



University of Dayton Assessment Plan

Guiding Principles on Assessment

The University of Dayton considers assessment to be an integral component of the daily operations of every unit on campus, both in the classroom setting and outside of the classroom. All units at UD engage in some form of assessment. Units continually evaluate the success of their efforts and view assessment as a tool rather than a target. The definition of “unit” is left to the discretion of the deans and vice presidents – whatever is appropriate for their situation. A unit might be a department, a program, or a function. Faculty or staff could conceivably belong to more than one unit for the purposes of assessment.

Even though student learning is our priority at UD, assessment is not limited to measurement of learning in the classroom. Every area on campus has goals and measures the attainment of those goals. Major campus activities on campus (such as the Stander Symposium) also have goals that are measured. Some activities involve more than one department or unit. In those instances the individuals involved work together to conduct their evaluations.

The University holds local units responsible for planning and implementing their own assessment activities. The University will not dictate to units how to conduct their assessments, yet it does require that assessment be conducted on a regular basis and that a summary of actions taken as a result of the assessment activities be reported annually to the University Assessment Committee (UAC), which acts under the authority of the provost.

The University encourages units not to review all their goals every year. For assessment to be effective units must allow individuals sufficient time to review the results in detail, adequately plan for changes, and monitor changes for their effects before being studied again. Reviewing a limited number of goals at one time assures that the unit is not spending an inordinate amount of time on assessment activities at the expense of other important functions.

Requiring units to submit short assessment summaries to the UAC on an annual basis reinforces the practice of making these evaluations an integral part of the units’ overall operating procedures. The submitted summaries highlight actions taken as a result of past assessment activities, and evaluate the effect of those changes. This process encourages units to evaluate not only data collected but also uses of those data. What changes were made previously after evaluating the data? Were those changes effective? What do the data show now? Should there be other changes made? How do those changes fit into the overall planning and function of the unit? What is the relationship between assessment and planning and budgeting?

The UAC and the assessment coordinators work with units to assure that their goals focus on outcomes (such as student learning), that both direct and indirect measures are used when available, and that the frequency of data collection is appropriate. It is the intention of this assessment plan to add structure and accountability to the assessment process at UD, yet be flexible enough to allow individual units to conduct evaluations according to their own needs.

The University acknowledges that individual schools and some units have their own accrediting bodies that require specific assessment-related activities. This plan will not arbitrarily duplicate the assessment efforts conducted by those units working in compliance with their accrediting bodies. The summaries submitted to the UAC contain information taken directly from accreditation reports written by the individual units and schools. The requirements contained in this plan coincide with assessment-related requirements of the accrediting bodies.

Goals/Outcomes

Learning outcomes

The UAC has adopted a set of seven university-wide overarching learning outcomes as guidelines for units to follow when drafting their student learning goals. These university-level goals were taken from the *Habits of Inquiry and Reflection* document approved by the academic senate. Each of the seven overarching objectives will be covered by at least one unit or activity on campus. No one unit will be expected to cover all seven objectives.

Even though these outcomes are worded in the context of the undergraduate student experience, that does not diminish the importance of the graduate student experience at UD. Assessments of graduate programs are conducted by the academic units in conjunction with assessments of their undergraduate programs. Units identify separate learning outcomes for their graduate programs.

The overarching objectives are as follows:

1. Scholarship: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate advanced habits of academic inquiry and creativity through the production of a body of artistic, scholarly or community-based work intended for public presentation and defense.
2. Faith traditions: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate ability to engage in intellectually informed, appreciative, and critical inquiry regarding major faith traditions. Students will be familiar with the basic theological understandings and central texts that shape Catholic beliefs and teachings, practices, and spiritualities. Students' abilities should be developed sufficiently to allow them to examine deeply their own faith commitments and also to participate intelligently and respectfully in dialogue with other traditions.

3. Diversity: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate intellectually informed, appreciative, and critical understanding of the cultures, histories, times, and places of multiple others, as marked by class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and other manifestations of difference. Students' understanding will reflect scholarly inquiry, experiential immersion, and disciplined reflection.

