



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

OFFICE OF
STUDENT LIFE ASSESSMENT
AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Assessment Champions Handbook

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Welcome, Champions!



Assessment Champions Overview The Division of Student Life Assessment Champions comprise a committee of staff who support student learning and success by providing leadership, oversight, and management for departmental and divisional assessment, evaluations, and institutional priorities. The purpose of the Assessment Champions program is to increase accountability and credibility, enhance the culture of assessment and evaluation, and improve efficiency within the Division of Student Life.

Mission The Division of Student Life Assessment Champions program cultivates departmental assessment experts that think critically about how their department's work impacts the student experience and that serve as the voice of assessment within their respective departments in effort to continually improve the campus community.

Program Outcomes

The Assessment Champions program is designed to...

1. Facilitate increased awareness within and between departments regarding best practices and assessment being a way of approaching work, rather than an addition to that work.
2. Provide meaningful opportunities for Champions to develop knowledge and skills in student affairs assessment.

Membership

- Champions are selected for appointment by their supervisors. Selection should involve individuals with interest in and/or responsibility for assessment.
- Each Champion will hold his or her appointment until his or her department's supervisor appoints someone else or until there is a natural reason for attrition.
- A current list of members may be found at dlassessment.utk.edu/about/#assessment-champions

Meeting Schedule

- Assessment Champions will hold one hour standing meetings on the second Thursday of every month.
- When needed, Assessment Champions may meet remotely, hold additional meetings or extend the times of meetings.

Roles & Responsibilities

Assessment Champions serve as the primary liaison between the Office of Assessment and Strategic Initiatives (OASI) and other departments in the Division of Student Life. The role of the Assessment Champion includes the following:

- I. Act as the primary resource for communication on assessment initiatives, timelines, and best practices within your department
- II. Promote assessment development opportunities and encourage participation by all members within your department
- III. Assist Directors in timely assessment planning and reporting, including departmental assessment plans, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), activity codes, annual data report, and other assessment-related tasks
- IV. Serve as a mentor and resource for assessment to staff in your department in order to ensure that appropriate assessment methods and tools are utilized, including using Baseline as the survey tool, notifying OASI and IRB where human subjects are involved, and ensuring that departments close the loop and use findings to implement actions for continuous improvement
- V. Play an active role in the annual DSL Assessment Symposium, typically held in May, by promoting and facilitating registration within their departments, serving during the event as a go-to resource for questions, and assisting with other requests from OASI as needed.
- VI. Serve as administrators in the Campus Labs platform adding and removing user permissions to each module for all staff within the department.

Champion Expectations

Champions are expected **to 1) communicate regularly, 2) serve as a mentor and resource, and 3) maintain a collegial attitude** regarding assessment for their departments and within the Division of Student Life. This section details expectations related to each role and responsibilities as described in the previous section.

I. Act as the primary resource for communication

Champions should regularly consult and share information from the following sources in a manner agreed upon with their Director (during or in addition to regular staff meetings, once a month during meetings, etc):

- ✓ **Champion Meetings.** The most pertinent information will be shared at the monthly Champion meetings. This information is meant to be passed on to your department; if you miss a meeting, please review the minutes in detail and share all appropriate information with your department.
- ✓ **eVOLVe Newsletters.** The monthly eVOLVe newsletter contains best practices, professional development opportunities, deadlines, and assessment resources. Prioritize and share these throughout the month with your department.

- ✓ **Email.** Occasionally OASI will send emails with important assessment-related information. Sometimes these will be sent to Directors with you Cced – in those cases, please assist your Director in following through and help them liaise questions and/or feedback to OASI.

Champions maintain a “We can do it!” attitude throughout their communications and face challenges with a service-oriented attitude, connecting colleagues with OASI for clarification and help as needed.

Celebration is also a key part of the Champion role. 🎉 Remember to acknowledge and celebrate the assessment accomplishments of your department! Invite colleagues to share their assessment results and plans for improvement and celebrate their ability to close the loop by applause or other swag/awards. Reach out to OASI for swag or other tokens of appreciation to share as rewards for your team.

