

Operational Outcomes (OPOs) Checklist

1. *An Operational Outcome Should...*

- Focus on a service, process, or instruction (not on individual personnel).
- Be clearly and succinctly stated (not bundled).
- Be under the control or responsibility of the unit.
- Be meaningful, not trivial.
- Be measurable/ascertainable and specific.
- Describes the expected beneficiary (Who is impacted?)
- Includes the intended impact. (How will it help them?)
- Not lead to a “yes/no” answer.

2. *An Assessment Method Should...*

- Be directly related to the outcome.
- Address all aspects of the outcome (over time).
- Provide measurable/ascertainable results.
- Provide adequate data for analysis.
- Provide actionable data.
- Answer these questions: What data will be collected? When will the data be collected? What assessment tool will be used? How will the data be analyzed?

3. *An Assessment Target Should...*

- Use component (not student or respondent) as analysis.
- Relate to outcome and assessment method.
- Be specific. (“x% of responses will be correct for each question” or “y% of scores for each item will be at least ‘Good’”)
- Avoid vague words such as “most” or “majority.”

4. *Data Collected Should...*

- Provide detailed data (avoid “most” or “majority”).
- Use specific numbers (not rounded).
- Avoid technical language.
- Be clearly and succinctly presented.
- Align with outcome and target.
- Support actions taken later to improve unit.

5. *Use of Results Should...*

- Address gaps identified by assessment results.
- Relate to outcome and result from data collected.
- Provide details of improvement made.
- Avoid “continue” or “maintain” or “refer to committee.”
- Be substantive, not trivial.
- Be stated in past tense.

Evaluation Rubric for Operational Outcomes (OPOs)		
ASSESSMENT PLAN	1: Acceptable	0: Not Acceptable
OUTCOME		
<i>Describes unit's current services, processes or instruction</i>	Outcome clearly states current services or process with the beneficiary and the impact.	a: Outcome is not clearly focused on current services, processes or instruction
		b: Outcome is future-focused or relates to individual employee performance
<i>Is succinctly stated</i>	Describes a focused Outcome	a: Describes multiple Outcomes only somewhat related
		b: Describes multiple unrelated Outcomes
<i>Is under control of unit</i>	Unit has control or responsibility for Outcome	a: Unit has modest control or responsibility for Outcome
		b: Unit has little or no control or responsibility for Outcome
ASSESSMENT METHOD		
<i>Directly measures service, process or instruction</i>	All Assessment Methods directly measure Outcome	a: At least one Assessment Method directly measures Outcome
		b: Assessment Methods do not effectively measure Outcome
<i>Addresses all aspects of the Outcome</i>	Assessment Methods measure all aspects of Outcome	a: Assessment Methods measure some, but not all aspect of the Outcome
		b: Assessment Methods do not effectively measure Outcome
<i>Multiple methods reported</i>	Multiple Assessment Methods are proposed	a: A single direct Assessment Method is proposed
		b: No Assessment Methods are proposed that measure the Outcome
ASSESSMENT TARGET		
<i>Is appropriately stated</i>	Targets are clearly stated and use item analysis when appropriate	a: Targets are vague or do not use item analysis if appropriate
		b: Targets are missing or not aligned with Assessment Method
ASSESSMENT REPORT	1: Acceptable	0: Not Acceptable
DATA COLLECTED		
<i>Are detailed and sufficient</i>	Sufficient data are reported in adequate detail to assess the Outcome	a: Data are reported, but more data would increase confidence in results
		b: Inadequate data were reported to assess the Outcome
<i>Are linked to Target and Assessment Method</i>	Data clearly aligns with Assessment Method and Target	a: Data somewhat align with Assessment Method and/or Target
		b: Data are not aligned with Assessment Method and/or Target

**Evaluation Rubric for
Operational Outcomes (OPOs)**

USE OF RESULTS

<i>Address gaps identified by data</i>	Unit improvements that clearly stem from Assessment Data are proposed; OR Target was met	a: Vague statement of unit improvements are proposed
		b: No improvements are proposed, despite Target not being met
<i>Are stated in the past tense</i>	Unit improvements are already in place; OR Target was met	a: Unit improvements are scheduled for implementation
		b: Needed unit improvements have not been identified

Tips for Operational Outcomes (OPOs)

Outcome Statement

What are Operational Outcomes

- Outcomes are directly tied to the mission (purpose) and key functionalities of the unit.
- An intended or expected outcome helps determine what is measured.
- Outcome statements have two mandatory elements:
 - Intended beneficiary: (customers, students, institution, community)
 - Gain or benefit: (impact)
- Outcomes should be measurable and actionable
 - Be able to monitor change in beneficiaries
 - Have some degree of controllable influence on the outcomes

Outcome statement with beneficiary as the subject:

- Customers have...
- Administrators are able to...
- Clients understand...
- Customers employ...
- Students are aware of...
- The institution gains...

Operational Outcome versus a Goal Statement

- An expected outcome is not a goal statement, nor is it an objective
- A goal describes the outcome (product or service) the unit is planning to achieve through organized activities.
- An expected outcome describes benefit or change that the department hopes to effect for the customer or university as a result of that outcome (i.e., the impact on the customer)
- An example of a goal statement versus an outcome:
Goal: To provide accurate and timely reports to university administrators.
Outcome: UAH applicants will receive notification of receipt of application within 2 business days.
Outcome: University administrators have the institutional data they need to make decisions effectively.

Assessment Methods

Select the appropriate Effectiveness Indicator, specifically a characteristic, dimension, or element that you will be measuring to monitor change.

Example: Outcome Statement: *University administrators have the financial information they need to make decisions effectively.*

- Timeliness of reports to supervisor
- Accuracy of monthly reports
- Timeliness of requests for ad hoc reports
- Accuracy of information in ad hoc report
- Proactive reports produced on topical issues for the institution

Assessment Targets

Targets are values set for the indicator that you expect to reach. Examples:

- 100% of monthly reports are submitted by the 5th of the month
- Fewer than 5% of reports are returned for corrections
- 100% of ad hoc reports are submitted by the requested deadline
- At least two proactive reports are generated by term

Data Collected

- Make sure you can obtain the data easily.
- Data should be representative of the year.
- Snapshots of data are acceptable.
- Potential sources of data: Unit records, Quality standards, Web site hits, Audit reports, Informal/formal interviews, Focus groups, Year to year comparisons, Benchmarking other institutions, Surveys, Systematic observation.

Use of Results

What do the results mean for your unit? Questions to consider:

- Why did you or did you not reach your target?
- What strengths do the results reflect about your unit?
- How can you strengthen this area?
- What strategies were successful or not successful?
- What will you employ to improve your outcome?
- Where is additional attention needed to correct a problem or issue?

Assessing outcomes is to provide meaningful information to help improve an institution/department. The most important part of the assessment cycle is determining how the results will be used for improvement and articulated through an Action Plan. Any item identified for improvement will need an action to correct or improve performance.

Strategies may include:

- Operational or programmatic: modifying what you do or how you do it
- Organizational: modifying the organizational structure of assignments
- Strategic: modifying your mission, responsibilities, or outcomes
- Assessment-related: modifying indicators or targets or method of data collection

Helpful Tips

- Avoid compound outcomes and/or also called double barreling.
- Use simple, specific action verbs to describe what the students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of your program. Action verbs result in overt behavior that can be observed and measured. See section on Bloom's Taxonomy below.
- Avoid verbs that are unclear and call for behavior that cannot be observed or measured, such as appreciate, understand, learn, know, become familiar with