4. Community: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate understanding of and practice in the values and skills necessary for learning, living, and working in communities of support and challenge. These values and skills include accepting difference, resolving conflicts peacefully, and promoting reconciliation; they encompass productive, discerning, creative, and respectful collaboration with persons from diverse backgrounds and perspectives for the common purpose of learning, service, and leadership that aim at just social transformation. Students will demonstrate these values and skills on campus and in the Dayton region as part of their preparation for global citizenship.

5. Practical wisdom: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate practical wisdom in addressing real human problems and deep human needs, drawing upon advanced knowledge, values, and skills in their chosen profession or major course of study. Starting with a conception of human flourishing, students will be able to define and diagnose symptoms, relationships, and problems clearly and intelligently, construct and evaluate possible solutions, thoughtfully select and implement solutions, and critically reflect on the process in light of actual consequences.

6. Critical evaluation of our times: Through multidisciplinary study, all undergraduates will develop and demonstrate habits of inquiry and reflection, informed by familiarity with Catholic Social Teaching, that equip them to evaluate critically and imaginatively the ethical, historical, social, political, technological, economic, and ecological challenges of their times in light of the past.

7. Vocation: Using appropriate scholarly and communal resources, all undergraduates will develop and demonstrate ability to articulate reflectively the purposes of their life and proposed work through the language of vocation. In collaboration with the university community, students' developing vocational plans will exhibit appreciation of the fullness of human life, including its intellectual, ethical, spiritual, aesthetic, social, emotional, and bodily dimensions, and will examine both the interdependence of self and community and the responsibility to live in service of others.

Other goals/objectives

Some units may have goals that are not directly tied to student learning. Their goals may include such areas as needs, tracking, satisfaction, environmental scans, comparisons, benchmarking, cost effectiveness, or national standards. Individual units decide what goals best fit their mission.

Evaluation activities conducted at the unit level are the responsibility of the units themselves. The dean or vice president assigns a coordinator or group to be responsible for assessment of the unit. However, these individuals do not need to attempt this alone. The units can receive support from a variety of sources. The institutional researcher for academics provides student data to the units and consults with individual units on their assessment process, providing suggestions for measurements and assisting with survey design and data analysis. The office of the provost provides funding and staff support for university-wide assessments such as the National Survey of Student Engagement. Assessment coordinators share with units their wealth of knowledge on assessment practices.

Assessment results are used to improve the learning process and student experiences on campus. Results are also used in student recruitment (look what our students can do...) and in planning for resource allocation (to help students do this we need more...). Commendable examples of assessment are posted online as an example for others to follow and as a testament to the quality education received by our students. The focus of assessment activities at UD is engagement and active change as a result of assessment.

Organization of Assessment Activities at UD

University Assessment Committee

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) works under the authority of the provost and oversees the assessment process at the University of Dayton. All units across campus annually submit to this committee summaries of actions taken as a result of their assessment activities. The UAC acts as a resource for those conducting assessment, providing suggestions for goals and various types of measures that can be used to evaluate the attainment of those goals. The UAC relays results of assessment activities to the provost and other administrators, and showcases exceptional success stories to the campus community. The UAC maintains an assessment website containing resources, templates, and examples for those in the UD community to use in their evaluation endeavors.

The UAC is chaired by the associate provost for faculty and administrative affairs. Membership is comprised of divisional assessment coordinators, as well as the institutional researcher for academics and the associate dean of the graduate school.

Meetings of the UAC provide an opportunity for members to share ideas and concerns or discuss assessment-related issues at hand. During the meetings members also review the assessment summaries submitted by various units across campus, after which the UAC may decide to provide suggestions or feedback to particular units – actions they might want to consider in the future, kudos for a job well done, etc. Every year the UAC forwards the assessment summaries for that year to the appropriate vice presidents and deans, along with a list of units that did not submit summaries.