II. Promote assessment development opportunities

Champions should help colleagues across the Division gain skills and knowledge of assessment by regularly sharing professional development opportunities shared via the following sources:

- ✓ **eVOLve Monthly Newsletter.** Each issue of eVOLve includes at least one professional development opportunity.
- ✓ **Upcoming Assessment Conferences.** OASI maintains a list of upcoming professional conferences. Make sure your department knows of these opportunities and encourage them to share their work (and remind them they need IRB approval to publish or present results not in the aggregate!).
- ✓ **Quarterly webinars or OASI-sponsored opportunities,** including the Spring Assessment Symposium where Champions are asked to play a sizeable role.

III. Assist Directors in timely assessment planning and reporting

Annual tasks for assessment planning and reporting due to OASI include 1) 3 Assessment Plans, 2) Annual Report deliverables (Executive Summary and Annual Data Report), 3) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and 4) Activity Codes. Champions also help prepare for and attend the Annual Assessment Meeting with their Directors.

A. 3 Assessment Plans

Each year departments select three items to assess and submit their Assessment Plan and results via the Planning module of Campus Labs. These Assessment Plans greatly inform the Annual Report and serve as a mark of progress for each department toward Division and University strategic goals. Assessments can be selected based on 1) new programs, services, or initiatives, 2) existing programs, services, or initiatives that have not been assessed in a long time, and/or 3) existing programs, services, or initiatives where improvements are needed but more data is required to identify the specific areas.

The three Assessment Plans for the upcoming year are identified at the Annual Assessment Planning meeting described below, and Champions play a large role in helping Directors determine which three items should be assessed for the upcoming year.

Share these resources to assist your Director with Assessment Plans:

- ✓ [Link to Campus Labs Planning Module](#)
- ✓ [Planning Module Resources & How-Tos](#)
- ✓ [Example Assessment Plan](#)
- ✓ [OASI Resources page](#). This page includes ideas for different assessment methods. Encourage your department to try alternative methods to surveys!

B. Annual Report Deliverables: Executive Summary & Annual Data Report

The Annual Report documents the progress of departments in Student Life toward Division Tactical and University Strategic plan goals. It also serves as a key marketing tool and showcase of the Division of Student Life to both internal and external constituents.

To help prepare this resource, each department submits their Executive Summary and Annual Data Report alongside the three Assessment Plans mentioned above using the Planning module of Campus Labs.

Share these resources to assist with Annual Report-related deliverables:

- [OASI Annual Report Website](#), which contains general info and up-to-date versions of each document and requirement
- [Access Link: Planning Module of Campus Labs](#)
- [PDF Overview of Required Forms for Annual Reporting](#)
- [Prezi Walkthru: Navigating Campus Labs and Completing Annual Report Forms](#)

C. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are metrics that indicate how well departments are progressing toward outcomes and overall priorities. In the Division of Student Life, KPI data are collected three times a year and made available on a shared spreadsheet so that departments can have insight into the metrics each are tracking. KPIs are instrumental elements of the DSL Annual Report also used to inform marketing and communications efforts.

KPI data should be organized and reported according to the following date ranges:

Summer May 16-Aug 15

Fall Aug 16 – Dec 31

Spring Jan 1 – May 15

For the link to access the Master KPI Spreadsheet, or to obtain a current copy of your KPIs off the master sheet, email dslassessment@utk.edu

D. Activity Codes

The Activity Roster Tracking System houses and organizes data-sets for specific co-curricular activities, initiatives, and programs, which allows UT to offer a “Volunteer Experiences” co-curricular transcript that demonstrates student engagement outside of class. The UT System also utilizes Activity Code data for its own research purposes.

Activity Codes are uploaded twice a semester in fall and spring and (at this time) once in summer. The first fall/spring upload occurs on the 10th day of class and then mid-semester. You can find the most up-to-date Activity Code dates on the dslassessment@utk.edu website.

