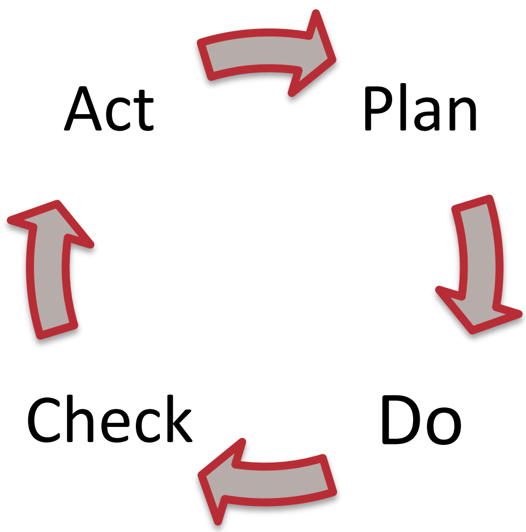
Academic Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Handbook

A Guide to Academic Learning Outcomes Assessment at Youngstown State University



YSU Institute for Teaching and Learning

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Help us improve!
This handbook is meant to provide guidance on assessment processes and YSU's reporting requirements. However, it is a work in progress. If you have suggestions for improvement, please email ysuitl@ysu.edu.

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Overview of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Processes

Learning Outcomes Assessment

Learning outcomes assessment is the systematic examination of student learning during a degree program. Its primary goal is the continued improvement of academic quality for the institution. Effective learning outcomes assessment answers three questions:

- What knowledge, skills, and attitudes will successful students have acquired upon graduation?
- How well do students perform relative to these learning outcomes?
- How can programs improve to provide a stronger academic experience for students?

YSU Institute for Teaching and Learning

The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) leverages data and best practices to guide innovative, inclusive, and integrative teaching. ITL elevates reflective practice and a focus on student success. ITL coordinates annual assessment reporting for both academic and co-curricular programs. We support the accreditation standards of the Higher Learning Commission by assisting faculty and staff in systematic, comprehensive assessment and improvement of student learning. ITL is guided by the YSU mission and strategic plan and works to build a positive culture of assessment, using data responsibly to improve institutional practice, and using assessment to support and promote student success.

ITL supports its mission through numerous services and programs, including workshops, consultations, professional development opportunities, mini-grant programs, and administration and dissemination of campus-wide student assessments (such as the National Survey of Student Engagement). More information on ITL services can be found on our website.

Purpose of the Assessment Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to assist YSU faculty and program chairs in conducting learning outcomes assessment. It is a step-by-step resource that explains the basic concepts and processes, provides examples and strategies for meeting the specific requirements, and offers approaches for making assessment a useful tool in curricular renewal. It also provides guidance on the reporting schedule and expectations for academic programs.

Benefits of Learning Outcomes Assessment

When conducted properly, learning outcomes assessment has benefits for the entire institution. It benefits students by ensuring they master the material of their degree program and by providing academic and professional programs that are responsive to both their and society's needs. It benefits faculty by providing the tools necessary to lead curricular renewal and development. Finally, it benefits the entire institution by giving the institution documented evidence of student learning and achievement, thereby validating the institution faithfully meeting its mission and goals.

Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation

Since the 1990s, issues of accountability in higher education have been increasingly common concerns of federal, regional, and state regulators. Often the standards of learning are discussed during hearings on the reaffirmation of the Higher Education Act, but to date higher education has been able to argue convincingly that self-regulation is the most effective method for ensuring academic quality and accountability. To achieve this goal, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), YSU's regional accrediting body, has greatly increased its emphasis on learning outcomes assessment.

While the HLC's Criteria for Accreditation clearly emphasize the importance of assessment and evaluation, the standards are written with intentional breadth to allow individual member institution flexibility in their assessment activity. Institutions and programs are simply required to illustrate that they have defined learning outcomes, that student performance is evaluated to measure effectiveness relative to those outcomes, and that there is a focus on ongoing, continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction to support student achievement of learning outcomes. **There is also the clear expectation that faculty participate substantially in the assessment process.**

Various Roles and Expectations in Learning Outcomes Assessment at YSU

For learning outcomes assessment to be truly effective, it must be a university-wide process. At YSU, there are four primary groups directly involved with assessment activity.

- **FACULTY** develop learning outcomes, assess student performance, and provide the necessary analysis to understand learning outcomes in their programs.
- **PROGRAM CHAIRS** and/or **ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS** manage the assessment process within their programs and submit yearly assessment reports that provide evidence of activity.
- The **INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING** coordinates and supports the overall effort and provides methodological and technical support throughout the process. ITL also posts the student learning outcomes reports to the online archive annually.
- The **ASSESSMENT COUNCIL** (AC), consisting of representatives from all the colleges and several divisions in the University, reviews and advises assessment activity to ensure that program-level assessment processes are effective and to keep the university in line with requirements of regional accreditation. The AC, with assistance of faculty and staff reviewers, conducts its work by reviewing all program student learning assessment reports from which specific recommendations for improvement are generated to be addressed by departments and programs.

Seven Steps of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

There are seven steps of learning outcomes assessment:

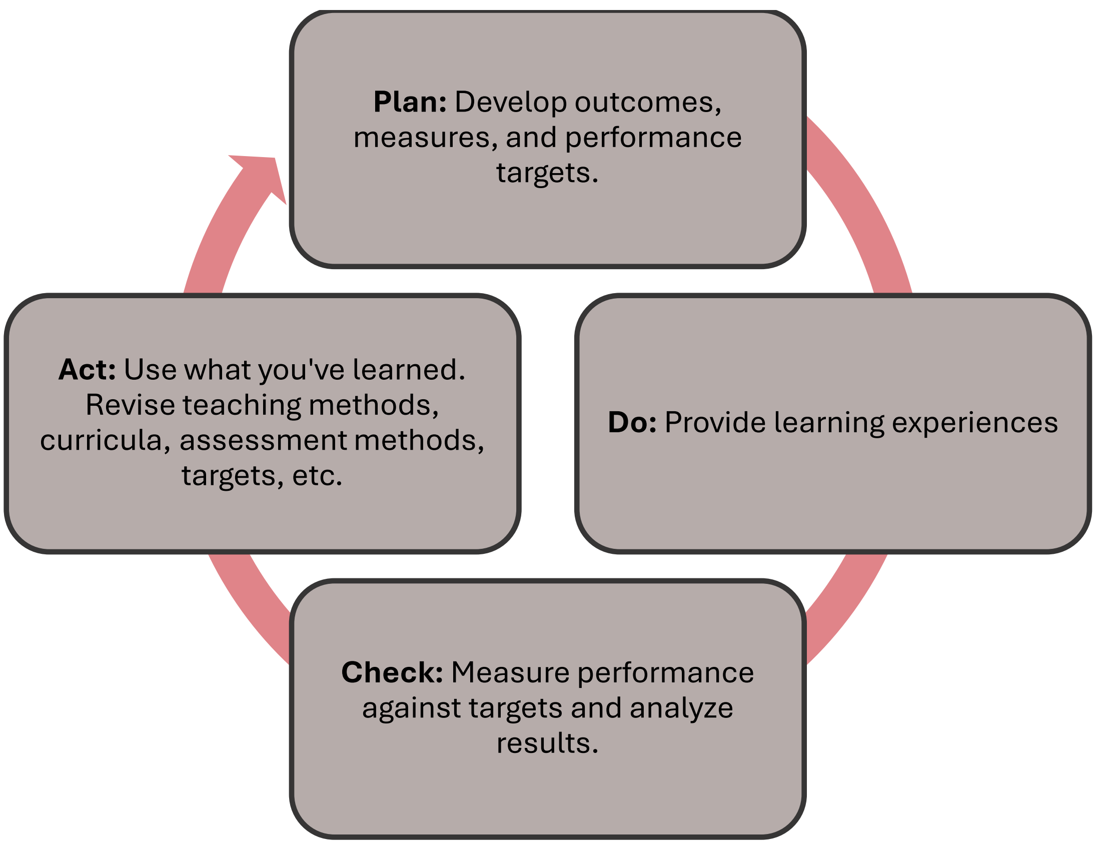
1. Develop program learning outcomes,
2. Develop a curriculum map,
3. Design outcome measures,
4. Collect data,
5. Analyze and evaluate data,

6. Share results, and
7. Reflect on process and start again.

Part 1 of the Assessment Handbook is divided into sections addressing each of these steps. Each section provides a basic overview of the goals and purpose of the step, lists the specific activities for programs associated with the step, and offers suggestions and potential strategies for effectively completing the step. Part 2 of the Assessment Handbook focuses on YSU's assessment reporting requirements, including drafting templates and detailed instruction guides for Watermark Planning and Self-Study submission.

Included in the Handbook are ideas and suggestions that are intended to provide useful information for faculty and department chairs. Since each academic department differs in terms of size, approach, and outlook**, it is important to ensure that a department's assessment approach matches the unique needs of the program**. ITL staff is available to discuss any thoughts or ideas to help programs build a learning outcomes assessment program that meets its needs.

Cyclical Nature of Learning Assessment



Since the primary goal of learning outcomes program assessment is continued improvement of the quality of education offered by Youngstown State University, the process is cyclical in nature. Assessment is an ongoing process that should grow and change as programs evolve and develop.

Assessment Reporting Requirements at YSU

The central reason for programs to participate in the assessment process is to ensure high quality programs that prepare students in their field of study; however, we are also obligated to provide evidence of these processes and efforts to continuously improve. This handbook outlines the core focus, that of evaluating student learning as best practice, but it is also helpful to understand how the steps relate to reporting. See Part 2, Reporting Requirements at YSU for more detail on reporting requirements and formats.

Generally, this is how the assessment process and reporting relate:

Handbook Part 1: Assessment Steps	Handbook Part 2: Associated Reporting
Step 1: Develop Learning Outcomes	Year 1/Planning Year
Step 2: Develop Curriculum Map	Year 1/Planning Year
Step 3: Design Outcome Measures	Year 1/Planning Year
Step 4: Collect Data	Yearly Updates
Step 5: Analyze and Evaluate Assessment Data	Yearly Updates
Step 6: Share Results	Yearly Updates
Step 7: Reflect and Begin Again	Reflection (after 5-years of updates)

Handbook Part 1: Assessment Processes

Section I: Developing Student Learning Outcomes

The first step in student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment is the creation of outcomes, which reflect the core knowledge and material of the program. Most programs have previously developed SLOs, so this process allows for re-examination and potential revision. All revisions to outcomes must follow Academic Senate curriculum change guidelines. The development of SLOs should capitalize on the depth of knowledge of the faculty and thereby help shape the nature and direction of the program. This section describes characteristics of strong SLOs, provides suggestions on how to develop SLOs, and discusses a process by which programs can scrutinize SLOs to ensure their strength.

Checklist of Needed Activity for Developing SLOs:

- ☐ A comprehensive but manageable number of SLOs (typically between 3-8 depending on program length/level)
- ☐ Evidence of faculty participation in developing learning outcomes
- ☐ Verification that outcomes are appropriate for course or program level, important, observable, and measurable.

Goals versus Outcomes

Goals are an important part of planning in programs and courses, but they differ from learning outcomes. Goals tend to be broader, more intangible, focused on the learning activities of the program, and/or outline on what faculty may do in the program. They differ from SLOs, as SLOs focus on what the student will take away from the program once complete.

Effective Student Learning Outcomes

SLOs are statements that specify what students will know or be able to do because of completing their program. **Effective SLOs are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, or abilities that students will possess upon successful completion of a program**. They provide guidance for faculty regarding content, instruction, and evaluation, and serve as the basis for ensuring program effectiveness. Because we evaluate student performance in terms of specific actions, the strongest learning outcomes are measurable and observable.

Strategies for Developing Effective SLOs

Prior to beginning the program's learning outcomes assessment activity, the chair and faculty may wish to meet with ITL Staff. This person can discuss the entire process, explain potential university resources, and answer questions on the process. To start the process, program faculty may want to compile a list of the key knowledge skills and attitudes that students acquire during the program. The chair may call a meeting of faculty or seek suggestions via e-mail. *"Tool 1: Key Questions to Consider When Drafting SLOs"* may be useful to generate the list of core components.

Tool 1: Key Questions to Consider When Drafting SLOs

- ? What is the most essential knowledge students need to have acquired upon successful completion of the program?
- ? Are there specific skills or abilities students need? What are they?
- ? How does the program attempt to shape students' attitudes or views regarding the discipline or profession?
- ? How do these skills, abilities, or habits of mind relate to the university's mission and core competencies?

After identifying the knowledge, skills and abilities that the program faculty want to assess, actual SLOs are drafted. Drafting outcomes can be a long process requiring multiple versions to capture the true essence of core ideas. One way to help simplify the process is use an opening such as "**Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to…"** and then focus on the actual essence of the outcome. The goal is to develop a comprehensive set of learning outcomes and examine them on a regular cycle.

Bloom's Taxonomy

In developing SLOs, it is helpful to consider the level of learning expected of students completing a postsecondary program. In academic programs, outcomes are usually expected to be at higher levels, so it is important that learning outcomes accurately reflect the level of expectation.

SLOs are often organized around Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), which is a classification of different ways of learning, from lower- to higher-order levels. In an academic setting, we most often write learning outcomes in the cognitive (knowledge) domain. Bloom also developed taxonomies around psychomotor (physical skills) and affective (attitudes) domains, which may be of use in some programs. These taxonomies are organized by learning from the less sophisticated to the more sophisticated. Here are some examples of verbs that may help you and your faculty articulate and frame outcomes at the appropriate level of sophistication for their program.

Selecting the Right Verb

Given that SLOs focus on observable and measurable actions performed by students, the selection of an action verb for each outcome is crucial. Determining the best verb to use in a learning outcome can be challenging because of its need to accurately reflect the knowledge, skills and abilities being studied. *"Tool 2: Common Learning Outcome Action Verbs"* provides a brief list of verbs that are used in writing learning outcomes at the collegiate level.

Tool 1: Common Learning Outcome Action Verbs

Define	Identify	Describe
Explain	Interpret	Compare
Solve	Apply	Illustrate
Analyze	Correlate	Criticize
Evaluate	Design	Compose
Create	Plan	Formulate
Hypothesize	Integrate	Categorize
Estimate	Select	Conclude

Certain verbs are unclear and subject to different interpretations in terms of what action they are specifying. Verbs/verb phrases such as "know", "become aware of", "appreciate", "learn", "understand", and "become familiar with" should be avoided; they frequently denote behavior that is not easily observed or measured.

Strengthening Weak SLOs

The process for strengthening SLOs re-examines the original characteristics used of strong outcomes. By asking the four questions in *"Tool 3: Evaluating Learning Outcomes"*, weaknesses in learning outcomes emerge.

Tool 3: Evaluating Learning Outcomes

- ? Is the action done by the students?
- ? Is the specified action observable?
- ? Can the specified action be measured?
- ? Is it important?

Revising SLOs

The process of writing SLOs is not simple. Determining the outcomes a program wants to examine can pose the first challenge. In addition, drafting the outcome often takes several revisions to develop a strong one that reflects the intentions of the faculty. However, the effort put into drafting strong outcomes will be returned through easier time developing measures, collecting data, analyzing the results, and ultimately making recommendations for improvement. **Strong outcomes will help to focus the entire process and allow for the most useful results from the assessment process.**

In addition, strong outcomes communicate to students what they will gain from your academic program. Program-level learning outcomes are included in the program description in the YSU catalog and can inform students what skills, knowledge, and habits of mind they are likely to acquire by selecting a particular academic program.

Section II: Designing Curriculum Maps

The curriculum map is a tool that can help build a curriculum, diagnose gaps in student learning, and improve programs. Sharing it with part-time faculty and with students can enhance understanding of the degree program and offers an important roadmap for student learning. It can be updated periodically and added to the departmental website and/or complement updated curriculum sheets. It is vital to understand where students are introduced to concepts defined in a program's SLOs. Mapping learning outcomes to program courses is the first step in understanding where students are introduced to the material they need to master. See "*Tool 1: Sample Curriculum Map*" and the example below as guides to develop a curriculum map. You can download a curriculum map template from the ITL website.

Examining Concept Reinforcement

Often programs will discover that students are introduced to the concept in the curriculum, but course assignments and planned experiences are not sufficient to help students master those concepts. This may lead to considering modifications in assignments, readings, or general teaching approaches to reinforce concepts with students. A program may also discover that a new course or experience needs to be created to sufficiently address a learning outcome.

Examining Course Sequencing

Sometimes faculty will discover that the course provides sufficient support for the student to master the material, but course sequencing should be adjusted so that students are introduced to concepts that build on and complement each other. The student learning assessment process can be used as an audit of a program's educational experience.

Tool 1: Sample Curriculum Map

Courses	Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 3	Learning Outcome 4	Learning Outcome X
15XX					
15XX					
26XX					
...					
...					
...					

While it is acceptable (and sufficient) to place an "X" in the boxes on the template to show where a learning outcome is covered, we encourage you to consider using use a key that indicates the level of learning being asked of the student. See below for examples:

- Bloom's Hierarchy: (adopted from the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy) the template uses initials to reflect the level of student learning in the course: **R**=Remember/Understand; **A**=Apply/Analyze; **E**=Evaluate/Create
- Another common breakdown is I=Introduce; R=Reinforce; M=Master

For more information here is a helpful web tutorial series on creating and using curriculum maps for assessment of student learning.

Section III: Designing Outcome Measures

After developing learning outcomes and a curriculum map, the next step in the assessment process is to select outcome measures. While learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and abilities that students should possess after instruction (or completion of the program), outcome measures are the specific tools and methods that generate data and information about students' performance relative to learning outcomes.

There are two types of outcome measures: direct measures and indirect measures, as well as supporting proxy data. Each serves an important function in assessment, and when used together they provide a richer perspective on student learning by providing direct evidence and context to understand student performance.

- **Direct measures** are methods for assessing actual samples of student work to provide evidence of student performance relative to the learning outcomes.
- **Indirect measures** are methods for assessing secondary information on student learning that do not rely on actual samples of student work, such as self-reported learning.
- **Proxy measures** are data that can corroborate the data found in direct and indirect measures, but do not directly provide evidence of student learning. They should only be used in combination with other data.

Each type of outcome measure serves a particular purpose. Direct measures assess the extent to which students' work meets the learning outcome performance criteria. Indirect measures compliment direct measures by providing supportive evidence, information, and student perspective. Proxy evidence can help "triangulate" and substantiate other forms of evidence. Proxy evidence should only be used to support other direct/indirect measures; proxy data alone does not provide sufficient evidence of learning. Together they provide a richer perspective on student learning by providing evidence and context to understand student performance. It is suggested that each SLO has at least two measures, with at least one measure being a direct measure.

Checklist of Needed Activity for Developing Outcomes Measures:

- ☐ At least one direct measure for each learning outcomes
- ☐ Indirect measures that will facilitate understanding of the assessment data, when appropriate
- ☐ Evidence of faculty participation in the development of measures
- ☐ Established performance criteria for each measure being used
- ☐ Expected results for each measure being used

Regardless of the type of measure used, strong measures share three basic qualities:

1. Provide sufficient data and information to measure the learning outcome
2. Are not overly burdensome for departments to collect
3. Have established performance criteria and expected results to help guide the analyses

Selecting Direct Measures

There are many issues to consider when selecting direct measures of learning. Programs should be creative in determining the most useful way to measure student performance, but at the same time ensure that the methods allow for meaning from interpretation and results. *"Tool 1: Sample Direct Measures,"* provides a list of some of the more common methods within higher education and can help foster ideas for developing measures.

