

GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT TERMS

Action Plan Course of action planned and agreed upon by faculty/staff as a result of assessment findings. It indicates the specific changes that a given program/unit plans to implement in the next cycle based on assessment results. The Action Plan is a part of the Annual Assessment Report (AAR).

AMEE *Assessment Management Evaluation Entry*
Data capture and analysis component of AMOS, the web-based infrastructure that supports assessment and accreditation activities. AMEE consists of three main functions: Maintenance, User, and Reporting. When used together all three functions provide a comprehensive system of collecting and evaluating assessment data from students, faculty, staff, and external respondents. AMEE serves as a survey tool featuring a variety of capabilities that include: target audience(s) selection and automatic e-mail notification; branching (skip patterns), automatic availability for faculty, course and non-class related assessments; formatted and non-formatted raw data for reporting or exporting to statistical software; and archiving to prevent loss of information.

AMOS *Assessment Management Online System*
This is the web-based management system supporting the assessment process. AMOS, developed internally by the IT Department in coordination with OIRA, is fully compatible with BANNER and interactive with AMEE. AMOS features a security system that allows for different levels of users roles, a tracking mechanism that stores and links documents to organizations and processes (via control numbers), and consolidates the AAP, AAR, and AP. AMOS has the capability to handle all accreditation-related documentation electronically.

Annual Assessment Plan (AAP) Required document that sets the priorities for assessing program outcomes and delineates the methodology and standards upon which performance will be measured. Each program submits its AAP (for the next academic year) in April

Annual Assessment Report (AAR)

Required document that reports the outcome assessment findings measured against expected performance and the consequent actions that the program will take based on those findings. Each program submits its AAR by September.

ARGOS

Reporting system for institutional and assessment-related data.

Assessment Cycle

To obtain completed outcomes measures every year, the assessment cycle at ATSU employs a *parallel* approach. Programs and administrative/support units plan their assessment activities for the next academic year (plan), collect and analyze data during the academic year (measure), and report findings and implement corrective actions (act) as needed. The cycle consists of 3 phases:

Phase I: The Annual Assessment Plan (AAP) is submitted in April for the next academic year.

Phase II: Data is collected and analyzed throughout the academic year and findings are communicated/interpreted by faculty and staff.

Phase III: The Annual Assessment Report (AAR) summarizing findings for the preceding academic year, and Action Plan (AP) is submitted in September.

**Assessment Methods
Direct**

Authentic evaluations of demonstrated success in achieving outcomes, evidenced by a clear and valid connection between the specific outcome and the data gathering method/technique used. Direct methods are used by academic programs (normed or in-house developed exams, senior projects, portfolios, etc.) and administrative functions (internal records, or log systems of day-to-day operations or third-party audits or certifications).

Indirect

Rely mostly on opinions and perceptions and, therefore, are not acceptable as sole means for outcome assessments. When used as complements to direct methods of assessment, they

are completely appropriate and useful. Most common indirect methods include surveys and focus groups.

Assessment Organization Organizational structure of the outcomes assessment process that provides a mechanism for quality assurance through specific roles and responsibilities for faculty and staff throughout the University.

Executive Assessment Committee (EAC) The Executive Assessment Committee (EAC) consists of deans, faculty, and staff members representing all academic and administrative programs. The EAC assists with the coordination of planning and reporting deadlines and will communicate this information to the university community. Committee members appointed as Assessment Coordinators work with individual units on developing Program Learning Outcomes, assuring they are congruent with the university's vision, mission, and goals. See Assessment Program Coordinators.

Assessment Program Coordinators Consist of faculty and staff from each of the academic departments and administrative/support organizations responsible for providing quality assurance in the planning, development, implementation, and internal review and approval process of assessment activities at the program level.

Assessment Results Data findings Conclusions drawn from the analysis of assessment information to determine whether expected outcomes were achieved (i.e. levels of student learning or support function performance are increasing/decreasing; significant number of students excel or are deficient in a specific area; student satisfaction with a particular service is high/low, etc.)

