2019-2020 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT PLAN (AAP) GUIDELINES

Academic and Administrative Programs

NOTE: Per university policy, all programs are required to have their 2019-2020 AAP on record (OIRA/AMOS) and conduct assessment data collection activities throughout the academic year.

Due Date (AAP entered in AMOS): APRIL 15, 2019

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

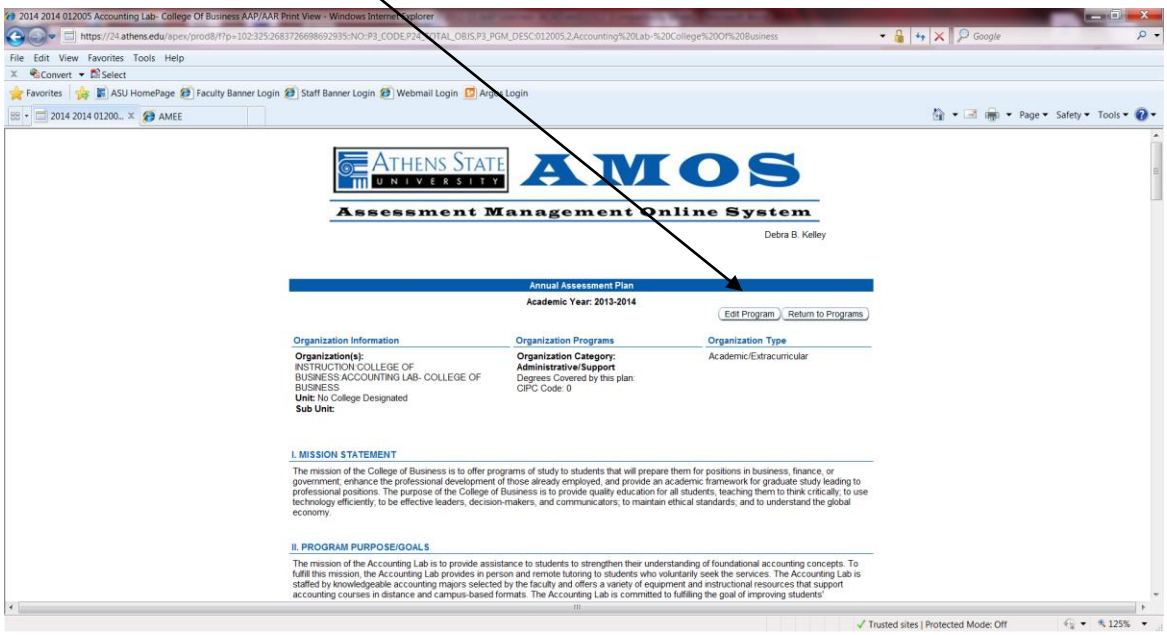
1. To access the 2019-2020 Annual Assessment Plans:
Go to http://www.athens.edu/iras and click on Outcomes Assessment, then click on **Consolidated Annual Assessment Plans (Secure Document)**. This will give you a login and password screen.

a. Or use this URL: https://24.athens.edu/pban_apex/f?p=102:101

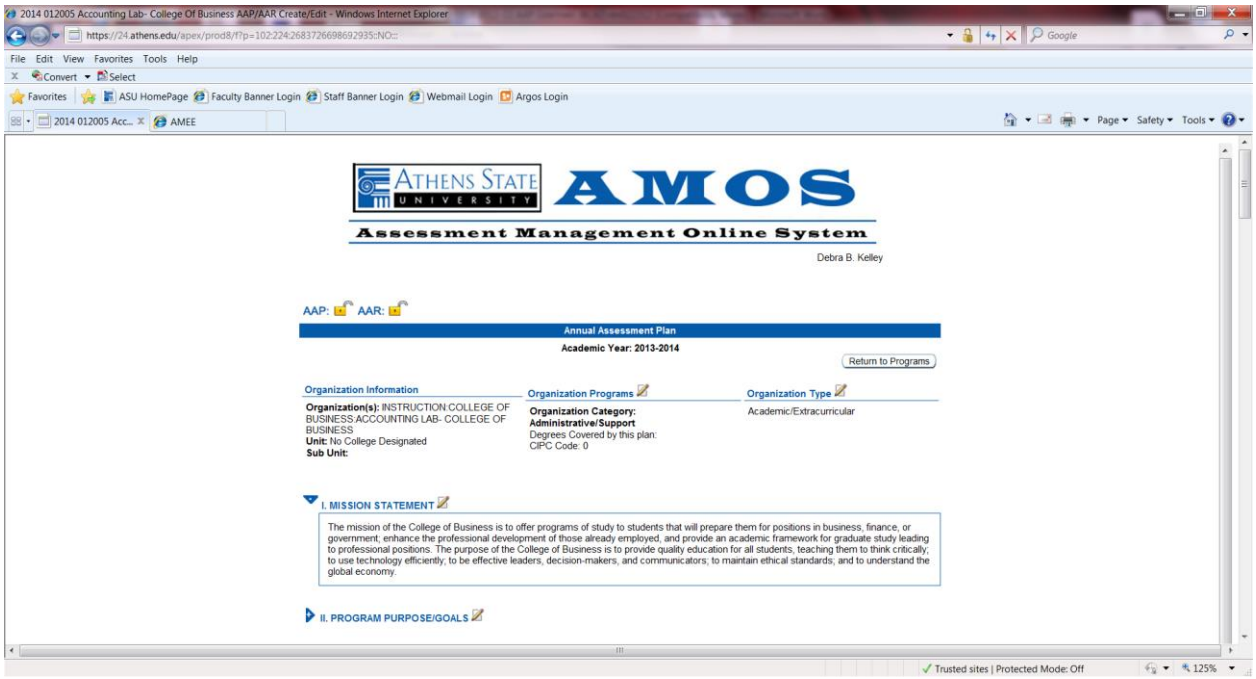
b. When the Login appears, enter your Employee ID and 6-digit password (originally your birthdate).

c. **Select the year 2020** (which will be academic year 2019-2020) and scroll until you find your program. **Click View** to open the Annual Assessment Plan.

