



STETSON  
UNIVERSITY  
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL  
UNIT ASSESSMENT  
GUIDE

Institutional Research & Effectiveness

*April 2018*

*Updated May 2021*

## *Overview of Assessment*

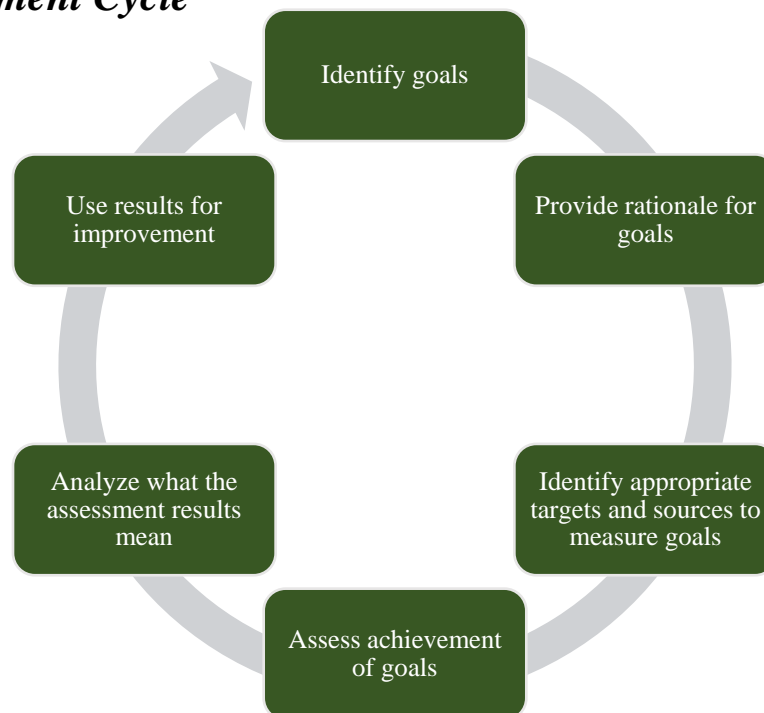
Assessment offers a systematic mechanism for organizations and their units to engage in reflective self-study, examine progress toward articulated goals, anticipate challenges, and demonstrate continuous improvement.

The purpose of assessment is to ensure alignment of unit goals with the university's Roll Ahead Strategic Map Goals 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 for academic support and administrative units.

The assessment process comprises two parts: the assessment plan and the assessment report. The plan requires units to indicate intended goals, targets, and assessment methods for the next year. The report, which is submitted after goals have been assessed, requires units to indicate the extent to which declared goals 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 instructional programs focuses on assessment of student learning outcomes at the educational program level. Both instructional and non-instructional assessment processes are overseen by the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness.

## *What are Non-Instructional Units?*

Non-instructional units include all units whose primary responsibility is outside of student instruction, including:

- **Academic Affairs (*non-instructional units*)**
  - Brown Center for Faculty Innovation & Excellence
  - College of Law Administrative Units
  - duPont-Ball Library
  - Faculty Development
  - Grants & Sponsored Research
  - Institutional Research & Effectiveness
  - Registrar
  - WORLD
- **Athletics**
- **Campus Life & Student Success**
  - Academic Success
  - Assessment & Operational Effectiveness
  - Career & Professional Development
  - Center for Community Engagement
  - Community Standards
  - Dean of Students
  - Dining Services
  - Diversity & Inclusion
  - Religious & Spiritual Life
  - Residential Living & Learning
  - Stetson Health Service
  - Stetson Public Safety
  - Student Counseling Services
  - Student Development & Campus Vibrancy
  - Wellness & Recreation
- **Development & Alumni Engagement**
  - Alumni & Parent Engagement
  - Corporate & Foundation Relations
  - Development Operations
  - Development Strategy & Communications
  - Gift Planning
  - Prospect Management
  - University Development
- **Enrollment Management**
  - Continuing Education & Outreach
  - Graduate Admission
  - Student Financial Planning
  - Undergraduate Admission
- **Finance**
  - Budget
  - Facilities Management
  - Finance & Risk Management
  - Human Resources
  - Information Technology
  - Investments
  - Legal Affairs
  - Real Estate
- **University Marketing**
  - Creative Services
  - Media & Communications

## *The Annual Assessment Process*

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

### **The Assessment Plan**

The plan consists of four elements:

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

### **The Assessment Report**

The report builds upon the information submitted in the plan and asks units to indicate the extent to which stated goals were accomplished during the year.

