

## Institutional Assessment at UAH: FAQ

### **Q: What is Institutional Assessment?**

**A:** Institutional Assessment is the process of identifying areas where changes is needed and then implementing those changes in both student learning and university operations. This is not a new innovation since most institutions have been doing this process for a long time using internal unit processes, strategic plans, and comprehensive academic program reviews. However, in recent years, the expectations for documenting this process have increased and have led to a formalized annual planning and reporting which, at UAH, is overseen by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). This process forms the core of the response to SACS COC Comprehensive Requirement 3.3.1.

### **Q: What is the Assessment Plan and Report (APR)?**

**A:** The Assessment Plan and Report (APR) is used to document the Institutional Assessment process at UAH. It is organized around the unit's outcomes with assessment methods and assessment targets described for each outcome. After the assessments are completed, the data collected are described, and those results are used to implement needed changes. This annual process is recorded in the internet-based software Compliance Assist.

### **Q: Which offices or departments have to complete an Assessment Plan and Report (APR)?**

**A:** Both academic and administrative units have to complete an Assessment Plan and Report (APR). Every degree, major, or certificate is considered an academic unit and completes an APR. (Other academic programs, such as a minors or concentrations, may choose to complete an APR if desired.) Any office or other department on campus led by a director or higher is considered an administrative unit and completes an APR. The institutional organizational chart is key in identifying each unit.

### **Q: What is included in an Assessment Plan and Report (APR)?**

**A:** Each APR is built around Student Learning Outcomes and/or Operational Outcomes.

- Each Academic unit offering a Major/Degree is required to have a minimum of 3 Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) with 2 assessment methods for each and a minimum of 2 Operational Outcomes (OPOs) with 1 assessment method each for a total of 5 outcomes.
- Each Academic unit offering a Certificate is required to have a minimum of 3 Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)\* with 1 assessment method each.
- Each Administrative unit is required to have a minimum of 3 Operational Outcomes (OPOs)\* with 1 assessment method each.

\*These units may choose to use a combination of SLOs and OPOs as long as they have at least 3 outcomes total.

For additional information, view the Institutional Assessment training module on Assessment Plans and Reports, available at the OIRA-Assessment webpage under Resources.

### **Q: How often do Assessment Plan and Report (APR) have to be completed?**

**A:** This is an annual process. The data collection cycle typically runs from August 1 each year through July 31 of the following year to coincide with the academic year. The written report describing the data and its use is due by November 1.

Units who already follow another reporting cycle, such as the fiscal year, may choose to follow those reporting dates for this process. For these units, the alternate choice should be explained within the Assessment Plan and Report.

### **More Questions?**

Visit the OIRA website. (Search OIRA from the UAH Website. Click on Assessment then Resources.)  
Contact Ginny Cockerill at [gdc0004@uah.edu](mailto:gdc0004@uah.edu) or x. 6254.

**Q: What information needs to be provided for each outcome?**

**A:** The following elements are required for each outcome

	<b>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)</b>	<b>Operational Outcomes (OPO)</b>
<b>Outcome</b>	observable knowledge, skill, attitude or behavior for student group	service or process with expected beneficiary and intended impact
<b>Assessment Methods</b>	first way to measure	one way to measure
<b>Assessment Targets</b>	expected results for first method	expected results
<b>Data Collected</b>	actual results for first method	actual results
<b>Use of Results</b>	changes made for first method	changes made
<b>Assessment Methods</b>	second way to measure	
<b>Assessment Targets</b>	expected results for second method	
<b>Data Collected</b>	actual results for second method	
<b>Use of Results</b>	changes made for second method	

The Outcome statement, the Assessment Method(s), and the Assessment Target(s) are generally set at the beginning of the year. The Data Collected and Use of Results are completed after the assessment methods have been completed and the data has been analyzed.

For additional information, view the Institutional Assessment training modules on Student Learning Outcomes and on Operational Outcomes, available at the OIRA-Assessment webpage under Resources.

**Q: What separates one assessment method from another?**

**A:** To be considered a separate assessment method, the assessment typically occurs at a different time (sophomore class versus senior class), involves different content (algebra versus geometry), collects different data (rubric rating on content versus rubric rating on application), or uses a different tool (paper versus test). The overall expectation is that each assessment method will result in a different set of data. See the training video Different Assessment Methods available at the OIRA-Assessment webpage.

For additional information, view the Institutional Assessment training module on Different Assessment Methods, available at the OIRA-Assessment webpage under Resources.

**Q: What is Compliance Assist?**

**A:** Compliance Assist is the internet-based software used to store the APRs for all units. It saves and archives the annual APRs and allows us to generate the information needed for accreditation reports. Access is based on the designated Assessment Coordinators and Report Writers for the unit.

For additional access, contact Ginny Cockerill at [gdc0004@uah.edu](mailto:gdc0004@uah.edu) or x. 6254. For additional information, view the User Guide and the QuickStart Guide, both available at the OIRA-Assessment webpage under Resources.

**Q: Who has access to the unit's completed Assessment Plan and Report (APR)?**

**A:** Primary access to the APR is currently set to whichever users were designated by the unit as well as the any supervisors for the unit listed in the UAH organizational chart. In the future, a peer review process will be implemented in which specific reviewers will be designated for each APR. Completed APRs are also included accreditation reports, although those reviewers do not typically have direct access in Compliance Assist.

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