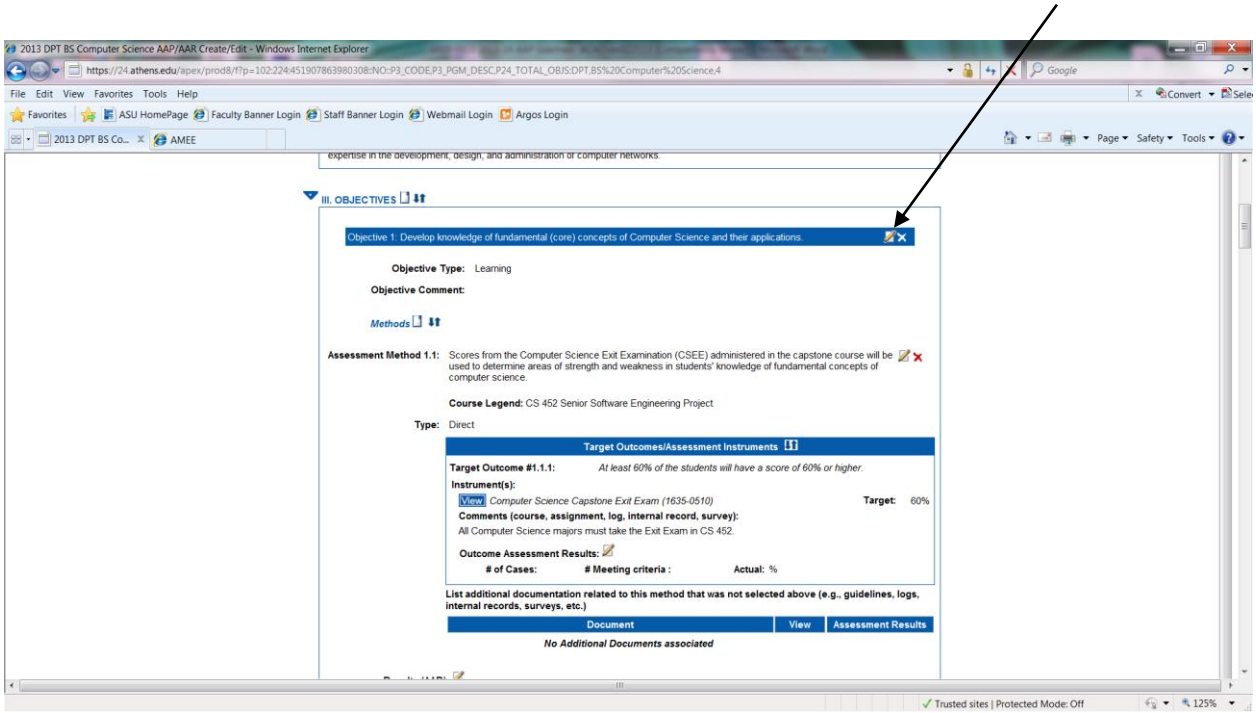
d. **Click on the "Edit Program"** button to open edit mode and enter your AAP.