Share these resources to assist with Activity Code-related tasks:

- [OASI Activity Codes Webpage](#)
- Access Link: [Banner Activity Roster System](#)
- Access Link: [DSL Swipe Event Attendance](#)
- How-To: [Student Activity Codes Roster Import Instructions](#)
- [Volunteer Experiences Transcript](#)

E. Annual Assessment Planning Meeting

The Office of Assessment and Strategic Initiatives hosts Annual Assessment Planning meetings each spring to help departments across the Division of Student Life organize their assessment efforts. These two-hour meetings include the OASI Director, department Director and Assessment Champion, and Associate/Assistant Vice Chancellor as available.

Champions are asked to attend this meeting with Directors and be prepared to discuss current assessment initiatives and evaluate current practices, programs, and initiatives, as well as to identify cross-departmental collaboration opportunities.

Share these resources to help your Director prepare for the Assessment Planning Meeting:

- [Assessment Plan Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Assessment Planning Worksheet](#) This resource will help you and your Director organize all planned assessments for the upcoming cycle. Completing this worksheet ahead of time will help the meeting go quickly and smoothly!
- [Link to schedule Assessment Planning Meeting](#) (scroll to bottom of page)

IV. Serve as an assessment resource and mentor within your department

The Assessment Champion is often the most well-versed department member when it comes to assessment. As such, Champions are asked to serve as a resource and mentor within their department. This does not mean you need to know all the answers – feel free to reach out to OASI for help whenever needed!

Champions will often assist with protocol related to best practices, including survey administration, closing the assessment loop, methods of assessment, IRB, and data security. See links below for more information and resources related to each area:

A. Survey Administration

- [DSL Survey Protocol](#), updated May 16, 2019.
- [Link to Baseline](#) (Student Life Survey Tool)
- **Two Required Elements for a Student Life Survey**
 - ✓ [Survey Request Form](#). The initial project request details all information related to survey administration and helps departments stay focused on the purpose of the survey.
 - ✓ [Survey Summary Form](#). This form helps close the loop by detailing improvements to be made as a result of the survey.

B. Methods of Assessment

- [Alternative methods of assessment](#). Help your department think outside the survey box!

C. Other Best Practices

- ✓ [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\) Approval](#). IRB approval is required any time there is research on human subjects that a department plans to publish or present outside of their department. For information regarding IRB requirements and whether a particular research project needs IRB approval, see the [Frequently Asked Questions section of UT's IRB website](#).
- ✓ **Responsible data storage and practice**. Professionals across Student Life are committed to using data to inform decisions that help continuously improve programs, activities, and services. As part of this commitment, a department may occasionally need to request data from UT's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). These data requests should be fielded through OASI, and Champions play a key role in helping liaise any data requests from their department to the Director of OASI, who will then facilitate the request with OIRA on behalf of the department. A number of data are already available from OIRA via [Data Central](https://data.utk.edu/) (<https://data.utk.edu/>).

D. Annual Assessment Symposium

Typically held each year in May, the Assessment Symposium is a full-day event that brings together colleagues from across the Division of Student Life and Academic Affairs to share and enjoy important and timely topics in assessment. Champions are crucial to the success of this event:

- ✓ During the planning stage, Champions promote the event and facilitate registration within their departments (completed using an online form on the OASI website).

