ASSESSMENT PRIMER

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND ASSESSMENT

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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ATS Mission
Asbury Theological Seminary is a community called to prepare theologically educated, sanctified, spirit-filled men and women to evangelize and to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world through the love of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to the glory of God the Father.

The Purpose of Assessment

Institutional Improvement in Fulfilling Mission

As a result of the institutional assessment process, each administrative and/or academic unit should be able to state at the conclusion of the annual assessment cycle, “My department has improved this year in the following ways...”

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NATURE AND ROLE OF THE
INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

The Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC) provides oversight and coordination of all assessment-related activities, including (1) assessment of Student Learning Outcomes; (2) assessment of program effectiveness; and (3) assessment of institutional effectiveness.

The IAC operates, primarily, through the day-to-day functioning of the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Sub-Committee (sometimes called IEA Team). The IAC oversees the functioning of the IEA to assure necessary effectiveness and assessment tasks are completed and information is appropriately disseminated.

The IAC reports to the Provost and, through the Provost, to the Academic Council and to the President’s Cabinet (the latter which operates as the Institutional Leadership Team for assessment purposes).

MEMBERSHIP

- Provost (Chair)
- Senior VP, Operations
- VP, Finance
- Assoc. Provost, Institutional Effectiveness (Vice-Chair)
- Dean, ESJ
- Dean, SPT
- Dean, SUM
- Dean, SPT
- Dean, STF
- VP, Orlando
- Director, Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment
- Director, Library Services
- Faculty Representative
- Staff Representative
- Coordinator, Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment (non-voting)

2014-15 Members:

- Doug Matthews (Chair)*
- James Thobaben (Vice-Chair)*
- David Bauer
- Gregg Okesson
- Chris Kiesling
- Brian Russell*
- Bob Landrebe
- Bryan Blankenship
- Steve Gober*
- Toddy Holeman*
- Alex Henchy*
- Paul Tippey (serving also as an assessment Special Assistant to the Provost)*
- Brian Yeich (serving also as an assessment Assistant to the Provost)*
- Barbara Jaeger (non-voting)

* = Member of IEA Sub-Committee
The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs serves as the seminary’s assessment officer and oversees the work of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. As such, s/he is charged with responsibility for ensuring that all academic programs and administrative units are assessed on a regular basis, and that results of assessment are used for improving programs vis-à-vis the seminary’s mission. S/He is available, therefore, along with the Associate Provost, Effectiveness and Assessment, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, and Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, for consultative assistance to assessment units with respect to all aspects of the assessment process.

**Meetings**

There will be four (4) regular meetings of the IAC in each calendar year. These meetings shall be scheduled by the seminary administration or may be called in conjunction with meetings of the full faculty, and shall be coordinated with other faculty and administrative committees to allow regular attendance by IAC members.

The IAC Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Sub-Committee (IEA) shall meet at least monthly, and, as needed, weekly. The IEA shall report to the IAC at the latter’s regular meetings and, as requested, to the President’s Cabinet.

**Responsibilities**

1. The IAC is a joint operational and academic committee through which the institution is continuously and effectively engaged in self-assessment.
2. The IAC monitors the progress of institutional self-assessment through the activities of the IEA sub-committee, and reports to the plenary faculty through the IEA report and the Academic Council. The IAC reports to the Provost through the IEA and to the President’s Cabinet as requested.
3. Through the IEA, and through the representatives on the IAC, the IAC communicates regularly with all schools and operational units.
4. The IAC works with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment in processing institutional evaluation data, as well as being the repository of institutional data.
5. The IAC ensures that student learning outcomes are continuously assessed and are related to the Program Level Outcomes, and, in coordination with the respective deans and unit directors, appropriate use of results occurs, thus closing the assessment loop.
6. The IAC ensures that periodic, systematic program assessment is conducted per established guidelines; this is through annual reports and through a more comprehensive Pentennial Report on programs.
7. The IAC, through the IEA, ensures that regular institutional assessment is conducted around the Seminary’s strategic plan, and that needed information is forwarded to the President’s Council and/or any strategic planning committees.