The UAC writes an annual “state of assessment” report that is made available to the university community. The UAC also evaluates the effectiveness of the assessment process itself at UD and makes modifications as necessary. This reinforces the principle that assessment pervades all operations at UD.

Assessment Coordinators

There is one assessment coordinator for each division or school at the university. The assessment coordinator oversees assessment activities for the division or school and acts as a resource for faculty and staff conducting assessment activities. The coordinator assists faculty and staff with the development and measurement of goals, and helps them interpret results of the measurements used. All assessment coordinators serve on the UAC and act as a liaison between that committee and the faculty and staff in their area.

Unit Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff in the individual units across campus are responsible for conducting assessment activities in their area. The dean or vice president assigns a coordinator or group to be responsible for assessment of the unit. Larger units such as student development may have an assessment committee that oversees assessment activities of the units in their area and acts as an assessment resource for the units. Smaller units may have one individual assigned to oversee the assessment process and report back to the group.

The units themselves develop goals, determine methods to measure achievement of those goals, and use the assessment results to help evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. They meet regularly as a group to discuss their goals, strengths and weaknesses of their units as revealed through the assessment process, and plans for changes to their programs or operations. They annually submit to the UAC summaries of actions taken as a result of their assessment activities. All this is spelled out in the unit’s assessment plan, which is written by the unit faculty and staff and approved by the dean or vice president responsible for that area.

The units assure that their goals coincide with UD’s mission, with UD’s overarching goals (student learning goals, strategic plan, etc.), and with their unit’s mission. The unit’s assessment plan maps the unit’s goals to the overarching university objectives. In reviewing their goals units ask themselves the following questions: Is the goal relevant? Is the goal measurable? Are there direct and indirect methods available to assess the goal? Do the selected methods of measurement actually reflect attainment of the goal?

At times there are opportunities for units to evaluate the success of ad-hoc programs or new ideas. The University encourages units to be flexible in their assessment endeavors, and to measure effectiveness of any aspects that the units deem important. Additionally, UD encourages faculty and staff to collaborate across units on assessment activities.

Summary of Assessment Responsibilities	
Associate Provost for Faculty and Administrative Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chairs University Assessment Committee ▪ Relays overall assessment results to provost
University Assessment Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviews assessment summaries submitted by units; offers suggestions as needed; showcases commendable assessment results ▪ Shares ideas and suggestions regarding assessment ▪ Writes annual “state of assessment” report ▪ Evaluates overall assessment process at UD and modifies process if necessary
Assessment Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with unit faculty and staff in designing and implementing effective assessment strategies
Institutional Researcher for Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides institutional data to units ▪ Assists units with development of objectives, selection of direct or indirect measures, design of survey instruments, and analysis of data
Faculty & Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with colleagues and assessment coordinator to identify goals and measures (both direct and indirect) used to evaluate attainment of those goals ▪ Evaluate attainment of goals and make changes; evaluate effectiveness of changes ▪ Annually submit to the UAC a summary of actions taken as a result of assessment efforts

Assessment Schedule for Units

The schedule by which a unit conducts assessment will depend upon the needs of the unit, itself. Efficiency and effectiveness are key elements of the assessment schedule. For example, if multiple goals use the same measures then units may want to evaluate all those particular goals together. If attainment of a goal requires monitoring for several years then that particular goal should not be evaluated every year.

The steps outlined below are provided as a guideline for units to follow if they so choose. Units are encouraged to follow any assessment schedule that is effective for their situation. The common features for all assessment schedules are that they are conducted regularly and that the units annually submit to the University Assessment Committee summaries of actions taken as a result of assessment.

Example Assessment Schedule

1. A. **For units that have not yet formally identified their goals and evaluated the attainment of those goals:**

Unit members meet to identify their goals, making sure the goals match the mission of their unit, the mission of their division or school, and the mission of the university. As a reference units review the list of university-level student learning objectives, the university strategic plan, and other university-level planning documents. Units can utilize the consultative services of their assessment coordinator or the institutional researcher for academics when defining their goals. Unit members will also decide the order in which they will evaluate each goal, starting with the goal that has the most pressing need or where the potential for productive change is greatest.