Assessment Types Formative Provide an assessment of students' experiences and progression during their time at the University. Data is collected on a routine basis and is used to adjust instructional or administrative practices and/or procedures in an effort to address and maximize learning, effectiveness of program operations and service efficiency.

Summative Provide an overall assessment of students' entire experiences at the program and/or University level. Data is collected at the time of graduation.

Athens State University Outcomes Assessment System Processes, documentation and tools by which performance indicators are identified; outcomes are measured and analyzed, and data findings are reported. The Outcomes Assessment System supports Institutional Effectiveness.

Benchmark A point of reference or standard for measurement typically considered “best practice”. Performance is compared against the “best” to gain perspective on institutional performance. Benchmarks can be compared against external or internal sources.

“Closing-the-Loop” Evidence of a direct link between the use of assessment results and program review, planning and decision-making. Commonly referred to as “*connecting the dots*”.

Continuous Improvement Operational viewpoint that reflects an ongoing and systematic methodology to attain quality improvement in academics, service, and administrative processes. Continuous improvements may result in changes in curriculum, support services, and administrative operations and procedures.

Control Number Control Numbers constitute the document tracking mechanism in AMOS. Each number is unique and identifies documents used in planning, research, and assessment activities. The code structure follows a hierarchical pattern with a syntax consisting of 8 numbers separated by a dash (xxxx-xxxx). The first 4 digits represent the sponsoring academic program or administrative organizational unit under each VP office and the Office of the President. The last 4 digits feature a prefix (first 2 digits) which identifies the type of document and a suffix (next 2 digits) which provides a chronological order to the document. Control Numbers are assigned by OIPRA and are displayed on the bottom left-side of all documents followed by the date (Mo/Yr) of the last document revision.

Goal Aimed end result or achievement toward which institutional, program, and functional level efforts are directed. Goals can be viewed as the desired “state of affairs” pointing to where the institution, individual programs, and functional units want to be.

Input Refers to the amount and type of resources put in place to accomplish a designated result (execute an activity, a project,

or a program). These resources may include funds, faculty, staff, materials, equipment and facilities.

Institutional Effectiveness The performance standard that determines the extent to which the University is achieving its goals as stated in its mission. Institutional Effectiveness is impacted by the combined performance of all academic programs, student support, and administrative areas of the University. Institutional Effectiveness is achieved through research-based planning, budgeting, and evaluation.

Institutional Effectiveness Cycle Management tool developed by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to assist senior and middle-level staff with the organization, execution, and monitoring of planning, budgeting, and assessment processes.

Institutional Effectiveness Matrix Comprehensive and dynamic working document that links performance indicators to twelve university goals to reflect the extent to which the University is reaching its goals.

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSA) Students' achieved competencies as a result of having gone through the curriculum (learning outcomes). KSAs 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, and Attitudes (Affective Learning): Awareness, interest, concern, etc. The faculty in every academic program stipulates the KSAs appropriate to the field of study.

Mission Statement University A statement that reflects the values and philosophy of the University and conveys a vision of what is supposed to do in reference to educational and service components.

Program (Academic Departments /Units) A statement that conveys the areas of activities derived from the University mission that each academic department undertakes to support the educational mission of the University.

Program (Administrative/ Support Unit) A statement that conveys the areas of activities derived from the University mission that each administrative functional unit undertakes to service and support the students and operate the University.