In addition to the verifying elements 1, 3, and 4 above, the report requires units to respond to five more items:

5. **Results** is a detailed summary of the assessment results for each goal. 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. **Target achievement** is a statement indicating whether the unit attained the expected target for the goal.
7. **Analysis of results** is a brief discussion of what the results mean to the unit. This section should include whether the goal was achieved and what the unit learned from the results of the assessment (potential improvements, strengths, weaknesses, etc.).
8. **Use of Results for Improvement** is a brief discussion of how exploration of results are used to make changes in unit services, processes, procedures, planning, etc.
9. **Type of changes made** asks units to select the type of changes made based on the assessment findings.

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## *Annual Submission and Review Process*

Responsibility for assessment varies across units and areas. As such, each unit is responsible for determining appropriate assessment methods, overseeing collection of artifacts, conducting assessment norming sessions with faculty, overseeing scoring of artifacts by faculty, and collecting and analyzing assessment data.

Oversight for ensuring unit-level assessment at the division level is provided by individuals charged by the vice-presidents or division heads to serve as division/area assessment reviewers. These individuals are responsible for ensuring all units within their division/area are appropriately and consistently assessing their services.

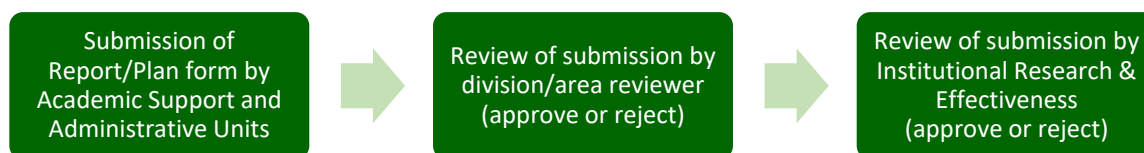
In Spring of 2021, the data collection process was refined to strengthen the workflow of the review and approval process by transitioning the separate Word report and plan forms used in prior years into an online collection process that allows submission of results of the prior year's assessments and plans for the coming year in a single document.

Submissions are now collected using Dynamic Forms; the link to the online form is available [here](#) and on the IRE Assessment [website](#). As this system relies on Stetson's Single Sign-On functionality, the best way to access the online form system is to log in to [MyStetson](#) and then click on the form link provided.

Once assessment reports are submitted by units, they are routed to the division/area assessment reviewer for approval. The division/area reviewer approves or rejects the submission. Rejected submissions are returned to the submitter for revision and resubmission. Approved submissions are routed to Institutional Research & Effectiveness for final review, approval, and archiving.

Institutional Research & Effectiveness reviews each assessment submission, using a [rubric](#) to determine the assessment maturity level of the unit. Results of this analysis are analyzed and compiled in the [Annual Non-Instructional Assessment Report](#), as are specific examples of improvements made from assessment findings. This report illustrates assessment participation, quality, and provides a longitudinal perspective on the state of assessment at Stetson. The report is provided to senior leadership, as well as posted on the IRE Assessment website.

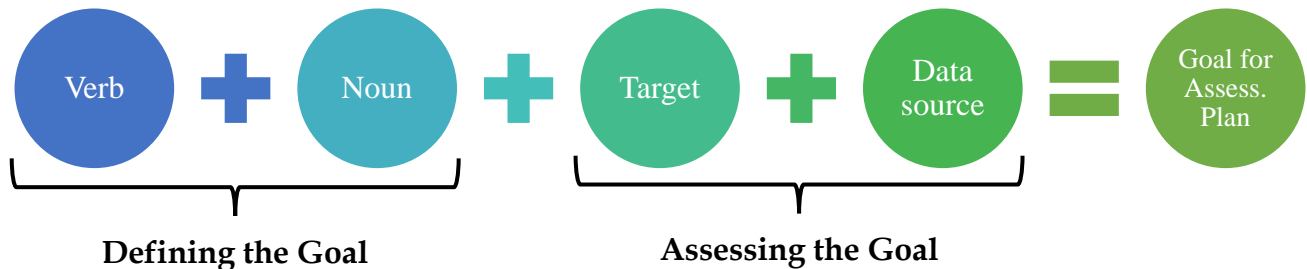
### **Submission Process Summary**



## *Guidance for Completing the Assessment Plan*

### **Tips for Selecting Goals, Targets, and Data Sources**

A simple way to develop a measurable goal is to define each element piece by piece. Some have found the following formula helpful in the development of measurable goals:



#### **Defining the Goal**

1. **Goal** - Verb + Noun: what do you intend to accomplish?
  - a. **Verb** - what action do you intend to take?
  - b. **Noun** - what are you performing the action on?

