



STETSON  
UNIVERSITY

INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT  
ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Institutional Research & Effectiveness

*May 2018*

# STETSON UNIVERSITY

## *Overview of Assessment*

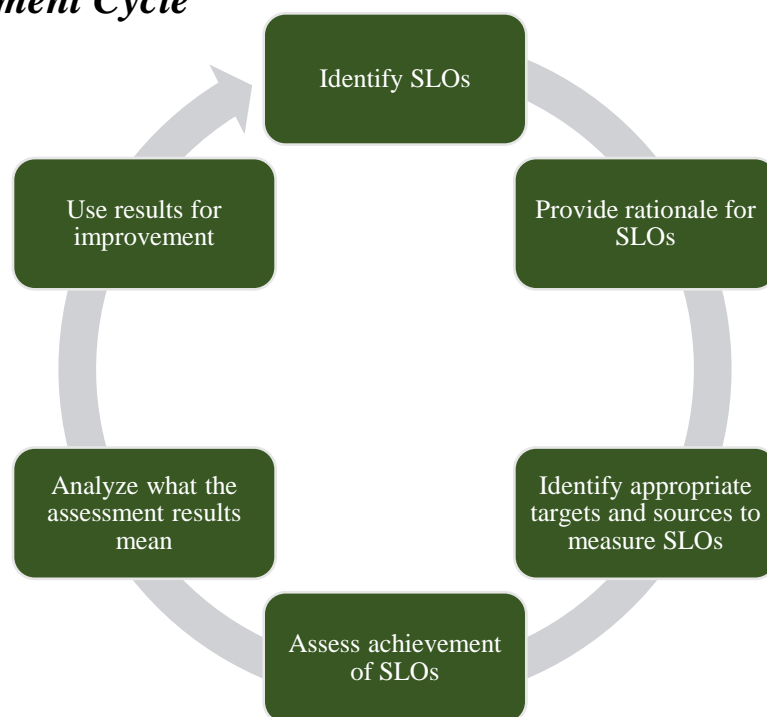
Assessment offers a systematic mechanism for organizations and their units to engage in reflective self-study, examine progress toward articulated goals, anticipate challenges, and demonstrate continuous improvement.

The purpose of assessment is to ensure alignment of unit goals with the university's Strategic Map priorities through an annual process which includes reviewing the unit mission statement, setting goals, and analyzing results to improve unit processes.

The concepts of assessment are central to Stetson's commitment to continuous improvement and to the accreditation process. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation criteria encourage institutions to integrate assessment plans which align with the institutional mission, employ a variety of assessment methods, and provide evidence of data-driven improvement at the unit level as a result of the assessments. The components outlined in this guide form the basis of Stetson University's demonstration of institutional effectiveness at the unit level to SACSCOC in the upcoming 10-year reaffirmation report (to be submitted September 2021).

The assessment process comprises two parts: the assessment plan and the assessment report. The plan requires units to indicate intended student learning outcomes (SLOs), targets, and assessment methods for the next year. The report, which is submitted after SLOs have been assessed, requires units to indicate the extent to which declared SLOs were met and to discuss changes made as a result of the findings.

## *The Assessment Cycle*



## *Overview of Stetson’s Assessment Structure*

Stetson University engages all of its academic programs and administrative entities in the assessment process. Assessment of non-instructional units focuses on the administrative and support services provided by the University. Assessment of these units is overseen by the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness. Assessment of academic programs, including assessment of student learning outcomes, is overseen by the Provost.

## *What are Non-Instructional Units and Instructional Units?*

Non-instructional units include all areas whose primary responsibility is outside of student instruction. Instructional units are those whose primary responsibility is student instruction.

| <b>Non-Instructional Units</b>  | <b>Instructional Units</b>        |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Academic Affairs (operational)  | Each academic program within CAS  |
| Athletics                       | Each academic program within SOBA |
| Campus Life & Student Success   | Each academic program within SOM  |
| Development & Alumni Engagement | Each academic program within COL  |
| Enrollment Management           |                                   |
| Finance                         |                                   |
| University Marketing            |                                   |

## *Program Level Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes*

The SACSCOC standard pertaining to assessment of student learning outcomes requires that the institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.

Per the *SACSCOC Resource Manual*, an academic program is defined as “a credential as defined by the institution. A degree with a defined major is clearly a program.” It may be helpful to refer to the Stetson [Academic Programs](#) website – any program which offers a major that leads to a degree should complete a program-level assessment. Note that assessing multiple programs at the department level using the same criteria for all does not constitute program-level assessment.