Tool 1: Sample Direct Measures

- Capstone projects
- Student performances
- Thesis evaluation
- Course-embedded assessments
- Pre-test/post-test evaluation
- Student portfolio evaluation

Course-embedded assessments are direct measures which use student work in specific courses to assess student learning. Students are already motivated to do their best on these assessments because they are conventionally graded on them. For example, if one learning outcome requires students to synthesize the literature on a topic in the field; student research papers may be evaluated using a rubric to assess how well they meet the learning outcome. Many classroom assignments can be used for course-embedded assessment if they assess the specific program student learning outcome. Course-embedded assessment measures are often selected because they take place in the classroom, take advantage of student motivation to do well, and directly assess what is taught in the classroom.

Examinations**:** Many course-level student learning outcomes can be assessed by examinations given within the course. In some cases, the outcomes measured by the examinations will be identical to the program's student learning outcomes and the exam questions will assess both course and program outcomes. With some creativity, exam questions can also be written to cover broader program SLOs without losing their validity for course grading. In programs without capstone courses, it might be possible to write a coordinated set of exam questions that provide a full picture of student learning when administered in exams across a series of courses.

Analysis of course papers**:** Course papers can be used as measures for student learning outcomes. Because students create these papers for grades, they are motivated to do their best, and these papers may reflect the students' best work. This process typically requires development of a different rubric that focuses on program learning outcomes. Faculty committees can also read these same papers to assess the attainment of program SLOs. Ideally, this second reading should be done by someone other than the instructor or by others along with the instructor, as the purpose for the assessment is different than grading. Scoring rubrics for the papers, based on the relevant learning outcomes, should be developed and shared with faculty raters prior to rating to promote interrater reliability.

Analysis of course projects, presentations, and artifacts**:** Products other than papers can also be assessed for attainment of program learning outcomes. For example, if students are required to give oral presentations, other faculty and even area professionals can be invited to these presentations and can serve as outside evaluators using the same rubric as other raters.

Student performances**:** In some areas, such as teaching, counseling, or art, analysis of student classroom teaching, mock counseling sessions, or creative performances can provide useful measures of student learning. A standardized evaluation form is necessary to ensure consistency in assessment. One advantage of using performances is that they can be videotaped for later analysis.

Cross course measures are direct measures of student work across the program. Cross course measures examine students' work that incorporates multiple dimensions of knowledge, skills and abilities developed throughout the entire program. The most common types of cross course measures are capstone course papers and projects, and student portfolios.

Capstone courses**:** Capstone courses provide an ideal opportunity to measure student learning, because this is where students are most likely to exhibit their cumulative understanding and competence in the discipline. One of the purposes of capstone courses is to provide an opportunity for students to "put it together," which typically requires students to integrate the knowledge, skills and abilities found in the program's learning outcomes.

Student portfolios**:** Compilations of students' work in their major can provide a rich and well-rounded view of student learning. The program usually specifies the work that goes into the portfolio or allows students to select examples based on established guidelines. By compiling a range of student work, portfolios can be used as the measure for more than one learning outcome. Portfolios can also be valuable for the student by providing a reflection of their skills and abilities. Portfolios do require strong, well-constructed rubrics to make the process of extracting assessment data manageable. See the Rubric Toolbox in the appendix for information on constructing a rubric.

Standardized and certification exams**:** In some disciplines, national standardized or certification exams exist which can be used as measures if they reflect the program's learning outcomes. The examination usually cuts across the content of specific courses and reflects the externally valued knowledge, skills and abilities of a program.

Internship supervisor evaluations**:** If the program has a number of students who are doing relevant internships or other work-based learning, standard evaluations by supervisors using a rubric designed to measure a particular learning outcome across the duration of the internship may provide data on attainment of learning outcomes. In addition, when programs exercise control over the content of internships, those settings can serve as capstone experiences where students can demonstrate their knowledge skills and abilities.

Selecting Indirect Measures

Like selecting direct measures, there are many issues to consider when selecting indirect measures of learning. Programs should be creative in determining the most useful way to measure student performance, but at the same time ensure that the methods allow for meaning from interpretation and results. *"Tool 2: Sample Indirect Measures"* provides a list of some of the more common methods within higher education and can help cultivate ideas for developing indirect measures.

Tool 2: Sample Indirect Measures

- Graduating student surveys
- Alumni surveys
- Employer and internship supervisor surveys
- Exit interviews
- Focus groups

The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) conducts campus-wide surveys that may be analyzed as indirect measures of student learning. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks students about their educational experiences, perceived learning gains, and level of engagement with faculty and in their program. The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) asks students about the importance of, and their satisfaction with, different aspects of their educational and co-curricular experience. This data may be disaggregated at the program level depending on the number of responses.

While University surveys may provide some insights into students learning experience, they sometimes lack the specificity needed by programs in their assessment activity. Accordingly, the programs may need to conduct their own inquiry to address the issues. These methods may be quantitative or qualitative in nature but should still address the key issues of strong measures.

Employer Survey: If the program prepares students for a particular job or career field, employers' opinions of students' on-the-job performance can be an effective outcome measure. However, it is important to survey those who have first-hand knowledge of student work.

Internship Supervisor Survey: Internship supervisors may provide general feedback to programs regarding the overall performance of a group of students during the internship providing indirect evidence of attainment of learning outcomes. This should not be confused with internship supervisors' evaluation of student performance on specific learning outcomes (a direct measure).

Focus Groups: Focus Groups provide in-depth, qualitative interviews with a small number of carefully selected people who are thought to represent the population of interest (students in the program). For program assessment, students are brought together to discuss their perceptions of how well they achieved the program's learning outcomes.

Exit Interviews: Graduating students are interviewed individually to obtain feedback on the program. Data obtained can address strengths and weaknesses of the program and/or assess relevant concepts, theories or skills related to the program's learning outcomes.

Area Expert or Advisory Committee Comments: Comments made by area experts can be useful in gaining an overall understanding of how students will be judged in each field. This differs from having experts use the same rubric faculty raters use and instead focusing on their opinion of the quality of students' work and the program in general. This should not be considered a direct outcome measure, but it can serve as a valuable indirect measure.

Establishing Performance Criteria

When interpreting assessment results, it is useful to set a performance criterion that specifies the acceptable level of student work or response. For each learning outcome, the program should ask "What is an acceptable performance criterion for this learning outcome?" This performance criterion may be a passing score on an exam, a rubric rating of "meets program standards" on a student paper or another indicator of the quality of student work.

Establishing Expected/Target Results

By setting expected results for the percentage of students meeting or exceeding performance criteria before data collection begins, the program can gauge its effectiveness in helping students meet the learning outcomes. For example: Seventy-five percent of students met the performance criterion set by the department for the outcome measure on ethical reasoning. This can be compared to the expected result of 85% meeting the performance criterion which reveals ethical reasoning an area for improvement.

Evaluating Measures

It is possible to evaluate outcome measures by asking the three questions found in *"Tool 3: Questions for Evaluating Outcome Measures."* If faculty and chairs can answer "yes" to all of three questions, it is likely that a strong set of measures has been developed.

Tool 3: Questions for Evaluating Outcome Measures

- ? Does the measure provide sufficient data and information to analyze the learning outcome?
- ? Does the measure require a reasonable amount of work to collect?
- ? Does the measure establish performance criteria to help guide the analysis?

Example: **Improving Outcome Measures**

The following illustration shows how the questions in *Tool 3: Questions for Evaluating Outcome Measures* can be used to evaluate outcome measures.

- **Student Learning Outcome**: Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to apply ethical reasoning in discussing ethical issues.

A department decides to use the outcome measure: **Two questions from the Graduating Student Survey**. Students respond to these questions by indicating their choice on a scale ranging from "Poor" to "Excellent."

For each of the following skills, please indicate how well you believe your education prepared you to:

1. Determine the most ethically appropriate response to a situation.
2. Understand the major ethical dilemmas in your field.

We will evaluate this outcome measure by asking the questions found in *Tool 3: Questions for Evaluating Outcome Measures*.

1. Does the measure provide sufficient data and information to analyze the learning outcome? **Yes** and **No. Yes,** because this evidence is the student's opinion. **No,** because it is an indirect measure and indirect measures are not sufficient by themselves to analyze learning outcomes. **Note:** While indirect measures are valid and appropriate, it is important to have at least one direct measure of student learning. This measure could work as an excellent second source of data on the learning outcome.
2. Does the measure require a reasonable amount of work to collect? **Yes,** the amount of work required is reasonable.
3. Does the measure establish performance criteria to help guide the analysis? **No,** it does not provide a performance criterion to help guide the analysis though one could be developed regarding the student opinion.

The department revises the outcome measure to: **A paper taken from student portfolios where the student discusses an ethical issue**. The papers are rated by each faculty member on a specific rubric designed to measure the application of ethical reasoning.

We evaluate this outcome measured by asking the same three questions as before:

1. Does the measure provide sufficient data and information to analyze the learning outcome? **Yes,** the measure directly measures students' application of ethical reasoning.
2. Does the measure require a reasonable amount of work to collect? **No,** the faculty may object to having to read all the student papers and they may deem this measure too much work.
3. Does the measure establish performance criteria to help guide the analysis? **No,** there is no specific performance criterion established.

The department revises the outcome measure to: **Student papers that discuss ethical issues are extracted from student portfolios. Each paper is rated by two faculty members on a rubric designed to measure the application of ethical reasoning. The mid-point of the rubric (a rating of 3) provides a description of the performance criterion required by the program.**

By revisiting the three questions, the strengths of this outcome emerge.

1. Does the measure provide sufficient data and information to analyze the learning outcome? **Yes,** the measure directly measures student's ability to apply ethical reasoning.
2. Does the measure require a reasonable amount of work to collect? **Yes,** it is less burdensome on the faculty to collect the data than the previous outcome measure.
3. Does the measure establish performance criteria to help guide the analysis? **Yes,** it provides a performance criterion to help guide the analysis.

Section IV: Collecting Data

Data collection is the next step in the assessment process. This section will cover the process of collecting student work and indirect measures, rating work, and storing data. The collection process may seem like a daunting task, but with planning, it can move more smoothly and provide quality data and information about the programs learning outcomes.

The data collection process consists of three basic steps:

1. **gathering** necessary student work and other information
2. **evaluating** the results
3. **storing** the data electronically

Checklist of Needed Activity for Collecting Data:

- ☐ Direct data collected for each learning outcome and measure
- ☐ Indirect data collected, if appropriate
- ☐ Secure electronic database of measures
- ☐ Examples of the student work for each performance criterion in paper or electronic form.

The **Gathering**, **Evaluating**, and **Storing** (GES) process is used for both direct and indirect measures; however, some of the specific steps will vary. The key to simplifying the data collection process is planning. "*Tool 1: Questions to Ask in Planning Data Collection*" provides several questions to think about before gathering data.

Step 1: Gathering

The process of gathering materials for direct measures varies greatly depending on the measures used. For course-embedded measures or capstone experiences, it is necessary to coordinate with the faculty teaching the course to ensure the student work is collected and forwarded for assessment. If a portfolio is being used, it will be necessary to determine who is responsible for putting the portfolio together. It is also important to ensure that data collected reflects all modes of program delivery--for example, departments with off-site programs, consortium programs, or distance education programs should ensure that the data collected reflects the population of students in their program.

When using indirect measures, the gathering phase consists of conducting the necessary research (survey, focus group, or other measures). Indirect measures based on secondary analysis of material (e.g. course syllabi) need these materials to be compiled. Programs should set a schedule that outlines the materials needed to simplify follow up and ensure all student work is collected.

Tool 1: Questions to Ask in Planning Data Collection

Direct Measures	Indirect Measures
▪ Where does the student work come from? ▪ Does the student work represent all major populations in the program (e.g., distance education students)? ▪ How will the student work be organized and stored for evaluation? ▪ When will it be evaluated? ▪ Who will be responsible for evaluating? ▪ How will the performance data be stored? How will it be secured? ▪ How will examples of student work be stored? Paper? Electronically? ▪ Are there FERPA issues to consider?	▪ Who will conduct the research for the measure? ▪ When will research be done? In a class? ▪ How will the results be tabulated or categorized? ▪ If you are using institutional data, will special data analysis need to be done?

Step 2: Evaluating

The evaluation phase for direct measures includes the examination of student's work by faculty to determine the level to which it meets the learning outcome. Evaluation, and supporting tools, can take multiple forms--they can be as simple as a checklist of criteria or expectations to as complex as a multi-level, multi-dimensional rubric. Because assessment looks to evaluate specific aspects of the student work, rubrics are often used as guidelines in the process. We will discuss the elements of an effective rubric.

Effective rubrics, standardized evaluation forms used to assess student work toward meeting learning outcomes, can be developed in many ways to assist the evaluation process. They can describe qualitative as well as quantitative differences; and are often used to assess assignments, projects, portfolios, term papers, internships, essay tests, and performances. They allow multiple raters to assess student work effectively by increasing the consistency of ratings and decreasing the time required for assessment. The development of rubrics is covered in the Rubric Toolbox.

Regardless of the type or style of rubric used, there are a few general principles to ensure they are effective. *"Tool 2: Steps for Using a Rubric to Evaluate Student Work"* outlines the basic process of using rubrics.

Tool 2: Steps for Using a Rubric to Evaluate Student Work

- Review the rubric with all raters to ensure it is consistently understood.
- Use the descriptors in each performance level to guide ratings.
- Assign the rating that best represents the student's work.

The key to achieving consistency between raters is conducting a "norming" session to allow faculty raters to reach consensus on the levels of student work at each level of the performance criterion. *"Tool 3: Steps to "Norming" a Rubric"* provides the basic process of a norming session.

Tool 3: Steps In "Norming" A Rubric

- Explain to the raters how to use the rubric.
- Provide a few samples of student work.
- Discuss each sample and determine how raters determine scores.
- Reach a general consensus on each level of the performance criterion.

For indirect measures that the program is conducting, the evaluation phase consists of the compiling of the results into a form that are meaningful to those doing the assessment. For survey data, this will generally include entering the data into a data set for analysis and generating the descriptive statistics. For qualitative work such as focus groups, this part of the process maybe the extraction of any themes or ideas.

Step 3: Storing

There are two different storage issues which departments need to address. The first is an electronic storage system of all the data that are compiled from students' work and results from indirect measures. Whatever methods are used, it is generally a good idea to use a department network (shared) drive to store the data. This makes submitting and accessing the data convenient as well as ensures that the data are backed up by YSU's Computer Center.

For tracking direct (and some indirect) measures programs may create an electronic database/Excel spreadsheet to store all of their assessment data for later analysis. The database will typically list all students and their performance on the measure. *"Tool 4: Example of a Program Database"* illustrates how to compile a database of assessment data.

Tool 4: Example of a Program Database

Last Name	First Name	Year	LO 1: Portfolio Rating	LO1: Senior Exit Interview	LO2: Paper Rating from 300-level course
Allan	Jane	Senior	4	More writing needed	4
Miller	Larry	Senior	5	Not Present	5
Smith	Bob	Senior	3	More writing needed	3
Bloom	Desmond	Junior			3
Jones	Robin	Junior			3
Smith	Troy	Junior			1

Because this database will have individual student information, it is very important to ensure it remains secure and that only faculty and/or staff involved in the assessment activity have access to the contents.

Many times, however, indirect measures may not be trackable by specific students. For these types of measures a descriptive report of the results will be useful as the program reviews the direct measures.

The second storage issue facing the department revolves around copies of student work and responses to questionnaires. It is generally advisable to retain copies of or access to the direct measures until the report feedback has been returned. It is best practice to not include students' names or student id numbers on copies of student work or questionnaires.

Additionally, it is recommended that samples of students' work be stored to document the assessment process. Generally, for each direct measure, an example at each level of the performance criterion should be saved. Electronic copies of student work can reduce space required for storage and allow the original work to be returned to the students. These documents can be scanned and stored as PDF files to help limit the amount of storage space necessary. Best practices suggest that these records should be archived for 10 years to ensure that any records for accreditation would be available if requested.

Student Awareness of Assessment Activity and Privacy Issues

Students should be aware that their work may be used in the assessment purposes. One way to do this is through a statement on a course syllabus. By incorporating a statement on select or all program course syllabi, the department informs students about its assessment work.

As noted in the section about keeping data work secure, student work is protected by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). To comply with FERPA regulations, student work should either be maintained in a secure system with access limited to those involved in assessment or should have all personally identifiable information removed. Even without a name, some student work is considered identifiable if it contains sufficient information about the student to enable the author to be identified.

Strategies for Collecting Data

By reviewing the original planning questions in "*Tool 1: Questions to Ask in Planning Data Collection*" before collecting data, programs can avoid many potential roadblocks in the data collection process. The following example lists three common roadblocks that can occur during this process and illustrates an effective plan for data collection.

Example: **Collecting Assessment Data from Direct Measures Effectively**

There are three common roadblocks that can stifle the collection of assessment data.

1. Data is not collected for stated outcome measures
2. Copies of student work are collected but cannot be found at the time of evaluation
3. There is no clear system for the evaluation of student work resulting in no data for analysis

The following example illustrates how to avoid these roadblocks and plan for effective data collection. By answering the questions in *Tool 1: Questions to Ask in Planning Data Collection* before data is to be collected, an effective plan can be developed. The example uses the learning outcome and outcome measures found in previous sections.

- The learning outcome chosen by the program is: **Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to apply ethical reasoning in discussing an ethical issue.**
- It will be measured by a direct measure***:*** **A paper taken from student portfolios where the student discusses an ethical issue**

The first common roadblock, data is not collected, can be avoided by identifying where the student work is coming from. The program chair decides that the instructor of the capstone course will collect copies of student work from the student electronic portfolios upon submission. This course is offered in both the fall and spring semesters and accordingly student papers will be collected by the instructor during both semesters. The instructor will remove the students' names from and affix unique numeric assessment codes to the papers.

The second roadblock, copies of student work cannot be found for evaluation, is discussed by the faculty and a system for organizing and evaluating the student work is developed. The capstone course instructor will submit electronic copies of the students' papers to the program chair who will store them on the department's secure network drive. This will ensure the data are available for evaluation.

The third common roadblock, no clear system for evaluating student work, is avoided by developing a schedule for evaluation of student work. The faculty agree to serve as evaluators on a rotating schedule to divide the work equally. The instructor of the capstone course will not evaluate the students' papers for assessment purposes to avoid instructor bias. Each paper will be reviewed by two faculty members using the rubric developed for this outcome measure. If the reviewers' ratings do not agree, a third faculty member will review the paper and assign a final rating. Ratings will be recorded on a 1 to 5 scale.

Ratings of student work will be stored in an Excel database located on the department's secure network drive and maintained by the program chair. Examples of student work for each level of student performance will be stored as PDF files on the network drive and maintained by the program chair. By keeping the data on the network drive, the data are automatically backed up in case of computer failure.

Example: **Collecting Assessment Data from Indirect Measures Effectively**

There are three common roadblocks that can stifle the collection of assessment data.

1. Data is not collected for stated outcome measures
2. Copies of student work are collected but cannot be found at the time of evaluation
3. There is no clear system for the evaluation of student work resulting in no data for analysis

The following example illustrates how to avoid these roadblocks and plan for effective data collection. By answering the questions in Tool 1 before data is to be collected an effective plan can be developed. The example uses the learning outcome and outcome measures found in previous sections.

- The learning outcome chosen by the program is: **Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to apply ethical reasoning in discussing an ethical issue.**
- It will be measured by an indirect measure: ***Indirect Measure:*** **Two questions from the Graduating Student Survey (GSS**) - For each of the following skills, please indicate how well you

believe your education prepared you to: (1) Determine the most ethically appropriate response to a situation. (2) Understand the major ethical dilemmas in your field. *Students respond to these questions by indicating their choice on a scale ranging from "Poor" to "Excellent"*

The first common roadblock, data is not collected, can be avoided by identifying where the student's work is coming from. For this indirect measure, GSS data will be obtained from the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness. Because the data is collected across the institution annually, the first roadblock is avoided.

