Administrative Unit Assessment Planning Handbook
Administrative Effectiveness & Academic and Student Support Services Units

The examples and tools included in this resource are intended to serve only as a reference and guide, not as an exclusive representation of all possible examples, tools, or best practices.

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Introduction to the Handbook

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette engages all its academic programs and administrative entities in the assessment process. The desire to understand how well the entity is performing and to enhance planning efforts, decision support, resource allocation, and operational excellence are all motivators for conducting the assessment.

The primary purpose of this handbook is to provide administrators and staff with information, resources, and examples to assist in developing annual assessment plans and reports, which document assessment activities and improvements.

Basics of Assessment

Assessment is the ongoing and systematic process of identifying outcomes. It involves developing outcomes, gathering data on the outcomes, using the information to inform decisions about improvement, and implementing improvements based on the collected data. The most important aspect of this definition is the *use* of the information. There are four main functions of assessment:

1. **To improve** programs and services through assessment results that identify areas for change and improvement**.**
2. **To inform** department heads and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the administrative Unit on the development and growth of students.
3. **To prove** and demonstrate what the administrative entity is accomplishing for students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders.
4. **To support** campus decision-making activities such as unit review and strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.

Differences between Institutional Effectiveness Planning and Strategic Planning

Institutional Effectiveness	Strategic Planning
• *Current* status	• *Future* initiatives
• Focus on *current* services, processes, or learning	• Focus on *new* services, processes, or operations
• Asks "*How well* are we performing?"	• Asks "*Where* do we want to go?"
• *Informs* budget	• *Drives* budget

Administrative Units Assessment

Administrative units at UL Lafayette participate in the assessment process to sustain excellence and set goals for continuous improvement and institutional effectiveness. Administrative, academic and student support units are divided into two distinct groups according to SACSCOC guidelines and are reported to SACSCOC separately. If a unit has dual functions with both administrative and student-support roles, it will only be reported in SACSCOC 8.2c. **Final determination of which standard applies to a unit is made by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.**

1. **SACSCOC 7.3 (Administrative Effectiveness)**
   The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.

2. **SACSCOC 8.2c (Academic and Student Services)**
   The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in academic and student services that support student success.

Administrative Effectiveness (7.3) and Academic & Student Support Services Units (8.2.c)

Category	Administrative Effectiveness (7.3)	Academic & Student Services (8.2c)	Dual-Function Units (Both Standards but reported in 8.2c)
Unit Focus	Efficiency & effectiveness of administrative operations supporting the institution's mission.	Services that **directly** enhance student learning, engagement, development, and/or success outside of formal coursework.	Units with both administrative and direct student-support roles.
Primary Goal	Ensure smooth, compliant, and effective operations that support the institution.	Ensure student-facing services directly support student progression, retention, and graduation.	Assess both functions separately to capture the full impact.
Assessment Methods	Process metrics, compliance audits, service efficiency surveys	Direct– Rubrics Indirect– Student satisfaction surveys, usage data, retention/ graduation data, rubrics	Two distinct sets of measures—one for admin tasks, one for student support services.
Link to Student Success	Indirect – creates the stable environment needed for learning and supports the educational mission.	Direct – improves learning outcomes, engagement, and completion rates.	Both direct and indirect impacts are measured separately.

UL Lafayette Administrative Units for Assessment

Administrative Effectiveness Units (7.3)		Academic & Student Support Services Units (8.2c)	
Administrative Services	Information Technology	Advance Student Research	Research Centers & Labs
Advancement Operations	Institutional Effectiveness	Career Services	Residential Life
Alumni Association	Intercollegiate Athletics	Center for Gifted Education	Student Engagement and Leadership
Auxiliary Services	President Office	Center for Louisiana Studies	Student Financial Aid
Communications & Marketing	Registrar	Child Development Center	Student Health Services
Development	Research Offices	Counseling and Testing	Student Orientation
Environmental Health and Safety	Scholarships	Distance Learning	Student Publication
Facility Management	Student & Faculty Excellence	Disability Services	Student Rights & Responsibilities
Financial Services	Undergraduate Admissions & Recruitment	Early Childhood Development Center	Student Success Initiatives
Human Resources		Economic & Community Development	University College-Honors Program
		Ernest J Gaines Center	University College- Special Services
		Global Engagement	University Connection
		Graduate School	University Libraries
		Hilliard Art Museum	University Police
		Recreational Sports	Veteran & Military Student Services

Administrative Units Assessment Cycle

Annual Cycle for Continuous Improvement

Phase	Timeline	Activities
Planning	July – September	Units define or revise outcomes and select assessment methods.
Plan Implementation	September - May	Units collect data using selected tools (surveys, KPIs, logs, etc.).
Analysis and Reporting	May - August	Units analyze data, identify trends, and evaluate performance.
Review & Feedback	August – September	Institutional Effectiveness Office reviews reports and provides feedback.