### ***Additional Guidance from the SACSCOC Resource Manual***

The expectation is that the institution will engage in on-going planning and assessment to ensure that for each academic program, the institution develops and assesses expected student learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes students are expected to attain in courses or in a program.

## *The Assessment Process*

The assessment process comprises two parts: the assessment plan and the assessment report.

### **The Assessment Plan**

- Programs identify the SLOs to evaluate during the coming year in the Assessment Plan.
- Plans are completed during the summer or early fall.
- Plans are submitted to the Dean for review and feedback.
- Once Deans have reviewed and approved the plan, it is submitted to Institutional Research & Effectiveness, no later than **August 31<sup>st</sup>**.

The plan consists of four elements:

1. **SLOs** describe what the program will accomplish within the next year. SLOs are specific statements that describe desired performance in relation to student learning.
2. **Rationales** are a brief description of why the specific SLOs have been selected, why they are important to the program, and how they support the University's strategic priorities.
3. **Targets for success** are the specific measures that SLOs seek to attain. Targets should include the specific metric to be attained and the timeframe for accomplishment of the SLO. Targets for success cannot be answered with a "Yes/No" response; targets must be measurable.
4. **Data sources** describe what evidence/data the program will use and/or collect to determine successful attainment of the SLO.

### **The Assessment Report**

The report builds upon the information submitted in the plan and asks programs to indicate the extent to which stated SLOs were accomplished during the year. Beginning in the 2019-20 year, reports will be completed on the same cycle as the plans.

In addition to the sections already completed in the plan, the report requires programs to respond to three more items:

5. **Results** is a detailed summary of the assessment results for each SLO. This section should include specific highlights of results, such as percentages or numbers or other findings resulting from analysis of the data. Compare results to prior years if applicable.
6. **Analysis and Exploration of Results** is a brief discussion of what the results mean to the program. This section should include whether the SLO was achieved and what the program learned from the results of the assessment (potential improvements, strengths, weaknesses, etc.).
7. **Use of Results for Improvement** is a brief discussion of how exploration of results are used to make changes in program curriculum, pedagogies, assessment measures, etc.

## ***Guidance for Completing the Assessment Plan***

While there are no strict rules about how many SLOs a program should have, programs should assess a reasonable and manageable number of SLOs each year. Two to three SLOs are typical; SLOs should represent what is most important to the program in the coming year and should be related to the mission and strategic map of the University. SLOs for each program (collected in March 2018) are provided in a separate document for reference.

### **Selecting Appropriate Data Sources to Assess SLOs**

Assessment is not intended to require additional work; it should be an extension of existing processes. Consider the types of information your program uses to make decisions – these are likely the data sources you will use to assess your SLOs. Remember, the Assessment Report requires units to provide a thoughtful analysis of assessment results based on the data; do not select data sources that you have no way of analyzing within the next year.

Data sources include a variety of items, which can be direct or indirect:

| <b>Direct Assessment Methods</b>     | <b>Indirect Assessment Methods</b>                 |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Capstone course assignments/projects | National surveys (NSSE, CIRP, SSI, etc.)           |
| Embedded test questions              | Institutional surveys (alumni, satisfaction, etc.) |
| Performance appraisals               | Advisory board surveys                             |
| Pre-post tests                       | Employer surveys                                   |
| Research papers/projects             |  |
| Standardized tests/licensure exams   |  |

Ideal data sources are those that:

- are already in place,
- can be easily analyzed, and
- have the potential to indicate areas for improvement within the program.

### **Additional Tips for Completing Assessment Plans**

- Be realistic in the development of your assessment targets and methods.
- Involve all members of your program in designing, implementing and carrying out the assessment process.
- Avoid verbs such as “improve” or “enhance” in your goals and objectives unless you have clear baseline data to compare against. A list of potential action verbs, organized by Bloom’s taxonomy, is provided in the [Appendix A](#).
- Be as specific as possible when formulating your assessment plan; being intentional will make the assessment analysis and reporting process much easier.
- Write clearly and concisely. Avoid using jargon or abbreviations when possible.
- If you cannot specifically describe how the results from your assessment activities will be used to improve your program, consider using a different data source or analysis method.

## *Guidance for Completing the Assessment Report*

After submitting the plan, the program should develop a plan to collect data/results associated with each SLO to be assessed. Upon completion of data collection, the program should analyze and contextualize the findings to make meaning of the results.

A summary of these results and analyses are submitted in the end of year assessment report. Summary results should be as detailed as possible, including percentages or numbers resulting from the assessments; the program should maintain the complete data results in its files.