8. The IAC, through the IEA, ensures that regular and consistent training is provided for the assessment process, either through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment or through consultants retained for this purpose in consultation with the Office of the Provost.

9. The IAC, through the IEA, maintains a website through Library Services on which it publishes or provides other access (specifically through reference to the Catalog) to Program Level Outcomes for each degree program, guidelines for assessment processes, and periodic outcomes of all assessment.

* The Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment team (IEA) is a sub-committee of the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC), which meets at least monthly, though usually weekly, to operationalize the actions of the IAC and the directions of the Provost.
Institutional Mission

Institutional Assessment Committee
(and designee: Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment sub-committee)

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

Assessment Loop, 2014
(Using the Tk20 Management System & the ‘Closing the Loop’ Responsibility Model)

Step 1/8
Determine and/or Refine Program Level Outcomes

Step 2
Determine and/or Refine direct & indirect assessment measures (often course Student Learning Outcomes)

Step 3
Measure / Collect data

Step 4
Review results of data collection at lowest organizational level possible (principle of subsidiarity)

Step 5
Using data analysis identify & initiate improvements with assigned ‘close the loop’ responsibility

Step 6
Disseminate information on improvement responsibilities

Step 7
Assess if task completed

The Institutional Assessment Process functions on the academic year (ending August 31) or fiscal year (ending June 30) as appropriate to each unit. During each twelve-month cycle, all non-academic assessment units will complete an eight-step assessment process report due December 15th; academic units review annually or at the end of the
Fall and Spring semesters (by December 22nd and May 15th respectively). The assessment process begins with the institutional mission. In addition to the yearly assessment reports, pentennial and decadal comprehensive program assessment reviews support our aim for continuous quality improvement.

**Assessment Unit Manager**

The assessment unit manager’s or dean’s role is to oversee the process of assessment and use of results in the unit (or school), including the formulation and implementation of a plan for improvement based upon this evaluation.

Specifically, the Unit Manager (or Dean):

1. Works collaboratively with the Director and/or Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment in the ongoing work of department and/or program assessment.
2. Reviews, on an annual basis, departmental and/or program outcomes with members of the assessment unit. (In the case of academic units, every five years review academic performance as whole, including review curriculum and programs generally.)
3. Establishes mechanisms for gathering data to evaluate outcomes on an annual basis. (Secure approval from OIEA for all research instruments prior to their use.)
4. Reviews results of evaluation with members of the assessment unit.
5. Develops a plan for improvement for the following assessment cycle based upon analysis of results from the evaluation.
6. Oversees implementation and follow-through of plan for improvement.
7. Reports results of operational assessment unit activities by December 15 of each calendar year to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment.

The assessment unit manager (or dean) reports directly to his/her immediate supervisor and works laterally and collaboratively with the Director/Coordinator of Institutional Assessment.

**Steps to Institutional Improvement**

The steps to institutional improvement—along with the seminary’s educational mission and unit mission—provide the basis for assessing annually the quality of student learning, academic degree programs, and administrative operations. Each assessment unit (administrative department and/or academic program) compares actual results to a pre-determined standard relative to the established operational/Program Level Outcomes (Step 1/8).
Each unit (as assigned) records assessment activity on the Assessment Record\(^1\) form and submits the form along with supporting documentation on December 15\(^{th}\) of each calendar year. In addition, the Assessment Record for each administrative unit or academic program is submitted to the Office of IEA for placement in the master Institutional Assessment Record and, for academic units, to be used in the Pentennial Report.

Specifically, academic unit steps include:

**STEP 1. DETERMINE AND/OR REFINE OPERATIONAL/PROGRAM LEVEL OUTCOMES**

- The administrative assessment unit establishes and/or studies the extent to which it achieves its operational/Program Level Outcomes.
- Outcomes clearly indicate how the unit mission will be achieved in terms of structure, content/procedures, and activities. Generally at least three outcomes are needed per assessment unit.
- The expected results, qualitative and/or quantitative, are appropriate to the level of instruction/operations.
- Finally, the expected results are attainable. Outcomes must be assessed on a regular, systematic, annual basis. Some outcomes, though not necessarily all, must be assessed annually.

