



SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Academic Assessment

the thing no one wants to do

What is Academic Assessment?

Information is collected on student learning across courses in a department/program to determine how well students as a whole are meeting expected goals.



Why are we doing this?

- ▶ To find out what students are learning.
Are students learning what you think they are? How would you know?
- ▶ To talk about what is important to learn.
As a group what is most important to you. What to focus on.
- ▶ To improve, improve, improve.
Even when students are doing well, there's always room for improvement.
- ▶ To demonstrate accountability.
Parents, students, and the government want proof of value.



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Accreditation



What do YOU want to know about your students?

The assessment committee does have guidelines they want followed but most importantly they want this to be useful for YOU.

- ▶ What are you interested in learning about?
 - ▶ How do you track your department/program's contribution to campus?
 - ▶ Has your department/program taken on something new?

- ▶ What and how well are students learning?
 - ▶ Subject knowledge
 - ▶ Critical thinking
 - ▶ Research methods
 - ▶ General education requirements

- ▶ Are students confident in their knowledge and abilities?

- ▶ How do students feel about the department/program?



Assessment is NOT...

- ▶ About individual classes
- ▶ An annual report
- ▶ A judgment on your abilities
- ▶ An evaluation of co-workers
- ▶ An evaluation of students



Parts of the Assessment

Office Mission:

- ▶ Your department/program's mission statement.

Introduction: A couple of paragraphs on...

- ▶ Important events since last assessment
- ▶ How last year's results were used
- ▶ Response to committee feedback



Parts of the Assessment

Goals:

A broad statement of something you want to achieve as a department/program.

Outcomes:

What should a student know or be able to do as part of that goal?

Assessment Mechanism:

How can we measure or test that outcome?

Assessment Target:

What would be a *success*?



A HYPOTHETICAL OFFICE: FILM STUDIES

Goal - broad statement of what you want to achieve as a department

“Students will be able to use film theory to engaged critically with texts and discuss their relationship to reality, history, individual viewers, and society.”

Outcome – what should the student know or be able to do at the end of the program?

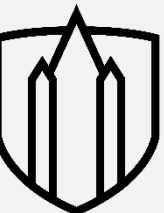
“Students will be able to articulate the development, use, and interpretation of film language.”

Mechanism – how can we test that outcome?

“Use a department-wide rubric to score a test’s short-answer question about mise en scene.”

Target – What would you considered a success?

“80% of students receive a rubric score of meets or exceeds expectations.”



Parts of the Assessment

Assessment Results:

- ▶ Report out on what you were measuring.
- ▶ Did you meet your target?
- ▶ Include previous years' results if you have them.

Comments/Improvements:

- ▶ Why was your target met or not met?
- ▶ Are there some changes you would like to make?



What the Committee Wants

- ▶ Assess students at different time points in the curriculum
 - ▶ Introduction, mid-level, capstone
- ▶ General Education (can tag these in Weave)
 - ▶ Languages and cultures (foreign language)
 - ▶ Writing in the disciplines
 - ▶ Paideia
 - ▶ Social justice
 - ▶ Exploration and breadth
 - ▶ Capstone experience
- ▶ Use different assessment mechanisms



What the Committee Wants

- ▶ Your target metric should match your results metric
 - ▶ Target: 50% of students will score 8/10 on a particular concept
 - ▶ Result: 75% (15 of 20) of students scored 8/10 » Target Met
- ▶ Previous year's data if available
- ▶ Include rubrics used
- ▶ No specific names of people - students, professors, staff



Assessment Mechanisms

Yes

- ▶ Pre- and Post-Tests
- ▶ Department Rubrics
- ▶ Specific Test Questions
- ▶ Surveys

No

- ▶ Final grades
- ▶ Comprehensive grades



Targets

- ▶ It is OKAY to not meet the target
- ▶ Meeting all your targets? Great.
 - ▶ Maybe there's something else you want to assess?
- ▶ Not meeting any of the targets? That's fine as well.
 - ▶ Is this result expected?
 - ▶ Do your targets need adjusting?



Feedback from the Assessment Committee

Fix Now

- ▶ Clarifications of ideas or jargon
- ▶ Typos that hurt understanding
- ▶ Incorrect data (copy-paste issues)

Address in next assessment

- ▶ Poorly defined targets
- ▶ Outcomes and mechanisms don't align
- ▶ Misuse of rubrics
- ▶ Missing specific requirements (Paideia, assessment at multiple points in time)

Suggestions

- ▶ Things the committee thought of that might be helpful



Transitioning to Weave®

- ▶ Assessment reports to this point have been submitted using a Word template.
- ▶ Weave is a cloud-based service that we are using to assist with our upcoming reaccreditation.
 - ▶ It includes functionality for assessment that we hope will streamline the process of submitting assessment reports.
- ▶ Weave allows us to:
 - ▶ Avoid formatting issues
 - ▶ Combine reports from different offices/departments
 - ▶ Link assessment mechanisms to University initiatives



1. Goal: Theoretical Proficiency

To lead students to proficiency in theoretical engagement with scholarship in the two main cognate areas of our department: rhetorical studies and critical media studies.

Learning Outcome

Students will demonstrate fluency in communication theories central to the critical study of rhetoric and media.

Assessment Mechanism(s) and Target(s)	Assessment Results	Target(s) Met/ Not Met? Comments/Improvements
Intro level: Each instructor will assess their class using the department rubric on a single assignment (either focused exam questions or major project) in Critical/Cultural Communication Studies (C/CCS), 70% of students will articulate foundational rhetorical and media studies theories and concepts at the level of at least “strong” or “excellent” on the C/CCS department rubric category 1. Theoretical Proficiency	18-19: 74/95 (78%) 17-18: 112/122 (92%) 16-17 46/49 (94%) partial data 15-16: 92/102 (90%)	Target met We have consistently exceeded our target in this area, largely because this course is centered on introducing students to the theories in our discipline. This year, we moved from considering “good”, “strong”, or “excellent” in our calculation to the more rigorous “strong” or “excellent” categories in these areas. As a result, the overall percentage is lower, but more realistically assesses where we aim for our students to be.



Department Mission

Department Mission



Introduction



Goal



1 Goal Theoretical Proficiency



DESCRIPTION

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Learning Outcome



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DESCRIPTION

Enter text

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PREVIOUS YEARS' RESULTS

17-18: 112/122 (92%)
16-17 46/49 (94%) partial data
15-16: 92/102 (90%)

Assessment Target (1)

1.1.1.1

DESCRIPTION

Enter text

ASSESSMENT TARGET

70% of students will articulate foundational rhetorical and media studies theories and concepts at the level of at least "strong" or "excellent"

STATUS

Met

THIS YEAR'S RESULTS

18-19: 74/95 (78%)

COMMENTS/IMPROVEMENTS

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Weave® Demo recording available

- ▶ How to log in
- ▶ How to find your report (we've already started it for you)
- ▶ Where to put previous years' results
- ▶ How to link to the general education curriculum (supported initiative)
- ▶ How to indicate met/not met (there are other options)
- ▶ How to attach rubrics (or other documents)
- ▶ How to view and download your report (page view versus table view)
- ▶ Not using action plans at this time



Resources

- ▶ New assessment website
 - ▶ <https://www.southwestern.edu/faculty-dean/assessment/>
 - ▶ Quick Start Guide done by Weave
 - ▶ Guiding Principles
 - ▶ Assessment Training Slides
 - ▶ Weave Demo Slides done by Hal
- ▶ Hal Hoepfner for all things Weave
- ▶ Natasha Williams for all things Assessment and some things Weave
- ▶ Michael Saenger for all things Assessment