B. **For units that are already formally evaluating the attainment of their goals:**

Unit members meet to review the goals they have identified, evaluating each goal based on past experience in measuring the attainment of that goal. Included in the discussion are answers to the following questions: Is this goal applicable? Should the goal be rewritten? Are the measurements we have used for this goal helpful? Should we drop this goal? Once they have finalized their list of goals unit members decide the order in which they will evaluate each goal, starting with the goal that has the most pressing need.

2. Unit members identify direct and indirect measures available to evaluate the attainment of each of the goals. If no measures are available the unit members can design their own methods for collecting the needed information. They can utilize the assistance of their assessment coordinator or the institutional researcher for academics if they choose. Unit members will also determine how the information will be collected, how often it will be collected, and how the results will be reviewed. Some measurements may be taken every year, such as senior exit interviews, portfolio evaluations, or

customer satisfaction surveys. Some measurements may be taken every few years, such as nationally standardized questionnaires.

3. Units decide how many goals to evaluate each year. They should evaluate at least one goal per year but it is recommended that they do not evaluate more than two or three goals each year. For the first goal(s) identified as being the most pressing the unit members start collecting information that will help them evaluate attainment of the goal(s). Results of the information collected in one year will be discussed as a group among the members of the unit the following year.

4. At the start of the next academic year unit members meet to set the agenda for that year's assessment-related discussions. Members meet on a regular basis to accomplish the following by the end of the academic year:
 - A. Review results of measurements taken the previous year on the first goal(s).

 - B. Regarding the first goal(s) studied, unit members decide the next course of action:
 - The unit seems to be achieving the goal; no major changes are needed; the unit will continue to monitor the goal or raise its expectations.

 - or –

 - The unit needs more information to make an informed decision; changes may or may not be needed; the unit will continue to monitor the goal.

 - or –

 - The unit does not seem to be achieving the goal; changes are needed.

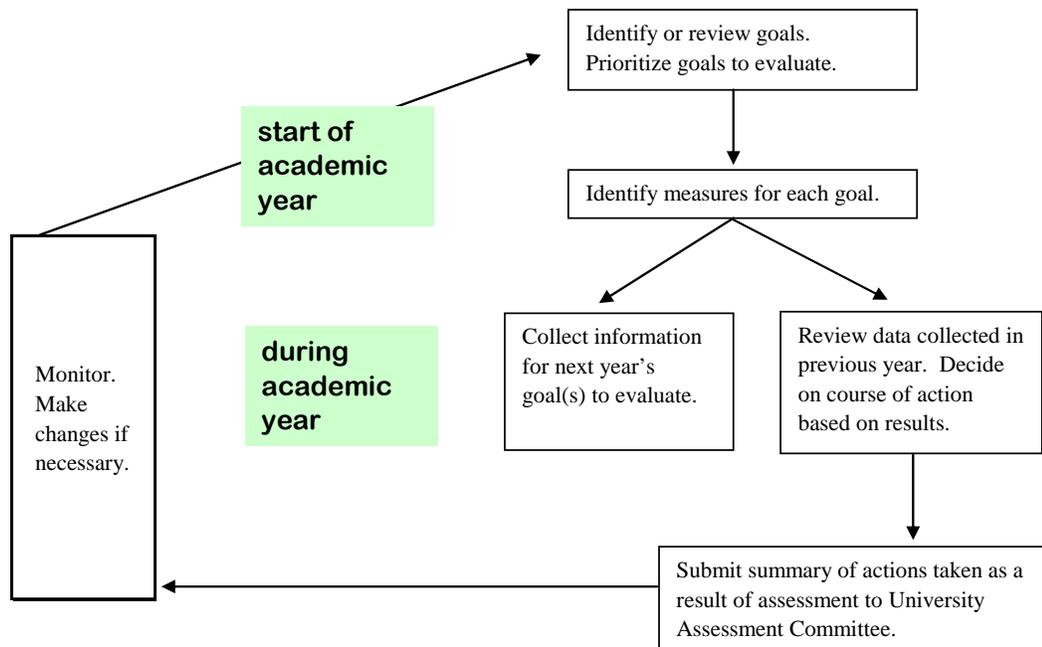
 - C. Unit members come to a consensus on changes they will make (if any) with regard to the goal(s) being reviewed. Changes (if needed) are made as soon as logistically possible. The goal(s) will be measured again in upcoming years.