The second roadblock, copies of student work cannot be found for evaluation is discussed by the faculty and a system for obtaining the data on the program's students is developed. The program chair volunteers to request the survey data for students in the program. This requires a special extraction of the responses for the program's graduating students from the main survey database.

The third common roadblock, no clear system for evaluating student work, is avoided by developing a schedule for evaluation of student work. The data will be analyzed by a designated faculty member to determine the percentage of students responding at each level of the measurement scale for each question. The results of this analysis will be stored in the secure Excel database on the programs' secure network drive. This avoids roadblocks two and three in this example.

Section V: Analyzing Assessment Data

Analysis of data is the next step in the assessment process. Analysis is a process that provides better understanding of data and allows inferences to be made. It summarizes the data, enhances the value of information gathered and provides direction for decisions regarding program improvement. While data analysis can be relatively complex, for the purpose of assessment it is usually basic.

This section discusses the core elements of data analysis and provides strategies for and examples of analysis. The underlying theme of this section is to illustrate how to link data to the learning outcomes and provide a basis for using data to improve student learning.

Checklist of Needed Activity for Collecting Data:

- ☐ An indication of the number students participating in the assessment activity for each outcome measure
- ☐ The percentage of students who met or exceeded the performance criterion for each outcome measure.

Before Analyzing Data

Two important steps should be taken before analyzing data. The first step is to review the data visually. Reviewing data has two benefits, it allows for the identification of outliers and possible mistakes, and it enables basic patterns or trends to emerge. For example, it may be clear that all students who took a particular class had difficulty with a particular outcome.

The second step of the process is to determine the appropriate method for analyzing the data. This can range from simply counting the number of successful students to higher powered statistical analyses. The two key factors are first to make sure the analysis method fits the data; and second, to ensure that method aligns with the program's needs. There are two types of data used in assessment, each with different methods of analysis.

1. **Categorical data** are based on groupings or categories for the evaluation of student performance. For example, a simple passed/failed score is categorical because there are two groups into which students can be placed. Often rubrics generate categorical data by using a scale of "exceeding expectations," "meeting expectations," and "failing to meet expectations".
2. **Numerical data** are based on scales that reflect student performance. Tests which are scored based on the percentage of questions answered correctly generate numeric data.

Direct measures can generate either categorical or numerical data. Students' papers rated on an assessment rubric may be categorized as "meeting standard" or "failing to meet standard." However, the papers may be scored on a numerical scale indicating the overall quality of the paper with respect to the learning outcome.

Indirect measures can also generate either categorical or numerical data. By asking students on a questionnaire, "Did you have sufficient writing in the program?" a program would compile categorical data based on those saying "yes" and those saying "no." However, by asking students to indicate how strongly they agree with a statement like, "There was sufficient writing required in my program," numeric data could be generated by applying an agreement scale. (5 – Strongly Agree, 4 – Agree, 3 – Neither, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree).

Analyzing Assessment Data

Once the data have been reviewed and the type determined, the process of analyzing data follows. *"Tool 1: Methods for Analyzing Data*" provides a brief overview of the basic methods used to analyze assessment data. Assessment's focus on student achievement of learning outcomes typically requires the determination of counts and percentages. Together they show clearly the number of students involved in the activity and the rate of successful display of the outcome. All data, regardless of type can be analyzed using counts and percentages.

Numeric data has the additional benefit of being able to be analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean, median, and mode provide useful information to interpret data by allowing for easier comparison between groups and tests for significant differences.

Tool 1: Methods for Analyzing Data

- **Percentage**: Proportion of total cases falling into a category
- **Mean**: Average of a set of scores
- **Median**: Middle value in an ascending list of scores
- **Mode**: Most frequent score
- **Standard Deviation**: Average distance of scores from the mean
- **Percentile**: Percentage of a distribution of scores that is equal to or below a specified value

The Impact of Dispersion

By examining how data are distributed around measures of central tendency, particularly the mean and median, a richer understanding of the data emerges. The standard deviation represents the average deviation of scores about the mean. Small standard deviations in student performance indicate that performance levels varied little across students in the sample. Large standard deviations indicate a greater variability in levels of student performance. Standard deviations are commonly reported with the mean. Percentiles represent the percentage of a distribution of scores that are at or below a specified value. They are calculated by the formula $Percentile = S_b/n \times 100$, where S_b is the number of scores below the score of interest, and n is the total number of scores. They are often reported with the median which by definition is the 50_{th} percentile. For example: a median score of 75 on a final exam would be the 50_{th} percentile indicating 50% of students scored above 75 and 50% scored below. By examining the 25_{th}, 50_{th}, and 75_{th} percentiles one can gain a sense of a student's performance relative to the group.

Missing Data and Valid Responses

Working with assessment data, there are many instances when data will not be available for every student. As a general rule, missing data should be excluded from calculations of percentages and descriptive statistics. If a program has ten (10) students, and eight (8) submit a needed paper for the assessment of an outcome; then eight (8) submitters become the basis of the analysis. Extending the example, if six (6) of the submitted papers meet or exceed the performance criterion, then a program would indicate 75% of students submitting papers showed mastery of the outcome rather than 60% of all students in the program.

Analyzing Data in Small Programs

In programs with a small number of majors, or a small sample of data, it may be appropriate to aggregate multiple collections of data for analysis to be able to use findings for program improvements. For example, data may be collected from a capstone yearly to evaluate ethical reasoning but would only be analyzed once in an assessment cycle using three years' worth of data.

Presenting Analysis

Tables and graphs are useful in presenting analysis because they focus attention to specific results. Tables are useful for reporting multiple percentages and frequencies, comparison of student performance with stated performance criteria and some descriptive statistics. They provide an ordered way for readers to see results quickly for each outcome measure without having to search through text to find a particular result. Graphs can further enhance the visual impact of assessment. Graphical representations of results show differences in variables, which makes graphs highly effective in showcasing assessment results.

When sharing the results of program assessment, it may be useful to report each learning outcome and outcome measure paired with the corresponding results of the analyses, which joins the multiple outcome measures (direct and indirect) for each learning outcome. Next, compare the results with the specified performance criterion and discuss the implications of the data as they relate to the program. Both strengths and areas for improvement are discussed, because showcasing program success is just as important as identifying areas for improvement, when it comes to making data-based decisions about the program.

Tool 2: Example of a Table of Counts and Percentages

	# of students evaluated	% Below Performance Criterion	% Meeting Performance Criterion	% Above Performance Criterion
Demonstrate critical thinking/writing skills	20	**30**	**50**	**20**
Apply specialized knowledge within Anthropology	18	**5**	**5**	**90**

When comparing student performance to specified performance criteria, a table with the counts and percentages may be useful to summarize the data. The example in *"Tool 2: Example of Table of Counts and Percentages"* shows data collected from 20 student portfolios for two learning outcomes. It indicates the number of students completing the portfolio component and the percentage who were below, met and above the performance criterion. While 70% of students in the sample achieved or exceeded the standard, 30% were below the performance criterion.

Example: **Presenting Analysis of Assessment Data**

Once the student ethics papers in Section III have been evaluated by faculty, the data is recorded and analyzed for interpretation. Analysis provides summaries of the data in a form that is more easily understood than raw data. To do this the assessment coordinator reports the number of students who meet or exceed the standard for this learning outcome measure. This count might be displayed in the chart below:

Students Meeting or Exceeding the Performance Criterion for Ethical Reasoning
35

While this gives a count of the number of students meeting or exceeding the performance criterion in Section III; it is also valuable to further classify their students' abilities.

Students Meeting or Exceeding the Performance Criterion for Ethical Reasoning

Below Standard	**Met Standard**	**Exceeded Standard**
5	20	15

This table shows that fifteen (15) students in the program exceeded the standard, but numbers by themselves are sometimes difficult to interpret. To facilitate greater understanding, reporting the percentage of students below standard, those meeting the standard and those exceeding the standard aid in interpretation of the data. The table below shows this.

Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding the Performance Criterion for Ethical Reasoning

Below Standard	Met Standard	Exceeded Standard
12.5% (5)	50% (20)	37.5% (15)

Choosing how much information to provide from any data analysis should be guided by the type of data gathered and also the needs of the readers that will be interpreting the results. The analyses may vary for each learning outcome measured.

The Role of Advanced Statistical Analysis

As a program's assessment activity and data increase, more advanced analysis may be useful in understanding student learning. It is possible to study differences in performance to examine the effects of curricular change, conduct pre and post assessments to evaluate impact of specific learning experiences, and compare program students to national performance on certification examinations. The Institute for Teaching and Learning can work with programs looking to incorporate these and other types of analysis into their assessment activity.

Section VI: Share Results

The next step of the cycle is sharing results of program assessment. This phase focuses on interpreting strengths, challenges/areas for improvement, and identifying recommendations and action steps to enhance student learning. There are three steps in sharing results.

Checklist of Activity for Sharing Results:

1. Work with program faculty to understand assessment results.
2. Decide stakeholders with whom to share the results.
3. Create appropriate materials for stakeholder groups.

Work With Faculty to Understand Assessment Results

Including program faculty in all steps of the assessment process is important to ensure its meaningfulness and effectiveness. The inclusion of faculty insights is probably most important in interpreting results and identifying strategies/action steps for improving student learning. In addition, **it is a specific expectation of our accrediting body that faculty substantially participate in assessment--at a minimum all should participate in interpreting results, identifying action steps, and implementing improvements.** The methods used for sharing results are driven by character of the department, with some pouring over all the data generated and others simply reviewing summary analysis outlined in Section V of the handbook. Using summary reports of assessment results, and the University Assessment Council's review of the previous year's report will typically facilitate rich discussion and generate useful interpretation for the assessment report.

Decide Who Needs to See the Results

In addition to faculty within the program, there are potentially other audiences that wish to see the work programs are doing to improve student learning. The first and most important group to share results with are the students themselves. Sharing results with students is both a strong message of the high program quality you provide for students and can also inform them on how best to be successful in the program. For example, if students who take a key course out of sequence tend to struggle in upper-division coursework, then sharing that with new students could help them plan their schedules to best ensure success. Similarly, sharing results with graduating seniors could provide rich information regarding context of results and/or suggestions for improvement.

In addition to students, sharing results with program alumni, other departments, or your college provides opportunity to demonstrate program continuous improvement through student learning assessment, as well as get feedback from colleagues who might be able to make suggestions and/or assist in making program improvements.

Finally, because we are expected by our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), to demonstrate program quality through student learning outcomes assessment, it is critical that programs share results with the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL). By reporting results to ITL, it both provides evidence of assessment processes and opportunity for ITL to provide resources, suggestions, and feedback to improve program assessment processes and outcomes. Part 2 outlines the types of reports that programs must submit on a yearly basis.

Create Appropriate Materials for Your Audience

With many stakeholder groups, it may be appropriate to just share a small portion of the data. For example, a program may share the results from the evaluation of writing in their program at the college level as it may be of interest to others in related disciplines. In other cases, you may just wish to focus on the action steps taken as a result of assessment data, such as in an alumni newsletter.

With reports to ITL, it depends on where the program is in the assessment cycle. Plans should provide detail on how programs plan to collect and evaluate data; with yearly updates the focus should be on the evaluation/interpretation of the data, and what action steps were identified/undertaken as a result; the assessment cycle reflection should provide a more holistic analysis of the assessment cycle as a whole and how program improvements have impacted learning. More details on specific reporting requirements are in Part 2.

Section VII: Reflect and Begin Again

Assessment is a cyclical process that builds on previous work and activity. The "assessment loop" is closed once a program takes findings from its assessment results and implements changes based on those findings. Though not always, assessment findings often indicate a need to modify the assessment process or the academic program. Making any change also requires consideration of resources and developing a plan of action. The following section provides a framework for thinking about taking action to close the assessment loop.

When and Where "Closing the Loop" Occurs

Change for improvement happens all the time in an academic program, for example, curriculum responds to current needs in the field, or faculty adjust their classes based on student performance and their professional judgement. In assessment processes, however, there tend to be two key places in which changes are mainly concentrated.

Changes in the Assessment Process

When reviewing the assessment results, it is also important to evaluate the assessment process. This involves considering all aspects involved in creating the assessment report. Reviewing learning outcomes as well as approaches to gathering data will provide direction on improving the assessment process. **Changes in the assessment process are generally made during the development of an assessment plan**, though sometimes may happen during data collection and evaluation.

Learning Outcomes

Tool 1: Re-Assessing Learning Outcomes

Results From Assessment Activity	Likely Use of Outcome During Next Cycle

Students not performing adequately relative to outcome	• Consider making outcome a priority focus in next cycle; consider potential action steps for improvement; re-assess more than once in next cycle.
	• Evaluate any action steps taken during last cycle:
	    ○ If action steps impact student learning immediately, re-assess outcome using same measure early in plan.
	    ○ If recommendations impact student learning over an extended timeframe; schedule re-assessment for further out in plan

Students performing adequately relative to outcome	• If same results for the past 3 years, consider scheduling re-assessment at an appropriate interval (e.g. only once in cycle)
Students' performance relative to outcome yields unclear current results	• If difficulty in determining appropriate level relates to outcome; re-write outcome and reassess during next cycle • If difficulty relates to measures; retain outcome; revise measure; and re-assess during next cycle

"*Tool 1: Re-Assessing Learning Outcomes*" provides a structure for reviewing student learning outcomes. Based on findings from the student learning outcome assessment results, a program may want to retain, modify, or eliminate an outcome.

Measures

In addition to changing outcomes, there might be a need to change the type of data collected. If results obtained were not as expected, it is also important to know if better information could be collected to demonstrate student learning. This change could vary from modifying items on a multiple-choice test to creating a new rubric for reviewing essays.

Data Collection Procedures

In addition to having the correct measures, it is also important to consider how data were collected in previous student learning assessments. Knowing who was included in the assessment data and when data were collected are important to understanding if changes need to be made in data collection procedures.

Changes in the Academic Program

Results from the student learning assessment may indicate that program curricula need to be reviewed and adjusted. These are the types of changes as a result of the yearly practice of measuring and evaluating student learning outcome data. Changing how concepts are introduced and the timing of that introduction to students are two common findings from student learning assessments. Changes tend to be very specific to the results of the assessment data. For example, a program may determine that a writing outcome in the program is not achieved at the capstone level, and a program may appropriately decide on several possible action steps, such as developing capstone guidelines; requiring draft submissions of the capstone paper; evaluating writing development in the program; or ensuring that a junior course provides sufficient opportunity for writing practice. Any or all of those action steps could serve to improve the writing outcome in the program.

Consider Resources

Closing the assessment loop for the assessment process or program may require the use of additional resources. Discovering the need for additional course sections or courses may require resources beyond current budgets. In addition to fiscal resources, there are other resources such as time to consider. Modifying tests or creating new materials requires time, which is a valuable resource.

Taking Action

Opportunities to improve the assessment process and curriculum may emerge from assessment results but will not be realized without planning and implementation. The assessment loop is only closed if actions are taken to make modifications where necessary. Answering who, what, when, and where questions about assessment modifications are helpful for planning and implementing any changes. "*Tool 2: Questions for Planning Change*" provides a few questions to assist with mapping and implementing changes.

Tool 2: Questions for Planning Change

- ? Who will implement the changes?
- ? Who needs to be involved to make these changes successful?
- ? What will be changed?
- ? What needs to occur for things to change?
- ? When will the changes be put in place?
- ? Where will they be implemented?

Appendix 1A: Rubric Toolkit

Rubrics are sets of guidelines that aid in the assessment of student work or activities. Rubrics are often derived from careful analysis of varying qualities of student work. For example, a professor has student work from a recent assignment. By examining the student work and defining the characteristics of "below performance criterion" papers, papers that "meet the performance criterion," and papers that "exceed the performance criterion," the professor has a good start on developing a rubric that will categorize the students' papers based on quality. Rubrics increase the reliability of assessment by making the process of scoring student work more consistent. This helps eliminate bias by ensuring student work is rated on the same criterion. ITL's suggests utilizing Blackboard to create any course or program level rubrics.

Types of Rubrics

There are three basic types of rubrics: **checklists**, **holistic rubrics** and **analytic rubrics**. **Checklists** are the simplest type of rubric and list accomplishments that are evident in the students' work. **Holistic rubrics** describe levels of performance with regards to the overall quality of the paper or project, without considering the components of student work separately. **Analytic rubrics**, guide the scoring of student work on multiple traits first, and then sum the individual scores to arrive at a total score. "*Tool 1: Description of Types of Rubrics"* illustrates the differences among rubrics.

Tool 1: Description of Types of Rubrics

Type of Rubric	Description
Checklists	Provide a check-off list of accomplishments completed/present
Holistic Rubrics	Contain narrative descriptions to focus on the quality of the entire document/performance/project rather than the components of specific traits
Analytic Rubrics	Contain descriptions of each level of performance for each component/criterion/trait

Checklists give a list of content that should be included in students' work. The content may be listed sequentially indicating the order in which it should occur. The rater marks each item on the checklist that the student has completed or included in their work. Checklists do not give an indication of the quality of student work.

Holistic rubrics assess the overall quality of student work by providing descriptions of student work at different levels of performance. These descriptions define the overall characteristics of student work at each level of performance. Holistic rubrics provide an overview of student performance and have the advantage of quick scoring. However, holistic rubrics do not differentiate between multiple traits and therefore may not provide as detailed a picture of student performance as an analytic rubric. They are most useful when a single trait is sufficient to define the quality of student work.

Developing Holistic Rubrics

The first step in developing a **holistic rubric** is to identify the components in the student work that are related to the learning outcome. These components should be linked to the student learning outcomes developed as part of the program assessment plan. After the components are identified, the next step is to decide how many levels are necessary to classify the quality of students' work. The descriptors chosen for the mid-point level of the rubric should describe the primary characteristics of the students' work that meet the minimum acceptable program standard.

Analytic rubrics provide separate evaluation of student work on multiple traits. They can pinpoint particular areas where students need improvement, which can be used during planning to suggest opportunities to improve instruction. One drawback to the use of analytic rubrics is that they require more time to use than holistic rubrics.

Developing Analytic Rubrics

The first step in developing an **analytic rubric** is to identify the trait or traits (knowledge, skills or abilities) to be measured. For example, the ability to choose an appropriate statistical technique for data analysis is a trait. Traits should be linked to the student learning outcomes and developed as part of the program assessment plan. The number of traits to include in the **analytic rubric** should be guided by the learning outcome.

The next step is to decide how many levels are necessary to classify the quality in student work for each trait being measured. The descriptors chosen for each level of the rubric should describe the primary characteristics of students' work for each of the selected traits. Sometimes it can be difficult to find meaningful descriptors for several levels of performance. Remember, all of the characteristics listed must be reflected in the students' work to be scored as meeting that level of the rubric.

