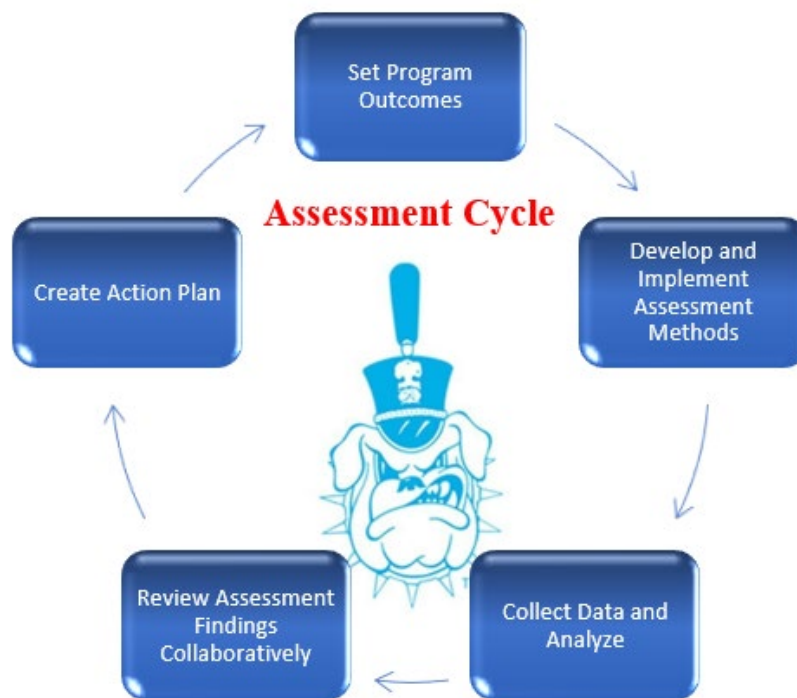


# The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina Program/Unit Assessment Guide

## Assessment at The Citadel

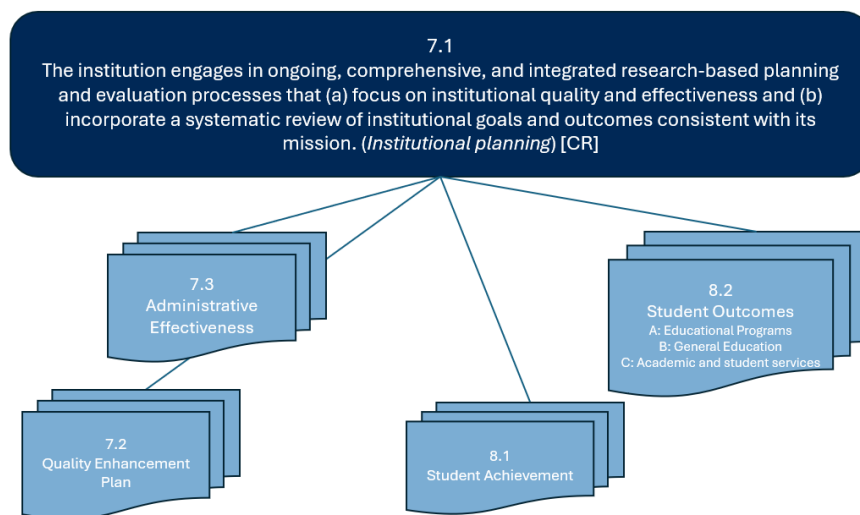
Assessment at The Citadel is an ongoing process of systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well outcomes are being achieved and expectations are being met. The resulting information is used to enhance the learning environment, improve student learning, and/or improve services. Academic, administrative, and educational support services are all integral to the assessment process and are aligned with the Mission and Core Values (Appendix A) and the six strategic initiatives of the *Our Mighty Citadel 2026* strategic plan (Appendix B).



The Citadel follows an annual assessment process, in which the steps above are implemented and documented in the Watermark online platform, Planning and Self-Study (P&SS), see User Guide in Appendix F. The Citadel assessment model defines two broad categories: academic programs and administrative units. Academic programs include undergraduate and graduate educational programs, certificates, and the general education program. Administrative units include administrative support services, academic and student support services, and centers/institutes.

The fundamental function of assessment is to improve educational programs and practices. Assessment feedback is essential to helping faculty and staff identify what is and is not working and what changes, if

any, are warranted (Suskie, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. Assessment is also mandated by federal and state government systems as well as institutional and professional accrediting agencies. Sections 7 (Institutional Planning and Effectiveness) and 8 (Student Achievement) of the *SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement*<sup>2</sup> directly describe the requirements for institutional planning and assessment.



## Accountability for Annual Assessment Reports

The Citadel’s assessment model is an ongoing, broad-based process and involves multi-level collaboration between faculty, program coordinators/department heads, academic deans. Similarly, administrative units coordinate with staff, the unit director, and division head. Institutional coordination and support are the responsibility of the director of accreditation and assessment.

Department heads/unit directors are responsible for ensuring that accurate and timely submission of reports occurs annually in June. The director of accreditation and assessment monitors completion rates and coordinates with academic deans or division heads to ensure complete, quality reports.

The official repository for program/unit assessments is through the assessment template in Watermark Planning and Self-Study (P&SS). The Assessment Checklist (Appendix E) provides guidelines on the components of an assessment plan and completed report. Appendix F provides instructions on entering assessment reports into Planning & Self-Study. The annual assessment reports are summarized and used for institutional planning, continuous improvement efforts, and as demonstration of compliance with SACSCOC standards.

The Citadel also has an institutional assessment committee charged with assisting in creating and maintaining a culture of assessment. This committee plays an integral role in determining and providing assessment training (formally and informally), assisting in developing and reviewing assessment resources, and provides feedback in reviewing SACSCOC Institutional Effectiveness related standards (particularly, sections 7 and 8).

<sup>1</sup> Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

<sup>2</sup> Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges, *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, ed. College Delegate Assembly (Decatur: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2018 Edition).

## Deadlines for Assessment

Assessment reports are due in June. The following timeline is recommended to ensure successful completion.

Assessment Activity	Recommended Timeline
Assessment data and plans discussed at annual department retreats	1 <sup>st</sup> week of classes
Academic assessments plan current in Taskstream AMS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Learning Outcomes</li> <li>• Assessment measures and targets</li> </ul>	September 15
Feedback process from Office of Accreditation and Assessment initiated	September 15/Ongoing
Assessment data for summer and fall courses due from faculty to department chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document any planned changes from spring semester in Continuous Improvements for This Cycle</li> <li>• Make notes on initial thoughts for Continuous Improvements for the Next Cycle</li> </ul>	January 15
Assessment data and initial suggestions for improvement from spring courses due from faculty to department chairs	May 15
Department chairs review data	May 25/ongoing
Data day (dedicated assessment work day or workshops)	Last week of May

## Steps in Building an Assessment Report (Plans and Results)

Steps one through seven summarize the process of developing a successful assessment plan. This process should begin as a department/unit is reflecting on the previous year's results and be finalized early in the fall semester. Steps seven and eight summarize the steps for year-end reporting and must be completed by the end of June.

1. **Begin with a brief statement of the program/unit mission.** A mission statement should tell the stakeholder what the academic program or administrative unit is about and why the program/unit exists. If the program/unit already has a mission statement, confirm that it is in alignment with The Citadel's mission (Appendix A). Mission statements should be reviewed periodically to ensure relevancy and currency. See Appendix C for more information on writing mission statements.
2. **Identify outcomes for the program or unit.** While no upper limit is set on the number of student learning outcomes or operational outcomes required, four to six outcomes tends to be both sustainable and sufficient to determine achievement of the program or unit mission.