*Timelines may overlap due to differences in operations, schedules, and duties.

The Assessment Process

Phase 1 – DEVELOPING THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSESSMENT PLAN

Step 1 – Define/Refine the UNIT'S MISSION STATEMENT
(**Who** are we?, **What** do we do?, **Why** do we do it?, **For whom** do we do it? *Why does the unit exist?*)
- A brief description of the unit's purpose, primary functions, and who they serve.

> **Structure of a Mission Statement**
> The mission of <the name of your office/department> is to <your primary purpose(s)> by providing <your primary functions or activities> to <your stakeholder(s)>. (Any additional clarifying statements.)
>
> Note: The order of the pieces of the mission statement may vary from the above structure.

Step 2 – Identify EXPECTED OUTCOMES
[What does the unit desire to achieve? What is the desired impact or quality improvement of your unit's action?
- Outcomes should not mirror the duties and responsibilities of the unit but rather go beyond basic tasks to improve or enhance operations.
- Create **(SMART):** Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-focused, and Time-bound outcome statements
- Alignment: Outcomes should support the University, Division, and/or the School/College strategic plans.

> **Structure of an Expected Outcome Statement**
> Outcome = Target/Subject + Verb/Action + Object + Modifiers
>
> The [Support Unit] will [verb describing the action to be taken] in order to [description of desired impact or quality improvement].

Administrative Effectiveness (7.3) Expected Outcomes
These expected outcomes may be categorized as:
- **Service Delivery Outcomes:** Focus on the efficiency, quality, and effectiveness of services provided (e.g., response time, accuracy of data). *Quality of Service and Stakeholder Satisfaction*
- **Operational Outcomes:** Specific statement, focusing on internal processes, procedures, and resource management (e.g., budget adherence, facility utilization). *Efficient and Effective Operations*

The table below demonstrates various outcomes that help units measure quality and effectiveness in their units.

Common Expected Outcomes for Standard 7.3: Administrative Effectiveness

Effectiveness Outcomes	Definition	Key Question	Sample Behaviors
Quality	Improvements in the quality of the process/experience/service – flaws or errors resolved, and value improvements made.	How will the process, experience, or service have more value because of this?	Meeting or exceeding the needs and expectations of stakeholders through high-quality service delivery.
Efficiency	Streamlined processes and operations to optimize resource utilization and productivity. focusing on internal processes, procedures, and resources	How will the process, experience, or service operate more efficiently because of this?	The application process will be streamlined to eliminate redundancies.
Timeliness	Time to completion is reduced, and timeframes or relevant deadlines are achieved	How will relevant timeframes be positively impacted by this?	The report will be submitted before the agency deadline.
Cost	Operating or student costs are reduced or optimized	How will costs be positively impacted by this?	Expenditures will be reduced by 5%
Perceptions	Changes are made in perceptions of, or attitudes about the Unit's processes/experiences/services	How do constituents view the process/experience/service?	95% of students will rate the academic advising they received as "Satisfactory" or "Very Satisfactory."
Reach	Increases are made in the number of people reached, impacted, or served by the process, experience, or service	How many people/processes/entities will be impacted by this?	The number of student research presentations will increase by 15%
Learning outcomes	Services offered produce intended learning outcomes	What knowledge should students/faculty/staff be able to demonstrate because of this?	Students will be able to apply money management principles to their personal finances

(Adopted from: Shults Dorime Williams Support Outcomes Taxonomy)

Academic & Student Support Services (8.2c) Expected Outcomes

- These expected outcomes focus on academic and student services; it's important to differentiate between broader success outcomes and the more specific student learning outcomes (SLOs).
- While units under this standard may have both types of outcomes, not all units will necessarily have measurable SLOs.
- Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that individuals are expected to acquire and demonstrate by the end of the educational experience.

