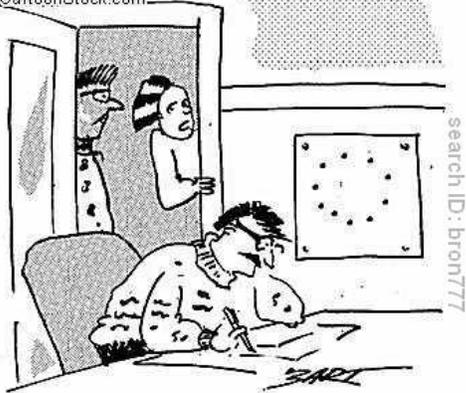


Assessment Manual for Administrative & Academic  
Support Services

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*"Ralph is doing a preliminary study  
of re-inventing the wheel."*



With Assessment, We Do Not Behave Like Ralph; We Exchange Ideas

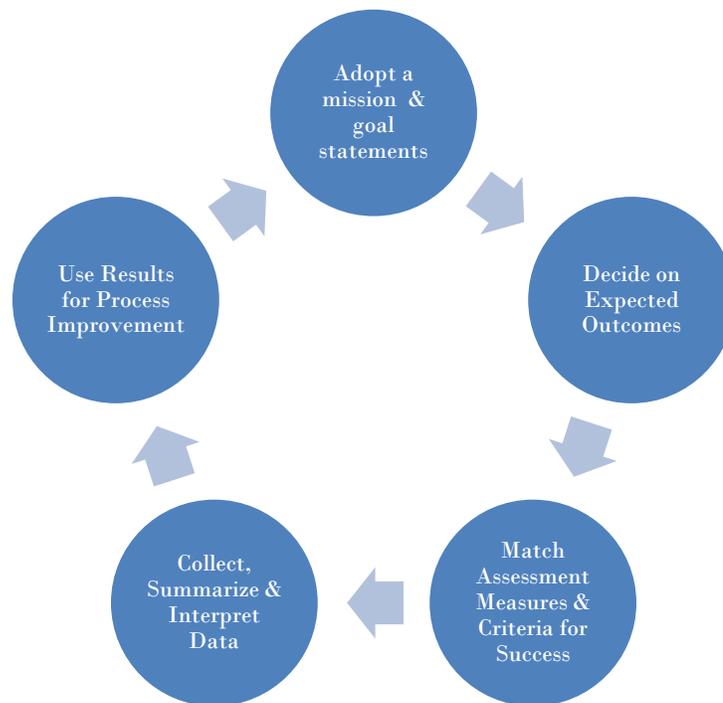
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## What is Assessment?

Assessment is a process of gathering, analyzing, interpreting and documenting information to demonstrate if a functioning unit is performing well against the background of criteria set for determining excellence and using the resulting information to improve the unit's performance.

The dynamics of assessment, as depicted in Figure 1 below, is cyclical:

Figure 1: Assessment – An Iterative Process of Continuous Improvement



As a procedural activity, the main purposes of assessment are:

- To *improve* the functions of the unit.
- To *inform* concerned stakeholders about the contribution of the unit to the fulfillment of the mission of Malone.
- To *support* institutional-level strategic planning activities.
- To *provide* evidence that the unit is accomplishing what it was set to do.

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It is extremely essential that units make intermittent references to the outlined purposes when developing their respective assessment plans.

### Steps for Developing Effective Outcome Assessment.

**STEP 1: Define/Adopt Unit MISSION Statement & Related GOALS:** Units must define/adopt mission statements that support and are derived from the institutional mission. As the Unit's foundation of the assessment plan, the mission statement must clearly articulate

- ✓ WHAT you do
- ✓ WHY you do it, and
- ✓ HOW you do it

While articulating the *What*, *Why* and *How*s, the Unit must ensure that the mission statement would support/reflect parts/components of Malone's mission, priorities, principles, and fundamental doctrines. In effect, a powerful mission statement must exhibit the following *components*:

- ✓ Primary functions – activities of Unit
- ✓ Purpose – reasons why you perform those functions
- ✓ Stakeholders – beneficiaries of functions.

Put together, an instrumental mission statement must depict the following *structure*:

The mission of (*name of Unit*) is to (*primary purpose*) by providing (*primary functions*) (*Unit's stakeholders*). (Take note that further clarification statements are welcome, and components of the statement might differ from the above structure).