---

*Student learning outcomes specify what students will know, value or be able to demonstrate after completing a course or a program. Outcomes postulate an action by the student that must be observable, measurable, and able to be demonstrated.*

---

### Academic Programs

For academic programs, student learning outcomes focus on what students will know and be able to do when they successfully complete their particular academic programs. Habits, attitudes, and dispositions students demonstrate may also be measured.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs):

- Help students learn more effectively by providing expectations for their educational experience.
- Encourage students to be intentional learners who direct and monitor their own learning.
- Help faculty design courses, curriculum, and programs.
- Make graduates' skills and knowledge clear to external constituents such as employers, accrediting agencies, etc.

Questions that SLOs address:

- What knowledge, skills, abilities, and/or values should the ideal student graduating from our program demonstrate?
- How well does our program prepare students for careers, graduate school, professional study, and/or lifelong learning in the discipline?

Program SLOs:

- Describe what students will learn, rather than what faculty will do.
- Are framed in terms of the program and not individual courses.
- Are observable and/or measurable.
- Align with school and institutional mission.
- Rely on verbs that specify definite, observable behaviors (see Appendix D).
- Focus on the central abilities of the discipline.
- Incorporate or adapt professional organization's outcome statements when they exist.
- Are collaboratively authored and collectively accepted.

### Administrative Units

For administrative units, operational outcomes focus on critical functions, services, and processes that impact the unit. Outcomes may include satisfaction, timeliness, accuracy, efficiency, responsiveness, etc.

Administrative Outcomes:

- Provide opportunities to seek improvements in what the unit is doing.
- Focus on critical functions, services, and processes that impact the unit.
- Statements that describe the desired quality (timeliness, accuracy, responsiveness, etc.) of key functions and services within the administrative unit.
- Rely on verbs that specify definite, observable behaviors and are observable/measurable (see Appendix D).
- Can include level of satisfaction clients have with services offered.
- Contributes to the development and growth of students, if appropriate.

Questions that administrative assessment address:

- Is the unit achieving its mission and thus, contributing to the institutional mission?
- Could the outcome lead to improved services? Do the results potentially provide data the unit can use to improve services and/or what aspects of services need improvement?

- Is the outcome worded in terms of what the unit will accomplish or clients think, know, do, or value following the use of services?
  - What and how does an administrative unit contribute to the development and growth of students? (If appropriate)
3. **Map outcomes for a program/unit.** Mapping of curriculum/functional areas is an optional exercise that identifies outcomes are properly assessing the program/unit’s mission. This exercise can be helpful in identifying gaps in the curriculum or in appropriate SLOs.

Academic Programs – Curriculum Map

The curriculum map identifies where in the curriculum the students obtain the knowledge and skills associated with each learning outcome. This can include specific courses as well as any extra or co-curricular opportunities that provide students with the opportunity to gain knowledge or skill in the outcome area.

Note: Each learning outcome (columns in the example below) should be introduced, reinforced, and demonstrated at least once across multiple courses. Each course (rows in the example below) should support at least one, and ideally more than one, learning outcome for the program.

**Example Curriculum Map**

	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4	SLO 5
Course 101	I			I	
Course 202	R		I, R	R	I
Course 230		I	R		
Course 310		R		R	
Course 360	R, D	R, D			R
Course 401				D	R, D
Capstone			D		D
Internship		D	D	R, D	

Note: I, R, and D describe the students’ experiences with the learning outcome. I = Student introduction to the learning to occur; R = Student reinforcement of the learning; D = Student demonstration that learning has occurred. Every required course should contribute to at least one learning outcome.

## Administrative Units – Functional Map

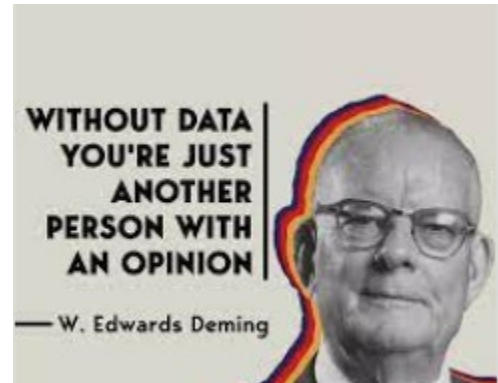
The functional map identifies which of the unit's functional areas are being assessed against the operational outcomes, as indicated by the X.

### Example Functional Map

	Functional Area 1	Functional Area 2	Functional Area 3	Functional Area 4
Outcome 1	X		X	
Outcome 2		X		
Outcome 3		X	X	
Outcome 4				X

4. **Identify methods of assessment and determine performance targets.** To inform improvement efforts, establish measures that will identify strengths and weaknesses among students' (aggregate) achievement of the learning outcome, or a unit's achievement of an operational outcome. Best practices encourage the use of multiple measures in determining success, in which at least one is a direct measure of student learning or unit performance.

For each measure, come to an agreement as a department/unit what the expected performance target is for each associated assessment method. In other words, how well do you expect students to perform collectively on the assessment method established or how well you expect the unit to perform. Acceptable levels of performance need to be established for aggregate performance on each measure (i.e., not for individual student performance, but for students as a group). Targets should strike a balance between ambitious yet attainable. It is acceptable if not all targets are met; in fact, unmet outcomes often provide strong direction for program change and renewal.



Tips and pointers:

- Rubrics are recommended for scoring subjective assessments of student work. Rubrics provide detailed descriptions of what is being learned and students' collective strengths and weaknesses.
- COURSE GRADES ARE POOR MEASURES OF SLOs. This is because an overall course grade does not reflect students' strengths and weaknesses in specific areas which is central to the continuous improvement model (Suskie, 2009)<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- In fact, assignment grades can also be poor measures of SLOs, as assignments frequently include elements of review that are outside the expectations of the SLO. In cases such as this, consider using the points from a particular section of an assignment or exam.

**Sample Direct and Indirect Measures for Student Learning Outcomes**

Direct Measures (Demonstration of learning)	Indirect Measures (Perception of learning)
Standardized exams Locally developed exams Embedded questions External examiners/judges Oral exams Minute papers Portfolios Behavioral observations Simulations Project evaluations Research paper/thesis	Exit or other types of interviews Focus groups Written surveys or questionnaires

**Sample Direct and Indirect Measures for Administrative Outcomes**

Direct Measures (Demonstration of learning)	Indirect Measures (Perception of learning)
Quantified staff time Cost analysis Reliability / Accuracy Competence External audits Reduction in errors	Exit or other types of interviews Focus groups Written surveys or questionnaires

- Determine the Implementation Plan.** Describe where and how data will be collected and the timeline.
- Designate key personnel.** It can be helpful to designate key faculty and staff responsible for collecting data.
- Analyze and report assessment results.** After assessment data are collected, scored, and analyzed, the results need to be summarized in a meaningful way and shared to collaboratively determine action items to improve student learning or administrative functions. Patterns, predictions, problems, and questions should become apparent while summarizing the data. Note: Individual student scores or rubrics should not be submitted to the Watermark P&SS platform.

Question to consider in reviewing results:

- Did students meet defined standards, criteria, and/or expectations?
- If the majority of students met the target, what happened to the minority that fell below expectations?
- Why did some students learn X but not Y?
- Does the data indicate unit performance is at expected levels?

- Is the assessment tool (rubric, test) valid and reliable? In other words, did the methods used measure what you intended to measure (validity) and are the methods likely to yield the same findings each time they are employed (reliability)?
8. **Using assessment results for continuous improvement.** Frequently called “closing the loop”, this is the most important component of the assessment process and should strike the appropriate balance between being concise yet thorough. Programs or units should review data and clearly document the methods that will be implemented to seek continuous improvement. This should be a collaborative process where program faculty or unit staff discuss results and make programmatic decisions based on the findings.