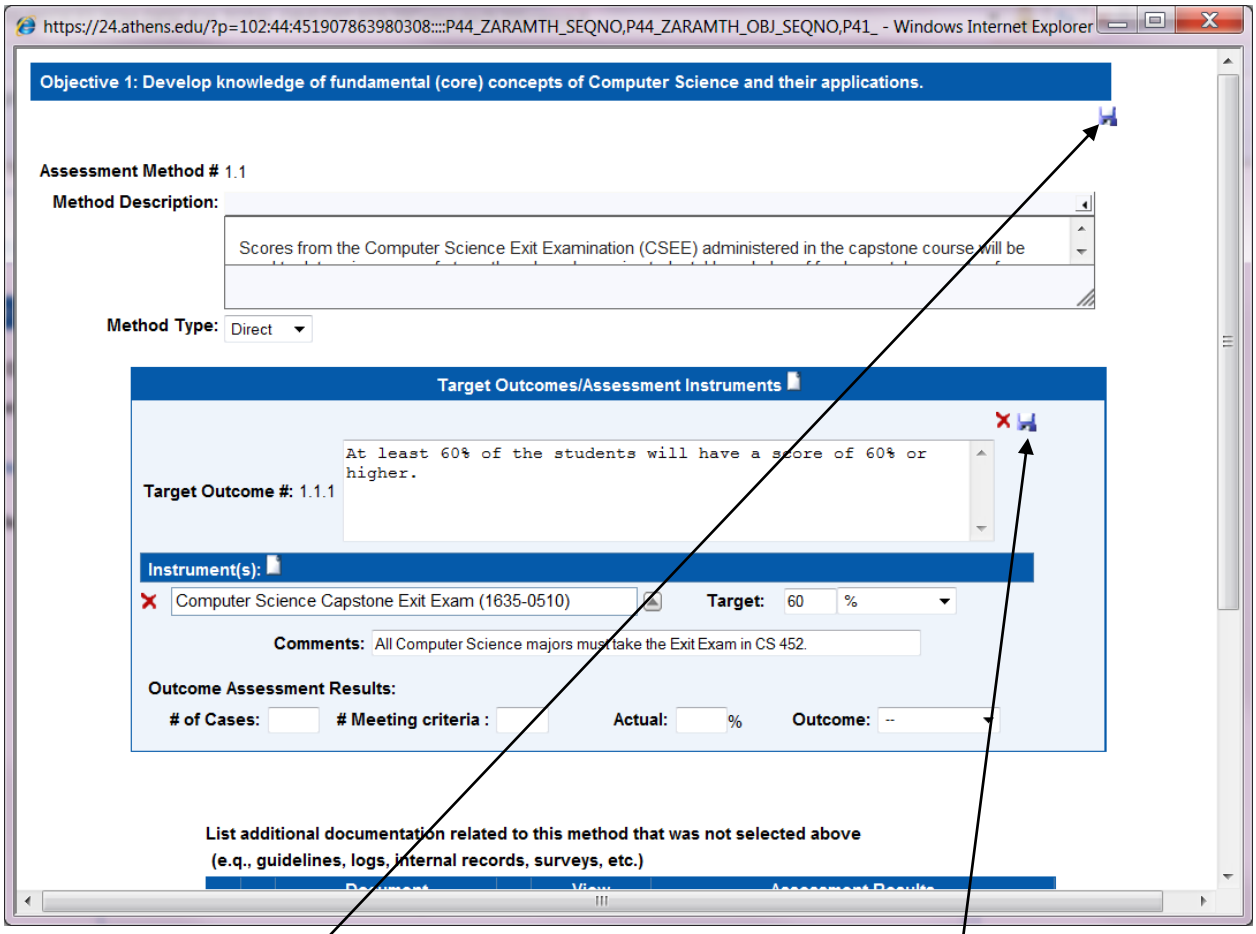
2. The screenshot below shows what you should see. **Note:** There is a lock beside both the AAP and the AAR. If both the AAP and the AAR are unlocked, only work in the AAP at this time. To view the Mission Statement and Program Purpose/Goals, click on the + sign and they will open. *(see page 7 for more information on changes to the Mission Statement and/or Program Purpose/Goals)*



3. The Objectives, Assessment Methods, and Target Outcomes are the ones from 2018-19. To change an Objective, Assessment Method or Target Outcome, **click on the pencil and paper icon**.



4. A new screen will open allowing you to edit the item selected.



5. You must click on the disk icon to save any revisions or changes you make. If a change is made in the Method Description, click the disk in the upper right corner.

6. If a change or revision is made in the Target Outcome, click on the disk in the Target Outcome area.

Saving changes:
Each time you make a change in an area, you **MUST** save it before you make changes in another area**.**

7. Continue this process throughout your AAP until you have reviewed and updated as needed all of the Objectives, Assessment Methods, and Target Outcomes.

Associated documents/instruments:

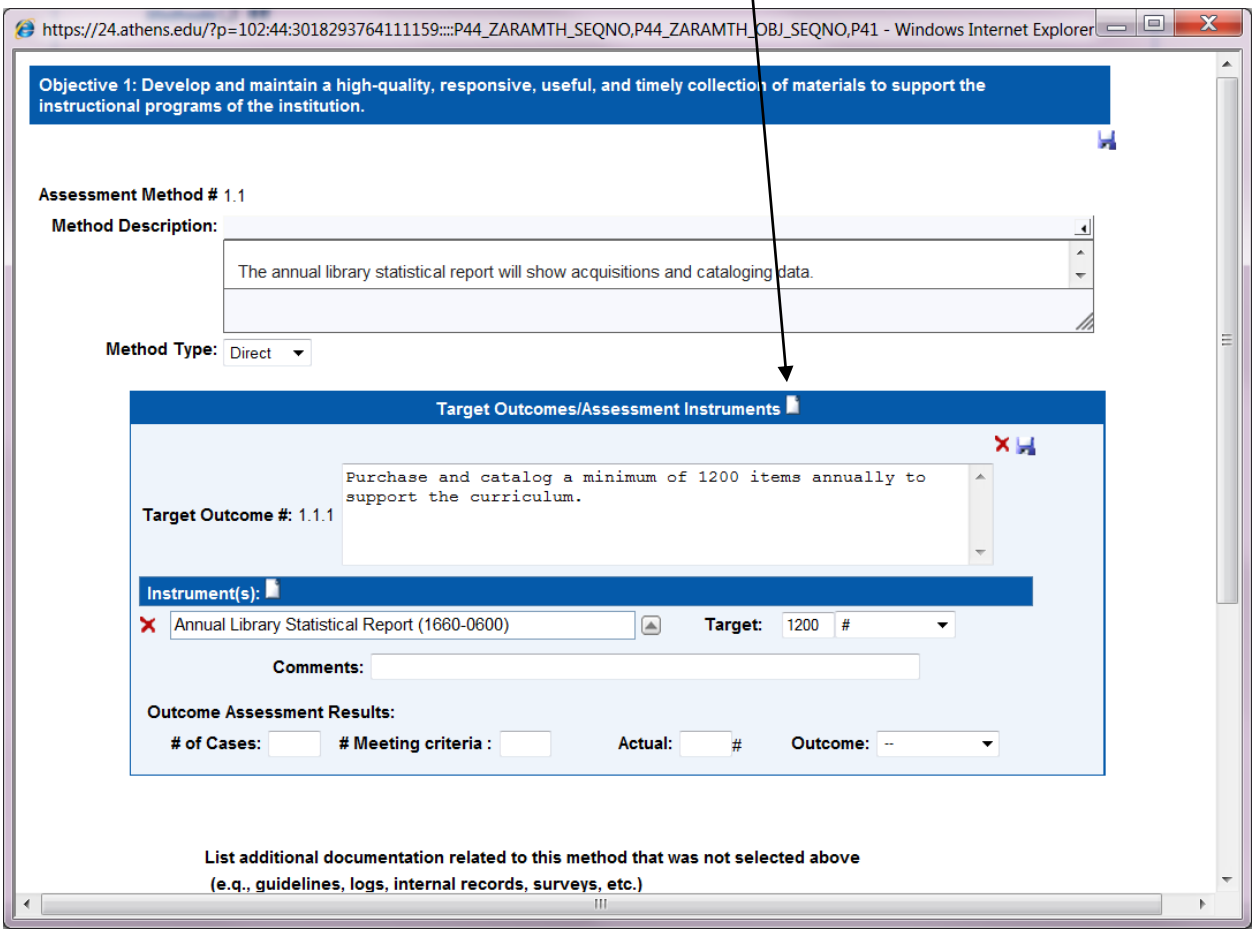
a. Every Target Outcome must have an associated assessment instrument. In some cases, the same instrument may be used for more than one target outcome.