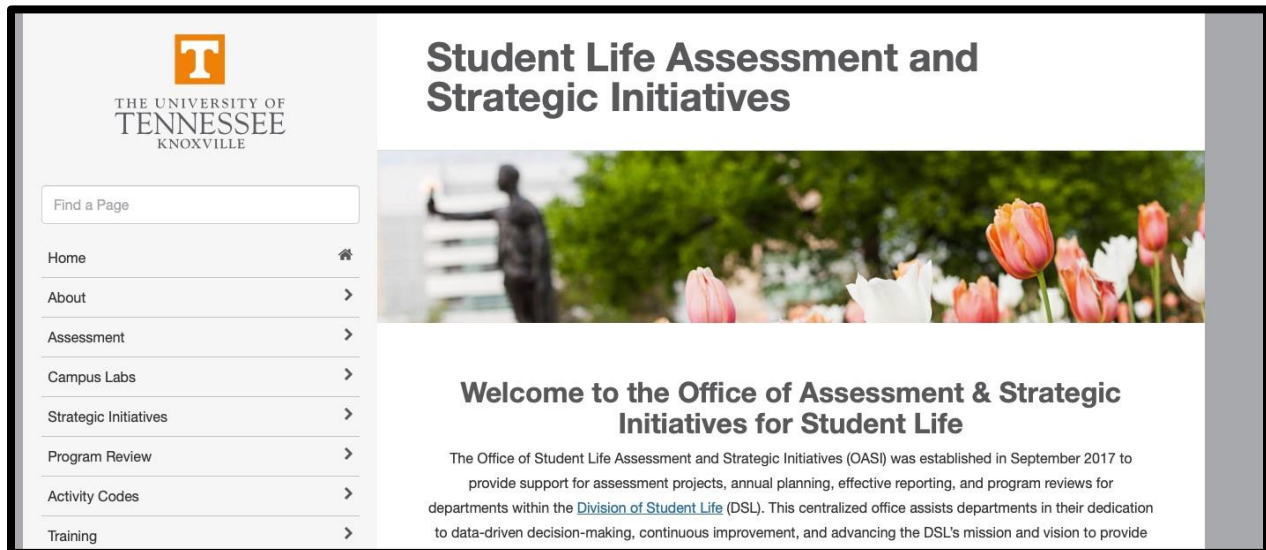
- ✓ During the event, Champions serve as go-tos for questions and active participants in each of the sessions. Champions may also be asked to lead or co-facilitate sessions by OASI.

As the key link of communication between individual departments and OASI, Champions are encouraged to submit topics of interest and suggest sessions that would help their departments better understand and/or facilitate continuous improvement through the use of assessment. Ideas can be submitted at any time throughout the year as needs develop. Topics not addressed in the Symposium could be featured in one of OASI's quarterly development events.

Assessment Resources

Champions can find the most up-to-date assessment resources and information on dlassessment.utk.edu, including but not limited to the following:

- [Assessment Calendar \(p.11\)](#)
- [Survey Process and Forms](#)
- [Activity Code Information](#)
- [Annual Assessment Planning Meeting](#)
- [Upcoming Assessment Conferences](#)
- [Program Review Information](#)
- [Campus Labs Links](#)
 - [Baseline Survey Tool](#)
 - [Planning Tool \(Annual data Report, Assessment Plans, etc\)](#)
 - [Compliance Assist program review tool](#)



Student Life Assessment and Strategic Initiatives

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE

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Welcome to the Office of Assessment & Strategic Initiatives for Student Life

The Office of Student Life Assessment and Strategic Initiatives (OASI) was established in September 2017 to provide support for assessment projects, annual planning, effective reporting, and program reviews for departments within the [Division of Student Life \(DSL\)](#). This centralized office assists departments in their dedication to data-driven decision-making, continuous improvement, and advancing the DSL's mission and vision to provide

OASI Staff

OASI staff are also available for consultation, to answer questions, and/or to assist with assessment-related projects:

dlassessment@utk.edu 4-1376

Dr. Melissa Brown, Director mabrown@utk.edu

A huge thanks to all Champions! Your role is vital to the ongoing success and continued improvement of the Division of Student Life at The University of Tennessee.

Assessment Calendar

January

- Fall KPIs due on or before January 4
- Data collection for spring semesters - January 1 to May 15

April

- Activity codes, roster deadlines: Spring Semester (Code 20) – April 15

May

- Assessment planning meetings: Between May 20 –June 14
- Data collection for summer semesters - May 16-Aug 15

June

- Spring KPIs due on or before June 30

July

- Activity codes, roster deadlines: Summer Semester (Code 30) – July 15

August

- Summer KPIs due on or before Aug 16
- Data collection for fall semesters - Aug 16 – Dec 31

November

- Activity codes, roster deadlines: Fall semester (Code 40) – November 15

Assessment Glossary

Accreditation A certification awarded by an external, recognized organization, that the institution or program meets certain requirements overall, or in a particular discipline.

Action Plans A statement based on assessment results that details the specific steps that a given area will implement in the next cycle to implement changes and ensure continuous improvement.

Annual Report A report from each unit based on its goals and accomplishments as well as an assessment plan that is submitted annually. The report outlines how evidence was used to improve student learning outcomes and program outcomes through changes or to document that no changes were needed.