#### **Assessing the Goal**

2. **Target for success** (by how much and by when?)
3. **Data source** (what evidence shows if the target was met?)

#### **Example 1**

**Goal:** To reduce average travel reimbursement processing time

*The goal verb is to reduce. A baseline is required for comparison. A reduction can't be measured without knowing the value you want to reduce from. (i.e., average processing time last year was 7 days)*

**Target:** By 2 days in the 2021-22 year

**Data source:** End of year travel reimbursement reports

#### **Example 2**

**Goal:** To train employees on new data system

**Target:** 80% of employees will receive training on the new data system in Fall 2021

**Data source:** Attendance records from employee training sessions, evaluations from training session

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While there are no strict rules about how many goals a unit should have, units should assess a reasonable and manageable number of goals each year. Three to five goals are typical; goals should represent what is most important to the unit in the coming year and should be related to the mission and Roll Ahead Strategic Map Goals of the University.

## Possible Action Verbs for Goals

- Acquire
- Adapt
- Analyze
- Audit
- Balance
- Catalog
- Change
- Collect
- Communicate
- Complete
- Condense
- Construct
- Convert
- Create
- Deliver
- Develop
- Diversify
- Document
- Educate
- Eliminate
- Enhance
- Establish
- Evaluate
- Expand
- Fundraise
- Implement
- Improve
- Incorporate
- Increase
- Initiate
- Install
- Instruct
- Integrate
- Minimize
- Modify
- Obtain
- Participate
- Perform
- Prepare
- Prevent
- Process
- Produce
- Provide
- Publish
- Reconcile
- Recruit
- Reduce
- Resolve
- Retain
- Revise
- Schedule
- Serve
- Streamline
- Strengthen
- Survey
- Test
- Train
- Tutor
- Update
- Upgrade

## Selecting Appropriate Data Sources to Assess Goals

Assessment is not intended to require additional work; it should be an extension of existing processes. Consider the types of information your unit uses to make decisions – these are likely the data sources you will use to assess your goals. 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:

- End of year reports
- Feedback logs
- Financial reports
- Focus groups
- Industry standards
- Media logs
- Observation reports
- Operational reports
- Participation logs
- Peer comparison reports
- Performance ratings
- Point-of-service evaluations
- Processing time audits
- Satisfaction surveys
- Training logs
- User reports

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 unit.



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

- Be realistic, not overly ambitious, in outlining your assessment plan.
- Involve all members of your staff in designing, implementing and carrying out the assessment process. Staff participation and ownership are key to the success of an administrative assessment plan.
- Avoid words such as “improve” or “enhance” in your goals and objectives unless you have a clear baseline to compare against.
- Be as specific as possible when formulating your assessment plan; being intentional will make the assessment analysis and reporting process much easier.
- Link goals to one or more Roll Ahead Strategic Map Goals to demonstrate how the work of your unit supports institutional goals. This can be done easily by adding a statement such as: (Aligns to Roll Ahead Strategic Map Goal: \_\_\_\_).
- Write clearly and concisely. Avoid using use jargon or abbreviations when possible.
- If you cannot specifically describe how the results from your assessment activities can be used to improve your services or operations, you should consider using a different data source or analysis method.

## *Guidance for Completing the Assessment Report*

### **Tips for Reporting and Analyzing Results**

The Assessment Report is completed at the end of the assessment plan year. For example, if the plan addresses goals for the 2020-21 year, the report is completed at the end of 2020-21 and discusses the results of each goal indicated in the plan.

After submitting the plan, the unit should collect data/results associated with each measure. A summary of these results are then reported on the report; the unit should maintain the complete data results in its files.

Reported results should be as detailed as possible, including actual percentages or numbers that resulted from the assessments. Examples of result statements building on the examples provided earlier are shown below.