#### **SAMPLES:**

#1: The mission of the *University Library* is to *develop, maintain, and enhance the resources, service,s and facilities* essential to the provision of optimum level of support for the instructional, academic, and research needs *of Malone University community*.

#2: The mission of the *Career Center* is to facilitate *students* to make a smooth transition from academia to the working world through career counseling, organizing workshops on career-related subjects, and offering *assistance on resume writing and interviewing skills*.

**GOALS:** After agreeing on a Mission Statement, the Unit must then state Goals, which are broad-not-to-be-measured statements focusing on the main functions of the Unit (registration, student orientation, facility maintenance, technology support services, assisting financial aid applicants, academic advising and counseling services, testing, tutoring & placement services, etc).

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SAMPLE: - Library

#1: To maintain collections supportive of student, faculty, and staff's need in relation to Malone's objectives of teaching, research and community service.

#2: To build and maintain internet resources appropriate for on-site students and also accessible to on-line candidates.

#3: To optimize traditional library services while developing new delivery methods in response to changes in students' expectations, etc.

Take note that the GOALS will help us write Expected Performance Outcomes in Step 2!

**STEP 2: State Expected Performance Outcomes/Objectives:**

The GOALS adopted in Step 1 must lead us to adopt related Performance Outcomes/Objectives. Take note that Outcome Statements do NOT GO BEYOND services & functions performed by the UNITS.

That is to say, outcomes are *specific* and *measurable* statements that define expectations in the performance of functions or services of a Unit. Deduced from previously stated goal statements, outcomes must be precise and specific statements reflective of anticipated undertakings of the Unit.

Figure 2: Goal & Outcome Matrix

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
Outcome1	Outcome1	Outcome 1
Outcome 2	Outcome 2	
Outcome 3		

Always adopt the SMART principle when developing Outcomes:

**Specific** – must be specific to the functioning Unit

**Measurable** – must be measurable to produce data

**Attainable** – must be attainable within the circumstances of the Unit

**Results-oriented** – must yield results reflective of the functioning Unit

**Time-bounded** – must indicate time-frame for data collection & analysis.

**SAMPLES:**

#1: The library will increase collections that support curricular information needs of students and faculty by the end of the 2010 fiscal year.

#2: Students who respond to Career Services Workshops on resume preparation will produce quality resumes.

*We have adopted our mission statement, defined our goals. Now we have to create expected outcomes.*

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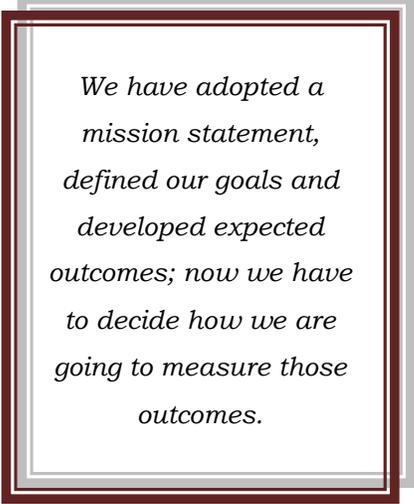
Note the format in writing Expected Outcomes: (4-5 Outcomes are OK) (Adapted from Nichols, J. O. and Nichols, K. W. (2005): A Road Map for Improvement of Student Learning and Support Services Through Assessment: Agathon Press, NY

- a. (Name of Unit) will provide, improve, decrease, increase (Name of Current Service)
- b. (Client) will be satisfied with (Name of Service)
- c. (Students attending) workshop, academic advising, etc will improve, increase, understand....

**STEP 3: Outline Assessment Methods and Criteria of Success for Each Outcome:** The crucial question here is: How Are We Going to Measure the 4-5 Expected Outcomes as indicated in the previous stage and at what level of accomplishment will we hope to achieve?

That is to say, the underlying requirement here is that specific assessment measures and associated benchmark criteria for determining success must be stated for each of the Outcomes outlined in Step 2. Take note that assessment methods are “friendly” because of the degree of variability/flexibility. They could be:

- Direct or indirect
- Qualitative or quantitative
- Objective or subjective



*We have adopted a mission statement, defined our goals and developed expected outcomes; now we have to decide how we are going to measure those outcomes.*

As a rule of thumb, at least two measures should be adopted for each outcome.

Types of Assessment Measures:

- Attitudinal Assessment – measuring the satisfaction of client through surveys e.g. Noel-Levitz, NSSE, etc.
- Direct Counts – counting/tallying the degree/volume/level of service offered by the Unit
- External/Peer Validation/Review external agencies or peers might review the services/functions of the Unit
- Observation – analyzing the performance of clients through observation.

