

Assessment Resource

Volume 1, Issue 1
March 2004

Office of Institutional Research,
Eastern Kentucky University

Assessment Tips

What are the characteristics of a good academic assessment plan?

- Clearly states, measurable and actionable objectives of student learning derived from institutional mission and linked to specific measures
- Uses multiple measures for each objective, including direct measures of student learning
- Incorporates a feedback loop specifying how information has been disseminated and used for improvement
- Documents every step and, specifically, changes proposed and made in teaching and curricula based on information derived from data
- Documents evidence of improvement in student academic achievement following the changes
- Provides evidence that the assessment program itself is being periodically re-viewed

Developing Program Objectives

Well written program objectives are the foundation of a good assessment plan. With clearly stated program objectives your assessment measures will be obvious. Program objectives take your more general department goals down to the level of specific student performance and behaviors that demonstrate student learning and skill development along those goals.

When attempting to write program objectives ask the following three questions:

1. For each of your stated goals, what are the specific student behaviors, skills, or abilities that would tell you this goal is being achieved?
2. Ideally and briefly, what would a skeptic need (evidence, behavior, etc.), in order to be convinced that your students are achieving the major goals you have set out for them?
3. In your experience, what evidence tells you when students have met these goals—how do you know when they're "getting" it?

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Schedule of Upcoming Events

TracDat Trainings	
Basics	March 24 April 21
Assessment Trainings	
Writing Program Objectives	April 7, 9-11:30
Selecting Assessment Measures	April 22, 9-11:30
See www.ir.eku.edu for more information	

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Did You Know?

- Forty-nine percent of EKU seniors report spending 11 or more hours per week preparing for class.
- Significantly more EKU seniors report working with other students on projects inside and outside of class than seniors at other KY Public Universities.
- Significantly more EKU seniors report participating in a community-based project as part of a course than seniors at other KY Public Universities.
- Significantly fewer EKU seniors state that their EKU experience contributed to their understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds than seniors at other KY Public Universities.

Source: NSSE 2003

Spotlight On:

University Assessment Committee

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) is dedicated to assisting our university community in successfully designing and implementing good assessment plans.

The UAC is preparing to work individually and in groups with departments and offices requesting assistance with writing program objectives, selecting assessment measures and closing the loop.

The UAC membership:

Carole Garrison, Chair
EJ Keeley, Vice Chair
Claire Good, ex-officio
Stacey Street, ex-officio
John Wade, ex-officio
Doug Robertson, ex-officio
Catherine Clement
Judy Lindquist
Mike Reagle
James Street
Janna Vice
Paul Erickson
Joanne Ewalt
Margaret Lane
Laura Melius
Mike Roberson

TracDat Tips

Make the "Reporting Unit Action Plan" TracDat report work for you

Categorize your program objectives by choosing one of the four strategic planning categories on the program objectives input page: \$ Educational; \$ Program; No \$ Educational; No \$ Program.

\$ or No \$ refers to whether you submitted a budget request for that objective.

Educational or Program refers to whether it is a student-learning objective or an operational planning objective.

Assessment Tips, continued

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Another way to help clarify your objectives is to:

- 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.
- Keeping this student in mind, ask yourself what the student knows, can do, cares about.

Effectively worded objectives:

- Use action verbs that describe definite, observable actions
- Include a description under which the action takes place: *"when given x, the student will be able to..."*
- Indicate an appropriate level of competency

Verb Power:

- Concrete verbs such as "define," "argue," or "create" are more helpful for assessment than vague verbs such as "know," "understand," or passive verbs such as "be exposed to" or "acquire."

Assessment Resources

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SACS Update

Time Line for Reaffirmation

Orientation of Leadership Team	June 13, 2005
Compliance Certification Due	August 15, 2006
Off-Site Peer Review conducted	Nov. 6-10, 2006
Quality Enhancement Plan Due	Six weeks in advance of on-site visit
On-Site Peer Review Conducted	Mar. 12– Apr. 27, 2007
Review by Commission on Colleges	Dec. 1-3, 2007