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Planning Assessment

Academic Assessment Process

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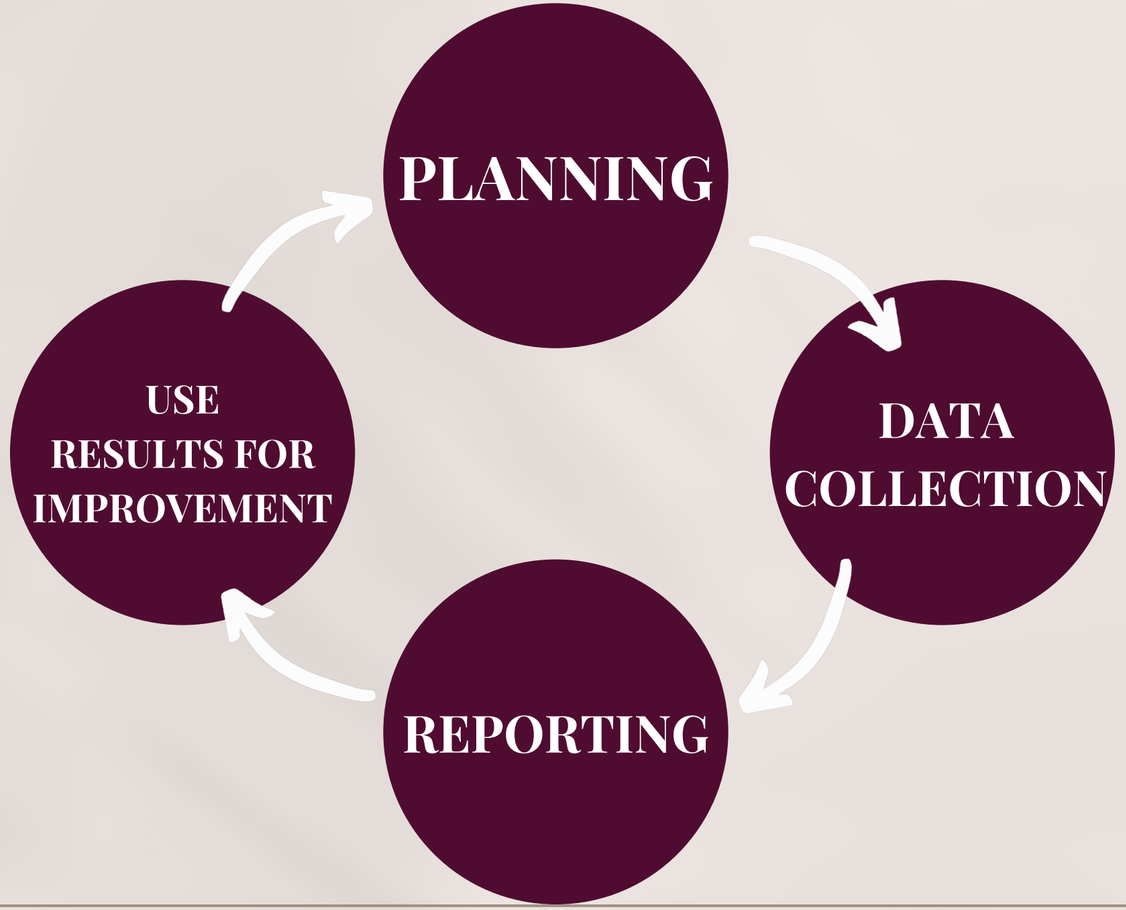
What is Assessment?

Assessment is the ongoing and systematic process of identifying outcomes and means to measure them, gathering measurements of the outcomes, using the information to make decisions about improvement and implementing improvements based on the data gathered. The most important aspect of this definition, if emphasis could be drawn to one item, is the using the information for improvement.

The Assessment Cycle



The Assessment Cycle

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Five Components of an Assessment Plan