b. The assessment instrument must meet the following criteria:
   i. Ensure that the information/data captured through or in the instrument reflects the target outcome(s).

c. If a new instrument is to be developed, contact OIRA for a control number to be assigned BEFORE you complete your 2019-20 AAP. Once the document is developed, send it electronically to OIRA to be uploaded into the database. (The assessment instrument will be populated in your AAP at this point.)

d. Please be sure that any newly created instruments and/or any revisions to current instruments are developed and sent to OIRA before **August 1, 2019**.

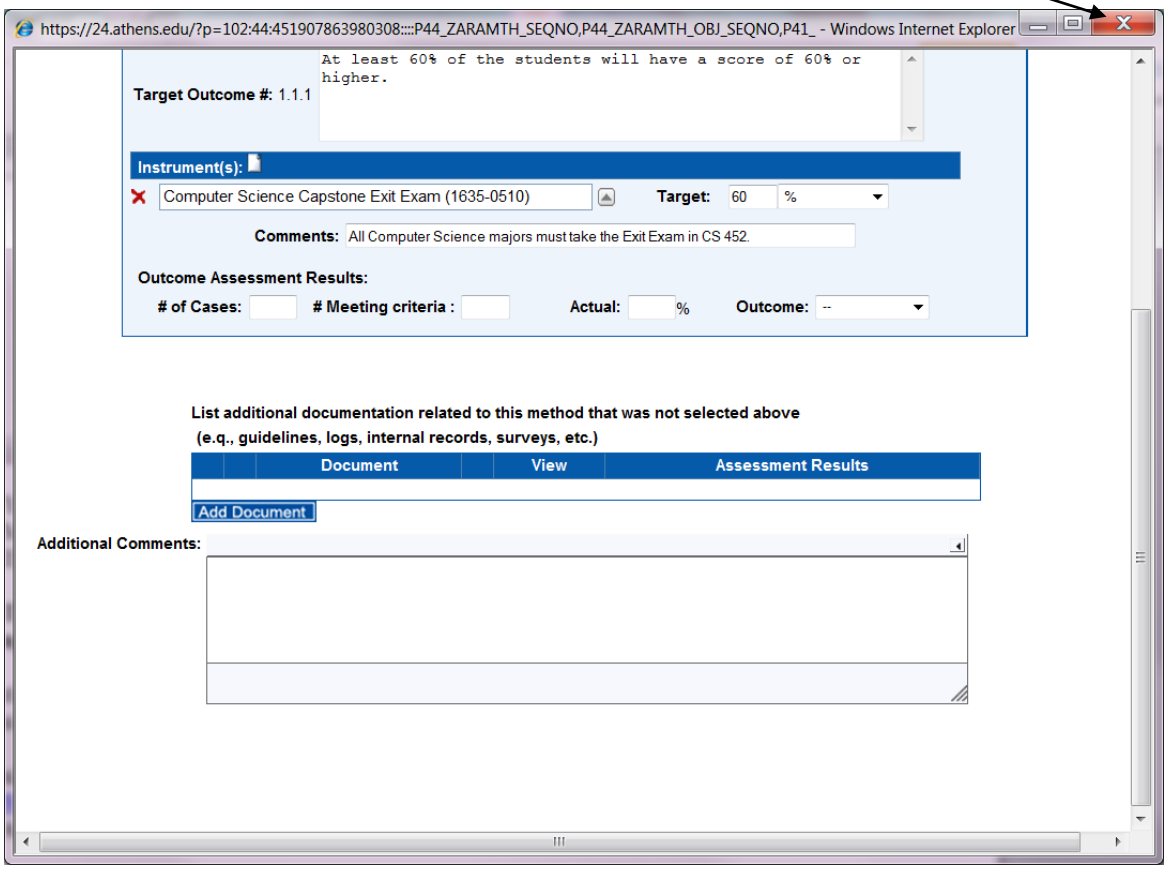
8. Should you need to **add a Target Outcome, click on the paper** beside the Target Outcomes/Assessment Instruments in the blue band. A new Target Outcome will be added below the last Target Outcome and will be numbered accordingly (i.e. if the last Target Outcome is 1.1.2, then the one added will be 1.1.3). If they need to be re-ordered, call or email us and we will be happy to assist.