Example Checklist Rubric

Ethical Reasoning: The paper...	**Yes**	**No**
Describes the key stakeholders	☐	☐
Discusses one ethical approach	☐	☐
Discusses both the benefits and risks associated with the ethical issue	☐	☐
Shows consideration of key stakeholders' interests	☐	☐
Contains at least one normative principle	☐	☐

Example Holistic Rubric

Below Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
The paper: identifies fewer than two key stakeholders and/or fails to state the ethical approach used in the discussion features limited discussion of the benefits and risks associated with the ethical issue shows little evidence of thought regarding the best interests of key stakeholders fails to use or is characterized by inappropriate use of normative principles in discussing the issue	The paper: identifies the key stakeholders and states the ethical approach used in the discussion features a full discussion of the benefits and risks associated with the ethical issue shows some evidence of thought, regarding the best interests of key stakeholders is characterized by appropriate use of normative principles in discussing the issue	The paper: identifies the key stakeholders and minor stakeholders states multiple ethical approaches used in the discussion features a rich and detailed discussion of the benefits and the risks associated with the ethical issue shows evidence of considerable thought, regarding the best interests of key and minor stakeholders is characterized by exemplary use of normative principles in discussing the issue

Example Analytic Rubric

Characteristics/Traits	Below Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
Identify the stakeholders for the ethical issue	Identifies fewer than two key stakeholders	Identifies the key stakeholders	Identifies the key stakeholders and minor stakeholders
States the ethical approach used (utilitarianism, justice, etc.)	Fails to state the ethical approach used in their discussion	States one ethical approach in their discussion	States multiple ethical approaches in their discussion
Discusses the benefits and risks associated with the ethical issue	Fails to discuss the benefits or the risks associated with the ethical issue	Discusses both the benefits and risks associated with the ethical issue	Discusses both the benefits and risks associated with the ethical issue and proposes suggestions for minimizing the risks
Demonstrates thoughtful consideration of stakeholders' best interests when discussing the ethical issue	Fails to consider the best interests of all key stakeholders	Shows consideration of key stakeholders' interests	Shows consideration for key and minor stakeholders' best interests
Uses normative principles in discussing the issue	Fails to use normative principles in discussing the issue	Uses at least one normative principle in discussing the issue	Uses multiple normative principles in discussing the issue

Appendix 1B: Glossary

- **Action Verb:** A verb that reflects overt behavior that can be observed
- **Analysis:** Process of summarizing information to make inferences about student learning and program effectiveness
- **Assessment Council (AC):** interdisciplinary group composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrators who, with ITL, works together with the aim of improving learning on campus
- **Assessment Cycle Reflection:** A program's comprehensive look at the past assessment cycle.
- **Assessment Plan:** A program's five year plan for student learning outcomes assessment.
- **Assessment Update:** A program's yearly submission of progress on student learning outcomes assessment
- **Categorical:** Data that are grouped by performance
- **Closing the Assessment Loop:** Implementing changes based assessment findings
- **Curriculum Map (CM):** Identifying where learning outcomes are supported in the curriculum
- **Data:** Quantitative or qualitative scores attributed to student work or responses to indirect measure data collections
- **Database:** Electronic collection of data relating to student performance or responses
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Standard formulas that generate numeric indicators of data allowing easier interpretation and comparison of data
- **Direct Measures:** Assessments that evaluate actual samples of student work
- **Expected Results:** Pre-specified percentage of students expected to meet or exceed the performance criterion
- **Indirect Measures:** Assessments that analyze supportive evidence, information, and student perspective of learning
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Outcomes that can differentiate the quality of student performance
- **Numerical:** Data that are measured on scales that reflect student performance
- **Observable Outcomes:** Outcomes that can be evidenced by student work or other data
- **Outcome Measures:** Methods for assessing student mastery of learning outcomes
- **Outliers:** Extreme values outside the expected range that should be reviewed for data entry or other errors
- **Performance Criterion:** Pre-specified level of acceptable of student performance (direct measures) or response (indirect measures)
- **Rater:** Faculty responsible for evaluating students' work using rubrics and other standardized forms
- **Rubrics:** Standardized evaluation forms used to assess student work toward meeting learning outcomes
- **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):** Statements that specify what students will know or be able to do as a result of earning their degrees
- **Success Rate:** Percentage of students meeting the program standard
- **Table:** A listing of data in a systemic format to facilitate comparison and analysis.

Handbook Part 2: Reporting Requirements

Section VIII: Assessment Reporting Requirements at YSU

The following information is designed to provide a timeline for program assessment over the life of an Assessment Cycle (typically 5-years).

Table 1 can be used to find the suggested assessment activities for each year in the Assessment Cycle for academic programs. Templates for suggested activities, as well as information on submitting reports through Watermark Planning and Self Study (PSS) are in the Appendices following this section. An Assessment Cycle begins with an Assessment Plan and ends with a Cycle Reflection.

Types of Reports

Assessment Foundational Documents: Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Curriculum Maps are created at a program's inception and reviewed for currency when developing or revising Assessment Plans. These submissions help provide the goals of the program translated into outcomes and provide a holistic overview of where and how learning is developed throughout the curriculum. These can be updated and managed via Organization Management in PSS.

Assessment Plan: For new programs, an Assessment Plan is created. For programs currently engaged in assessment, plans will be reviewed after completing a reflection of the past cycle or making significant program changes. An Assessment Plan is an opportunity for programs to review their student learning outcomes, measurement tools, and assessment strategies for the following cycle. Plans should reference and reflect on the strengths and challenges of student learning identified through the prior Cycle Reflection. Assessment Plans detail the measurement of all student learning outcomes in the program over the next four (or more) years.

Yearly Assessment Update: Active programs report on the progress of the Plan for four or more consecutive years through Assessment Updates. Updates focus on the student learning outcome(s) the program focused on the prior year, how the program measured the outcome, what the program learned from the data, and how the program will make modifications to improve student learning. Each year's update will focus on a different student learning outcome(s). Between the consecutive years of updates, a program will touch on all student learning outcomes at least once in an assessment cycle.

Assessment Cycle Reflection: The Assessment Cycle Reflection is meant to be a summative look at the past four or more years of assessment (including planning, outcome measuring, analysis of student learning, and action steps for improvement). The Cycle Reflection is completed the same year a program reviews/edits/affirms their Assessment Plan. Cycle Reflections are meant to gauge the health and status of student learning and assessment processes in your program. Cycle Reflections will also be used when programs are making significant curricular changes.

Review Process

The review process of any assessment submission is focused on providing support and enabling a program to effectively and efficiently evaluate learning in the program. There is evaluation of assessment processes to ensure that programs are maintaining high standards in assessing learning, but it is the vitality of the program's assessment processes, not results, ITL will evaluate in its review. Once submitted, generally a team of volunteer reviewers (including members of the YSU Assessment Council) will review the submission and provide feedback based on a rubric (a set of evaluative criteria). ITL also reviews the report and may provide additional feedback. The report is returned through PSS to the program with feedback and suggestions for improvement, meant to inform assessment processes moving forward. Occasionally reports are returned for revision, or a consult is scheduled to gather more information or work toward process improvements.

Reporting Schedule

With integration of assessment reporting into an assessment cycle, the needs and types of assessment reporting will follow a more set schedule. See below for a sample 5-year cycle.

Table 1: Sample Assessment Activities for Academic Programs Based on a 5 Year Cycle

Cycle Year	**Typical Assessment Activities**
Year 1 **New Program**	• Review and/or modify a complete set of SLOs for your program (these will be broken down and analyzed separately in each year and then comprehensively in Year 1 of your next cycle) and submit in PSS • Review and/or modify the curriculum map in PSS to reflect any updates • Add measures to Student Learning Outcomes, October deadline • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs
Year 2	• Analyze data on Year 2 SLOs • Submit Update in PSS detailing what you learned from analyzing Year 2 SLOs; October deadline • Suggest action steps to improve learning on select SLO's (if necessary) and input in PSS; October deadline • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs
Year 3	• Provide status report updates to action steps from previous year in PSS; October deadline • Analyze data on Year 3 SLOs • Submit Update in PSS detailing what you learned from analyzing Year 3 SLOs; October deadline • Suggest action steps to improve learning on select SLO's (if necessary) and input in PSS; October deadline • Implement Action Steps from Year 3 update (if necessary) • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs
Year 4	• Provide status report updates to action steps from previous year in PSS; October deadline • Analyze data on Year 4 SLOs • Submit Update in PSS detailing what you learned from analyzing Year 4 SLOs; October deadline • Suggest action steps to improve learning on select SLO's (if necessary) and input in PSS; October deadline • Implement Action Steps from Year 4 update (if necessary) • Identify subset of next year's SLOs

	• Collect data on next year’s SLOs
Year 5 **End of cycle**.	• Provide status report updates to action steps from previous year in PSS; October deadline • Analyze data on Year 5 SLOs • Submit Update in PSS detailing what you learned from analyzing Year 5 SLOs; October deadline • Suggest action steps to improve learning on select SLO’s (if necessary) and input in PSS; October deadline • Implement Action Steps from Year 5 update (if necessary) • Identify subset of next year’s SLOs • Collect data on next year’s SLOs
Year 1 **Next Cycle**	• Provide status report updates to action steps from previous year in PSS; October deadline • Analyze data/reporting/Action Steps from past 5 years on all SLOs included in the program’s Assessment Plan • Complete Assessment Cycle Reflection detailing how you use the assessment process to improve learning for students in the program; October deadline • Review Foundational Documents and Assessment Plan • Make any desired adjustments to Foundational Documents and/or Assessment Plan • Identify subset of next year’s SLOs • Collect data on next year’s SLOs

Navigating to Planning & Self-Study

Navigate to your Penguin Portal. Click on the “Faculty Success/Watermark” card. If you do not see the card on your dashboard, you can use the search function by clicking VIEW ALL CARDS and searching for Watermark.

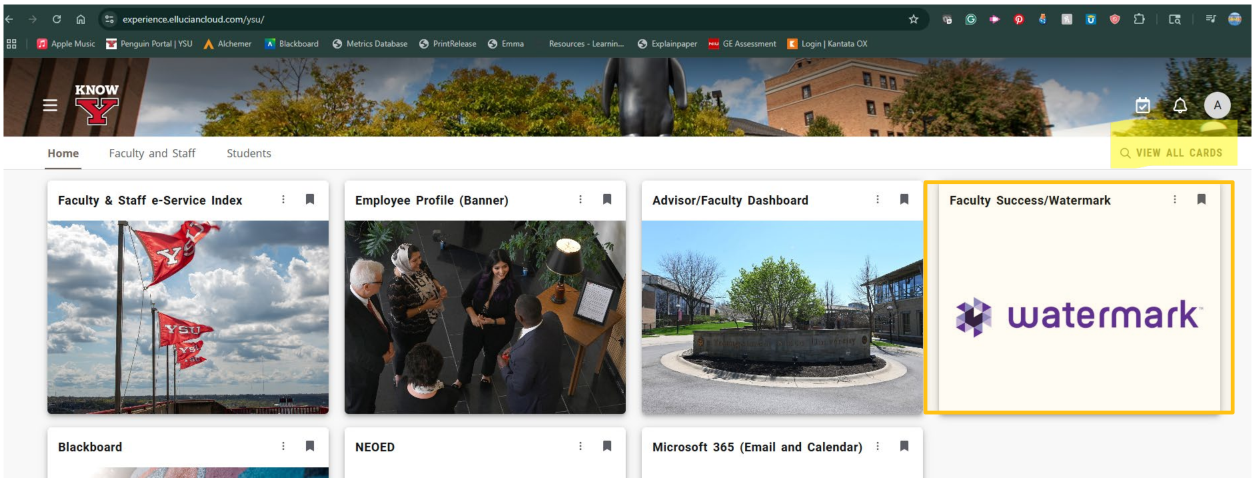


Figure 1

Click the rectangle that says Planning & Self-Study.

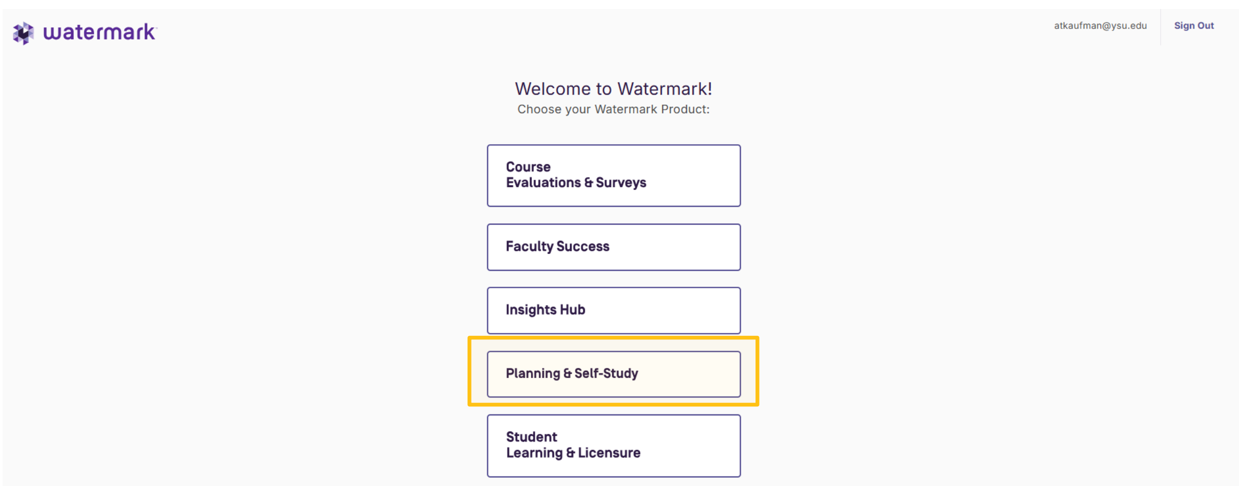


Figure 2

Adding or Editing Program Information

Your home dashboard should include your program(s). You may have projects listed on this page, but for now we are going to focus on the foundational program information. To do this, select the purple square that says **ENTER PROGRAM**.

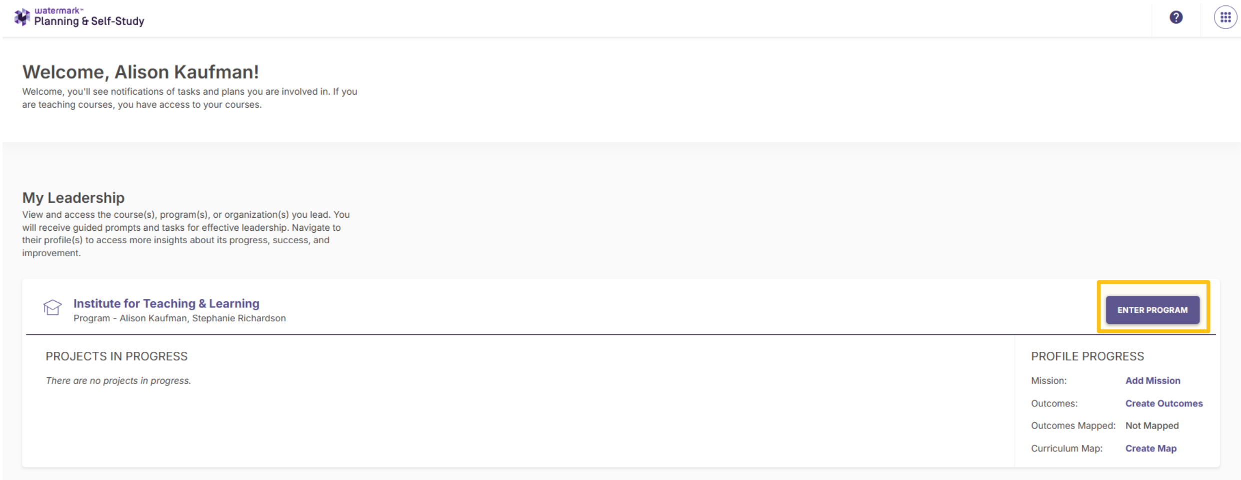


Figure 3

Your program's dashboard is going to look different based on where you are in the assessment process, but every program screen has a toolbar along the left side of the screen that will help you navigate your program's space. To start, click the **Program Information** link on that toolbar.

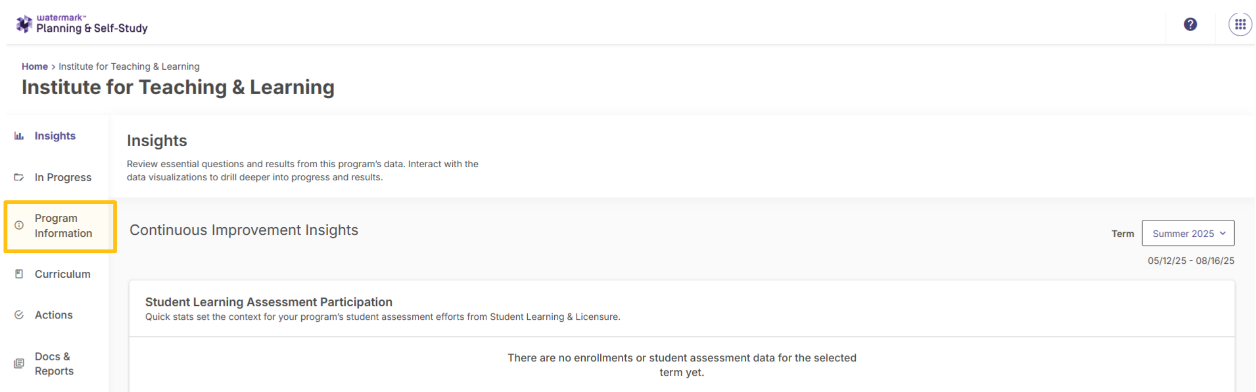


Figure 4

Adding or Editing a Mission Statement

If you don't have a mission statement associated with your program, the first thing you are going to do is enter your mission statement by clicking **ADD MISSION**.

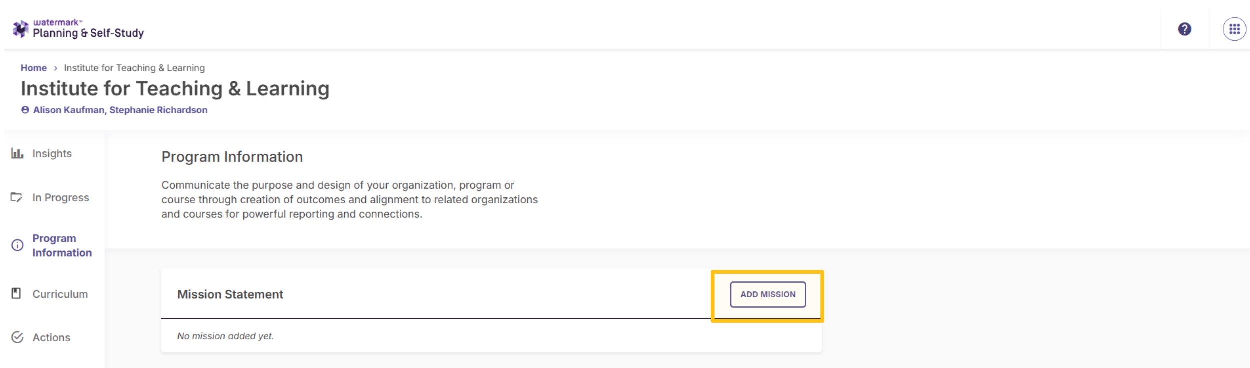


Figure 5

When you enter a mission statement in the Program Information section, it will exist in all other workspaces in Planning and Self-Study. At any time, you can navigate back to Program Information to edit your mission statement by clicking the three dots that will show up next to your mission statement.

Type or copy/paste your mission statement into the text box. Click the checkmark when you are finished.