### Sample Continuous Improvements at the Program Level

<b>Changes to curricula, pedagogy, or programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty professional development</li> <li>• New or updated laboratory equipment</li> <li>• New or updated software</li> <li>• Modifications to program offerings</li> <li>• Revision of course content</li> <li>• Revision of course sequencing</li> <li>• Resequencing within a course</li> <li>• Revision of course outcomes</li> <li>• Adopting a new textbook</li> <li>• Adding prerequisites to courses where assessment take place</li> <li>• Provide supplemental resources for student use</li> </ul>
<b>Changes to processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modify frequency or schedule of course/program offerings</li> <li>• Revise advising processes</li> <li>• Revise admission standards</li> <li>• Create co-curricular activities</li> <li>• Implement training or workshops</li> </ul>
<b>Modifications to assessment process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifications to rubric</li> <li>• Revision of mission</li> <li>• Revision of SLOs</li> </ul>

### Sample Continuous Improvements at the Administrative Level

<b>Changes to services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alter scheduling or frequency of services</li> <li>• Add new programs</li> <li>• Revise content area of services or programs</li> </ul>
<b>Changes to processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise training/workshop content</li> <li>• Transform manual procedures to automated systems</li> <li>• Alter staff scheduling or availability</li> </ul>
<b>Modifications to assessment process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifications to survey instrument</li> <li>• Revision of mission</li> <li>• Revision of Outcomes</li> <li>• Revision to performance targets</li> </ul>

## Assessment Training and Support

The office of Accreditation and Assessment, the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching and Learning and Distance Education (CEITL&DE), and the director of the General Education program regularly partner together to offer in-depth training and workshops.

Please contact these offices for assistance:

Office	Specialty Area	Contact Information
<a href="#">CEITL</a>	Program and course-level assessment, CANVAS, Learning Technologies	Dr. Jessica Higdon <a href="mailto:jhigdon@citadel.edu">jhigdon@citadel.edu</a> 843-953-1817
<a href="#">Accreditation and Assessment</a>	Program and course-level assessment, accreditation reporting, state program approvals, substantive change	Dr. Karin Roof <a href="mailto:kroof1@citadel.edu">kroof1@citadel.edu</a> 843-953-4871
<a href="#">Institutional Research (IR)</a>	Surveys, Banner Student Data	Ms. Pam King <a href="mailto:kingp1@citade.edu">kingp1@citade.edu</a> 843-953-6790
<a href="#">General Education</a>	Course-embedded general education assessments, AAC&U rubrics	Dr. Joel Gramling <a href="mailto:gramlingj1@citadel.edu">gramlingj1@citadel.edu</a> 843-953-6459

# **Appendix A**

## **Statement of Mission and Core Values**

### **Mission**

As The Military College of South Carolina, The Citadel's mission is to educate and develop principled leaders and citizen-soldiers, prepared to serve their state and nation, and to lead with integrity by instilling the core values of Honor, Duty, and Respect in a disciplined and intellectually challenging environment.

The Citadel strives to produce graduates who have insight into issues, ideas, and values that are of importance to society. It is equally important that Citadel graduates are capable of both critical and creative thinking, have effective communication skills, can apply abstract concepts to concrete situations, and possess the methodological skills needed to gather and analyze information.

Throughout its history, The Citadel's primary purpose has been to educate undergraduates as members of the South Carolina Corps of Cadets and to prepare them for post-graduate positions of leadership through academic programs of recognized excellence supported by the best features of a military environment. The cadet lifestyle provides a structured environment that supports growth and development of each student's intellect, discipline, physical fitness, and moral and ethical values. The four pillars which define The Citadel experience for cadets consist of these four developmental dimensions.

A complementary purpose of The Citadel, realized through The Citadel Graduate College, is to provide the citizens of the Lowcountry and the State of South Carolina opportunities for professional development by offering a broad range of educational programs of recognized excellence at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. These programs are designed to accommodate the needs of non-traditional students seeking traditional and demanding academic challenges.

### **Core Values**

#### **Honor**

Honor demands adherence to the Honor Code of The Citadel. A cadet "will not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate those who do." The Honor Code is the foundation of the college. The commitment to honor extends beyond the gates of The Citadel and is a life-long obligation to moral and ethical behavior. Honor demands integrity; "doing the right thing when no one is watching." Finally, honorable behavior includes exercising the moral courage to "do the right thing when everyone is watching."

#### **Duty**


Duty is a call to serve others before self. To quote General Lee, "Duty is the sublimest word in the English language. You must do your duty in all things. You can never do more, you should never wish to do less." Duty requires that cadets accept and accomplish the responsibilities assigned to them. At The Citadel, a cadet's primary duty is to perform academically and then to perform as a member of the Corps of Cadets and the campus community. Duty demands that cadets accept the consequences of their actions and hold others accountable for their actions. Finally, duty means that others can depend on all cadets to complete their assignments and to assist others with their assignments.

#### **Respect**

Respect demands that cadets treat other people with dignity and worth – the way cadets would want others to treat them. Respect for others eliminates any form of prejudice, discrimination, or harassment. Respect demands that cadets are duly obedient to those in positions of authority. Finally, respect includes respect for God and country.

## Appendix B

### Our Mighty Citadel 2026 (OMC '26) Strategic Initiatives



#### **Strategic Initiative 1**

Educate and develop principled leaders

#### **Strategic Initiative 2**

Enhance the learning environment through academic programs of distinction and student success services

#### **Strategic Initiative 3**

Advance The Citadel as the Senior Military College and Graduate College of Choice

#### **Strategic Initiative 4**

Create and maintain safe and secure campus facilities to advance student learning, innovation, and campus operations

#### **Strategic Initiative 5**

Ensure The Citadel has the leadership, talent, diversity, and inclusive culture to accomplish its mission

#### **Strategic Initiative 6**

Enhance the region's social, educational, and economic development through meaningful community and corporate collaborations

## Appendix C

### How to Write a Program Mission Statement

#### Mission Statement of the Program

The *Program Mission Statement* is a concise statement of the general values and principles that guide the program, describe the community the program is designed to serve, and define its standards. Accrediting bodies expect program mission statements to be aligned with the mission statements of the institution, school/division, and department.

#### A Program Mission Statement:

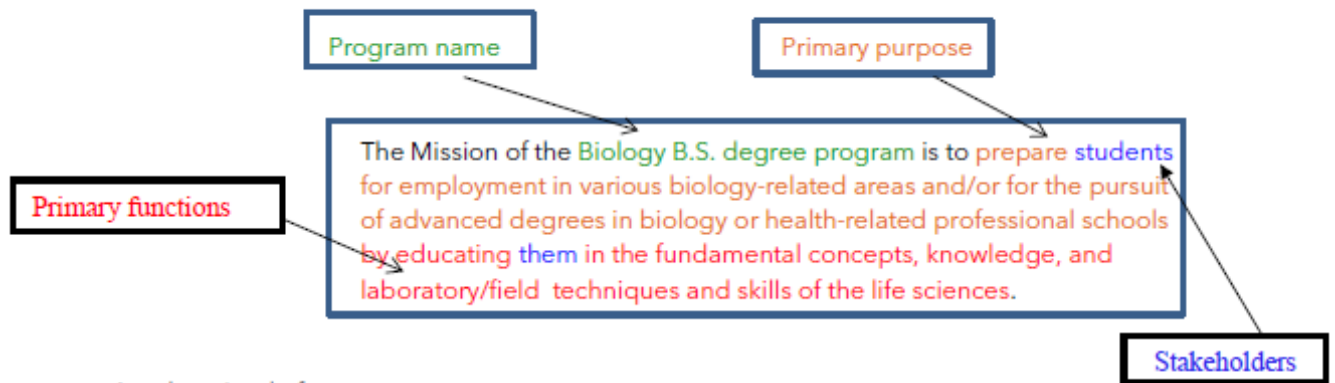
- Is a broad statement of *what the program or unit is, what it does, and for whom?*
- Is a clear description of the *purpose* of the program or unit?
- Reflects how the program contributes to the education and careers of students graduating from the program or how the unit supports its stakeholders.
- May reflect how the teaching, research and/or support efforts enhance the student experience.
- Should be distinctive for the program or unit.
- Explicitly promotes the alignment of the program with college, school/division, and department missions.