<p>Objectives Learning</p>	<p>Knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that students should attain by completing the degree program. KSAs should be specific to the major, in addition to the overall educational objectives of Athens State University. Objectives are sometimes treated as synonymous with outcomes, though outcomes are usually more detailed, behavioral in nature, and stated in operational terms.</p>
<p>Program-Operational (Administrative)</p>	<p>Intended results that demonstrate the effectiveness of an administrative or support unit based on functional responsibility.</p>
<p>Service Delivery</p>	<p>These objectives measure the quality of the service on two dimensions: the quality and/or relevance of the service itself (service effectiveness) and the service delivery process (service efficiency). Performance of service organizations is reflected in constituents or stakeholders' satisfaction or quality ratings of services provided measured via opinion surveys</p>
<p>Operational Definition</p>	<p>A detailed set of observable conditions that allow classification of observations to define a variable. It allows the researcher to transform an abstract/theoretical concept into something observable and measurable by providing an exact description of how to derive a value for the characteristic being measured. Operational definitions must be valid and reliable.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Actual (achieved) results and impact of an academic program or administrative/support organization.</p>
<p>Learning Outcome(s)</p>	<p>Learning accomplishments of graduates that provide insight on whether or not the curriculum is meeting its proposed goals. Outcomes are operational statements describing specific student behaviors that evidence the acquisition of desired KSAs.</p>
<p>Program-Operational (Administrative outcomes)</p>	<p>Administrative units' accomplishments through student and/or administrative service (support function) provided. Reflect the actual achieved results and their impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations.</p>
<p>Service Delivery</p>	<p>Effectiveness and efficiency of the services provided measured on two dimensions: (a) quality/relevance of the service itself</p>

(service effectiveness), and (b) the service delivery process (efficiency in providing the service)

Target Outcomes	The pre-determined (expected) group performance standard to be achieved that defines the level of acceptance as evidence of achieved performance.
Output	Refers to the results obtained from the resources (input) put behind any specific activity, project, or program. Outputs are also known as deliverables.
Performance Indicators	
Academic Programs	Explicit definitions of what students must do to demonstrate proficiency at a specific level on the content standards (outcomes). Performance indicators are determined by each individual academic department/college.
Administrative/Support	Explicit definitions of service quality and productivity measures to demonstrate functional performance at a specific level. Performance indicators are determined by each administrative unit/office.
Performance Metric	Quantitative indicator used to evaluate the effectiveness or quality of a process, service or product.
Program Purpose	General aims (goals) of the program (department) and its curriculum centered on its educational goals as the framework for determining specific learning objectives and expected outcomes.
Reliability	The extent to which data results can be replicated (i.e. obtain similar results over time/free).
Scoring Rubric	An assessment tool used to evaluate (or quantify) data that is qualitative in nature. Scoring scales consist of a set of pre-determined criteria that define descriptors ability at each level of performance and assign values to each level (usually on a 4-point scale). Levels referred to are proficiency levels, which describe a continuum from excellent to unacceptable.

**Summary Use of
Assessment Results**

Spreadsheet that summarizes academic programs and administrative support functions' use of assessment data to effect change for continuous improvement. Specific actions or changes made as a result of the evaluation process are categorized based on organizational function: academic, academic support/extracurricular; student support, and administrative support.

Survey

A means of gathering data on the opinions, feelings, impressions, or satisfaction of a group. Question items on survey instruments can be structured, open-ended, or a combination, and must meet validity and consistency standards. All surveys throughout the university must have an identification code (control number) assigned by the Office of Institutional Research, and Assessment.

**Point of Service Surveys
(POS)**

These are surveys specific to an organization, typically an administrative or support function. POS surveys are administered by the respective unit/sub-unit at the time of service and measure a set of standardized service attributes and other data items, unique to the specific function. All student support and administrative service organizational units are required to conduct a POS survey as part of their outcomes assessment activities. Website Radio Buttons – “Rate Our Services”

University-wide Surveys

These are standard university-wide surveys administered and/or coordinated with the Office of Institutional Research, and Assessment and applied to all organizations across the board based on the category of objective being measured. There are six university-wide surveys used for outcomes assessment purposes: Faculty-Course Evaluation, Graduate Follow-Up Survey, Employer Survey, and the Graduating Senior Exit Survey.

Validity

Extent to which the measurement actually measures what is intended.