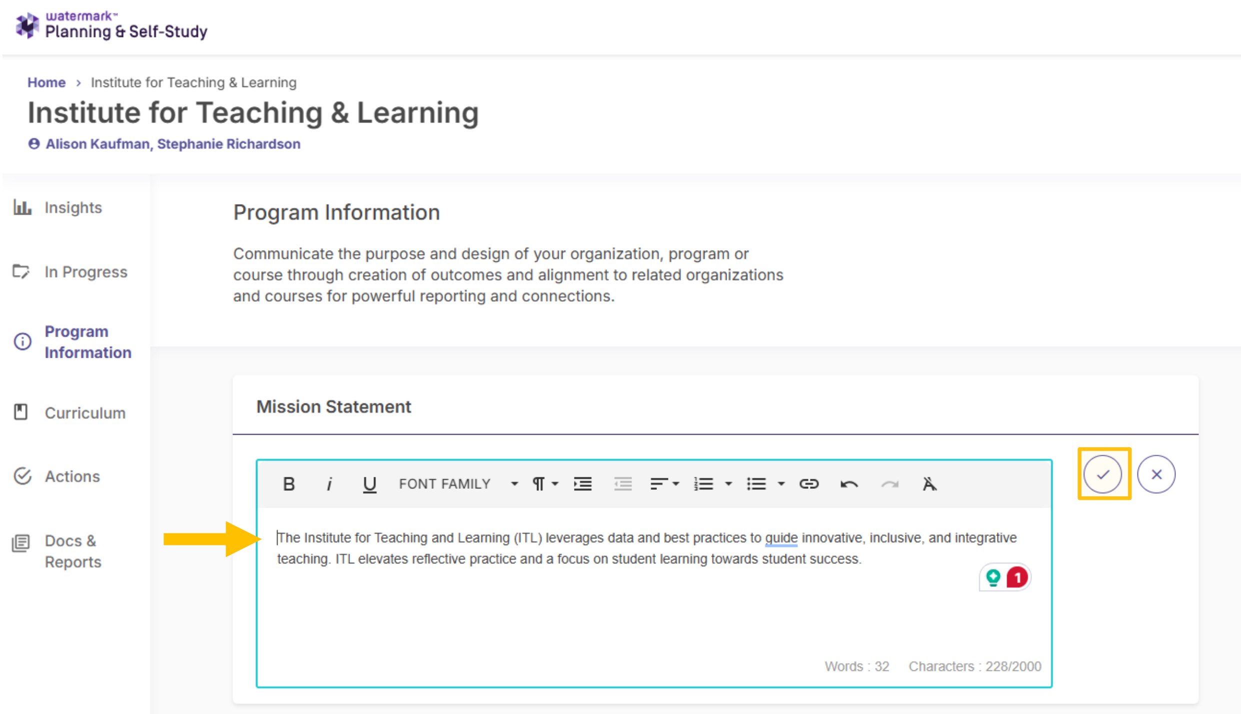


Figure 6

Adding or Editing Program Learning Outcomes

The next step in your Program Information section is to enter your program's Learning Outcomes. The Learning Outcomes you enter in this area should match the Learning Outcomes you have listed on the YSU Course Catalog. You will be able to archive, delete, or edit learning outcomes in the future, but be sure you are doing this in alignment with the process for program changes via Academic Senate. Click on either **MANAGE OUTCOMES** button to begin with adding your outcomes.

Just a reminder, Learning Outcomes typically start with "Students will be able to…" and are focused on what you hope students know, learn, or are able to do because of your program. Success Outcomes should be thought of as more program goals or effectiveness goals, and are goals related to things like graduation, retention, staffing, budget, etc. This system allows you to track both, but we are focusing here primarily on your program level Student Learning Outcomes.

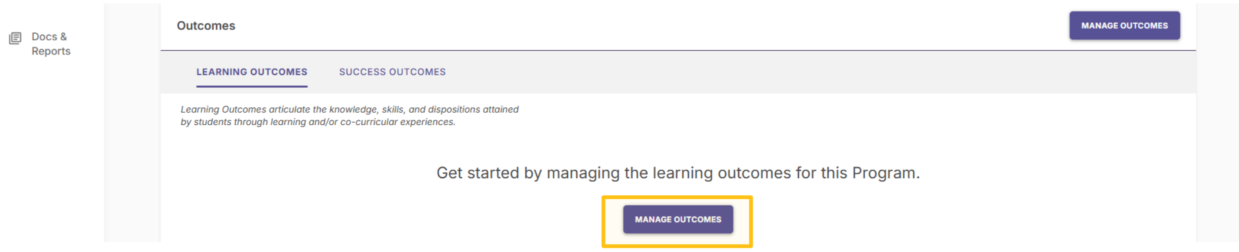


Figure 7

You are now able to manage both your learning and success outcomes. To add one of your program Student Learning Outcomes, click on the button that says **CREATE NEW OUTCOME**.

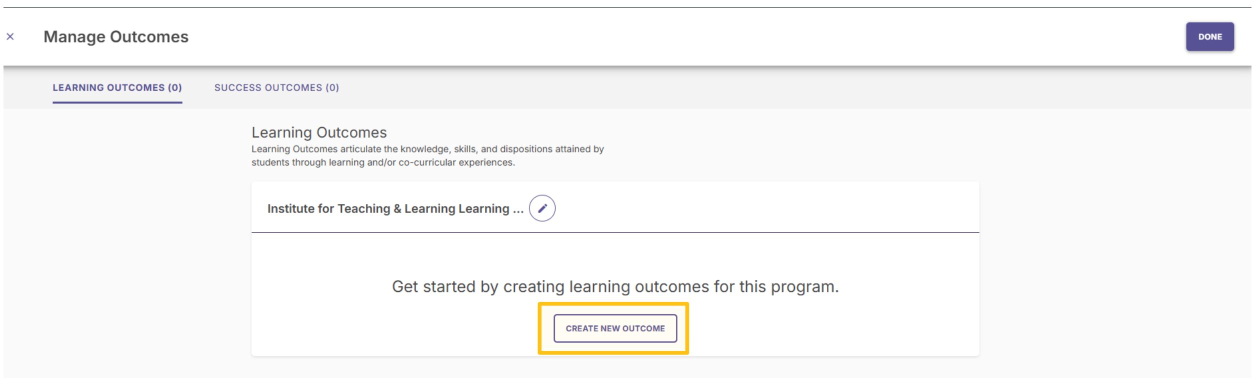


Figure 8

A pop up will appear allowing you to add your outcome. You'll first need to add a short Outcome Title (this is a required field). Your Outcome Title might include something like *SLO1: Communication*. Then you will enter your full program Student Learning Outcome in the Outcome Description textbox. The Outcome Description textbox might include text such as, *Students will be able to communicate original research*. You do not need to add any Tags, but if you'd like you can use tags related to Blooms Taxonomy levels (apply, create, etc.). Once you enter your information, click **CREATE**.

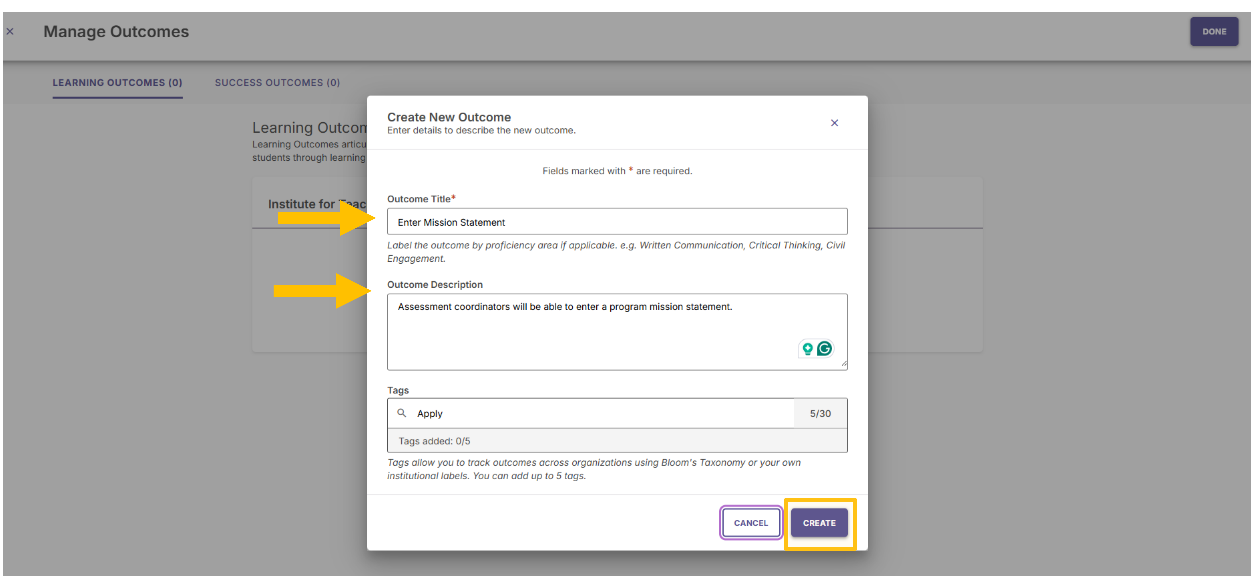


Figure 9

Your first outcome now appears, and you are directed back to the main screen of the Manage Outcomes section. If you added any tags, you'll notice them under your outcome. After you enter your outcome, next to the outcome is a button with three dots. If you click on the three dots, you can edit, archive, or delete your outcome.

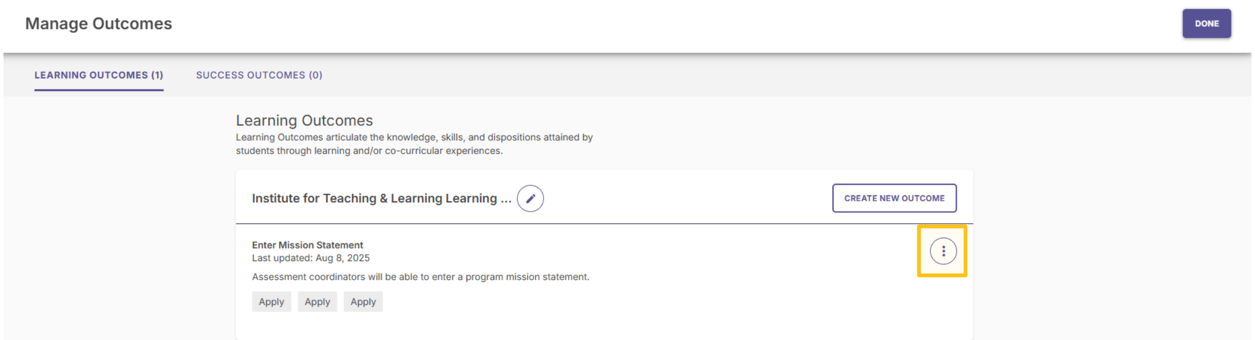


Figure 10

You can continue adding outcomes by clicking the **CREATE NEW OUTCOME** button. Just a reminder, the three dots next to each outcome allow you to edit, archive, or delete an outcome. The arrows allow you to change the order your outcomes appear. The order they show up here is how they will appear in your curriculum map.

If you'd like to add any Success Outcomes, click the Success Outcomes tab and follow the same process. Success outcomes are entered the same way but are optional for learning outcomes assessment. This could be a good place to manage any program effectiveness goals.

When you have finished entering your outcomes (and remember, these should match your program outcomes in the YSU Course Catalog), click **DONE** to go back to your program information screen.

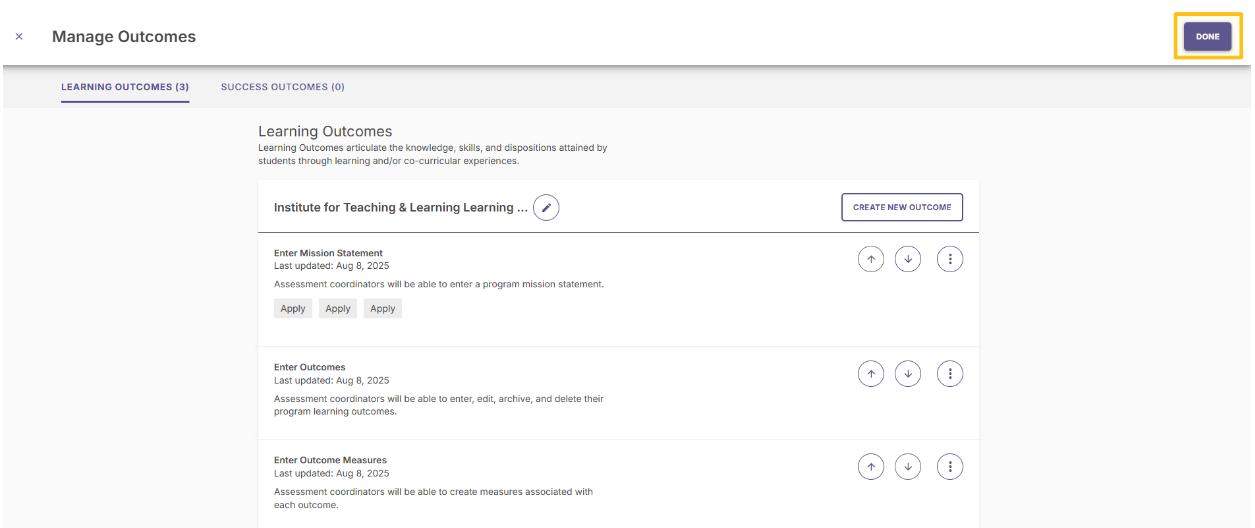


Figure 11

Mapping Learning Outcomes to University Outcomes

While not required, you can align (called Mapping in Watermark) your student learning outcomes to the University Wide Learning Outcomes (UWLO) or other strategic priorities of the University. For this example, we are going to show you how to map a program outcome to a UWLO. To begin mapping, click **EDIT OUTCOME MAP**.

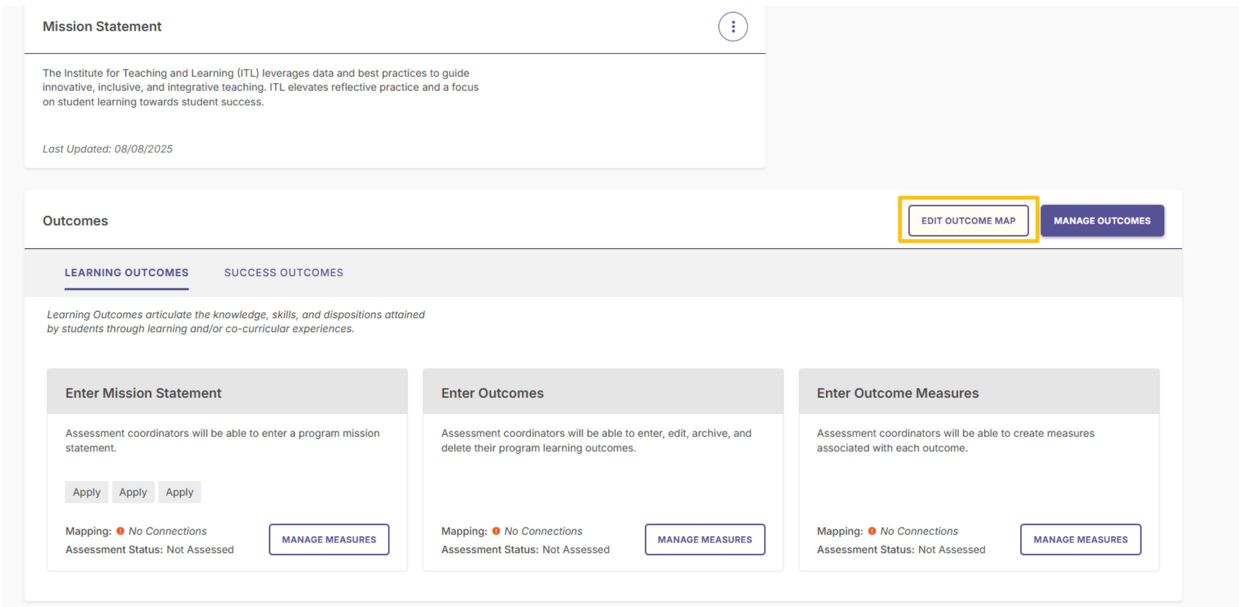


Figure 12

An outcome map screen will pop-up. On the left side of the screen are your program learning outcomes that you previously entered. Along the top are the organizational outcomes that are shared with your program. You cannot edit the organization outcomes available to your program, but if you need something added in this area, please email ysuitl@ysu.edu to request the outcome set.

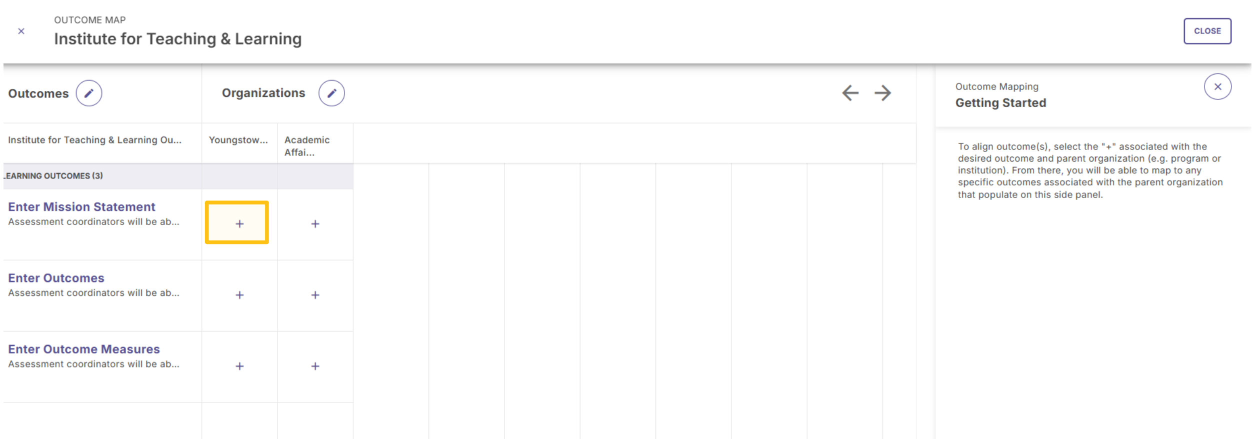


Figure 13

If you click the **+** (plus sign) in any of the boxes on the map, you can create an alignment between a program outcome and an organization outcome. In this example, you are going to click the **+** (plus sign) aligning the first program outcome with the UWLOs. After clicking the **+** (plus sign), a pop-up appears on the right side of the screen that lists your outcome and the organizational outcomes you can align with.

You will need to toggle the “Aligned” option to **YES** to be able to check any of the UWLOs.

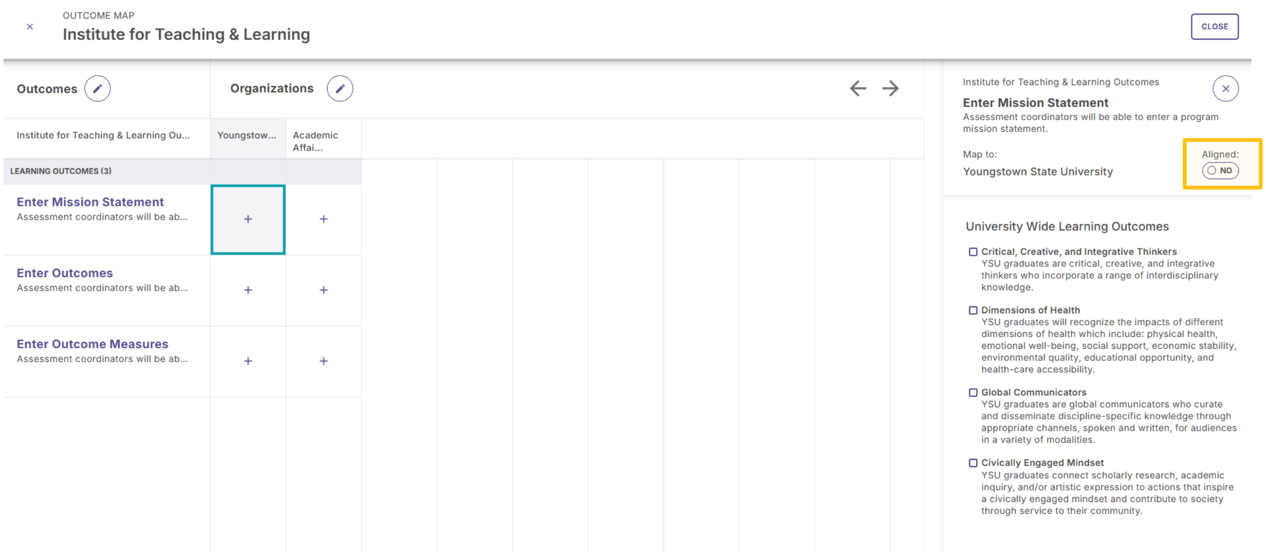


Figure 14

After you toggle alignment to **YES**, you can use the checkbox to align to one or several of the UWLOs by checking the checkbox next to the outcome. After you check the box next to the aligned UWLO(s) a checkmark will auto populate in the main Outcome Map.