**STEP 2. DETERMINE AND/OR REFINE DIRECT & INDIRECT ASSESSMENT MEASURES**

- Assessment unit identifies and/or revises for gathering data to measure outcomes and standards to accept (units should use direct measurements when possible; units should assure that the measurements can be used to assess all objectives or Program Level Outcomes).
- Reviews procedures for administering the assessment instruments. For each assessment instrument (including sampling: the who, what, when, where, and how of testing should be stated, as well as to whom the test will be given including the percentage of the test group, if not 100 percent).
- Identifies existing data sources in administrative operations.
- Uses benchmarks and external comparables as appropriate
- Must use at least one or more instruments per intended unit outcome or Student Learning Outcome for assessing the program/operation.

**STEP 3. MEASURE/COLLECT DATA**

- The assessment unit reviews results from data collected and compares results to pre-determined standards establishing levels of acceptable performance.

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\(^1\) https://one.asburyseminary.edu/book-page/assessment-reporting-template-academic-areas
• The assessment unit analyzes the results, identifies factors that contributed to success and/or failure of outcomes, and, if minimal expected results are not achieved, provides a plan for improvement.

**STEP 4. REVIEW RESULTS OF DATA COLLECTION**
• The assessment unit interprets the data, in light of benchmarks and reports from comparable institutions.
• The unit determines potential means for using the results from data collected.

**STEP 5. USING DATA ANALYSIS IDENTIFY AND INITIATE IMPROVEMENTS WITH ASSIGNED ‘CLOSE THE LOOP’ RESPONSIBILITY.**
• The assessment unit formulates specific and measurable means to strengthen or improve the performance, program, or administrative operations, and implements a plan for improvement (use of results must be documented).
• The assessment unit connects its outcomes to strengthen or improve its budget.
• The stated improvement should include (1) changes to be made; (2) person(s) responsible for implementing change(s); and (3) timeline for implementation.

**STEP 6. DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON IMPROVEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**
• Disseminates to all relevant stakeholders, including those outside the unit who may find results useful.

**STEP 7. ASSESS IF TASK COMPLETED**
• Revisits the proposed ‘use of results’ and determine:
  1) If the actions were taken, and
  2) If they had an effect (positive or negative).

**STEP 8. RENEW & RE-ENACT PROCESS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

**CLOSING COMMENTS FOR ACADEMIC UNITS:**

Each degree program of Asbury Theological Seminary has a set of degree-specific Program Level Outcomes approved by the faculty as a whole. Programs are to be evaluated according to administrative outcomes (mission, staffing, enrollment, curriculum) as well as their operational/program level outcomes. Together, all programs are to be comprehensively assessed at least every five years.
PENTENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

In addition to the normal annual cycle of assessment, each degree program will undergo a comprehensive pentennial and decadal program assessment review. The following questions will be addressed specifically:

(1) Is this degree program appropriate to the mission of the Seminary? In what way(s) does this degree program serve the Seminary’s mission?
(2) Are sufficient numbers of students enrolling in this degree program to constitute a critical mass for purposes of formation and academic community?
(3) Are faculty numbers and deployment sufficient to addressing the advising and coursework needs of this degree program?
(4) Does this degree program have a well-articulated list of Program Level Outcomes? Does the curriculum set for this degree program grow out of its Program Level outcomes?
(5) Are the Program Level Outcomes of this degree program being addressed through its curriculum? Do students and graduates of this program evidence competence appropriate to the degree, as defined by the degree’s Program Level Outcomes?
(6) Does this degree program conform to the program standards as specified by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the Association of Theological Schools (tATS)?

The appropriate Area and/or School for each degree program prepares program-specific assessment instruments in light of the Operational/Program Level Outcomes for that program and administers these instruments annually. Among the tools for assessment that are available are:

- Student Learning Outcomes as submitted through Tk20
- Student Course Evaluations
- Entering Student, Graduating Student, and Alumni Surveys (with comparison with comparable institutions through tATS)