Note: Consider how the SLO will be measured. Course grades and overall graduation/retention rates are typically not accurate measures.

Common Expected Outcomes for Standard 8.2c :

Service Area	Student Learning Outcome (SLO)
Academic Advising	Students will articulate academic goals and pathways related to their chosen major.
Tutoring/Academic Support	Students will apply 1 or more problem-solving strategies to academic tasks after tutoring sessions.
	Students will utilize effective note-taking strategies tailored to their learning styles.
Library Services	Students will identify and evaluate the credibility of information sources for research.
	Students will formulate effective search strategies for locating academic resources.
Career Services	Students will construct a professional resume/cover letter tailored to specific job opportunities.
Writing Centers	Students will utilize assistive technology to enhance their learning experience.
	Students will develop and organize ideas more effectively in written assignments.

Step 3: Identify METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

[What will provide the information necessary to see that expected outcomes are met?]

- A measure identifies evidence and methods (tools used to collect the data) you will use to determine whether the unit is achieving its expected outcomes.
    - Measures may not tell you *why* outcomes are or are not being met. However, they should be specific enough to determine whether the objective *is* being met.

Below are the most commonly used assessment methods for your unit. However, you may choose a different method if it better suits your specific needs.

Common Methods of Assessments for Standard 7.3: Administrative Outcomes

Method	Purpose	Examples	Benefits
Surveys & Questionnaires *(Indirect)* *(Quantitative)* *(Qualitative)*	Gauge satisfaction, gather feedback, and collect data on service quality, efficiency, and clarity.	- Customer Satisfaction Surveys: Measure satisfaction with services. - Service-Specific Surveys: Assess response time, clarity, and resolution. - Staff Engagement Surveys: Evaluate employee satisfaction with leadership	- Gather widespread feedback. - Identify areas for improvement. - Quantify satisfaction levels.
Key Performance Indicators *(Direct)* *(Quantitative)*	Measure efficiency, volume of activity, timeliness, and financial impact.	- Financial Metrics: Track net margin - Process Efficiency: Track response/ processing times, task completion rates- Resource Utilization: Analyze equipment/software use, cost-effectiveness	- Provide objective measures of performance. - Track trends over time. - Identify areas needing improvement based on data.
Focus Groups/ Interviews *(Direct)* *(Qualitative)*	Understand experiences, perceptions, and reasons behind satisfaction/ dissatisfaction	- Discussions with staff, faculty, or students. - One-on-one conversations for deeper insights.	- Explore complex issues. - Complement quantitative data with context.
Benchmarking *(Direct)* *(Quantitative)*	Compare performance against external standards or peer institutions.	- Auditor's Findings: Use internal/external audit reports. - Peer Comparisons: Benchmark against similar institutions to identify best practices.	- Identify strengths/ weaknesses vs. peers. - Reveal opportunities for innovation & improvement.
Documents Review *(Direct)* *(Qualitative)*	Evaluating policies, procedures, and reports for clarity and effectiveness.	- Financial Reports: Analyze audited statements for financial health. - Internal Audit Reports: Identify compliance gaps or inefficiencies.	- Utilize existing data. - Track trends over time. - Demonstrate compliance with policies/regulations.

Common Methods of Assessment for Standard 8.2c: Academic & Student Support Services

Method	Assessment Type	Examples
Student Success *(Quantitative)* *(Direct)*	Retention & Graduation	Track persistence and completion among service users
	GPA & Academic Performance	Monitor changes in GPA tied to tutoring or academic support.
	Course Completion	Measure the success rates of students using these services.
	Student Engagement	Track attendance at workshops, advising, etc.
	Service Usage	Analyze demand for counseling, tutoring, and career services.
Surveys & Feedback *(Indirect)* *(Quantitative)* *(Qualitative)*	Student Satisfaction	Evaluate service quality and accessibility
	Exit Surveys/Interviews	Capture insights from graduates or departing students.
	Post-Service Feedback	Collect input after tutoring, advising, etc.
	Faculty/Staff Input	Gather observations from those referring students.
	Focus Groups	Explore student experiences and suggestions.
Learning Assessments *(Direct)*	Pre/Post Tests	Measure learning gains from workshops or sessions
	Rubrics	Assess skill development through student work.
	Portfolios	Track growth over time in supported areas
	Student Self-Assessments	Student reflection activities
Benchmarking	Peer Comparisons	Compare metrics/data with similar and aspirational institutions

Responsible Staff Collecting Data

Who is responsible for collecting assessment data, administering surveys, etc.?