Examples of assessment measures (not categorized):

- ✓ Processing time for request (registry)
- ✓ Student satisfaction surveys (all units)
- ✓ Number of complaints (registry, advising & testing, technology, library, etc)
- ✓ Average wait time (registry, library, career services, technology, etc)
- ✓ Number of users (library, career services, technology, etc)
- ✓ Opinion surveys (all units)
- ✓ External review (all units)

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- ✓ Number of staff trained (human resources, technology, library, etc)
  - ✓ Average service time (all units)
  - ✓ Number of applications (registry, advising & testing, etc)
  - ✓ And others.....

**Criteria for Success:** Quite apart from adopting specific means of assessment, the unit must also decide on pre-determined criteria. The attainment of that will define success. That is, at what level of performance, as measured by the means of assessment, will satisfy the Unit as acceptable level of excellence?

**SAMPLES:**

#1: Library collections in support of curricular information needs of students and faculty will increase by 10% by the end of Fiscal Year 2010 (In this case, the means of assessment is the number count of collections and the criteria for success is 10% increase).

#2: The resumes of 90% of students who attended a current resume workshop will receive greater than 4 rating on best resume checklist (In this case, the means of assessment is a checklist that details five quality aspects of a resume, and the criteria for success is 90%).

**STEP 4: Record & Summarize Data Collected from Assessment:** Procedurally, the first three steps constitute the planning phase; step 4 begins the real implementation phase.

Here, as suggested by the means of assessment that were adopted in step 3, we organize surveys, count the # of applicants and users of services, calculate average wait time, record results from institutional surveys, summarize external reviews, etc.

The data collected must then be collated into concise numerical values. Relax, no need to panic: Analyzing assessment data revolves around simple averages and calculated percentages. No need for SPSS. The interpretation of results is more important than the mere presentation of mundane statistical values!

We have adopted a mission statement, defined our goals, developed expected outcomes, outlined our means of assessment and associated criteria for success; now we are in the implementation phase of gathering and summarizing data

Data collected, summarized, analyzed, and interpreted must be shared among all members of the Unit, because the implementation of the next final step would involve the collaborative efforts of ALL.

**STEP 5: Use of Results for Process Improvements:** Assessment is not an end in itself but a means that enables us to use the results for continuous improvements in services/functions performed by the Units. As a reminder, Step 5 is the most important section scrutinized by accrediting agencies.

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At this final stage, we explain the gap between criteria set and actual results and indicate how results WERE USED (not will be used) for continuous service improvements. Using the results of assessment might involve inter-unit cooperation and collaboration. Expectedly also, responding to the use of assessment results might feed into the academic, budget, and facilities planning activities of the institute. The use of results might call for:

- Improvement in technology & facilities.
- Adoption of new forms and procedures.
- Inter-departmental cooperation through staff cross-training.
- Reorganization of staff duties.
- Provision of suggestion boxes.
- Follow-up surveys & focus group discussions on special issues.
- Etc.

As a continuous, never-ending process, there are several ways in which the end result of one assessment cycle could be fed back into the planning of subsequent assessment cycles: do the results suggest we:

- ✓ Re-calibrate our mission statement to fit in better with institutional mission?
- ✓ Expand/limit our goals in light of revealed circumstances?
- ✓ Broaden our expected outcomes to accommodate new responsibilities due to increased enrollment?
- ✓ Use more than three assessment methods for each expected outcome?
- ✓ Set more stringent criteria of success due to our previous successes?
- ✓ Etc.

#### **Notes on Co-Curricular Assessment:**

Administrative and Academic Support Units, such as Student Development, Career Development, Library, and Athletics and to some extent Technology, do directly interact with students in the performance of their daily, routine functions. The context of this interaction provides the opportunity to articulate and measure some aspects of student learning beyond the classroom. Assessing student learning outcomes beyond academic programs is commonly referred to as Co-Curricular Assessment. The Director of Assessment will work directly with assessment liaisons to explore the articulation and assessment of specific learning outcomes in the context of their respective units.

Please take note that a convenient template for the presentation of assessment plans and results, in addition to rubrics for the evaluation of reports, are provided under *Templates & Evaluation Rubrics*. Also, comprehensive reference points on assessment resources and best practices are provided under *External Links*.

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