#### Structure of a Program Mission Statement

"The mission of (name of your program or unit) is to (your primary purpose) by providing (your primary functions or activities) to (your stakeholders)." (Additional clarifying statements)

*Note: the order of the mission statement may vary from the above structure.*

#### Sample Program Mission Statement



#### Another simple format:

The \_\_\_\_\_ (organization) will \_\_\_\_\_ (for) \_\_\_\_\_ (by) \_\_\_\_\_.

This tells *who* the organization is, *what* it intends to do, *for whom* it intends to do it, and *by what means* (how).

## Appendix D



**THE CITADEL**

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE AND  
INNOVATION IN TEACHING,  
LEARNING, AND DISTANCE  
EDUCATION

### Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs for Outcomes

Cognitive Domains	Remembering <i>Recalling information</i>	Understanding <i>Explaining idea or concepts</i>	Applying <i>Using information in another situation</i>	Analyzing <i>Breaking information into parts</i>	Evaluating <i>Justifying a decision or course of action</i>	Creating <i>Generating a new idea or concept</i>
<b>Measurable and Observable Action Verbs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange</li> <li>• Choose</li> <li>• Compile</li> <li>• Define</li> <li>• Describe</li> <li>• Identify</li> <li>• Label</li> <li>• List</li> <li>• Locate</li> <li>• Match</li> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Recall</li> <li>• Recite</li> <li>• Reproduce</li> <li>• Sequence</li> <li>• Write</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate</li> <li>• Categorize</li> <li>• Connect</li> <li>• Convert</li> <li>• Demonstrate</li> <li>• Discuss</li> <li>• Estimate</li> <li>• Explain</li> <li>• Generalize</li> <li>• Illustrate</li> <li>• Indicate</li> <li>• Interpret</li> <li>• Paraphrase</li> <li>• Predict</li> <li>• Specify</li> <li>• Summarize</li> <li>• Translate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply</li> <li>• Change</li> <li>• Chart</li> <li>• Compute</li> <li>• Devise</li> <li>• Establish</li> <li>• Experiment</li> <li>• Identify</li> <li>• Implement</li> <li>• Interview</li> <li>• Modify</li> <li>• Organize</li> <li>• Perform</li> <li>• Prepare</li> <li>• Sketch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze</li> <li>• Characterize</li> <li>• Classify</li> <li>• Compare</li> <li>• Contrast</li> <li>• Correlate</li> <li>• Debate</li> <li>• Deduct</li> <li>• Diagram</li> <li>• Differentiate</li> <li>• Discriminate</li> <li>• Examine</li> <li>• Infer</li> <li>• Outline</li> <li>• Question</li> <li>• Solve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appraise</li> <li>• Assess</li> <li>• Conclude</li> <li>• Critique</li> <li>• Defend</li> <li>• Determine</li> <li>• Estimate</li> <li>• Evaluate</li> <li>• Hypothesize</li> <li>• Judge</li> <li>• Justify</li> <li>• Predict</li> <li>• Prioritize</li> <li>• Prove</li> <li>• Rate</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Validate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt</li> <li>• Build</li> <li>• Combine</li> <li>• Compose</li> <li>• Construct</li> <li>• Create</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Develop</li> <li>• Formulate</li> <li>• Invent</li> <li>• Modify</li> <li>• Plan</li> <li>• Produce</li> <li>• Propose</li> <li>• Reorganize</li> <li>• Revise</li> </ul>

### Action Verbs that are Not Easily Measurable or Observable

Action verbs should be free of vague or ambiguous words or phrasing. Here is a list of notoriously ambiguous or "fuzzy" words which should be avoided so that the intended learning outcome is concise, explicit, and easily measurable.

WORDS TO AVOID:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Any Noun (Only use VERBS)</li> <li>•Appreciate</li> <li>•Believe</li> <li>•Comprehend</li> <li>•Conceptualize</li> <li>•Experience</li> <li>•Explore</li> <li>•Feel</li> <li>•Hear</li> <li>•Know</li> <li>•Learn</li> <li>•Listen</li> <li>•Perceive</li> <li>•Realize</li> <li>•See</li> <li>•Self-Actualize</li> <li>•Think</li> <li>•Understand</li> <li>•Use</li> </ul>

Source: Anderson, Lorin W., and David R. Krathwohl, eds. 2001. *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

## Appendix E

### Assessment Checklist

*At the heart of assessment is improvement and the ultimate goal of any of this work should be with that in mind.*

#### Checklist of elements required in the annual assessment process (based on Watermark structure)

Checklist	Watermark P&SS Element	Description/Suggestions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Standing requirements (This section is done once – not annually)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mission:</b> explanation of what the program is and why the program exists. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Student Learning Outcomes:</b> A statement that describes the measurable skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students should be able to do or demonstrate as a result of the course or program. Learning outcomes should be specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic, and time framed. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Success Outcomes:</b> A statement that articulates indicators other than student learning such as student success that is not directly tied to mastery of learning or unit effectiveness. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Curriculum map:</b> Demonstrates where the program’s curriculum learning outcomes are being addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment plan (Completed annually)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Method:</b> list of direct or indirect measures <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Course:</b> links student learning outcomes to a specific course from the curriculum. (For academic programs only). <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Measure title:</b> short title for measure <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Target:</b> expectation of student performance based on previous data or best practices. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Description:</b> describe how data will be collected (supporting documents may be uploaded).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment findings & Continuous Improvement (Completed annually)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Measure status:</b> indication if target was met or not met. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Analysis:</b> provide a summary of strengths and weaknesses in data results; also provide the “N” to indicate the number of student artifacts evaluated. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Action:</b> <u>Specific</u> strategies or actions to seek continuous improvement.

#### Tips:

- Including the program mission helps to demonstrate alignment to college mission. Likewise, outcomes presented should be assessing the achievement of the program/unit mission.
- Curriculum mapping is a great exercise to ensure that all aspects of learning are being assessed (especially for new programs or when considering curricular changes). Once completed, the curriculum map becomes good supporting documentation to demonstrate a commitment to program improvement.
- An outcome should be assessed for as many cycles as it takes to “close the loop” – that is, to present a challenge or area for improvement in learning, to determine where students are, implement changes that are expected to create observable improvement, and then to document that the changes “worked” and improvement was documented. However, outcomes may remain consistent in cases where they address the requirements of discipline-specific accreditation.
- Good supporting documents to attach whenever possible:
  - assessment measures and sample rubrics;
  - detailed data reports; and
  - minutes from departmental faculty meetings or retreats to demonstrate that continuous improvement is a shared responsibility among all faculty.