Resources / Expenses

[What resources are needed *to accomplish this outcome?*]
Tracking this can help serve as a mechanism to request resources and place your department's resource needs.

Step 4 - Set ACHIEVEMENT TARGETS

[*Criterion for Success*] [*What level of performance is expected?*] [What level do you want to meet that indicates success?]

- The minimum requirements for what constitutes expected success
- Establish targets/benchmarks (e.g., national standards, best practices, historical trends) that will help you articulate what success will look like for your unit.
- Targets should be rigorous, yet achievable.
- It is important to note that targets must be clear, not just in numbers but in words. "Satisfactory" and "successful" are positive, but they are not commonly understood. A better way to define these concepts is to share the rating scale. Does "satisfactory" mean 3 out of 5 points?

Structure of an Achievement Target

Target = Level + subject + action + object + modifiers

90% (level) of first year experience students (target) will rate on a customer satisfaction survey (action) their Preview experience (object) as a 3 (satisfactory) or better on 5-point scale.

Phase 2 – THE ASSESSMENT REPORT OF RESULTS AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(How well did we do?)

Step 5 - DATA COLLECTION

[*Data collection source*]

Collect the findings/results associated with each measure. Findings are the quantifiable data, without any analysis, resulting from the measures listed in the assessment plan being completed.

Timetable for Data Collection

[When during the year will you conduct the assessment or gather the information?]
Note: Determine when data will be available, especially when using external or university-level data.

Step 6: DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

[*How did we do?*]

Summarize the current state based on assessment results. State whether each outcome was achieved and explain why or why not.

- Why was the target, or why wasn't the target achieved?
- What did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/outcomes?
- How will you use this information to improve your Unit? If you can answer that last question, you are ready to proceed with creating your improvement plan.
- Highlight strengths, successful strategies, and areas needing improvement.
- Use and include supporting documentation (e.g., reports, meeting notes, emails) as evidence.

*Note: Failing to meet the target is <u>not</u> an assessment failure.

Step 7: Develop an ACTION PLAN & USE OF RESULTS FOR SEEKING IMPROVEMENT

[*What data-informed action will be employed in the next assessment cycle to achieve the desired outcome?*]

To develop the Improvement Plan, consider the following questions:

• What did you learn from the assessment reports about the present effectiveness of your Unit's programs or services in achieving their outcomes?

• What steps should be taken to enhance the effectiveness of outcomes assessment to improve programs or services in your units?

• What are some examples of productive new actions taken by staff to improve their programs or services?

• Include a summary **of accomplishments** based on data-informed actions.

• Use this reflection to inform your **next assessment cycle**.

• Results are used to inform budget requests, staffing decisions, process redesign, and technology upgrades. Units are encouraged to document and share success stories and lessons learned

Step 8: EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

• Submit annual assessment report to the Office of Planning and Academic Initiatives Office

• Reports are evaluated using the Administrative Effectiveness Rubric. Units receive feedback and may be asked to revise or enhance their assessment practices. High-performing units may be highlighted as models of best practice.

Challenges in Assessing Administrative Effectiveness for Standard 7.3

Category	Challenges	Potential Strategies / Solutions
Defining Measurable Outcomes	- Difficult translating services into measurable outcomes. - Hard to set challenging but achievable standards.	- Develop unit-level outcomes linked to institutional goals. - Use a mixed-methods approach (surveys, data, benchmarking).
Data Collection & Measurement	- Limited access to reliable, timely data.	- What data are you already collecting? - Use sampling or rotating assessments to reduce burden.
Culture & Engagement	- Difficulty fostering a culture of continuous improvement.	- Involve stakeholders early to increase ownership.
Utilizing & Communicating Results	- Data not easily translated into actionable insights - Weak follow-through and accountability.	- Use dashboards, scorecards, and summaries for clarity - Assign responsibility and timelines for acting on results.

Sample Dual Function Units (Reported under Standard 8.2c)

•Units within an institution can sometimes have a dual function, encompassing both administrative support services and services directly impacting student success.