Assessment results are meant to improve effectiveness and inform decision-making. The final section of the report requires programs to reflect upon what they have learned from the collected results and how they have converted that knowledge to action within the program. This is the foundation of continuous improvement.

Most importantly, the use of assessment results to make changes to improve effectiveness and inform planning is the reason why we assess. Even negative assessment results can have powerful, positive impact when they are used to improve performance and effectiveness.

### **SLO Assessment Example**

**SLO:** Students will identify and summarize the important feature of major periods in the history of western culture.

**Target:** Students will achieve 80% or better on the embedded test questions.

**Data source:** Test administered to all students enrolled in Course X during Fall 2017.

**Results:** In Fall 2017, 324 students received the embedded test questions in Course X. 298 students (92%) achieved 80% or better on the embedded test questions.

**Analysis of Results:** The target for all students to attain a minimum of 80% on the embedded test questions was not met. Review of the questions most frequently missed by students indicated the need for additional emphasis on the Middle Ages.

**Use of Results for Improvement:** The target was met and analysis indicated the need for additional emphasis on the Middle Ages to better prepare students for success. As a result, the curriculum in Course Y has been revised to include a more detailed component which focuses on the Middle Ages.

## **Additional Tips for Completing Assessment Reports**

- Follow your assessment plan and collect data throughout the year. Assessment cannot be conducted as you write your report.
- Be as specific as possible when writing about the data you collected. Consider providing relevant data in appendices that can be referred to in the summary narrative responses.
- Indicate explicitly whether the target for each goal has been met (i.e., “target was met” or “target not met”).
- Don’t be afraid to admit that you didn’t achieve the target. Assessment is about continuous improvement.
- If data results are missing or incomplete, provide an explanation and a plan to avoid this situation in the future.
- Write clearly and concisely. Do not provide extraneous information. Avoid using jargon or abbreviations when possible.
- If the data are qualitative in nature (i.e., interviews, open-ended questions), consider counting the positive versus negative responses or counting the number of times a subject was mentioned.
- As you write your report, think about how any proposed modifications will inform the SLOs and budget planning for next year.

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## *Instructional Unit Assessment Calendar \*REVISED\**

### Fall 2018-Spring 2019 (Baseline collection)

- Submit 2017-18 Assessment Report by **November 5, 2018**
  - Deans receive feedback from IRE by November 30
  - Deans provide feedback to programs by December 21
  - If revisions required, programs resubmit by February 1
- Submit 2018-19 Assessment Plan by **February 1, 2019**
  - Shows what outcomes are currently being assessed in 18-19
- Report and Plans will be due in June in subsequent years

### Summer 2019

- 2018-19 Assessment Report **and** 2019-20 Assessment Plan due by **June 15, 2019**
  - Deans receive feedback from IRE by July 15
  - Deans provide feedback to programs by August 15
  - If revisions required, programs resubmit by September 1

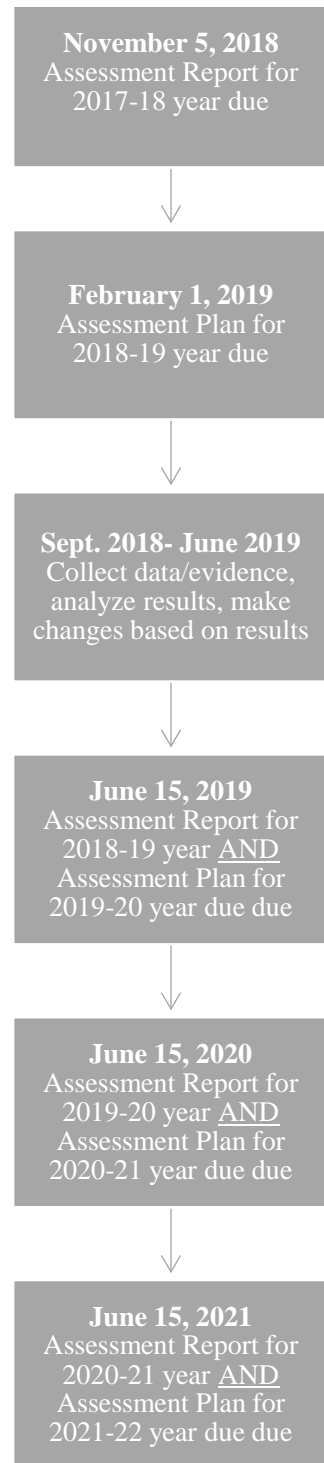
### Summer 2020

- 2019-20 Assessment Report **and** 2020-21 Assessment Plan due by **June 15, 2020**
  - Deans receive feedback from IRE by July 15
  - Deans provide feedback to programs by August 15
  - If revisions required, programs resubmit by September 1