# Appendix F

## Watermark User Guide: Planning & Self-Study (P&SS) for Annual Program Assessment Reports

### WATERMARK USER GUIDE: PLANNING AND SELF-STUDY (P&SS)

#### Using Planning and Self-Study (P&SS) for Annual Program Assessment Reports

**Purpose:** The Plans Module within Planning and Self-Study is the institution's repository for program assessment reports; including student learning outcomes, evidence-based achievement of those outcomes, and data-informed actions to seek continuous improvement.

#### Entering an Assessment Plan and Resulting Data

##### Step 1: Accessing Planning & Self-Study

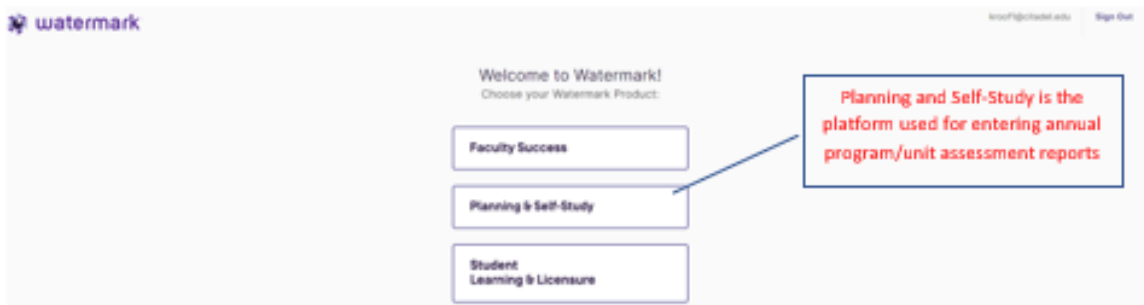
- The link for Planning & Self-Study can be found in the [MyCitadel Portal](#):

On the Faculty Resources [tile](#):



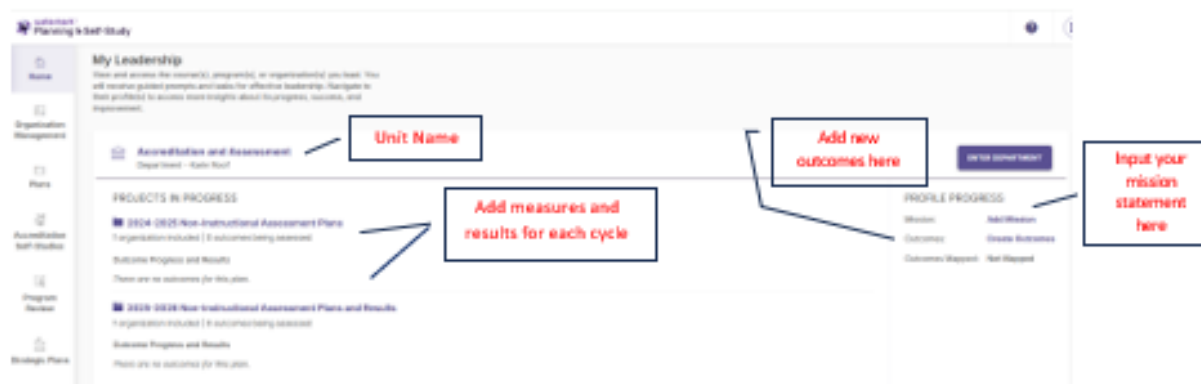
*Note: Even if you are not faculty, you should be able to access the Faculty Resources tile and access has been granted to key personnel for Watermark products, such as P&SS).*

- Once you have followed the link to the Watermark Platforms, you will see the following landing page:



- Follow the link for **Planning and Self-Study**
  - Note: the landing page above may look different depending on user access
  - Faculty Success is the platform used for the annual review of faculty
  - Student Learning & Licensure is a platform for capturing data for SLO attainment from course-based assessment

- On your home page, under the heading My Leadership, the programs or units are listed to which you have responsibility for assessment
- Select the Enter Department button in the upper-right corner to add/edit your mission statement or to create outcomes
- Select the appropriate academic year to enter your annual assessment plans and results

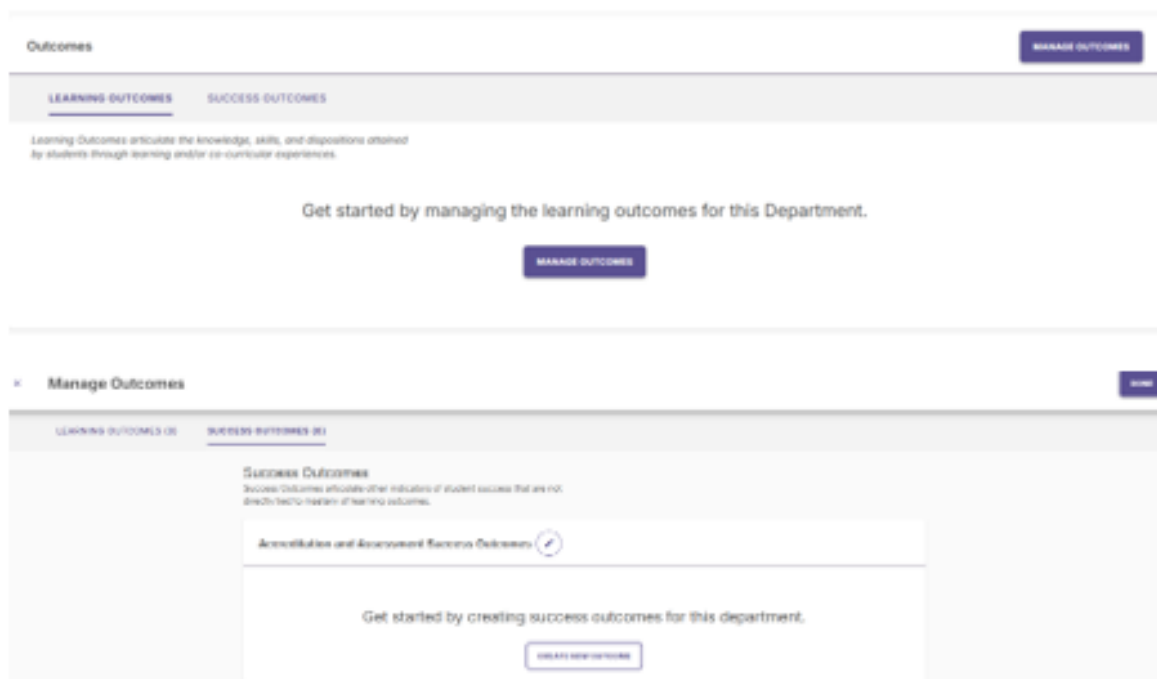


## Step 2: Creating or Editing Outcomes

### Adding a Mission and Outcomes

Note: Once you have created an outcome for the first time, you will be able to select it (or not) in future years.

- If starting a plan for the first time, you will see a screen like this when you enter "create outcomes"
- To make a new outcome select either **Learning Outcomes** or **Success Outcomes** and then **Manage Outcomes**



- Add a short title for the outcome in the Outcome Title box and then the full outcome in the outcome description box. Select create new [outcome](#) to add the outcome for your unit.

Fields marked with \* are required.

Create New Outcome

Outcome Title\*  0/70

Label the outcome by proficiency area if applicable. e.g. Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Civil Engagement.

Outcome Description

Tags  Enter Tag 0/30

Tags added: 0/5

Tags allow you to track outcomes across organizations using Bloom's Taxonomy or your own institutional labels. You can add up to 5 tags.

- Here is a (fictional) example from my test program, BS in Aardvark Biology:

Fields marked with \* are required.

Edit Outcome

Make minor changes to the existing outcome details.

