

Writing Annual Assessment Reports



Annual Assessment Report: An annual assessment report documents a program's assessment activities over the past year, including findings, analysis, and continuous improvement plans.

Findings

Findings are your assessment information and data--the results gathered from your measures. For annual reporting purposes, a concise summary of these results is sufficient (more detailed reports or spreadsheets can be attached). Enough detail should be included to determine whether the achievement target was met, partially met, or not met. The language used to describe findings should be parallel to that used in the achievement target. For instance, if the achievement target was that students will demonstrate at least a ten-point improvement from pre-test to post-test, the findings should discuss the difference in scores from pre-test to post-test.

Examples of findings:

- The overall mean score of our students exceeded that of the state average on the state certification exam. Program overall mean score--91.50; state overall mean score--79.13.
- 65 students attended the Fall workshop, nearly double the number of attendees in Spring (34).

Analysis

The analysis of findings is a reflective consideration of what has been learned in the assessment process. What do the results tell you about student learning in your program, or about program effectiveness? Were the achievement targets met? Are you satisfied? Who should see the results and help interpret them? If there are shortcomings, what should be done to address them? Did changes made in previous assessment cycles have the desired effect?

Internal communication about these questions will make the assessment process more meaningful and relevant to faculty and staff, and will likely result in better action plans.

Note that your analysis may also include an evaluation of how effective the assessment process was, and whether it needs to be changed (e.g. taking a larger sample of student work, collecting different statistics, etc.).

Action Plans

Action plans are actions to be taken to improve student learning or enhance the program based on the analysis of results. Action plans are developed by reflecting on the question: “What can we do to help students master the learning outcome more proficiently?” or “What can we do to enhance the program?”

The actions should be specific and directly related to an outcome or several outcomes. For instance, if a program was unsatisfied with students’ ability to apply mathematical concepts to a discipline-specific problem, a course assignment might be modified or added to require more mathematical skill. Action plans might address the assessment process as well. For instance, questions on an exit survey may be revised in order to obtain more useful information.

The number of action plans a program creates should be realistic and manageable, even if this means that not all of the outcomes are addressed every year. Each action plan should include a target completion date and the group or person responsible for implementation.

Examples of enhancement actions:

- Revise the curriculum for the capstone course
- Change course requirements for the major
- Expand mentoring program

Conclusion

An assessment report may conclude with a statement about the program’s contribution to the department, college, or institution’s mission over the course of the assessment cycle. This is an opportunity to tout the successes and the ongoing mission of the program.

Note that it may be important to attach supporting documents to the Annual Assessment Report. These may include spreadsheets containing raw data, surveys, meeting minutes, or detailed instructions on how certain measures were executed, so that the process can be duplicated in subsequent cycles.