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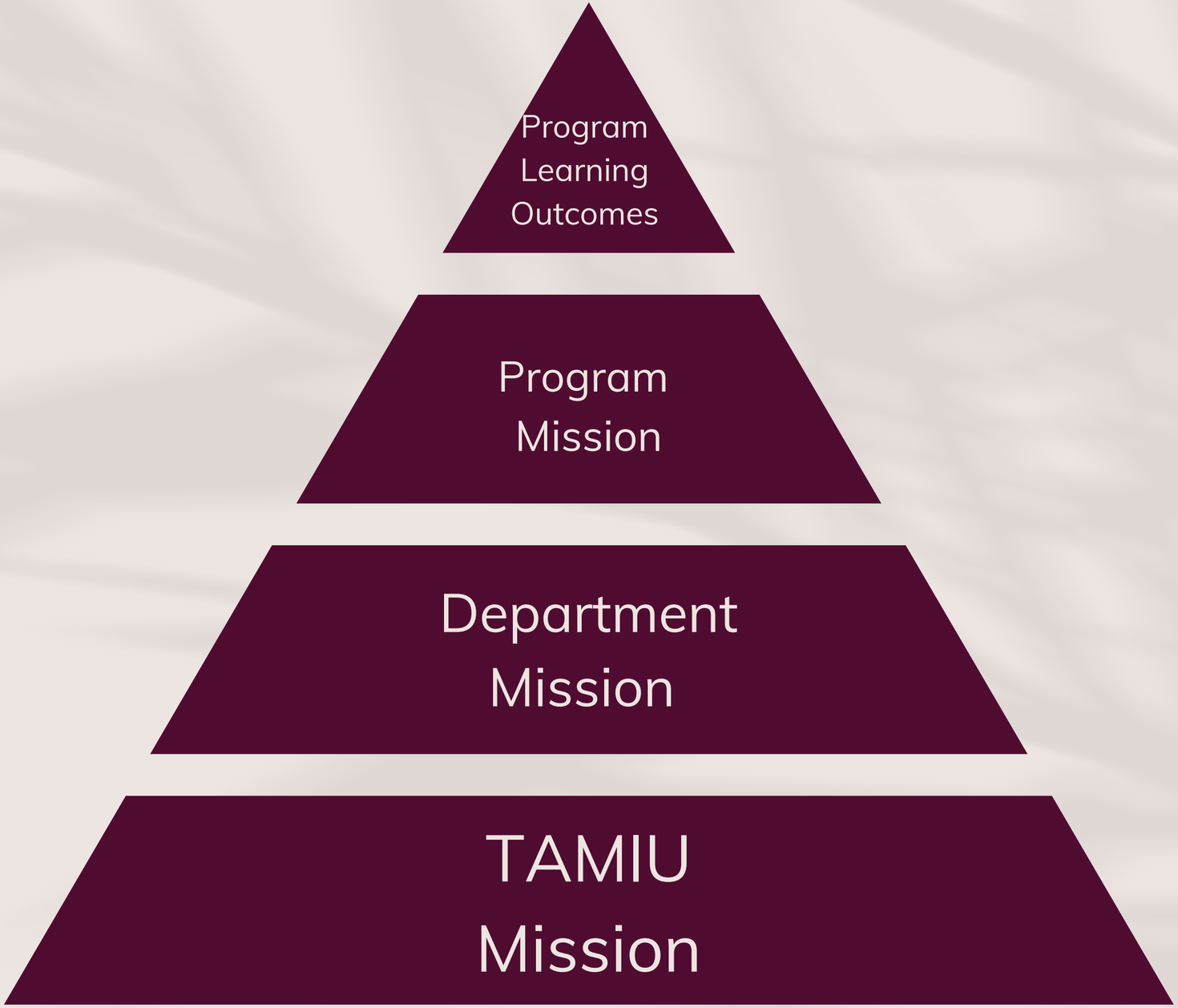
Mission

Analyzing your Program Mission

Component One

Analyze Program Mission



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TAMIU Mission

Texas A&M International University (TAMIU), a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society. TAMIU provides a learning environment built on a solid academic foundation in the arts and sciences. The University offers a range of baccalaureate and master's programs and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in International Business Administration. In addition, the University pursues a progressive agenda for global study and understanding across all disciplines.

Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, TAMIU improves the quality of lives for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

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Outcomes

Writing Program Learning Outcomes

Component Two

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What are Program Learning Outcomes?

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are a formal statement of what students are expected to learn in a degree program. Program learning outcome statements refer to specific knowledge, practical skills, areas of professional development, attitudes, higher- order thinking skills, etc. that faculty members and administrators expect students to develop, learn, or master during a degree program.

Simply stated PLOs describe what students should *know* AND *be able to do* at the end of their degree program.

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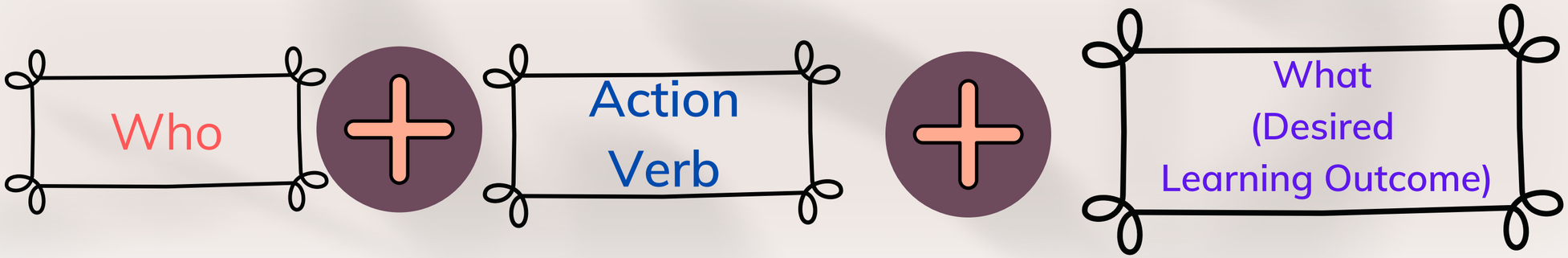
PLO Formula



Clear Measurable PLO: Graduates of the program will be able to summarize the major theories of human development.