#### **Example 1**

**Goal statement:** To reduce average time required to process travel reimbursements by 2 days in the 2021-22 year, as evidenced by end of year reimbursement processing reports.

**Results:** The end of year reimbursement processing report shows that 324 reimbursements were processed in 2021-22. The average processing time was 5 days, a decrease from the prior year average of 7 days. The shortest processing time was 2 days and the longest was 14 days.

**Analysis of Results:** The target to reduce average processing time by 2 days was achieved. The amount of variation in processing time (between 2 days and 14 days) suggests there is room for additional refinement of processes. Reimbursement with the longest processing time were due to the need to request additional documentation from individuals submitting the forms.

#### **Example 2**

**Goal statement:** 80% of employees within the unit will receive training on the new software system in the Fall 2021 term.

**Results:** Training attendance logs show that 9 of 12 employees (75%) received training on the new data system in Fall 2021. Evaluation surveys completed by attendees show that 89% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed that the training session increased their understanding of the data system.

**Analysis of Results:** The target for 80% of employees to receive training was not quite met. 75% of employees attended training; however, the other 3 employees were unable to attend due to schedule conflicts.

## Closing the Loop: Tips for Reporting

Assessment results are meant to improve effectiveness and inform decision-making. The final section of the report requires units to reflect upon what they have learned from the collected results and how they have converted that knowledge to action within the unit. 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.

### Example 1

**Goal statement:** To reduce average time required to process travel reimbursements by 2 days in the 2021-22 year, as evidenced by end of year reimbursement processing reports.

**Use of Results for Improvement:** Although the target was met, analysis indicated that processing time can be delayed due to the need to request additional documentation from individuals submitting the forms. As a result, a document drop box was created to allow submitters to upload documentation. This system automatically notifies submitters of missing documents, eliminating the need for processors to send email notifications.

### Example 2

**Goal statement:** 80% of employees within the unit will attend training on the new software system in the Fall 2021 term.

**Use of Results for Improvement:** As the target was not met due to schedule conflicts that made it impossible for all employees to attend training, the unit will offer multiple training sessions in Spring 2022 in order to accommodate employee schedules.

Also, within the training, more emphasis will be placed on content areas that received lower ratings on the training evaluation survey. This includes merging files, exporting reports, and creating new records.

## **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 your target, or to adjust it in the light of new information. Assessment is about continuous improvement, not perfection.
- 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), you might consider counting the positive versus negative responses or counting the number of times a subject was mentioned.
- As you write your report begin to think about how your proposed modifications will inform your goals and budget planning for next year.

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## *Non-Instructional Unit Assessment Calendar 2020-2022*

### **August 15, 2020**

- 2019-20 Assessment Report **and** 2020-21 Assessment Plan due by **August 15, 2020**

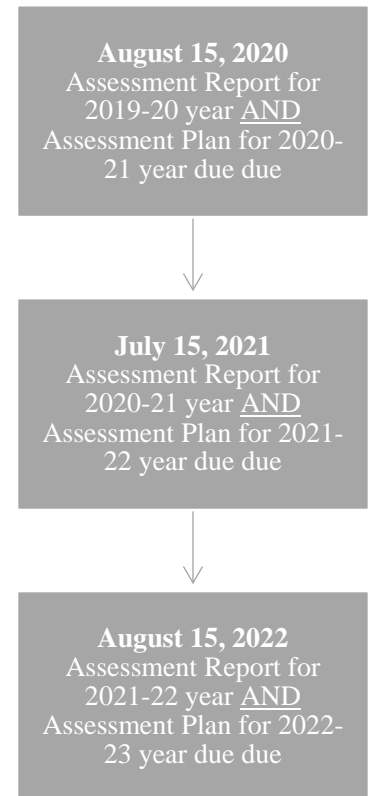
### **July 15, 2021**

- 2020-21 Assessment Report **and** 2021-22 Assessment Plan due by **July 15, 2022 (earlier deadline due to SACSCOC Report due date)**

### **August 15, 2022**

- 2021-22 Assessment Report **and** 2022-23 Assessment Plan due by **August 15, 2022**

### **Summary Timeline**



## *Appendices*

### *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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<https://www.stetson.edu/other/strategic-planning/media/Roll%20Ahead%20Graphic%208-2019.pdf>