 - D. During the discussion process unit members also evaluate each goal itself. Maybe the goal is too broadly or narrowly stated or is not measurable. Maybe the goal is appropriate but the measurements used to evaluate attainment of the goal need to be changed. Maybe the goal is entirely inappropriate and should not be included at all. With changing technology and changing needs it is possible that unit members will need to modify existing goals, add new goals to their list, delete goals, or change the order of the goals they will evaluate.

 - E. Collect information relating to attainment of the next goal(s) on the rank-ordered list of goals to measure. (Results of these measures will be discussed by unit members the following year.)

 - F. By June 30 unit members submit to the University Assessment Committee an executive summary of actions taken as a result of assessment activities that year (see template included at the end of this document).

5. The next year this assessment cycle repeats itself. Unit members review the next goal(s) on their list, utilizing data collected the previous year. At the same time the units are collecting information pertaining to the next goal(s), whose results will be reviewed the following year. This cycle continues every year. At any given time units are discussing results to measurements collected the previous year while simultaneously collecting measurements for the next goal(s) to be discussed the following year.



Assessment Schedule for Major Events

It is expected that all major events at UD (such as the Stander Symposium) include an assessment component to evaluate their success. Event organizers identify at least one goal that they deem to be an important outcome for that event. Organizers incorporate measures for their goal(s) in their overall event planning. After the event the organizers review results of their measures and decide if changes are warranted for future events. Then they submit to the University Assessment Committee a short summary of actions taken as a result of their assessment efforts.

Assessment Resources

There are many resources available centrally at the university level to assist units with their assessment activities:

- The institutional researcher for academics (in the provost's office) assists units with development of goals and selection of measures used to analyze the attainment of the goals, and helps units analyze data.
- The institutional researcher for academics also provides institutional data to units. Some sources of institutional data are compiled on a regular basis and can be used for trend analyses, such as the UD online factbook, IPEDS reports, and the common data set. Other data can be retrieved directly from UD's data warehouse.
- Assessment coordinators assist units in designing and implementing effective assessment strategies. The University Assessment Committee helps units meet UD's assessment requirements.
- The assessment website offers resources that can help facilitate effective assessment. The website includes examples of best practices in assessment at UD, guidelines on how to construct rubrics and assessment plans, and sample departmental assessment plans from UD and other universities.
- The Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center conducts faculty development workshops related to assessment.
- There are various centrally-administered assessments whose results are utilized by multiple units across campus. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is conducted every three years by the Provost's Office. Climate/institutional effectiveness surveys are conducted by Human Resources.

Mission awareness surveys are conducted every three years by the International Center for Marianist Formation.

- Units can petition the University Assessment Committee for money to cover expenses for one-time special assessment projects (see request form on next page).

Fund Request Template



**University Assessment Committee
Petition for Special Assessment
Project Funds**

Unit submitting request:

Amount needed:

Date(s) funds needed:

How will funds be used?

How does this fit into the unit's assessment activities?



Report Template

Actions Taken As a Result of Assessment

Department / Program / Unit / Activity:

Date submitted:

1. Outcome/objective/goal reviewed:

2. Changes made since the last time this goal was reviewed: (If this was the first time this goal was reviewed skip to question 4.)

3. What prompted those changes? (previous assessment results, discussions with colleagues, etc) Were the changes effective?

