Are there any results from previous activities that need to be addressed – has the program “closed the loop” in prior assessments? What have been some recent conversations about student performance?
- ❖ **Consider any new opportunities or data sources.** Has the program added a capstone course, for example?

PART 2:

Draft or revise your program's assessment plan

Once a program has identified the student learning outcome(s) to be assessed and what measures will be utilized, the next step in solidifying a reasonable assessment plan is documenting the proposed system and creating an implementation timeline, or calendar.

- ❖ **What to include.** The plan should indicate what is being measured (SLO), how it is being measured (direct and indirect measures, including tools like a rubric), what student work (capstone projects, papers, presentations) will be assessed, and when the student work or data will be collected (e.g., end of term). It should indicate how faculty will participate, including when faculty or a committee (such as undergraduate studies committee) will meet to discuss the data. Some assessment coordinators find it helpful to enter these activities into their Outlook or iCal calendar and set reminders. You may find a more detailed calendar helpful for you to efficiently manage details and logistics.
- ❖ **Consider some common issues**, such as
 - Do you have previously collected data that need to be analyzed and shared w/faculty for discussion?
 - Does your program rubric need revision? Have you scheduled time in for norming faculty on the use of that tool, practicing assessment on sample work?
 - Are students on all campuses, including Global (or online), included in your assessments? Have you considered strategies for [sampling](#)?
 - Is your [curriculum map](#) current, or does it need an update to reflect changes in core courses or learning outcomes or new curricula?
 - Is your program resourced sufficiently – in time and personnel – to accomplish your activities successfully? Do you need to engage others?
- ❖ **Identify participating faculty & others and draft a basic calendar.** Taking stock of your program's structure, identify the participants and pencil in individuals and dates for the year. It's advisable to clarify which faculty – or committee – will participate and to have chair/director leadership backing these expectations.
- ❖ **If you will be piloting a new assessment measures, there are special considerations.** In the case of a new measure, it typically takes several semesters to pilot, refine and scale up. That should also be reflected in the assessment plan. Make good use of existing measures or data.
- ❖ **Contact ATL.** *After completing the steps above*, the [Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning](#) (ATL) offers many resources to assist faculty in their annual assessment activities. No rubric to measure an outcome? ATL can help you create a meaningful rubric that faculty can test and refine. Need help displaying data in ways that help faculty discuss and use it? We can provide samples and some assistance.

We hope that this guide helps assessment coordinators develop and revise an assessment plan or manage assessment activities. ATL has an [Assessment Plan Toolkit](#) and [other resources](#), including good practice guidelines, examples of assessment plans from WSU programs, and suggested formats for planning and managing your assessments to help you complete meaningful assessments in a time-effective manner. Creating a solid, actionable, responsive assessment plan is the first step in helping your program meet the needs of today's students.

LET US HELP YOU!

The Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning offers consultation and services to help undergraduate programs in their assessment activities. Let us help you in your efforts to improve student learning.

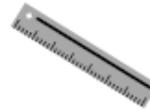
UPDATE KEY ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS



Revise program learning outcomes



Map your curriculum



Develop direct and indirect measures to assess student learning

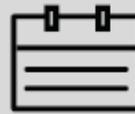
PLAN FOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT



Optimize tools and handle logistics



Coordinate to find sources you need (IR, OBIEE)



Establish a manageable schedule

ASSIST WITH DATA COLLECTION



Conduct student focus groups



Design student surveys



Create rubrics and provide norming sessions

SUPPORT YOUR SPECIFIC NEEDS



Analyze data and results, draft presentations or summaries



Engage faculty and provide workshops



Communicate your successes to the College, university, and accreditors

FOR MORE: [HTTPS://ATL.WSU.EDU/](https://atl.wsu.edu/)