Outcome Title\*  Aardvark Ecosystem

Label the outcome by proficiency area if applicable. e.g. Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Civil Engagement.

Outcome Description  Upon successful completion of the program, students will describe how aardvark activities affect the physical environment.

Tags  Describe biology aardvark Enter Tag 0/30

Tags added: 3/5

Tags allow you to track outcomes across organizations using Bloom's Taxonomy or your own institutional labels. You can add up to 5 tags.

Short title – will be displayed on your outcome summary page

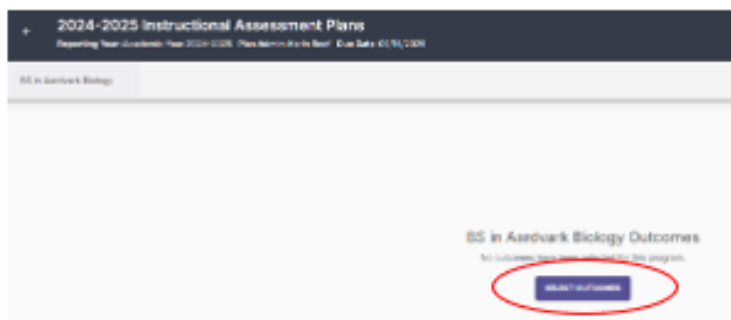
Full outcome in proper format:  
Leader phrase  
Bloom's verb  
Not compound (no ands or lists)

Tags help to organize outcomes across the institution (optional)

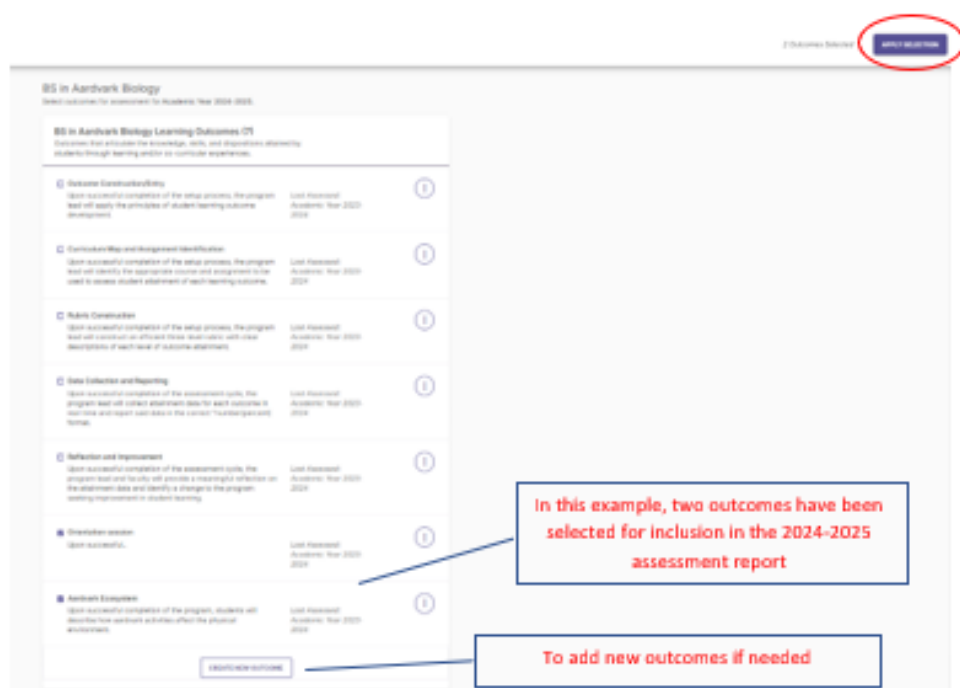
**Adding or Editing Existing Outcomes**

Once you have added outcomes, you can carry them over from year to year and edit them if needed.

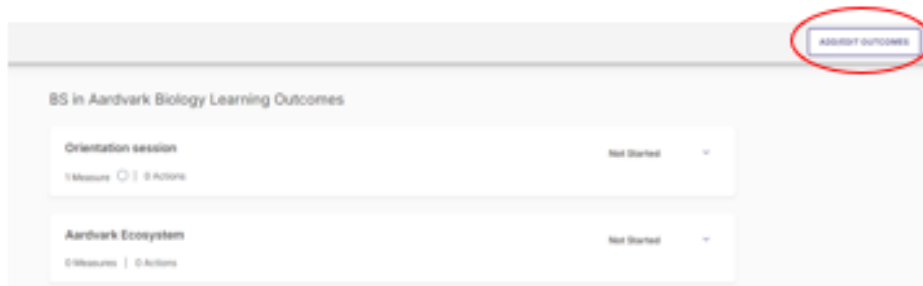
- Since outcomes were created for 2023-2024 in my test program, when I select the link for my program in 2024-2025, I can choose which outcomes I would like to include by using the Select Outcomes button



- Use the checkboxes to select the outcomes to include and use the Apply Selection button
  - Note, new outcomes can also be added, if needed



- To edit an existing outcome, use the Add/Edit Outcomes link

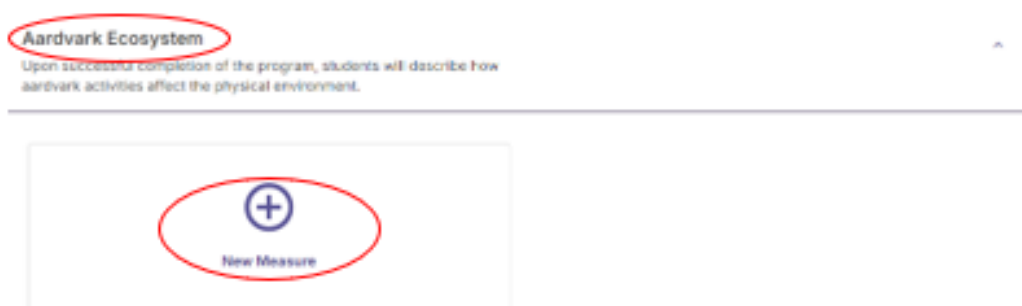


- There are two options for editing existing outcomes:



### Step 3: Adding Assessment Measures to an Outcome

- To add assessment measures, click the short title of an outcome and the plus sign for New Measure



## WATERMARK USER GUIDE: PLANNING AND SELF-STUDY (P&SS)

- Begin by adding the method by which the assessment data will be gathered, adding the course (if a learning outcome) and a measure title (summary title here)

Fields marked with \* are required.

Definition	Details of the measure activity
<p>Method</p> <p>Select Measure Method</p>	<p><b>Methods include:</b></p> <p>Direct measures: assignment, capstone, licensure or certification exam, course-based exam, field assessment, portfolio, presentation, project or quiz</p> <p>Indirect measures: completion rates, course evaluation, focus group, interview, survey</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Aardvark Ecosystem</p>	
<p>Program</p> <p>BS in Aardvark Biology</p>	
<p>Course*</p> <p>Select a course for this measure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This is a non-course based measure</p>	
<p>Title*</p> <p>Enter Measure Title</p>	<p>For academic programs, select the course in which the assessment will be administered OR Use the checkbox for non-course-based measure</p>

Add short title here

Results Collection

Align this measure to results from another integrated system. If your results aren't being collected in an integrated system, simply skip this step.

ALIGN RESULTS

Target

Enter target or criteria of success for this measure

For example, 80% of the students will achieve a score of 3 or above.

Description

0 of 5 Files  
Maximum file size 100 MB

Accepted file types: .pdf, .txt, .log, .xml, .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .ppt, .pptx, .gif, .jpg, .jpeg, .png, .csv

Align Results allows you to integrate course-based data collected in Student Learning & Licensure

This target is the expected performance for the assessment measure. This should not be an average score and should be rigorous (for example, 95% of students met or exceed...)