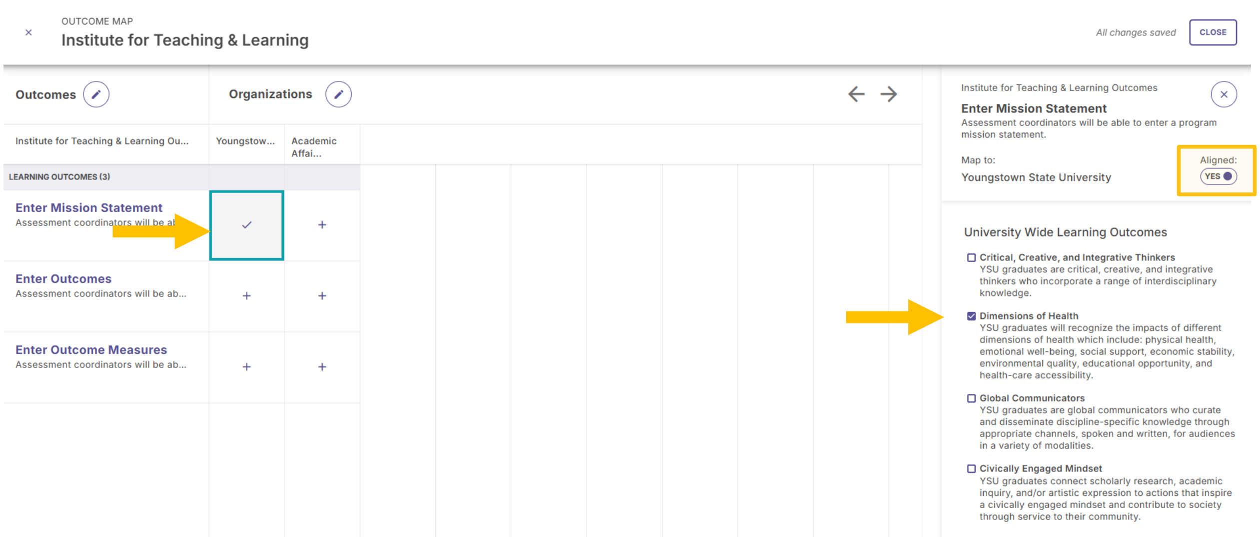


Figure 15

You can continue this mapping process for each of your program learning outcomes.

Adding or Editing a Program Curriculum Map

If you have a curriculum map that already exists as a file, you can upload that in the **Docs & Reports** section of your Program Information. However, this system does provide a user-friendly tool for creating curriculum maps that align courses with measures. Based on accreditation guidance, YSU asks that every program has an updated curriculum map either created in Watermark or uploaded as a file in Docs & Reports that includes all required courses and program learning outcomes. We encourage you to check out the curriculum map feature.

On the Curriculum screen, you will see a list of courses that are associated with your program. This list is based on information available via the YSU Course Catalog. If you are missing courses, please email ysuitl@ysu.edu to request courses be added to your program workspace.

Be sure your program learning outcomes are entered before you build your Curriculum Map! Click **Curriculum** along the left side toolbar, and then click **CREATE NEW MAP**.

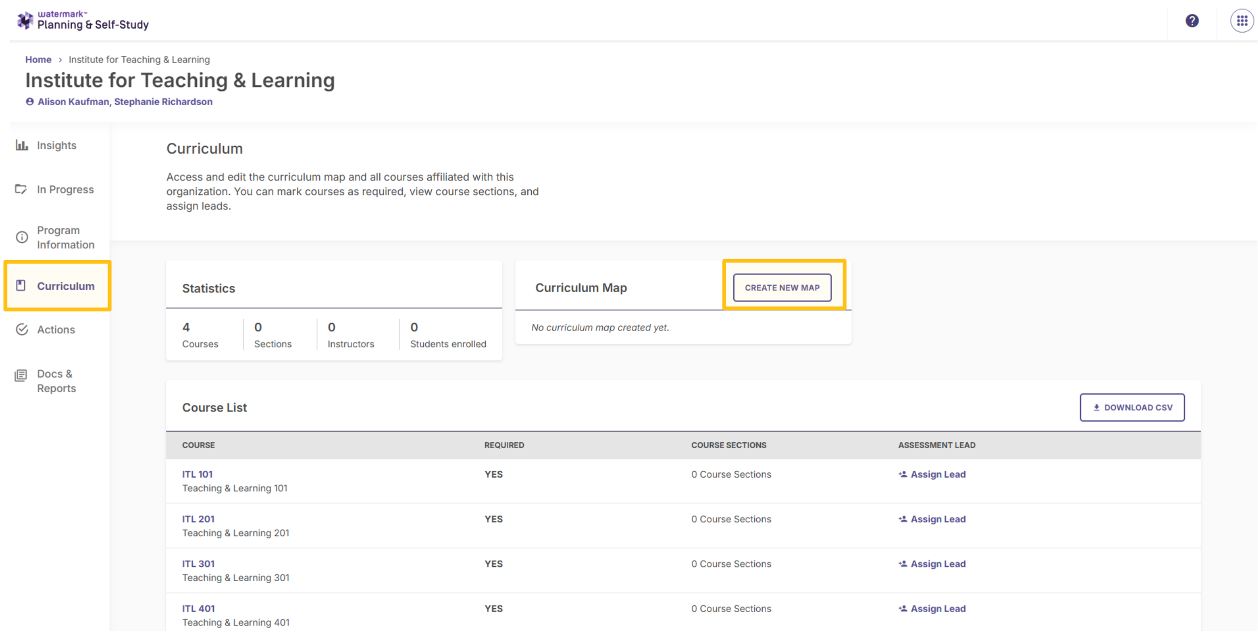


Figure 16

A pop-up window will appear which allows you to build your program Curriculum Map. Along the left side of the screen, you will see the program learning outcomes you entered. Along the top of the screen, you will see a list of courses associated with your program curriculum. If there are courses that are not required and/or a part of your program, click the pencil icon next to courses to delete courses from the map.

Along the bottom of the screen, you will see the Curriculum Map key – you can indicate learning at a Level 1 (Introduce or Know), Level 2 (Reinforce or Apply), or Level 3 (Master or Evaluate). You also have the option to simply use a check mark to indicate alignment without a learning level. You will also see an A icon that indicates an Assessment Activity. In the future, when you enter measures for your learning outcomes, you can link a measure to a specific course. If you make this course link, the A icon will automatically show up on your Curriculum Map.

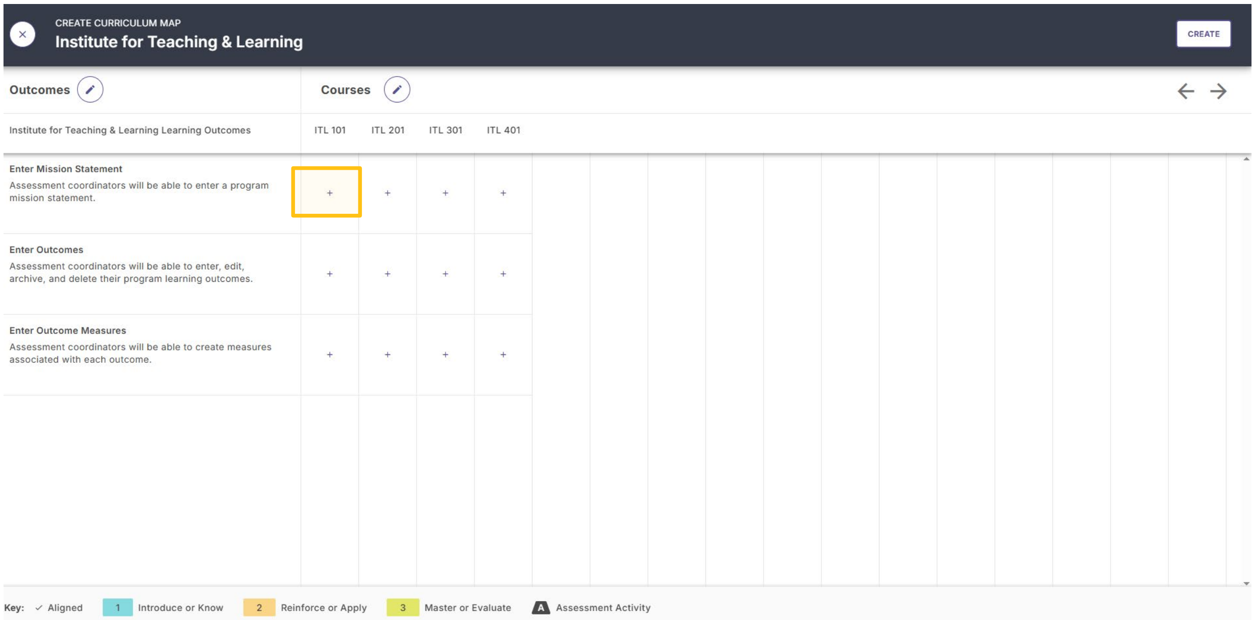


Figure 17

If you click the **+** (plus sign) in any of the boxes on the map, you can create an alignment between a program outcome and a course. In this example, you are going to click the **+** (plus sign) aligning the first program outcome with the ITL 101 course. After clicking the **+** (plus sign), a pop-up appears on the right side of the screen that lists your outcome, the selected course, and then the option to align. Toggle the Alignment button to **YES** and then select the appropriate level of learning by checking the box. You may choose multiple boxes. The level(s) will automatically appear on the map. If you only toggle alignment to **YES**, and do not check a level, then the checkmark will appear on the map.

Just a note, you see the option to ADD MEASURE on this pop-up screen. While you can add measures here, it is easier to add measures from the Manage Outcomes screen, so we recommend adding measures after you build your curriculum map. However, wherever you choose to add your course-based measures, they will appear across the entire system.

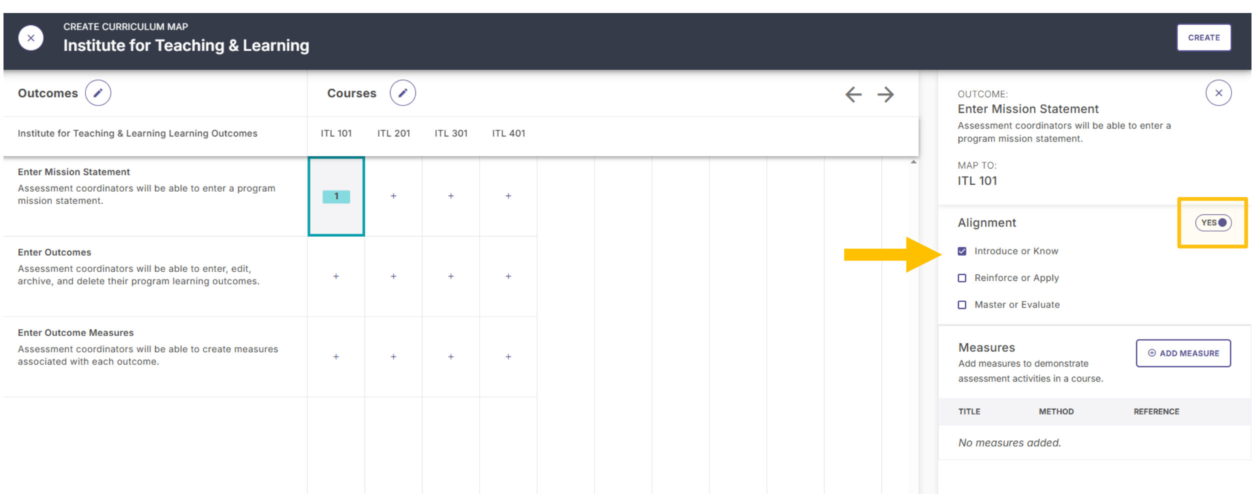


Figure 18

You can continue aligning outcomes with courses by clicking on the respective **+** (plus signs) and following the same process. When you are finished, click **CREATE**. This will bring you back to the Curriculum screen. At any point, you can re-enter your Curriculum Map to make updates. Also note, as you add any course-based measures, the “Assessment Activity” symbol will appear on your map.

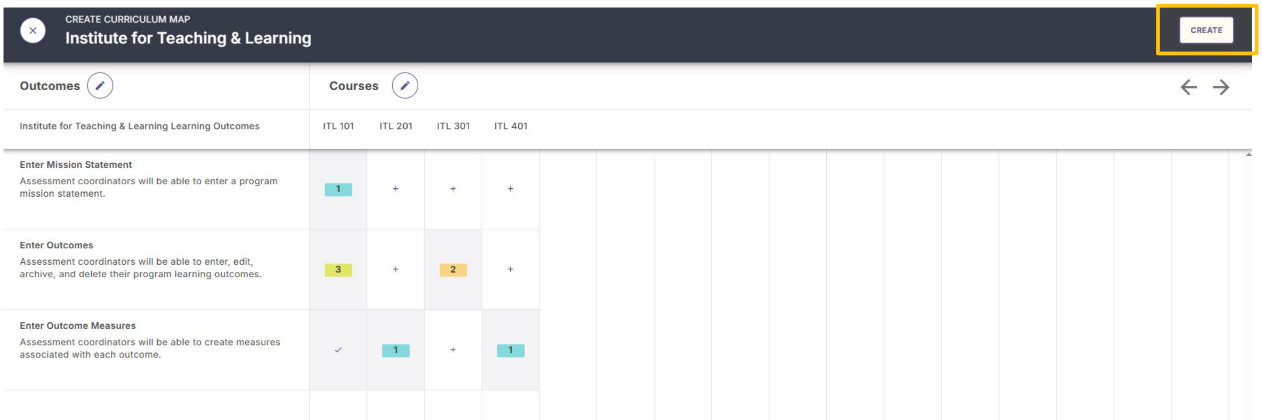


Figure 19

Adding or Editing Assessment Measures

The central way to add and manage assessment measures is via Program Information. There are several other ways to add measures, such as directly in the curriculum map or when you are annually reporting data (which is great for flexibility and when things change!), but our guidance is to start by first adding measures in this central location, **Program Information**.

Measures are associated with an outcome and can be added to any specific outcome by clicking **MANAGE MEASURES**.

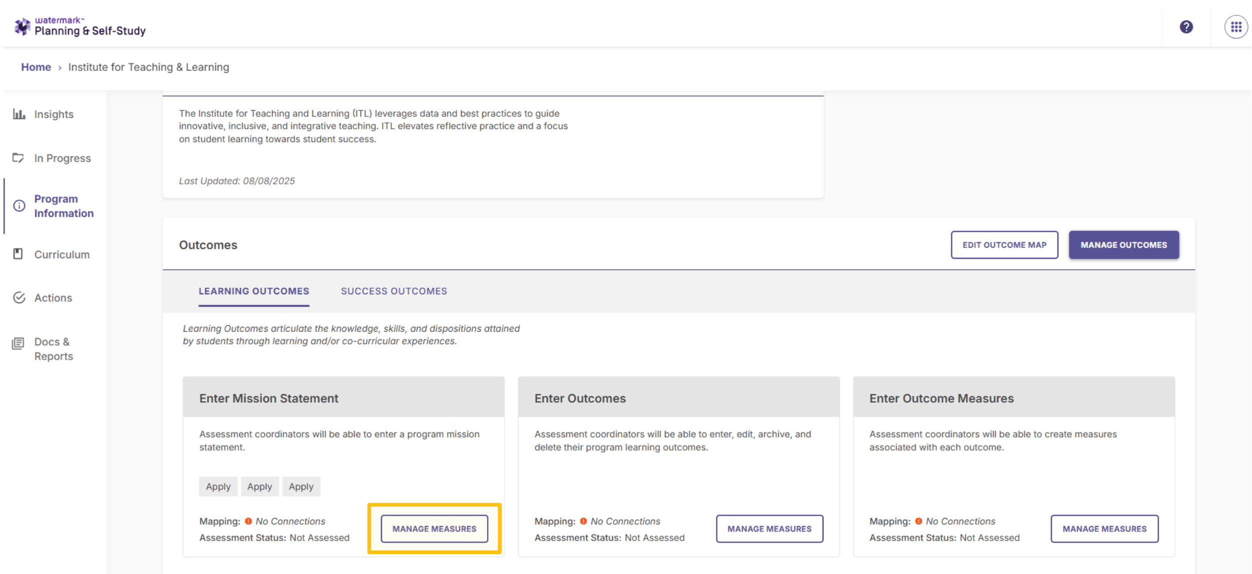


Figure 20

Click **CREATE NEW MEASURE** to add your first measure for the selected outcome. Just a reminder, measures are directly linked to an individual outcome. If you have a measure that repeats, you'll need to enter that measure again for a different outcome.

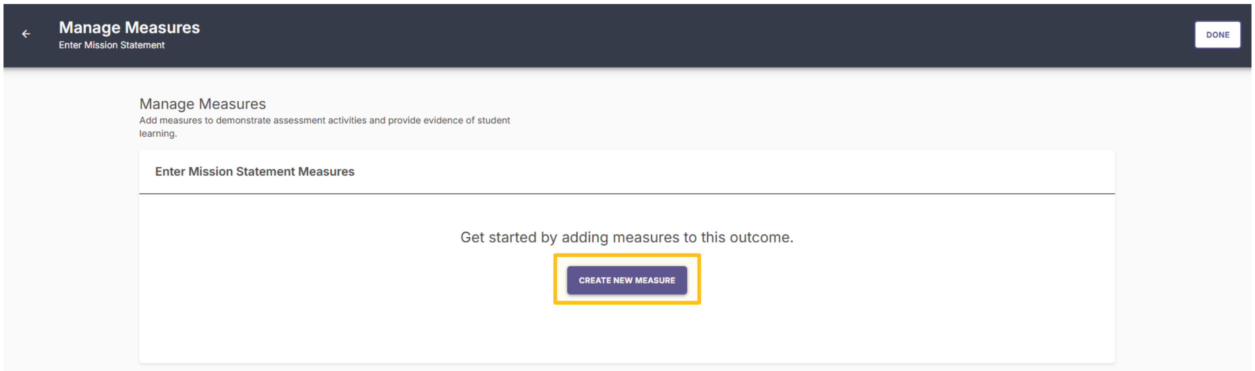


Figure 21

A pop-up window will appear for you to enter your measure. First give your measure a short title in the **Title** textbox. Next use the **Method** dropdown to identify your measure type. Here is a quick refresher on measure types:

- *Direct measures* are methods for assessing actual samples of student work to provide evidence of student performance relative to the outcome (for example, an exam or graded presentation).
- *Indirect measures* are methods for assessing information on student learning that do not rely on actual samples of student work (for example, self-reported survey data from an exit survey).

We recommend having at least two measures per outcome, with at minimum one of those measures being a direct measure.

After you select your **Method** type, enter a **Description** of your measure. This does not need to be long but should provide additional context with the **Title** textbox.