### Summer 2021

- 2020-21 Assessment Report **and** 2021-22 Assessment Plan due by **June 15, 2021**
  - Deans receive feedback from IRE by July 15
  - Deans provide feedback to programs by August 15
  - If revisions required, programs resubmit by September 1

### Summary Timeline





# STETSON UNIVERSITY

## *Appendix A: Potential Action Verbs for Bloom's Taxonomy Levels*

| <b><i>Remember</i></b><br>Recall<br>previously<br>learned facts<br>and concepts.  | <b><i>Understand</i></b><br>Construct<br>meaning from<br>facts, ideas,<br>or concepts.   | <b><i>Apply</i></b><br>Use<br>information<br>in a new way.  | <b><i>Analyze</i></b><br>Break down<br>information<br>into parts and<br>explore<br>connections.  | <b><i>Evaluate</i></b><br>Critically<br>examine<br>information<br>and make<br>judgements.   | <b><i>Create</i></b><br>Use<br>information<br>to produce<br>new or<br>original work.  |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| define<br>describe<br>duplicate<br>examine<br>identify<br>label<br>list<br>locate<br>match<br>memorize<br>name<br>observe<br>quote<br>recall<br>recite<br>recognize<br>repeat<br>reproduce<br>select<br>state | associate<br>classify<br>compare<br>contrast<br>convert<br>describe<br>discover<br>discuss<br>estimate<br>explain<br>extend<br>generalize<br>give<br>examples<br>group<br>infer<br>interpret<br>organize<br>paraphrase<br>predict<br>restate<br>rewrite<br>summarize<br>transform<br>translate | administer<br>apply<br>calculate<br>change<br>chart<br>collect<br>complete<br>compute<br>construct<br>determine<br>develop<br>discover<br>examine<br>illustrate<br>interpret<br>manipulate<br>modify<br>operate<br>predict<br>prepare<br>produce<br>relate<br>show<br>simulate<br>solve<br>transfer | analyze<br>appraise<br>break down<br>calculate<br>categorize<br>classify<br>compare<br>connect<br>contrast<br>diagram<br>differentiate<br>discriminate<br>dissect<br>distinguish<br>estimate<br>evaluate<br>illustrate<br>infer<br>organize<br>plan<br>prioritize<br>separate<br>subdivide<br>survey<br>test | appraise<br>argue<br>assess<br>choose<br>compare<br>conclude<br>convince<br>criticize<br>critique<br>debate<br>defend<br>discriminate<br>distinguish<br>evaluate<br>find errors<br>judge<br>justify<br>measure<br>order<br>persuade<br>predict<br>rank<br>rate<br>reframe<br>summarize<br>support | adapt<br>assemble<br>collaborate<br>combine<br>compile<br>compose<br>construct<br>create<br>design<br>develop<br>devise<br>formulate<br>integrate<br>invent<br>modify<br>originate<br>plan<br>prepare<br>produce<br>rearrange<br>reorganize<br>revise<br>rewrite<br>simulate<br>validate<br>write |

Adapted from Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing, Abridged Edition. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

## *Appendix B: Stetson University Mission Statement and Values*

### *Stetson University's Mission Statement*

Our mission at Stetson University is to provide an excellent education in a creative community where learning and values meet, and to foster in students the qualities of mind and heart that will prepare them to reach their full potential as informed citizens of local communities and the world.

At Stetson, the art of teaching is practiced through programs solidly grounded in a tradition of liberal learning that stimulates critical thinking, imaginative inquiry, creative expression, and lively intellectual debate. The art of learning is enhanced through small interactive classes, close student-faculty alliances, and collaborative approaches that provide the foundation for rewarding careers and advanced study in selective graduate and professional programs. We embrace diverse methodologies to foster effective communication, information and technological literacy, and aesthetic appreciation. We encourage the development of informed convictions, independent judgment, and lifelong commitments to learning that are characteristic features of the enlightened citizen. In bringing together learning and values, the University encourages all of its members to demonstrate personal integrity; to develop an appreciation for the spiritual dimension of life; to embrace leadership in an increasingly complex, interdependent, and technological world; and to commit to active forms of social responsibility.

### *Stetson University's Values*

Stetson values the development of the whole person committed to engaging and building lifelong connections with the larger world through Personal Growth, Intellectual Development, and Global Citizenship. To that end, the University fosters policies, practices, and modes of inquiry to support and explore these values areas.

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## Appendix C: Stetson University Strategic Map