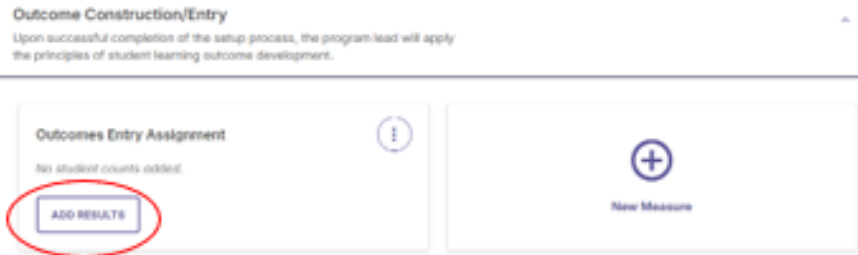
Assessment measures should identify strengths and weaknesses of students' achievement of the learning outcome. Describe the type of measure, where it will be administered, and how it will be evaluated.

This is a good place to attach a sample of the measurement (assignment prompt, exam, survey) and/or a sample of the rubric used to evaluate.

- Once all the fields above have been completed, use the Add button in the upper right-hand corner to include the measure in your assessment report.

Step 4: Adding Results to a Measure

- Once a measure has been created, results can be added



- The example below is set up for results to be enter a count of students who did or did not meet the target. IT IS IMPORTANT TO USE A COUNT – P&SS will translate to percentages

**Other options are:**

- upload the assessment results (not recommended)
- connect to (SL&L), which will import results aligned to the rubric.

Once you have entered the counts, select view results and it will present you data in a graph.

Add files or additional text here if needed.

Indicate if target was Met or Not Met

This is a good place to include the N to reflect how many student artifacts were included or to disaggregate data by specific populations (for example: online sections as compared to face-to-face sections).

- Once the results are entered, action items seeking improvement are added using Add New Action.

- The list of Actions is as follows:

Add New Action

---

Select the type of action you recommend.

- Revise Curriculum
- Restructure Outcome Statement
- Revise Measurement / Assessment
- Revise Benchmark / Target
- Implement New Program Or Services
- Community Partnership
- Modify Position / Personnel
- Modify Policies / Procedures
- Adopt Or Expand Technologies
- Additional Training
- Collaborate With Another Department / Unit / Program
- Modify Physical Environment
- Other

This can include changes across the curriculum for a program OR changes in the curricular form of a course. For learning outcomes, this is the most meaningful action type.

- Once the action type has been selected, a description and due date can be provided.

Add New Action

---

Action Type  
 Revise Curriculum  
 Change Action Type

---

Status

---

Action Description\*

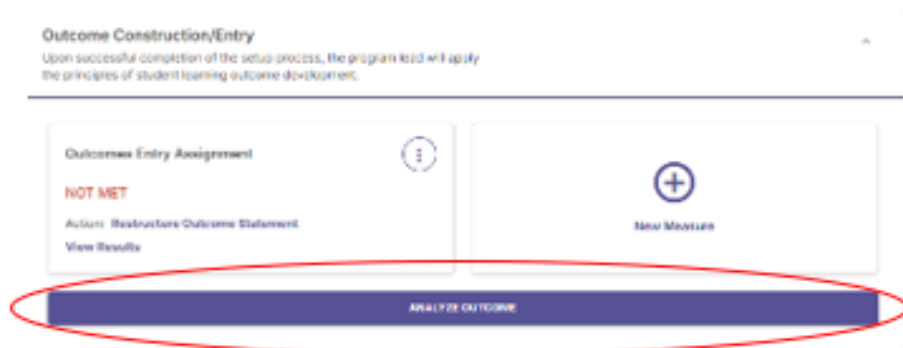
---

Recommended Due Date

---

**Step 6: Provide an Analysis of the Outcome**

- Once an outcome has at least one assessment measure with results and analysis added, an analysis at the outcome level can be provided. This is helpful in cases where multiple measures are used with conflicting results.



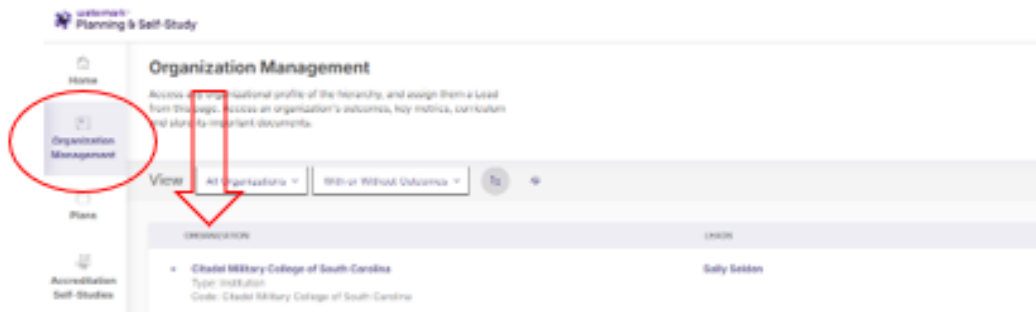
- A narrative can be added for the outcome, the overall status of the outcome (met or not met), and actions can be added here as well.

**Step 7: Submitting the Final Report**

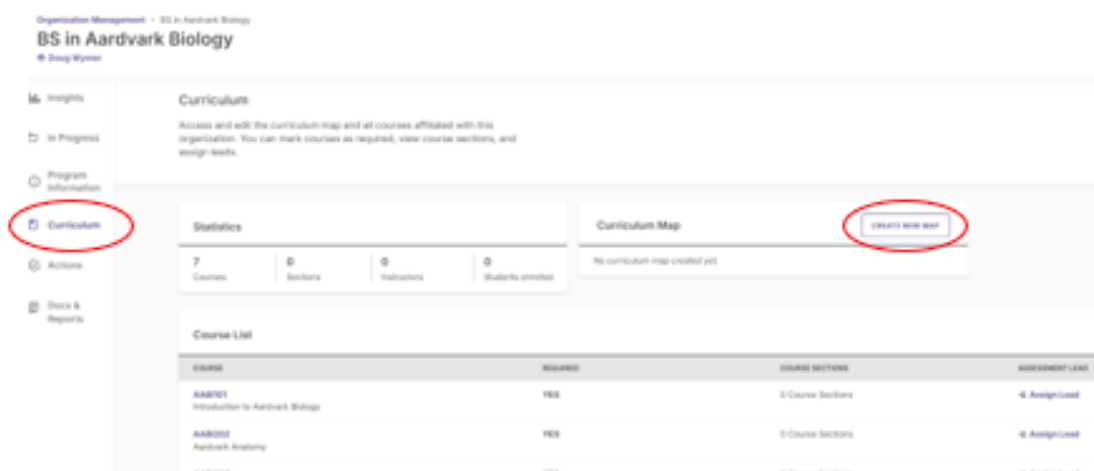
- Once the assessment report is complete, use the submit button in the upper right-hand corner
- For 2023-2024, reports will be reviewed by the Director of Assessment. Discussions will occur regarding a broad-based review process for future years.

**Step 8: Building a curriculum map**

- Once the assessment outcomes and measures have been entered, a curriculum map can be developed.
- Using the Organization Management module on the left-hand menu and scroll through the Organization structure to find your program.



- Once you have selected your program, use the Curriculum link on the left-hand menu and then Create New Map



- A template for the curriculum map is presented with course-based assessment indicated in black. Use the plus button in indicate where in the curriculum each outcome is Introduced, Reinforced, or Mastered.