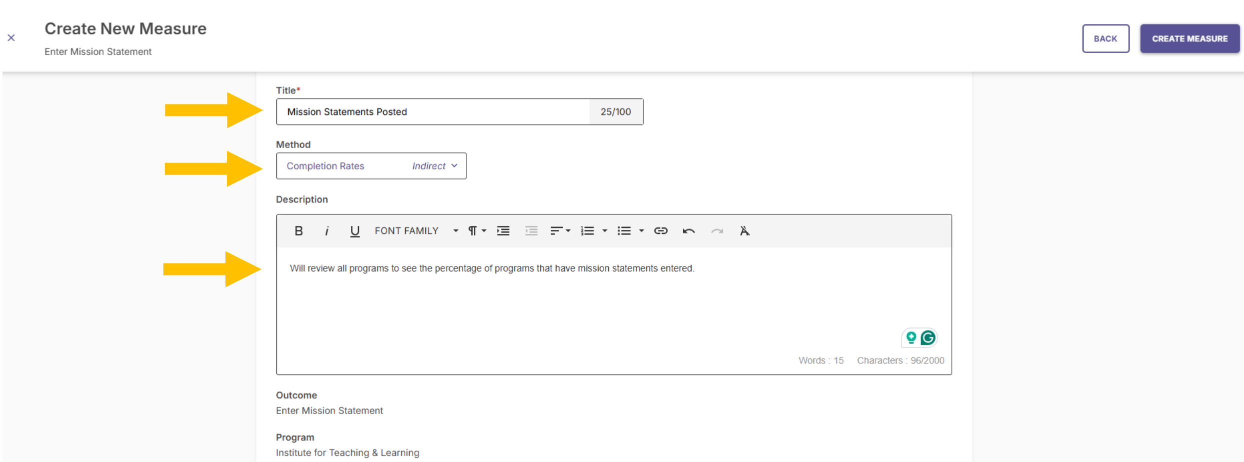


Figure 22

If your measure is associated with a specific course, you can select that course here. By selecting a course, the Assessment Activity icon will show up on your curriculum map. If your measure is not course based (such as an exit survey), click the checkbox that says, “This is a non-course-based measure.”

Enter your **Target** performance level (if you have one). You may also include any attachments, such as rubrics or tools that would support your measure by clicking **ATTACH FILES**.

You do not need to do anything in the Alignments section. Eventually this system will be connected to Blackboard and this section will be relevant, but for now you are done adding your measure. Click **CREATE MEASURE** to finish.

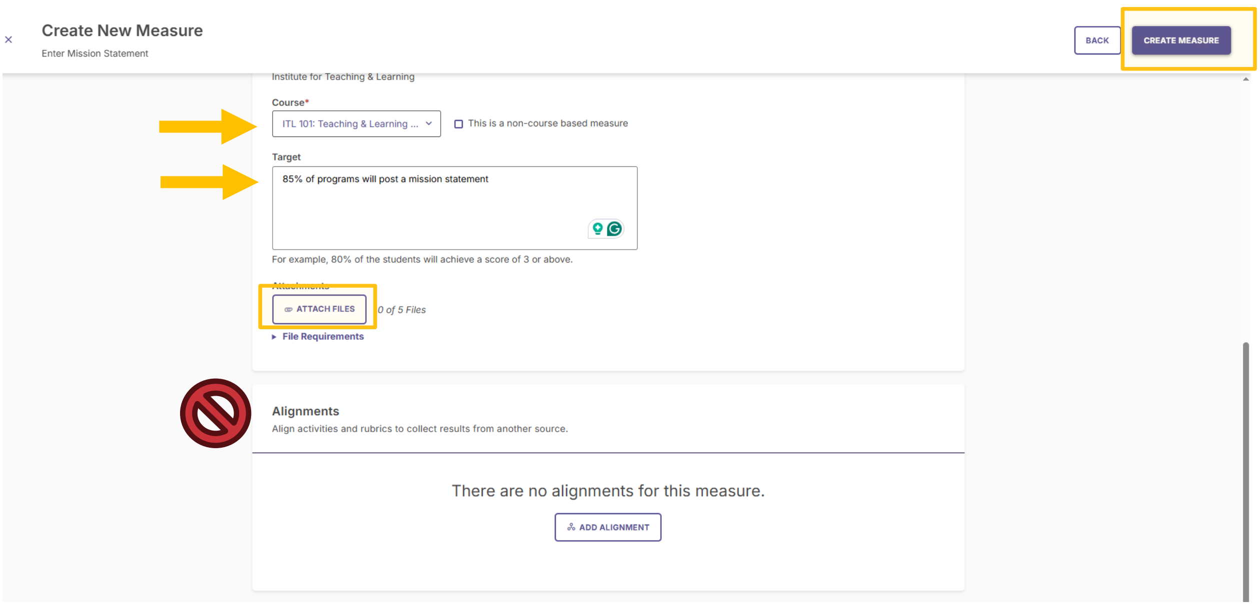


Figure 23

The measure you just added will show up under the selected outcome. If you click on the title of the measure, you can go in and make any desired edits or delete your measure. To add your second measure, click **CREATE NEW MEASURE**.

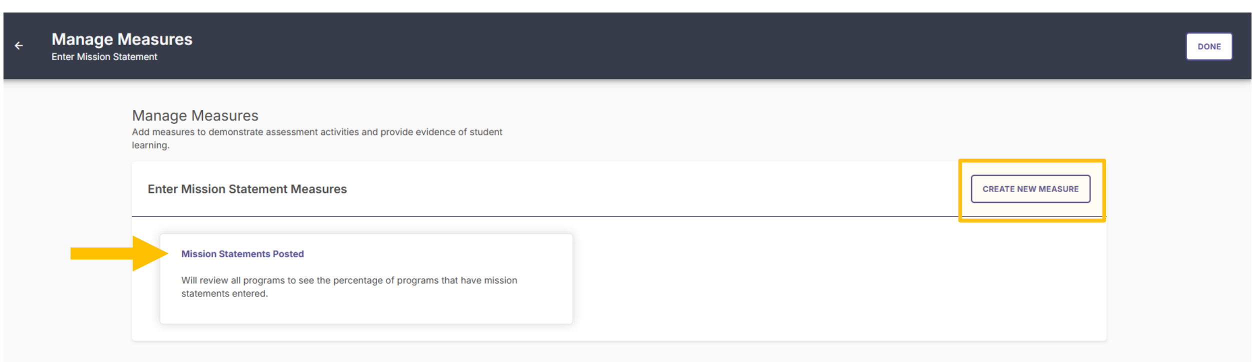


Figure 24

After adding an additional measure, the measures will show up as tiles listed under the outcome. This is the central location for adding measures, but in future reporting years, you will be able to add, edit, or delete measures directly from your reporting screen. When you are finished entering all your planned measures, click **DONE** to be brought back to your main program information screen.

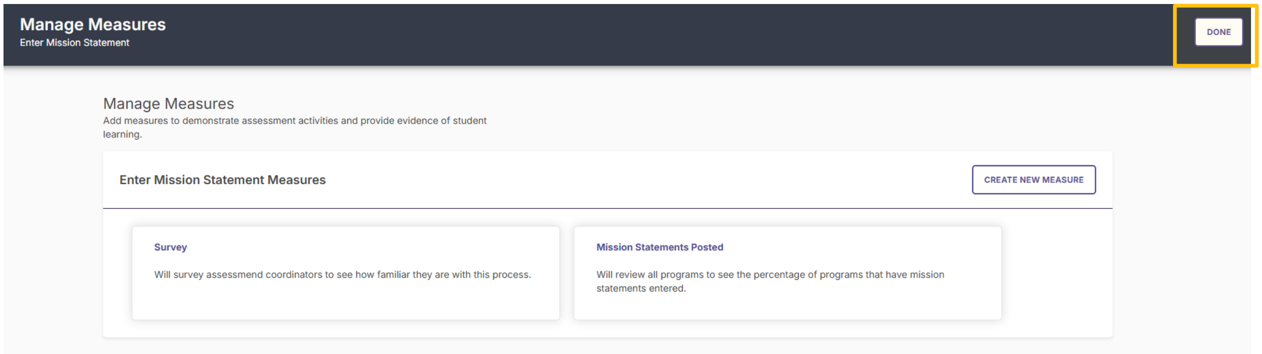


Figure 25

Reporting Program Assessment Data

When you are ready to enter data and complete your annual assessment report, you are going to log in to Planning & Self-Study. On your home screen, you will see a section that says, "Projects in Progress" and a clickable link that says Academic Assessment Reporting. By clicking that link you will enter your annual reporting space.

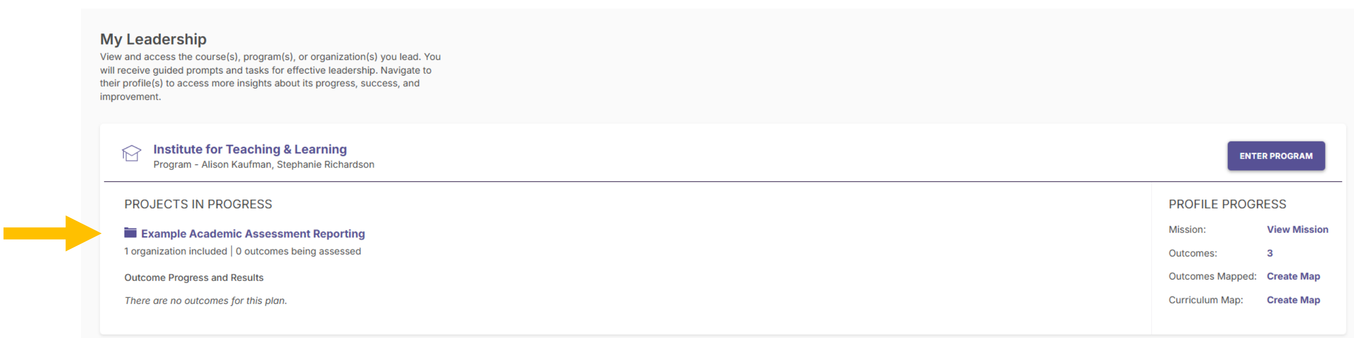


Figure 26

You can also enter your annual reporting, by clicking **ENTER PROGRAM** and navigating to the In Progress tab on the left side toolbar and clicking the Academic Assessment Reporting link.

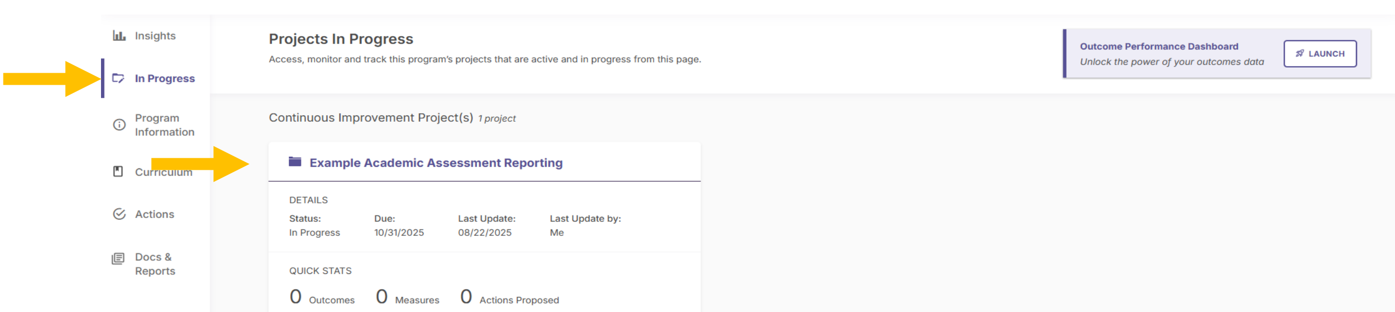


Figure 27

After clicking into the Academic Assessment Reporting space, you will first need to select the outcome or outcomes you plan to report on in the current year cycle. Click **SELECT OUTCOMES**.

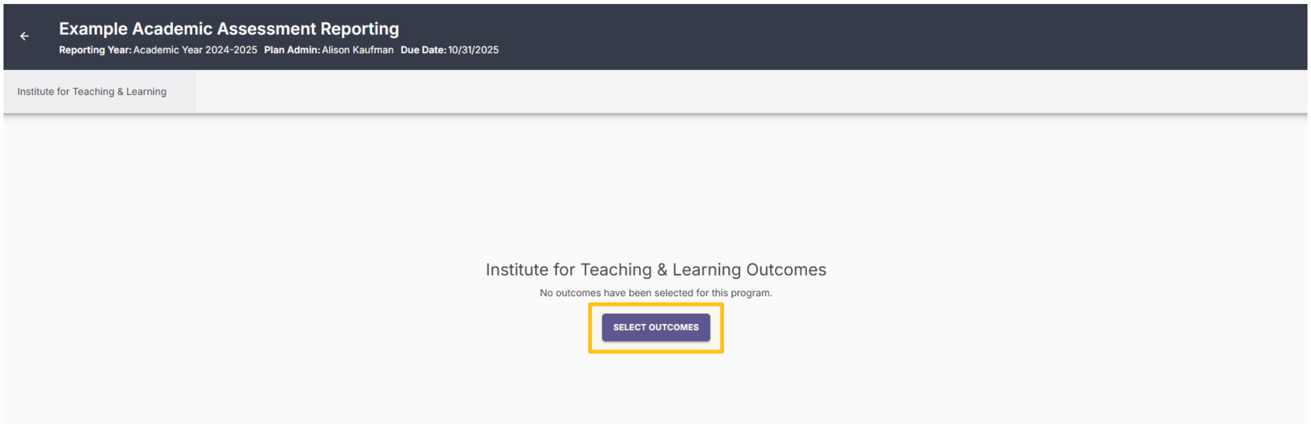


Figure 28

A pop-up window will appear that includes the learning outcomes associated with your program. All the program learning outcomes should be included, but if they are not, you can click **CREATE NEW OUTCOME** to add a program outcome. The three dots next to each outcome also allow you to edit if small changes are needed.

Use the checkbox on the left side of our outcome to select the learning outcome you want to report on for this year's reporting. Typically, programs select 1-2 outcomes to report data annually for institutional reporting. After selecting your outcome(s) click **APPLY SELECTION**.

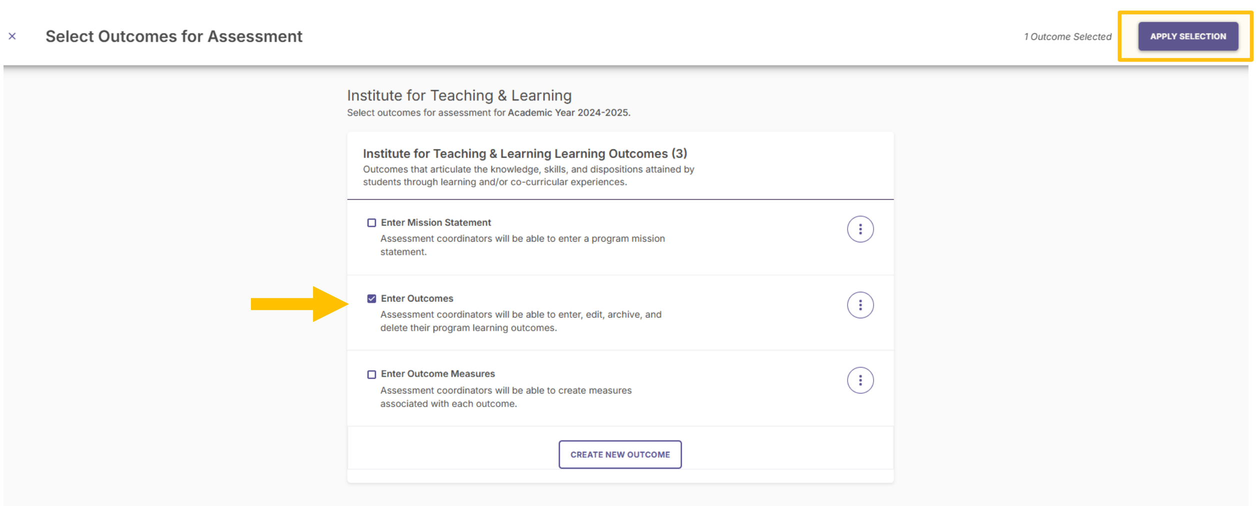


Figure 29

After selecting your outcome(s), any measures you have associated with that outcome(s) will appear on your screen. If you need to edit or delete the measure, click the three dots to make any changes. You can also click the **+ New Measure** box to add additional measures. If your measures look correct, click **ADD RESULTS** to begin entering your data/findings.

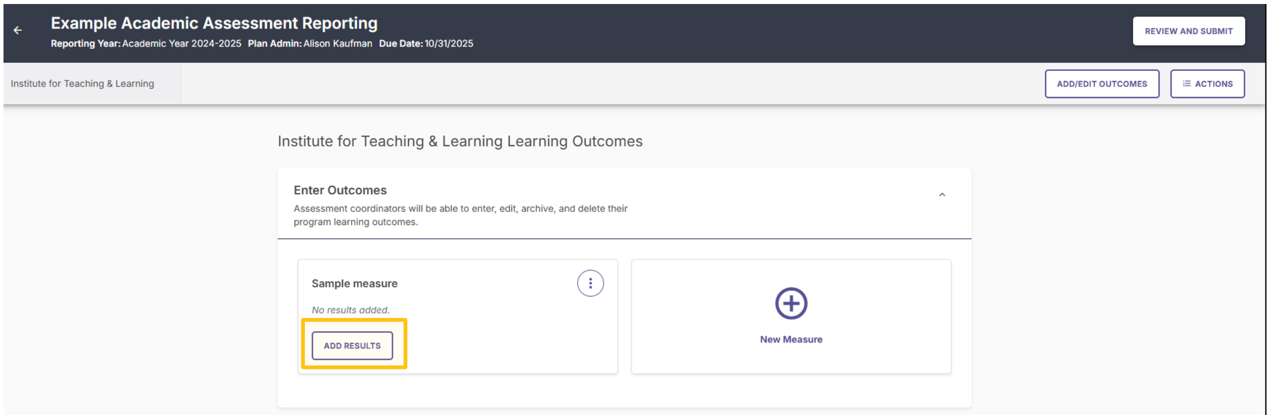


Figure 30

Two additional features on the screen:

- If you need to change the outcomes you selected for reporting, click the **ADD/EDIT OUTCOMES** button.
- If you click the **ACTIONS** button, you will see a pop-up on the right side of the screen with any previous Action Steps that have been associated with this learning outcome. This is a great way to monitor progress!

Click, **ADD RESULTS** after you are finished working on the measures screen to add findings for a specific measure.

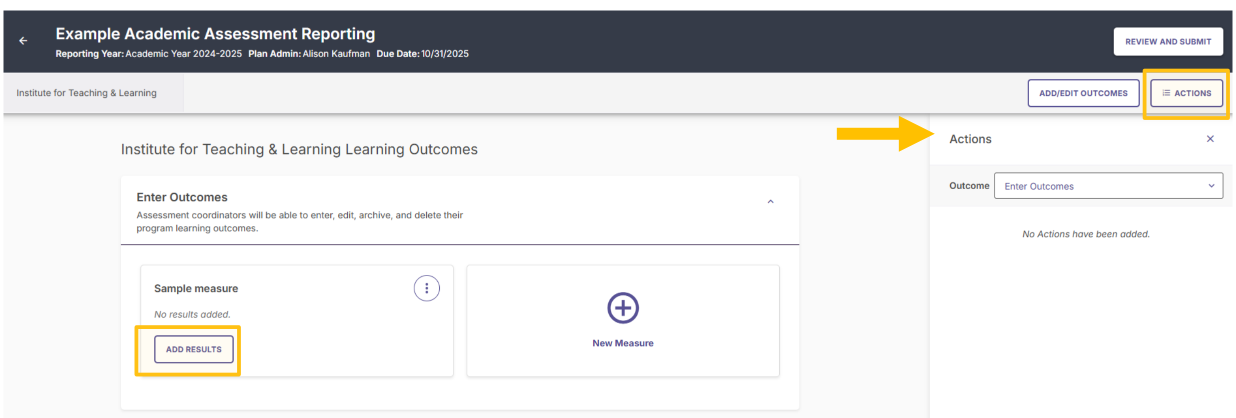


Figure 31

Adding Results, Data, Findings, and Action Items

There are three different ways to add student learning data to a measure. We are currently going to focus on two different ways to add your results. A third way, "Collecting Results from Another System" will launch as an option in future reporting as we complete integration between this system and the Blackboard Learning Management System.