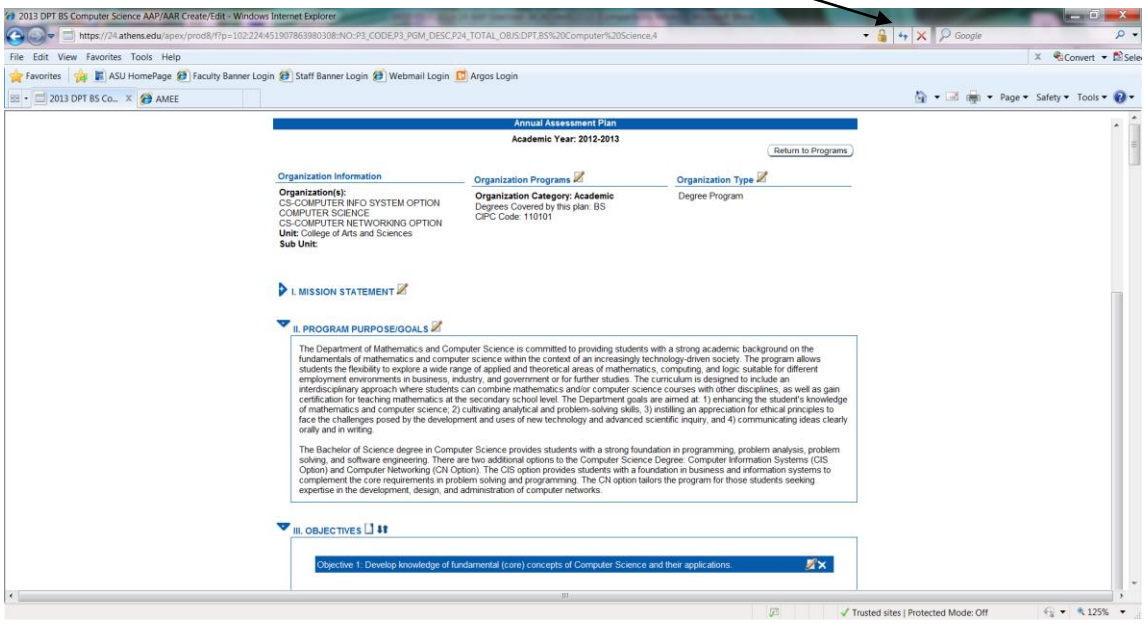
Continue going through the Annual Assessment Plan until you have completed all your revisions, **saving each one as you go**.

Should you update or change an instrument, please send the revised/new instrument to us at pamela.clark@athens.edu *as soon as possible* and we will upload it in the database so it will populate the AAP.

9. Once you have completed editing a section, click on the Red X at the top right corner of the box to close the editing screen and return to the AAP.



10. Click the refresh screen icon in your tool bar. The AAP should refresh and display the updated document.



As always, please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions or concerns.

Contact Information:

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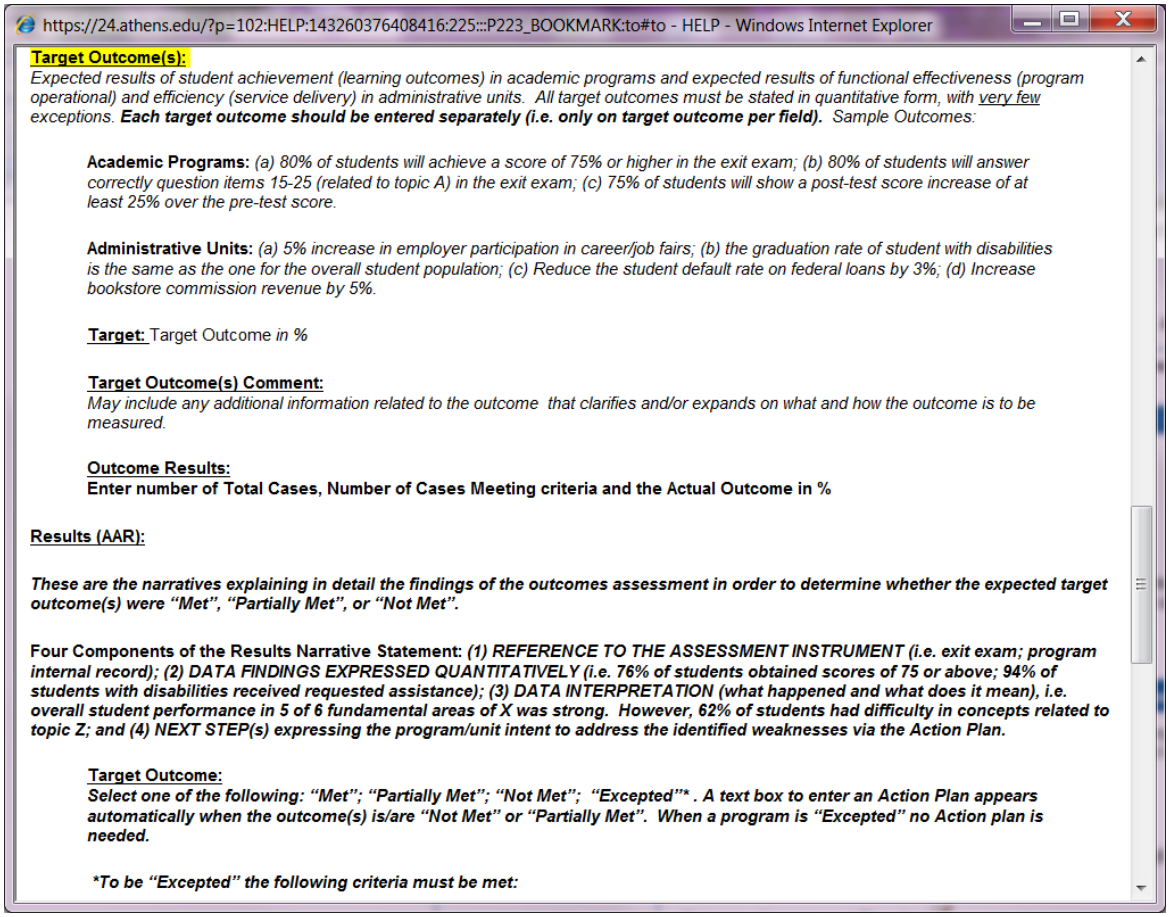
Please refer to the Planning Guidelines on the attached pages.