Assessment The systematic collection, review, and use of information for the purpose of improvement. Assessment data provide feedback for continuously improving teaching, learning, programs, services, activities, etc.

Assessment Cycle The assessment cycle in higher education is generally annual and fits within the academic year. In the DSL, Annual Assessment Planning meetings set up all activities to be assessed for the upcoming cycle. Outcomes, targets and assessment tools are established before the fall semester begins; data is collected by the end of spring semester; results are analyzed during the summer and results submitted by July of each year.

Assessment Methods Assessment methods include the criteria, process, and tools used to determine if the intended outcomes were reached. Assessment methods articulate the target audience of the assessment, the methods and tools for data collection, criteria or targets that specify that the outcome has been met, and how the data will be analyzed. A combination of methods to measure outcomes is desirable.

Benchmark To select measures that allow you to track and compare the quality of and student satisfaction with your programs, activities, services, and facilities with that of comparable institutions. You can benchmark against other institutions, or even against your own measures from year to year. Benchmarking helps assess student learning and the effectiveness of programs over time.

Best Practice Tested, proven practices that are shared and accepted as effective.

Bias A situation that occurs in testing when items systematically measure differently for different ethnic, gender or age groups. Test developers reduce bias by analyzing item data separately for each group, then identifying and discarding items that appear to be biased.

Case Study This term has two definitions: 1) An in-depth study of a program or service. This technique is often used to understand more fully why a program or service has been successful or unsuccessful. 2) An approach in which practitioners ask students to respond to specific scenarios they may face in a given leadership role. The manner in which the students respond to these scenarios provides assessment data.

Checklists A list of statements that describe expected performance. Performance may include skills or knowledge. Checklists can be used to analyze reflective essays, observed behavior, or open-ended responses on questionnaires. A checklist is used to simply record the presence of the expected performance. This is in contrast to a rubric, which is used to assign a score to the performance.

Closing the Loop Analyzing and sharing data with appropriate stakeholders, and then using the results to create an action plan geared toward continuous improvement of the item being assessed. Closing the loop ensures that information is being used for improvement rather than merely “collecting dust on a shelf.”

Competency Level at which performance is acceptable.

Culture of Evidence. A way of conducting day-to-day operations where evidence/data is regularly used to influence behavior and decisions made. In their book, *Assessment for Student Affairs*, Schuh, Biddix, Dean & Kinzie identify several strategies on how a culture of evidence can be developed:

- identify program goals in advance
- appreciate multiple forms of assessment (i.e. going beyond the survey)
- put someone in charge of assessment
- report results (“close the loop”)
- devote discretionary resources to assessment
- reward assessment with resources
- celebrate assessments

Data Facts, information, and/or statistics collected and used for reference or to calculate, analyze, or plan something.

Data-driven describes decisions and behaviors that use data as the primary (and sometimes only) source of input.

Data-informed means that decisions and behaviors that use data as one of many sources of input.

Direct Assessment Assessment measures in which actual behavior is observed or recorded and the measure is derived from that observation. Assessment to gauge student achievement of learning outcomes directly from their work.

Document Analysis Document analysis is a technique a practitioner can use to make inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages, whether they are written records or communications, physical evidence, or audio, video, or electronic recordings. Document analysis is often used to examine the values espoused by an organization.

Efficient Performing tasks in the best manner possible, with the least waste of time or effort.

Effectiveness How well an approach, a process, or a measure addresses its intended purpose.

Empirical Data

Qualitative Data - ways of collecting information that are concerned with understanding or conveying meanings or contexts, rather than making statistical inferences.

Common forms: participant observations, focus groups, in-depth interviews, etc.

Quantitative Data - information that is collected or represented numerically; typically focuses on counting occurrences or measuring characteristics or behavior rather

than meanings; easy to analyze statistically. Common forms: surveys, experiments, questionnaires, etc. addresses its intended purpose.

Evaluation Comparing data for the purposes of judging quality or effectiveness. Evaluation determines the merit, worth, or value of something and normally involves measurement against relevant standards.

Expedited Review When seeking IRB approval, if the project involves minimal risk or if you are simply seeking approval for small changes to a project during the approved time frame that approval had already been granted, you may receive approval quicker and with less effort.