Outcomes	Courses						
	AAB101	AAB102	AAB103	AAB101	AAB150	AAB190	AAB199
<b>BS in Aardvark Biology Learning Outcomes</b>							
<b>Outcome Construction/Entry</b> Upon successful completion of the setup process, the program lead will apply the principles of student learning...	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Curriculum Map and Assignment Identification</b> Upon successful completion of the setup process, the program lead will identify the appropriate course and...	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Rubric Construction</b> Upon successful completion of the setup process, the program lead will construct an efficient three-level rubric...	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Data Collection and Reporting</b> Upon successful completion of the assessment cycle, the program lead will collect assessment data for each outcome...	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Reflection and Improvement</b> Upon successful completion of the assessment cycle, the program lead and faculty will provide a meaningful...	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Orientation session</b> Upon successful...	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Aardvark Ecosystem</b> Upon successful completion of the program, students will describe how aardvark activities affect the physical...	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Reg:  Aligned  Introduce  Reinforce  Master  Assessment Activity

## **Appendix G**

### **Glossary of Terms**

The Glossary of Terms contains a number of definitions adapted from assessment resources developed by other institutions and entities. The major resources listed below were used to compile the present glossary. The resources listed below are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive.

- Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. 2007. *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*. Ed. College Delegate Assembly. Decatur: Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- Eaton, Judith S. 2009. *An Overview of U.S. Accreditation*. Washington DC: Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

**Accreditation** – A certification awarded by an external, recognized organization, that the institution or program meets certain requirements overall, or in a particular discipline. The SACSCOC accreditation process assumes that all programs and services are reviewed as part of the institutional effectiveness process.

**Accrediting Organization** – Decision-making bodies (commissions) made up of administrators and faculty from institutions and programs as well as public members. These commissions may affirm accreditation for new institutions and programs, reaffirm accreditation for ongoing institutions and programs, and deny accreditation to institutions and programs.

**Aggregated Data** – Statistics which relate to broad classes, groups, or categories, so that it is not possible to distinguish the properties of individuals within those classes, groups, or categories. Aggregated data should be collected for program or unit level assessment.

**Assessment** – The ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning and operations; the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs and administrative units undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning, development, and institutional effectiveness.

**Assessment Plan** – The document that presents the program information (coordinator, assessment committee members, mission, and assessment process), student learning or operational outcomes, how those outcomes will be measured, and the performance targets for each outcome.

**Assessment Report** – The document that presents both the assessment plan and results for a given academic year.

**Assessment Results** – The section of an assessment report that presents data and discusses how assessment results will be used to change curriculum, pedagogy, programs, services, and/or assessment procedures for the coming year.

**Assessment Template** – The form that demonstrates how the academic program or administrative unit will assess the upcoming year's assessment activities.

**Benchmark** – A criterion-referenced objective. Performance data can be utilized to create a baseline of acceptable performance or to create a standard when setting target levels of performance.

**Best Practice** – Compares your results against the best of your peers.

**Bloom's Taxonomy** – Six levels in which cognitively related objects can be categorized by levels of increasing complexity; the revised levels are Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create.

**Closing the Loop** – Using assessment results for academic program or administrative unit change and improvement.

**Coherence** – A critical component of a program which should demonstrate an appropriate sequencing of courses, so that the student learning is progressively more advanced in terms of assignments and scholarship required and demonstrates progressive advancement in a field of study that allows students to integrate knowledge and grow in critical skills.

**Cohort** – A group whose progress is followed by means of measurements at different points in time. A group of persons sharing a particular statistical or demographic characteristic.

**Competency** – Level at which performance is acceptable.

**Course Assessment** – Using direct and indirect measures to determine if the student outcomes at the course level have been met and using this data to enhance student learning.

**Course Embedded Assessment** – A means of gathering information about student learning that is built into natural part of teaching-learning process. Course embedded assessment can assess an individual student performance or aggregate the information about the course or program. For example, tests, portfolios, papers, etc.

**Curriculum Map** – Demonstrates where in the program's curriculum learning outcomes are being addressed. Mapping program outcomes to course outcomes shows how students develop skills and knowledge in courses that are required for their programs of study.

**Direct Assessment Measures** – Requires demonstration of student knowledge or skills against measurable learning outcomes.

**Effectiveness** – How well an approach, a process, or a measure addresses its intended purpose. Extent to which an institution/division/department meets its unique mission.

**Focus Group** – A carefully planned discussion to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately 7-12 people by a skilled interviewer.

**Formative Assessment** – It is in progress assessment, feedback loops intended to improve teaching and learning or operations.

**Functional Map** - Demonstrates where in the unit's outcomes are being addressed. Mapping operational outcomes to functional areas shows how unit or students coordinate assessment strategies across the unit or division.

**Indirect Assessment Measures** – Assessment methods that involve perceptions of learning rather than actual demonstrations of learning. For example, a student survey about whether a course helped develop a greater sensitivity to diversity or an employer survey asking for feedback on graduate's skills. Compare with direct measures.

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

**Institutional Effectiveness** – The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.

**Longitudinal Assessment** – Assessments that collect data from the same population at different points in time.

**Measures** – The specific methods by which outcomes are assessed through the planned and systematic collection of data.

**Mission Statement** – The mission statement is usually a short, one paragraph general explanation of what the program is, and why the program exists.

**Outcome** - A specific, measurable statement that describes desired performance.

**Performance Target** - The expected or predicted success level of an individual, unit, school, or division.

**Peer Review** – An review conducted primarily by faculty and administrative peers in the profession. These colleagues review the self-study and serve on visiting teams that review institutions and programs after the self-study is completed. Peers constitute the majority of members of the accrediting commissions or boards that make judgments about accrediting status.

**Portfolio** – Collections of multiple student work samples usually compiled over time and rated using rubrics. The design of the portfolio is dependent upon how the scoring results are going to be used.

**Program Assessment** – Program outcomes based on how well courses and other experiences in the curriculum fit together and build on each other to improve student learning.

**Qualitative Assessment** – Assessment that relies on description rather than numerical scores or ratings. The emphasis is on the measurement of opinions, reflections and/or judgments. Examples include interview, focus groups, and observations. Compare with quantitative assessment.

**Quantitative Assessment** – Assessment that relies on numerical scores or ratings. The emphasis is on the use of statistics, cumulative numbers, aggregated data, and numerical measurements. Compare with qualitative assessment.

**Random Sample** – A sample drawn from the population such that every member of the population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample.

**Reliability** – Reliability is the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same result on repeated trials.

**Rubrics** – A set of categories that define and describe the important components of the work being completed, critiqued, and assessed. It evaluates performance and quality of work in attaining learning outcomes; assists in identifying strengths and weaknesses in performance based on department expectations or standards.

**Student Learning Outcomes** – A statement that describes the measurable skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students should be able to do or demonstrate as a result of the course or program. Learning outcomes should be specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic, and time framed.

**Summative Assessment** – An assessment that is done at the conclusion of a course or some larger instructional period (e.g., at the end of the program). The purpose is to determine success or to what

extent the program/project/course met its goals and learning outcomes. Compare with formative assessment.

**Use of Results** – Explains how specific results from assessment activities will be used for decision-making, strategic planning, program evaluation and improvement; assists in documenting changes and the reasons for the changes.

**Validity** – Degree to which a method or study accurately reflects or assesses the specific outcome that the institution/division/department is attempting to measure.

**Value-added (growth or pre-post)** – Compares results against student scores when they started or entered the program to the end of the program or course of study.

**Variable** – Observable characteristics that vary among individual response.