Using Built-in Definitions and Examples of Outcomes Assessment

Definitions in AMOS: Hover over a word or phrase and click. The definition will open.

Assistance with definitions and examples of Outcome Assessments can be found by hovering over a word or phrase. An arrow and question mark will appear beside any word or phrase that contains a definition. Simply click on the word/phrase and the definition or example will open in a new window.



PLANNING GUIDELINES

1) 2019-2020 Planning Assumptions (Revised for Academic & Administrative Offices):

a) Depending on the number of assessment instruments/methods stated in your 2018-19 AAP, at least 33% to 50% of your assessment data **was collected during the 2018 Fall Semester and stored in your internal program files.** Please make sure that your term by term data is stored and ready for submission to OIRA upon request, if needed. **The Annual Assessment Reports (AARs) and Action Plans (APs) for** 2018-2019 **will be due in September 2019.**

b) This preliminary data alone may/may not be enough to allow conclusions regarding a specific target outcome, but will typically suggest a direction ("red/yellow flag") as to whether the target outcome(s) will/will not be met. This information allows you to make preliminary assumptions useful for planning your 2019-20 assessment methodology. Please refer to # 4 below.

c) Typically, most changes will relate to objectives, expected target outcomes, and assessment methodology.

2) Changes to one or more element(s) (Part I through VI) of the 2019-20 AAP

Changes to one or more elements of the AAP for the assessment year 2019-20 are NOT required. However, **the review process is required** to ensure continuous faculty/staff deliberation in setting appropriate objectives, target outcomes, and in formulating assessment methodology.

3) Review of AAP Elements

a) **Part I. College/Administrative Department Mission Statement**

i) Changes needed **only if** the College/Administrative Department plans to change/modify its mission effective in 2019-20. **Changes require written approval by the College Dean and/or the PV/VPAA or VP of the department.**

ii) All changes to the Mission Statement **will require** changes in the Catalog, Athens State Website, and any other official communication from the College. **Please notify OIRA, the Printing & Publications Office, and the Webmaster (Website/webpage).** This is an area frequently overlooked resulting in major inconsistencies throughout.

b) **Part II. Department and Program Purpose and Goals**

i) Changes needed only if the Department and/or Program plan to change/modify its purpose and goals effective in or after fall 2019. These changes require Administrative Office, Department Chair/Dean approval for academic programs and Vice President approval for administrative programs.

ii) All changes to the Department's and Program's Purpose and Goals may require changes in the Catalog, ATSU Website, and any other official communication. **Please notify OIRA, the Printing & Publications Office, and the Webmaster.**

4) Part III. Objectives, Target Outcome(s), and Assessment Methodology

a) This part is where most changes may be made as programs review their preliminary assessment data and decide on whether to make adjustments at this stage for the next assessment cycle.

b) Conducting the review of Part III: Questions to ask…

i) Are objectives still meaningful for the function of the program? In answering this question, faculty and staff may consider changes to services, processes, or curriculum and/or course(s), that may call for modification of the objective(s) during the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

ii) Have they been achieved in the previous period(s)?

iii) Has the program/office measured all objectives stated in the 2018-19 AAP?

(1) <u>If no</u>, which ones have not been measured? Why not?

(a) Is it impossible or extremely difficult to collect data for this objective (i.e. adjunct faculty, too many courses selected for assessment, course not required to all students, employers' reluctance provide information, etc.)?

(b) <u>It is highly recommended that programs review the course(s) selected for assessment to ensure maximum efficiency in the assessment process.</u>
(i) In conducting learning assessment, fewer and more skill-based targeted courses at strategic points (entry-mid-end) throughout the curriculum facilitate the process and generally produce valid and reliable results.