Action Verbs

Bloom's Taxonomy helps to select a measureable and higher order thinking verb when developing PLOs.
(Available on our OIARP website)

Avoid using unmeasureable verbs such as understand, know, be familiar with, comprehend, learn, or appreciate.

How many PLOs should we have?

- Programs should identify at least three, and not more than five, program outcomes.
- The outcomes should reflect the primary things that program graduates should know and be able to do.
- Plan to assess only two or three outcomes each cycle, and think about how to rotate among them all.

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Measures

"IF YOU CANNOT MEASURE IT YOU CANNOT IMPROVE IT"
-BARON KELVIN

Component Three

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What is a Measure?

Measures answer the question of how we know whether graduates **know** and can **do** the things in our outcomes.

It helps us to find where in the curriculum students have opportunities to learn the content or skill of the outcome, and where they have chances to try out and demonstrate their learning.

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Direct Vs. Indirect Measures

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Direct Measure

Students demonstrate their learning through a performance of some kind.

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Indirect Measure

Does not call on students to demonstrate their knowledge of skill, but provides other information from which we can draw inferences about student learning.

10 Helpful Tips When Selecting Measures

1. Identify at least two measures for each outcome.
2. Measure student learning on the outcome near the end of the program.
3. Avoid purchasing or creating additional tests or other assessment activities simply to satisfy your assessment data collection needs.
4. Course grades and course completion are NEVER appropriate measures of student learning.
5. An overall grade for an exam, project, etc. may or may not be appropriate.

6. Be specific.

7. Do not write a long description of the measure.

8. Don’t combine multiple measures as one.

9. Don’t use pre-post measures.

10. Use the same measure for more than one outcome, if relevant.

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Benchmarks

Component Four

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What is a Benchmark?

Benchmarks communicate our expectations about how well students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skill on the outcomes.

Benchmarks must be identified prior to the collection and analysis of assessment data. Be careful about setting targets too high or too low.

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Primary Vs. Secondary Benchmarks

Primary

Identify the level of performance necessary to satisfy us that total student performance on the measure indicates that the program outcome has been achieved.

Secondary

Identify a lower threshold below which we do not want student performance to fall. Can be useful in programs with high percentage of at-risk or developmental students.

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How to Write Benchmarks

A **primary benchmark** is written as a statement indicating that at least some percentage of students will perform at or above a certain level on the measure.

A **secondary benchmark** is written in conjunction with a primary target, and indicates that no more than some percentage of students will fall below a certain level on the measure.

A primary benchmark must be provided for every measure. Secondary targets are optional

Example:
(P) 80% or more of students will earn 75% or higher on [subset of outcome-related test items] on the final exam. (S) No more than 10% of students will earn below 60% on [subset of outcome-related test items] on the final exam.

Helpful Tips When Writing Benchmarks

1. The benchmark must be directly related to measure.

   Example: Exam = threshold of performance on the exam.

   Survey item = respondents' ratings on that particular item

2. Write benchmarks in this format:

- "XX% of students will earn a grade/rating of YY or higher on the [name of exam/project]. "
- "XX% of students will [pass/successfully defend] the [licensure exam, exam, dissertation] on the first attempt."
- "XX% of respondents will report that [use scale points from survey item]."

3. Course grades and course completion are not appropriate for use with benchmarks.
4. No pre-post benchmarks

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Sampling

Component Five

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How do you choose samples?

It is important that you collect and analyze data from a group of program majors about whom inferences will be drawn.

The goal is to identify a reasonably representative group of program majors in your data collection.

Do not include students enrolled in a course used for data collection if they are not majors in your program.

Helpful Tips When Collecting Samples

1. Before the fact. The sampling strategy statement reflects the decision about how you will select a reasonably representative group of program majors AND minimally answers the following questions:

- How many students will be included in data collection?
- Who will those students be?
- What timeframe is associated with data collection? This is dictated by when the course is offered during academic year. Other unique parameters (e.g., specific course section; specific level of student, e.g., junior, senior)?

2. Program Majors only.
3. Reasonably representative

Assessment Plan

You have now completed the complex and time consuming work of planning your assessment activities.

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References

- BAKER, W. (2012). ASSESSMENT 101: ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT HTTP://WWW.COUNCILOAKASSESSMENT.COM/