Formative Assessment The assessment of student or program achievement at different stages. The focus of formative assessment is on the documentation of student development or program improvement over time. It can be used to provide feedback, to modify, shape, or improve a program/service and/or student learning.

Focus Group A group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a program, service, or concept. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting in which participants are free to talk with other group members.

Forced-choice The respondent only has a choice among given responses (e.g. very poor, poor, fair, good, and very good).

Incentive A reward offered to participants to give them encouragement to complete the survey.

Indirect Assessment Assessment that deduces results of outcomes through the reported perception of by students and other agents. Opinion surveys, interviews, and other subjective data combined with enrollment analyses, retention rates, graduation rates, employment data, transfer data, and other measures that provide data that can be analyzed as indicators of student learning.

Informed Consent The process of revealing to the participant full details regarding any potential harm to him/her as a result of participating in the assessment project and that he/she may refuse to participate, and then receiving his/her agreement to participate in the study.

Institutional Assessment Assessment of institutional mission and goal statements including student services, financial stability, business and industry training, adult education, as well as academic programs.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) The IRB is charged with the responsibility of protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research. irb.utk.edu

Interview Refers to a question and answer session in which a person is asked to share opinions, attitudes, or experiences. Interviews can range from highly-structured and formal to unstructured and informal. Responses are usually recorded in the form of notes or transcripts and are then analyzed.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Metrics used to indicate how well a department is progressing toward outcomes and objectives. KPIs for the Division of Student Life are collected three times a year on a shared spreadsheet and are instrumental elements of the annual report and to inform marketing and communications efforts.

Learning Outcomes Operational statements describing specific student behaviors that evidence the acquisition of desired goals in knowledge, skills, abilities, capacities, attitudes or dispositions. Learning outcomes can be usefully thought of as behavioral criteria for determining whether students are achieving the educational goals of a program, and, ultimately, whether overall program goals are being successfully met.

Outcomes are sometimes treated as synonymous with objectives, though objectives are usually more general statements of what students are expected to achieve in an academic program.

Method A tool or strategy used to implement a research plan.

Methodology The justification for using a particular method.

Metric A quantitative measure of behavior, activities, and/or performance that indicates how well outcomes and objectives are being accomplished.

Mixed Methods An assessment project that employs more than one strategy for collecting information. The purpose of using mixed methods is to acquire a broader understanding of a service or program being assessed. For example, the Center for Leadership and Service administers online questionnaire to students in a leadership program and then conducts follow-up interviews with them to gain a richer understanding of the experiences.

Objectives Concrete ways that priorities are to be met through program processes, student learning, etc. For the Division Tactical plan, objectives describe what the Division of Student Life will do to achieve the priorities established.

Observer Effect The degree to which the assessment results are affected by the presence of an observer.

Observations An effort to gain familiarity with a given group of individuals and their practices by observing them in their natural environment, usually, over an extended period of time. Observations might include: watching how students socialize in public, observing the ways students use furniture in a lounge, or witnessing a college football game from the student section.

Open-ended Assessment questions that are designed to permit spontaneous and unguided responses.

Operational Plan The strategic plan of individual departments, aligned with and positioned under Division Tactical and University Strategic Plans.

Outcome Framework for collecting data to tell whether the programs, activities, or services offered by a department are having the desired impact(s) on those who partake in them. Student Life focuses primarily on two types of outcomes, learning and program:

- **Learning outcomes** examine cognitive skills that students develop through interactions with a department, program, or service; measurable, transferable skill development. These outcomes indicate what a participant will **know, think, or be able to do** as a result of an event, activity, program, etc.

- **Program outcomes** examine what a program or process is to do, achieve, or accomplish for its own improvement and/or in support of institutional or divisional goals. Operational and satisfaction outcomes are two types of program outcomes:

- **Operational outcomes** deal with functions, demand, resources, and efficiencies. Examples include the following:

- a. *Tracking.* Number of students served, number and type of appointments, number of advisees, etc.
- b. *Cost effectiveness.* Are the benefits worth the cost?
- c. *Needs.* Are services and offerings consistent with what students are requesting? Does availability meet demand?