(c) **Academic Programs Only**---Should the program prioritize objectives and focus accordingly?
(i) For instance, "Knowledge Base" is obviously a high priority for each individual program. However, the same skill may be more relevant to one degree than to another.

1. Examples:
   a. While "quantitative skills" are important to all, such skills should be of a higher priority to math, computer science, science, or business majors for which this skill is a major component of their knowledge base than to other majors (i.e. Arts and Humanities) for

which this skill is not a major component of knowledge base in the discipline.

(2) If yes, is the faculty/administrative staff satisfied with the preliminary results?

(3) Does the preliminary assessment data suggest that the outcome will not be met or will be partially met?

(a) If no, is the faculty or administrative staff comfortable with the validity of the results at this time?

(b) If yes, can the faculty or administrative staff identify the reason(s)?
(i) Could it be…?
1. unrealistic target outcome(s) (Please note that "lowering the standards so everybody can make it" is not an acceptable/honest approach to outcomes assessment.)
2. inappropriate assessment methodology (i.e. flawed assessment instrument (validity), wrong course(s) and/or curriculum point selected for assessing the specific learning skill, small sample of students, changes in course or curriculum content, etc.)

(c) Are there any steps that faculty can take now to avoid the same situation in the next assessment cycle?

(d) Given the suggested findings of the preliminary data, is it appropriate to wait until more data is collected and a pattern/trend is developed before any changes for the next cycle are made?
(i) What are the PROS and CONS?

In planning your assessment activities for 2019-20, please review data results from 2017-18 forward to make determinations on changes/adjustments.

Note: The principle of continuous improvement does not call for "punitive" measures against programs that do not meet quantitative objectives. Instead, the principle relies in the thoughtful and honest consideration of alternative courses of action to realize improvement and enhance the teaching and learning process.

5) Part IV: Implementation Plan (Sections A & B)

a) Changes **are needed** if the program/office alters any component of the implementation of its assessment activities (i.e. objectives, assessment methodology, assessment responsibilities, timeframes, etc.)

b) Please make sure that any change made in Part III is integrated and/or updated in Section A- Narrative Statement. (Section B-Objectives/Methods Matrix is automatically populated/updated by AMOS as you enter your assessment instruments under your assessment methodology.)

6) Part V: Dissemination of Assessment Findings

Changes **are needed only** if the program/organization alters the way in which assessment findings are reported and communicated to faculty, staff, OIRA or any other constituency. This may also include timeframes and data reporting formats.

7) Part VI: Use of Assessment Findings for Continuous Improvement

a) Changes **are needed only** if the program/organization alters the way in which assessment findings are used.

b) Please remember that the **use of assessment data in program planning and review is a major element of institutional effectiveness under SACS Comprehensive Standard** CS 3.3.1 and should be documented.

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Plan Format

The assessment plan comprises the six sections listed below as formatted in the attached template. A control number, assigned by OIRA and tracked through the document control mechanism of AMOS, uniquely identifies the organization, unit and subunit sponsoring each one of the 65 AAPs that collectively measure Institutional Effectiveness (IE). For each learning objective and outcome identified, **there will be** a corresponding section IV: "Procedures, Methods, and Measurement Criteria" featuring four subsections as listed below.

I. College/Organization Mission Statement
II. Department and Program/Organizational Unit/Sub-unit Purpose and Goals
III. Objectives, Target Outcomes, and Assessment Methods
IV. Implementation Plan
V. Dissemination of Assessment Findings
VI. Use of Assessment Findings for Continuous Improvement

I. MISSION STATEMENT

Mission: the values and philosophy of the College/Organization: a vision of what the entire curriculum or program is supposed to do. The mission statement must convey the areas of activities derived from ATSU mission that each college undertakes to further the mission of the university. It must also reference the educational and service components stated in ATSU mission. (Research component, although not required at ATSU, can be referenced if such activities can be documented by the respective faculty/department/college.) This statement should be IDENTICAL to the one stated in the University Catalog, Website, and any other official publication.

II. DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM PURPOSE (GOALS)

Purpose/Goals: the general aims of the Unit/Sub-Unit or Program and its curriculum is to support student learning and overall educational experience.

Make sure that the purpose as written supports the organization's/department's mission within the context of the College and/or University mission. The program purpose should provide the framework for determining the more specific learning objectives and expected outcomes of your program, and should be consistent with those of the Office of Vice President and/or College overall.

III. OBJECTIVES, TARGET (EXPECTED) LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY (central component of the assessment plan)

Academic:

Learning Objectives: the knowledge, skills, and competencies student majors acquire through the program (what is to be achieved?). Student learning outcomes may be a combination of the following: Content (Cognitive Learning): Knowledge of a subject matter; Skill Acquisition (Behavioral Learning): Comprehension of a topic, demonstration of a

competency, etc.; and Attitudes (Affective Learning): Awareness, interest, concern, etc. Make sure that your learning objectives are clearly stated, realistic, achievable, and measurable.

- **Learning objectives/outcomes (typically 3-9).** Each objective/outcome must:
  - be stated **operationally** (i.e. expected student behaviors/achievements)
  - be aggregate, focusing on the program and not on the individual students or courses
  - specify the skills, competencies, understandings, and values that students should have acquired as a result of having completed the program of study.
  - individually specify the measurement procedures, methods, and criteria under Section IV.