•These dual-function units are addressed under Standard 8.2c, focusing on their student support function.

•The unit should clearly identify and assess outcomes related to both the administrative effectiveness and student support functions of the unit.

Examples of Dual-Function Units

Unit	Administrative Function	Student Support Function
Environmental Safety	Ensuring the safety and security of the campus, managing emergency preparedness, and enforcing policies and procedures.	Educating students about safety and addressing student concerns related to security.
Financial Aid	Managing the financial aid budget, administering and complying with federal and state regulations, and ensuring the accurate processing of financial aid applications.	Providing counseling and guidance to students and families on financial aid options, helping them navigate the application process, and educating them on financial literacy.
Registrar's Office	Maintaining student academic records, managing course registration, and issuing transcripts and diplomas.	Providing academic advising support, assisting students with academic policies and procedures, and helping them access their records and navigate academic processes.
Recruitment and Admissions	Managing the application and enrollment process, processing applications, and maintaining admissions records.	Providing guidance and information to prospective students about the admissions process, helping them explore academic programs, and supporting their transition to the institution.

Appendix

Examples of Assessment Measures by Unit

Unit	Quantitative Measures	Qualitative Measures
Administration and Finance	Financial Ratios (Operating Margin, Cash Flow Margin, Return on Financial Resources); Contribution Ratios (Tuition, Grants, State Appropriations as % of Revenue); Financial Trends (Admin Costs, Institutional Services, M&O, Indirect Cost Recovery)	Process Efficiency (Timeliness & accuracy of reporting, Budget quality, Audit responsiveness); Stakeholder Satisfaction (Dept. satisfaction, Transparency, Communication); Strategic Alignment (Mission alignment, Resource allocation); Innovation & Improvement
Recruitment and Admissions	Inquiries, Applications, Confirmations by program; Acceptance & Yield Rates; Preview Day attendance	Applicant satisfaction; Admissions process satisfaction; Usefulness of online tools; Staff helpfulness
Registrar	Transcript issuance time, add/drop processing time; FERPA compliance incidents	Satisfaction with course availability; Satisfaction with registration procedures
Financial Aid	Applications processed; Time to disbursement; Students working on campus; Median student debt	Satisfaction with services; Usefulness of financial counseling
Bursar	Receipts per term; Billing error rates	Satisfaction with billing and payment procedures
Library	Budget/expenditures; Collection use; Services delivered	Satisfaction with collection, services, and facilities
Student Affairs	Student access to services (activities, counseling, career, community service)	Exit surveys; Participation in activities; Satisfaction with social experience, health, childcare, disability services, leadership, career planning
Research & Sponsored Programs	Faculty and student research participation; Research space (sq. ft.); Compliance reports	Satisfaction with research resources; Ease of access to forms and policies
Information Technology	Software version compliance; Help desk tickets and response; Audit findings	Satisfaction with labs, Wi-Fi, off-campus access, Help Desk
Human Resources	Benefit costs by type; Time to fill positions; Outreach sessions; Performance evaluations; Turnover rate	Employee satisfaction with staff, benefits, hiring, training, outreach, appreciation

Examples of Outcomes for Assessing Administrative Support Services (Standard 7.3)

Focus Area	Unit / Area	Outcomes	Measures / Targets
Operational Effectiveness & Efficiency	Financial Services	Improve fiscal control & accountability	Process invoices within an average of 10 business days
	Human Resources	Enhance HR effectiveness & employee experience	Successfully onboard 90% of new employees within 30 days
	Information Technology	Provide reliable, secure, and responsive IT services	- Resolve 80% of IT tickets within 24 hours - Increase IT user satisfaction by 10%
	Facilities Management	Improve service efficiency & user satisfaction	Reduce maintenance request response time by 20%
	Purchasing	Strengthen procurement efficiency & cost-effectiveness	Process purchase orders within an average of 5 business days
Quality & Customer Satisfaction	Registrar's Office	Ensure accurate records & improve student service	-Reduce transcript request wait times by 15% - Achieve 90% student satisfaction with registration
	Admissions	Enhance efficiency & applicant experience	- Increase student satisfaction with admissions by 10% - Improve timeliness of admissions decisions by 20% - Reduce incomplete applications by 5%