- **Satisfaction outcomes** are related to program and operational outcomes, but detail the level of satisfaction with services provided from the perspective of a specific audience (students, community, parents, etc).

Performance-Based Assessment Direct, systematic observation and rating of student performance of an educational objective, often an ongoing observation over a period of time, and typically involving the creation of products. The assessment may be a continuing interaction and should ideally be part of the learning process. The assessment should be a real-world performance with relevance to the student and learning community. Assessment of the performance is done using a rubric or analytic scoring guide to aid in objectivity. Performance-based assessment is a test of the ability to apply knowledge in a real life setting or performance of exemplary tasks in the demonstration of intellectual ability.

Priorities Similar to goals, priorities are broad, general statements of what a unit seeks to accomplish. The Division Tactical plan, for example, includes five overarching priorities with more detailed objectives for each.

Program Review Part of the ongoing improvement process for a department, program reviews include a self-study, multi-day visit by an External Program Review Team, and follow up plan of action based on that team's findings. Program Review Guidelines are updated and kept on dslassessment.utk.edu.

Program Effectiveness The degree to which a program, service or initiative meets its mission, objectives, and outcomes. Program effectiveness relies on the establishment and assessment of clear outcomes. An administrator must know specifically what the desired effect (outcome) of a program or service is in order to determine the extent to which the program is being effective, i.e. achieving the outcome.

Program Objectives Reflects student learning outcomes and achievements related to the academic program as a unit rather than an individual course.

Questionnaire A tool used to gather information through a series of questions. Questionnaires are often referred to as "survey instruments" or mistakenly as "surveys". The use of questionnaires is the most common technique for gathering information due to how quickly and inexpensively they can be administered.

Reliability An assessment tool's consistency of results over time and with different samples of respondents.

Research The systematic collection and use of data for the purposes of developing new knowledge and/or contributing to cumulative bodies of knowledge. Research seeks conclusions, tests theories, develops theory-based hypotheses and research questions, and uses controls to minimize error and bias.

Rubric A set of criteria specifying the characteristics of a learning outcome and the levels of achievement in each characteristic.

Sample A subset of the population. I.e., Listing the IQ scores of every tenth politician in Florida from an alphabetical listing of politicians.

Stakeholder Anyone who has a vested interest in the outcome of the program/project.

Standards Systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and/or reporting based on demonstrating progress, knowledge, or skills gained as a result of an experience. Each department in the Division of Student Life is governed by a set of professional standards like CAS, NASPA, ACPA, etc.

Summative Assessment The assessment of student or program achievement at the end point of learning or a process. The focus of summative assessment is on the judgment of a current program, service, student learning, for quality and/or worth, based on previously established standards. It does not reveal the pathway of development to achieve that endpoint.

Survey Refers to a process by which one gathers information from a number of people. Information gathered by surveys usually used to describe group attitudes, satisfaction, or learning. Surveys can include a number of data gathering techniques, such as questionnaires and interviews.

Survey Fatigue A decline in survey response rates, due to the population being subjected to too many survey requests.

Tactical Plan The strategic plan for the Division of Student Life that outlines priorities and objectives geared toward continuous improvement over a five year period. The Division Tactical plan aligns with and supports the VolVision University Strategic plan, and all department operational plans and outcomes align with and support this plan as well.

Third Party Person(s) other than those directly involved in the educational process (e.g. employers, parents, consultants).

Triangulation The collection of data via multiple methods in order to determine if the results show a consistent outcome.

Usage Data Information about the extent to which a program or service is used. Usage data can include number of tickets sold, number of people who pass through a turnstile during a given period of time, or number of students who attend an activity.

Utility The usefulness of assessment results.

Validity The degree to which an assessment measures (a) what is intended, as opposed to (b) what is not intended, or (c) what is unsystematic or unstable.

Variable Observable characteristics that vary among individual responses. An *independent variable* is manipulated by an experimenter. A *dependent variable* is used to examine the impact of the manipulation of the independent variable. *Continuous variables* can assume all values between any two given values - i.e. the time it takes for you to do your summer reading.



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