- For nationally-accredited programs/college (i.e. College of Business and College of Education) all of the outcomes listed under their respective accrediting criteria will need to be specifically included, and the respective procedures, measures, and criteria be designed to yield evidence of those requirements for program outcomes.

Administrative:

All administrative/support organizational units/sub-units will formulate both operational (what is to be achieved) and service-delivery (how is service delivered) objectives.

Because your organizational unit is providing a service to students, the objectives must definitely include service attributes (i.e. process timeliness, staff courtesy, quality of the information/assistance provided, etc.) in addition to operational metrics that measure program effectiveness. How your unit performed will be reflected in the workload of the office and in the level of student satisfaction with the service provided. Examples of program effectiveness (workload) metrics include institutional data such as the number of students who are qualified/eligible and/or requested the service, the number of students actually served, amount of financial aid awards, etc. *(Please contact OIRA for **one-to-one** assistance with this matter.)*

Make sure that your objectives are clearly stated, realistic, achievable, and measurable.

- **Objectives/outcomes.** Each objective/outcome must:
  - be stated **operationally** (i.e. expected service and operational results)
  - be aggregate, focusing on the service program and not on individual students
  - individually specify the measurement procedures, methods, and criteria.

Assessment Methodology

The procedures, methods and measurement criteria **must** include the following:

- the operational definition of each one of the competencies (performance indicators) being assessed within each learning objective and expected outcome (what specifically is to be measured)

- how will each competency be assessed (what method or instrument)

- where in the curriculum those competencies will be assessed (course-curriculum map)

- the group performance standard to be achieved (target outcome that defines the level of acceptance as evidence of achieved performance)

- Assessment Method(s):
  - Type of Assessment Method: Direct or Indirect
  - Evaluation method or instrument used (exams, projects, portfolios, surveys, etc.)
  - Location in curriculum
  - Operational Definitions of each learning objective and outcome
  - Supporting Documentation (Exam, Project, Survey, etc., identified by name and control number, and frequency of application (i.e. annually)

Notes:

- Since performance is often not observable, indicators of performance must be sought. These indicators are basically the criteria that will allow you to "recognize performance when you see it".
  - Performance indicators must be stated operationally, in a way that allow for quantitative measurement (metrics) in order to make objective interpretation of results.
  - Performance standard for each competency must be stated previously to the actual assessment since results from the latter will be measured against those standards.

- The method of assessment will vary depending on the learning outcome(s) being measured. You may choose from a variety of DIRECT and INDIRECT assessment methods. **Indirect methods alone cannot be the sole means of assessing learning outcomes.**

- Use of multiple methods (direct and indirect) is usually needed to assure accuracy of measurement.

- The same assessment method or instrument can be used to measure several learning objectives/outcomes. For example in the academic programs, senior presentations in a capstone course might be used to assess discipline-related knowledge, oral and written communication skills, and problem-solving abilities and in the administrative programs, the Graduating Senior Exit Survey may be used to assess objectives from several organizational units.

- Inventory your existing evaluation strategies. Some may need revisions to add/delete question items to reflect new reporting standards and documentation. (Please consult with the OIRA for assistance on this matter.)

- Measurements must meet statistical validity and reliability standards. Since "not all measures were created equal" and "there is no such thing as perfection in measurement", you must decide which ones will work best in testing the expected outcomes that you have identified. Please remember that the assessment objective is not to gather data and return "results", but rather to identify "what matters most in student learning".

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan has three basic components and must accomplish the following:

- define responsibilities for tasks related to assessment, including the data collection, data analysis, and reporting

- specify the data collection timetable

- display in matrix form how the learning objectives and expected outcomes relate to the methods/assessment tools used for measurement.

V. DISSEMINATION OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Please quote the following statement: "Assessment results will be featured yearly in the Annual Assessment Report (AAR)."

Note: To comply with the Athens State assessment cycle, assessment results will be presented annually as a separate document called Annual Assessment Report (AAR) due in September of the next academic year as follows:

- Assessment data findings for 2018-19 will be reported in September 2019.
- Assessment data findings for 2019-20 will be reported in September 2020.

This section identifies the specific forum/mechanisms and frequency for disseminating assessment results to program faculty (how and where results will be shared).

Sample statement: *"Assessment results will be disseminated to program faculty at the _____ (internal department/college event, i.e. retreat, annual meeting, etc.). Findings will be fully discussed to determine the extent to which the curriculum is functioning as intended, and to agree on any needed changes. Assessment results will be made available online to program faculty two weeks prior to the ____ (event cited above) to allow time for individual consideration and analysis of the information."*

VI. USE OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This section provides the framework for **documenting the link** between assessment findings and program review, planning, and decision-making, an accreditation requirement. This information will document the "Closing the Loop" Statements required by SACS.

Sample Statement: *"Specific Action Plans, agreed upon by the faculty/Vice President of _____and the staff of the _____, will be developed for each objective/outcome on which one or more weakness (es) has/have been identified by the assessment findings. The specific improvement strategies, tasks/action steps, responsibilities, resources, and timelines will be outlined. Action Plans will be tracked for implementation and the impact of the actions taken will be evaluated against initial goals and expected target outcomes. Annual Assessment Reports (AAR) will document the actual Action Plan(s) by the program."*

Note: An Action Plan Template for programs' use will be populated in AMOS once the Annual Assessment Results narrative and Target Outcomes are completed. Please call our office for any assistance or questions.