4. After reviewing the assessment results the department/program/unit has decided to:
 - Stay the course and continue to monitor; we're satisfied that this goal is being met
 - Monitor the results and investigate causes; we may need to make changes in the future; we don't have enough information to make an informed decision yet
 - Make changes (list below)
 - Other:

Comments:

5. Changes to goal itself –
After working with this particular goal the department/program/unit has decided to:
 - Keep the wording of this goal as is and keep the same measures
 - Keep the wording of this goal but use different measures next time (list below)
 - Keep these same measures but change the wording of the goal (list below)
 - Change the wording of the goal *and* change the measures used (list below)
 - Drop this goal entirely (list reason below)

Comments:



Example of New Goal

Actions Taken As a Result of Assessment

Department / Program / Unit / Activity: Campus Welcoming Committee

Date submitted: June 30, 2008

1. Outcome/objective/goal reviewed:
All new students will feel welcome on campus their first day here.
2. Changes made since the last time this goal was reviewed: (If this was the first time this goal was reviewed skip to question 4.)
n/a - This is a new committee. This is the first time we've reviewed this goal.
3. What prompted those changes? (previous assessment results, discussions with colleagues, etc) Were the changes effective?
[REDACTED]
4. After reviewing the assessment results the department/program/unit has decided to:
 - Stay the course and continue to monitor; we're satisfied that this goal is being met
 - Monitor the results and investigate causes; we may need to make changes in the future; we don't have enough information to make an informed decision yet
 - Make changes (list below)
 - Other: [REDACTED]

Comments:

Focus groups of randomly-selected students revealed a general satisfaction with feeling welcome, with only some minor problems. The Committee will look into those problems and try to correct them for next year's incoming class. We'll survey students again next year.

5. Changes to goal itself –
After working with this particular goal the department/program/unit has decided to:
 - Keep the wording of this goal as is and keep the same measures
 - Keep the wording of this goal but use different measures next time (list below)
 - Keep these same measures but change the wording of the goal (list below)
 - Change the wording of the goal *and* change the measures used (list below)
 - Drop this goal entirely (list reason below)

Comments:

We're changing the goal to read "most" new students will feel welcome. It's unrealistic to expect ALL new students to feel welcome.

Example of Previously-Assessed Goal



Actions Taken As a Result of Assessment

Department / Program / Unit / Activity: **Campus Welcoming Committee**

Date submitted: **June 30, 2008**

1. Outcome/objective/goal reviewed:
 Most new students will feel welcome on campus their first day here.

2. Changes made since the last time this goal was reviewed: (If this was the first time this goal was reviewed skip to question 4.)
 We set up a welcome table next to the room key pickup station in orientation.

3. What prompted those changes? (previous assessment results, discussions with colleagues, etc) Were the changes effective?
 Some students fell through the cracks in past years; we weren't able to talk to every student. We wanted to make sure we reached each and every new student, so we moved our welcome table next to an area that each student had to visit – the room key pickup station. This change was effective. Each student surveyed after this year's orientation noted that they talked to someone on the Welcoming Committee, and most students did in fact feel welcome as a result.

4. After reviewing the assessment results the department/program/unit has decided to:
 - Stay the course and continue to monitor; we're satisfied that this goal is being met
 - Monitor the results and investigate causes; we may need to make changes in the future; we don't have enough information to make an informed decision yet
 - Make changes (list below)
 - Other: _____
 Comments:

5. Changes to goal itself –

After working with this particular goal the department/program/unit has decided to:

 - Keep the wording of this goal as is and keep the same measures
 - Keep the wording of this goal but use different measures next time (list below)
 - Keep these same measures but change the wording of the goal (list below)
 - Change the wording of the goal *and* change the measures used (list below)
 - Drop this goal entirely (list reason below)
 Comments:
 We've decided to use online surveys instead of focus groups. Focus groups were useful for initial start-up efforts, but now we feel confident that online surveys will give us adequate information with less time spent by staff.