After you click the ADD RESULTS button on your measure screen, your measure will pop-up in a new window and allow you first to make any edits. You can first make slight edits to your outcome if needed, **then scroll down your screen to the Results header.**

The first option for adding results is the most like YSU's former assessment reporting system. Click "**Upload results and write a summary**."

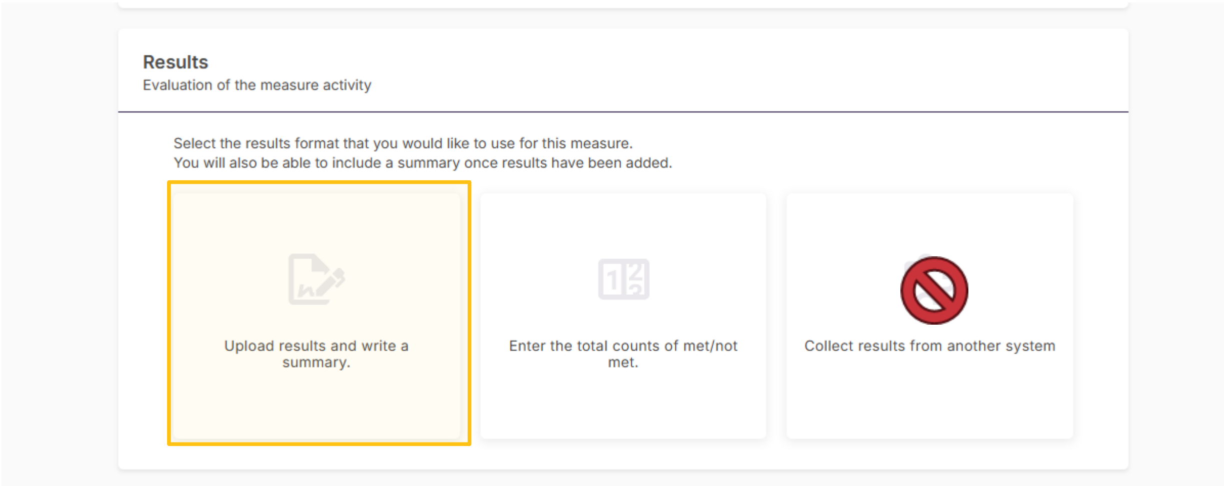


Figure 32

A Results screen will pop-up. You can attach any relevant files (e.g., a spreadsheet of rubric results or mean scores from an exit survey) from your desktop by clicking **ATTACH FILES**. In the **Summary of Results** textbox, please provide a summary of your attachment(s) and explain your findings related to the measure. Be sure to provide clear explanation to your attachments, as the reviewer looking at your submission may not be familiar with your discipline.

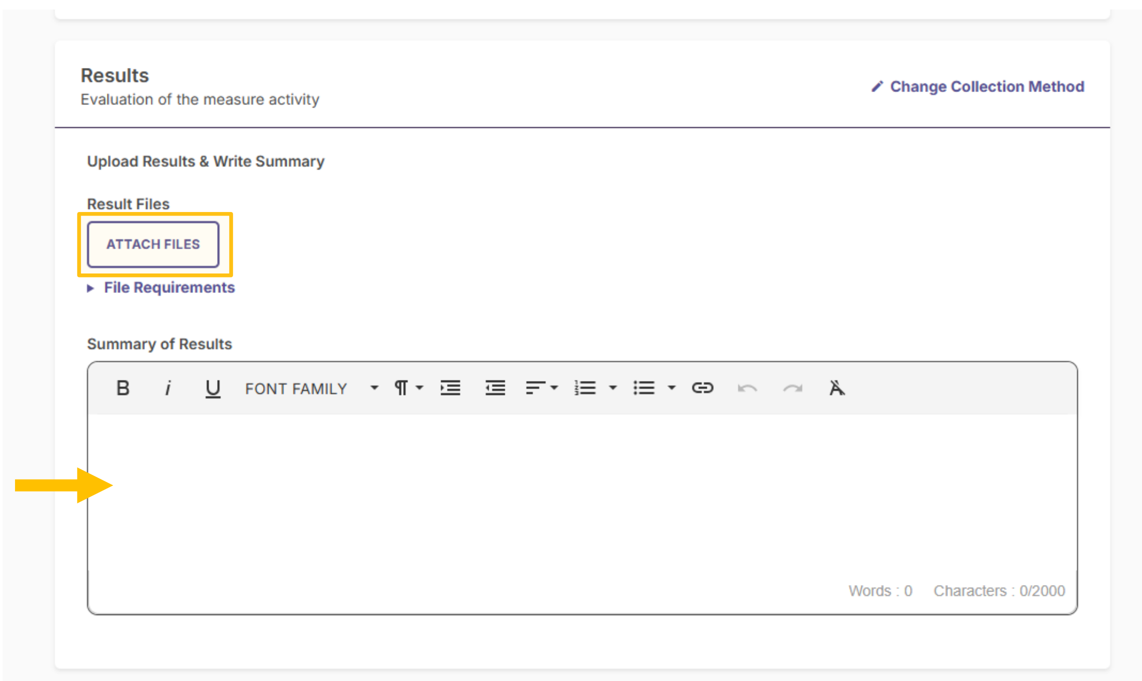


Figure 33

In the upper right corner of the screen, is a pencil icon and link that says, "**Change Collection Method**." Click that link if you'd prefer to toggle to a different option for inputting your results.

Rather than attaching a file of student data related to a measure, you can also choose to manually enter the counts of students who met, almost met, and did not meet the criteria for a specific measure. To do so, click the box that says, "**Enter the total counts of met/not met**."

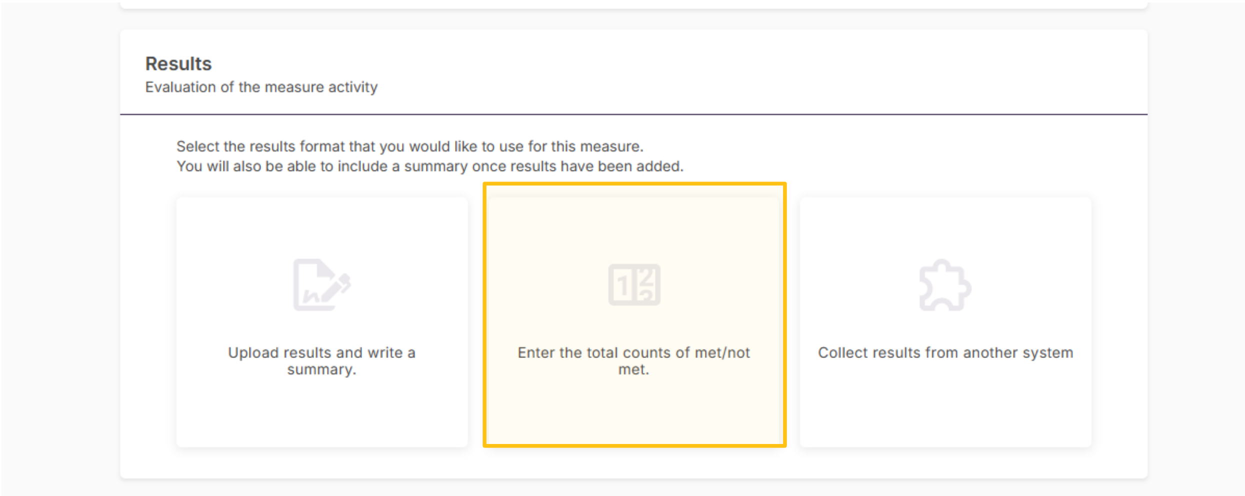


Figure 34

Manually enter the number of students who met, approached, and did not meet the measure. Then click, **VIEW RESULTS**.

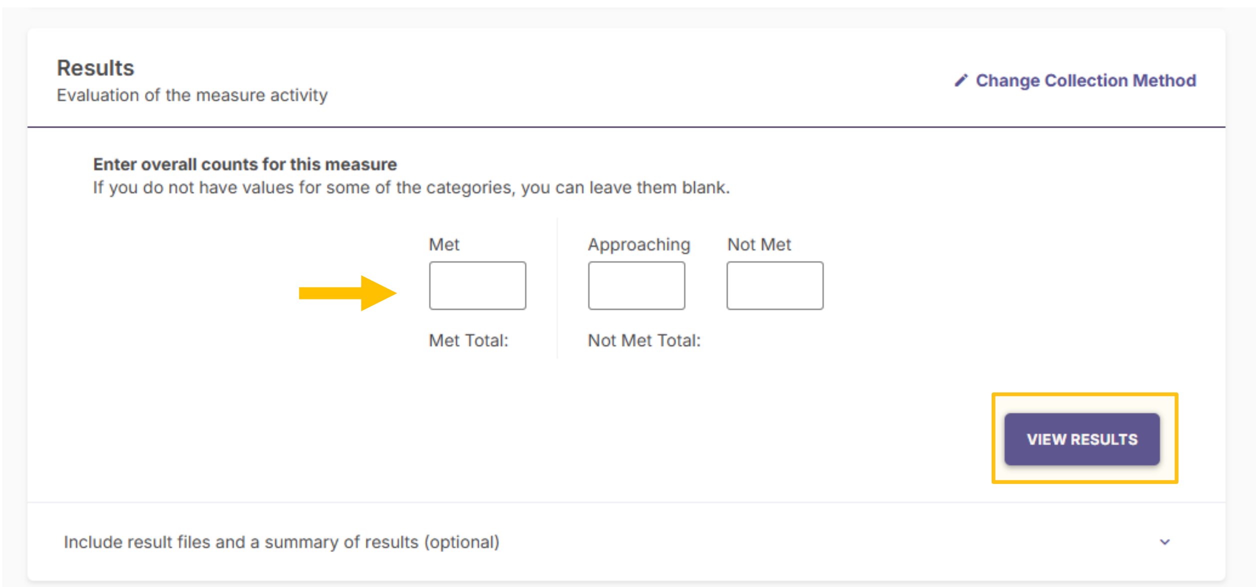


Figure 35

After clicking **VIEW RESULTS**, and chart will generate to show your results as related to a specific measure.

You can also optionally include any additional files and a summary of results to this section as well using the dropdown arrow at the bottom of the pop-up.

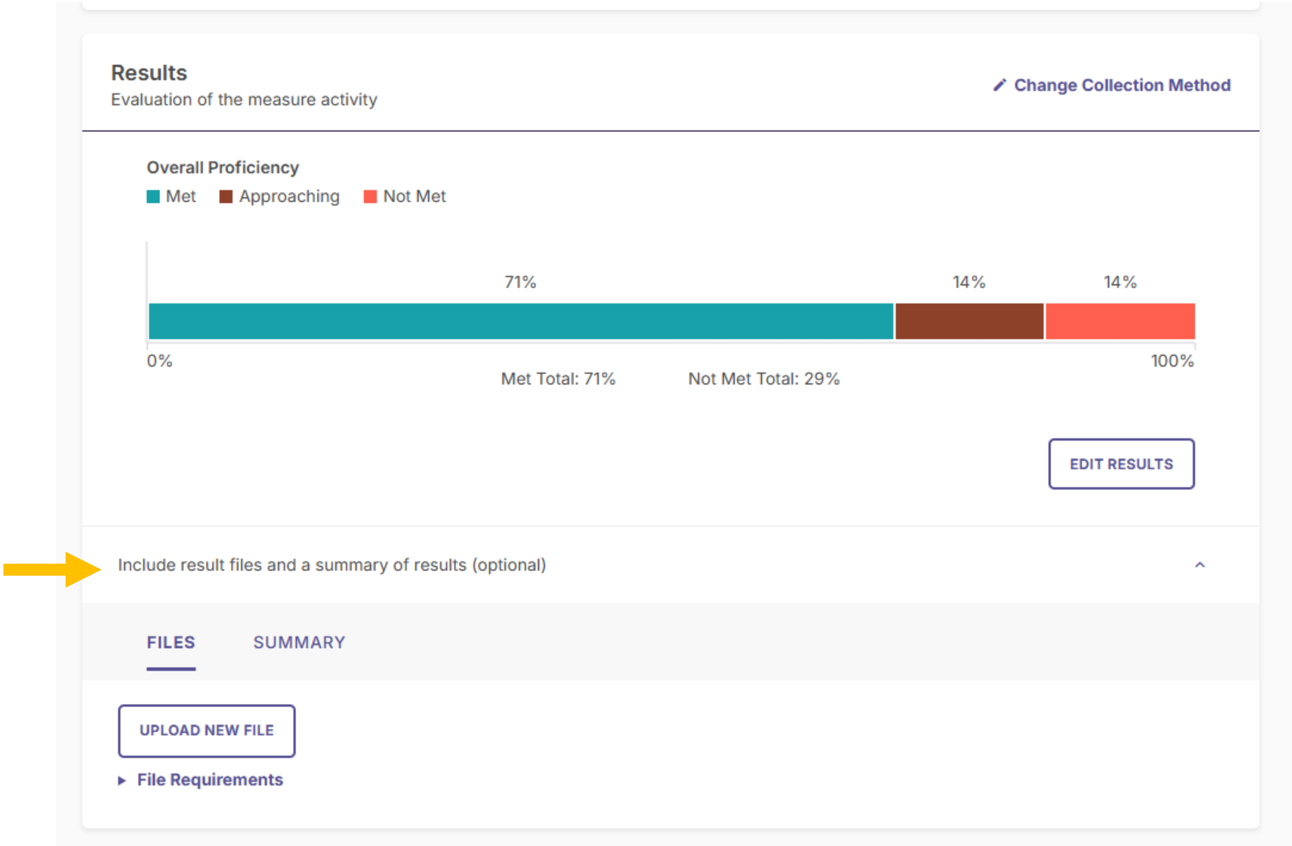


Figure 36

Regardless of how you enter your results, when you have finished adding student learning data/results, scroll down to the **Findings** section. You can click **PAST FINDINGS** to see information that has been entered in the past.

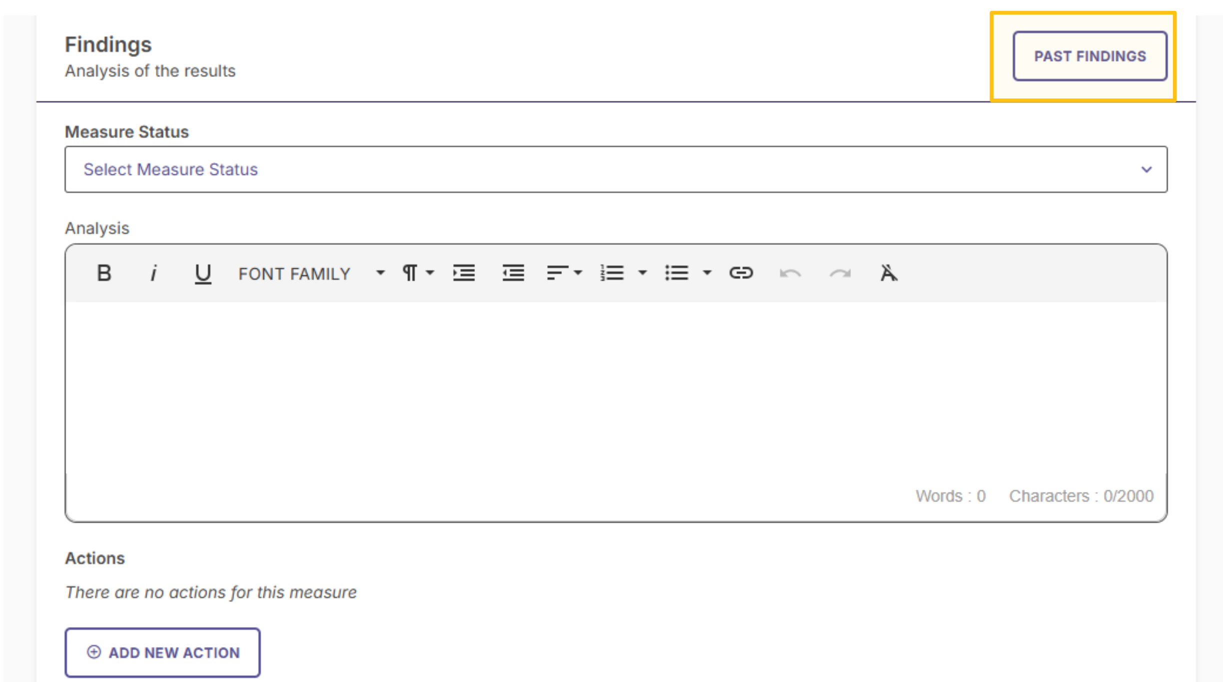


Figure 37

Any past findings will pop up in a side bar. You'll note that this is the first time I am adding information to this measure, so no past findings are listed. Click the **X** to close Past Findings.

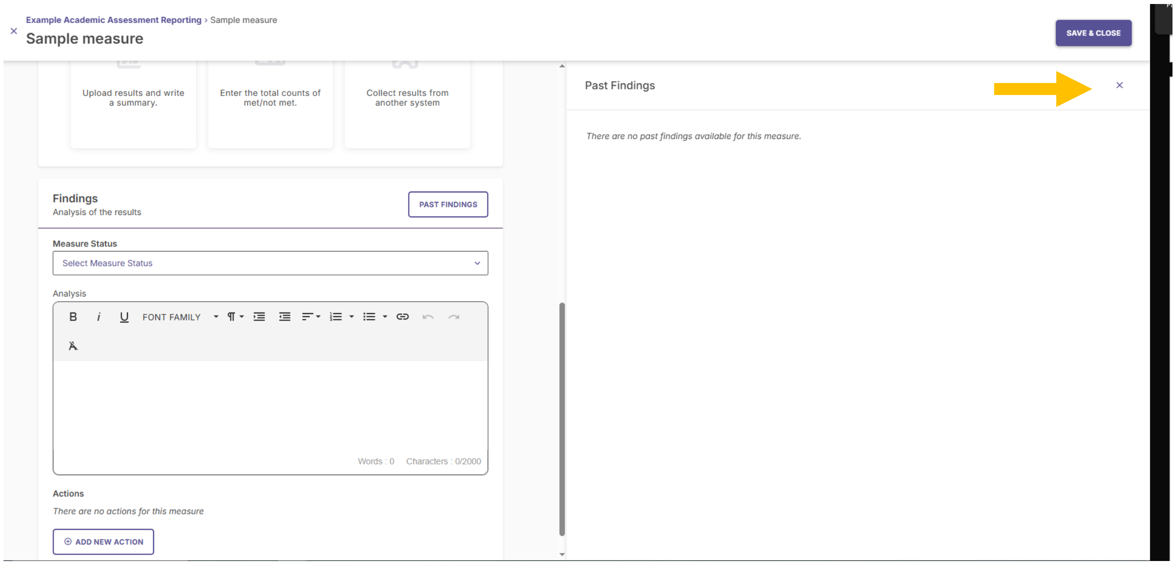


Figure 38

Click the **Measure Status** dropdown to select your status for the measure. Note, this is a status for the specific measure, not the outcome overall. You'll have a chance to do that in a later step. Write in any additional analysis you need to explain your measure status. This does not need to be long but should provide any additional details or information needed to help understand your results and status selection.

Click **ADD NEW ACTION** to add an action step based on your measure findings.

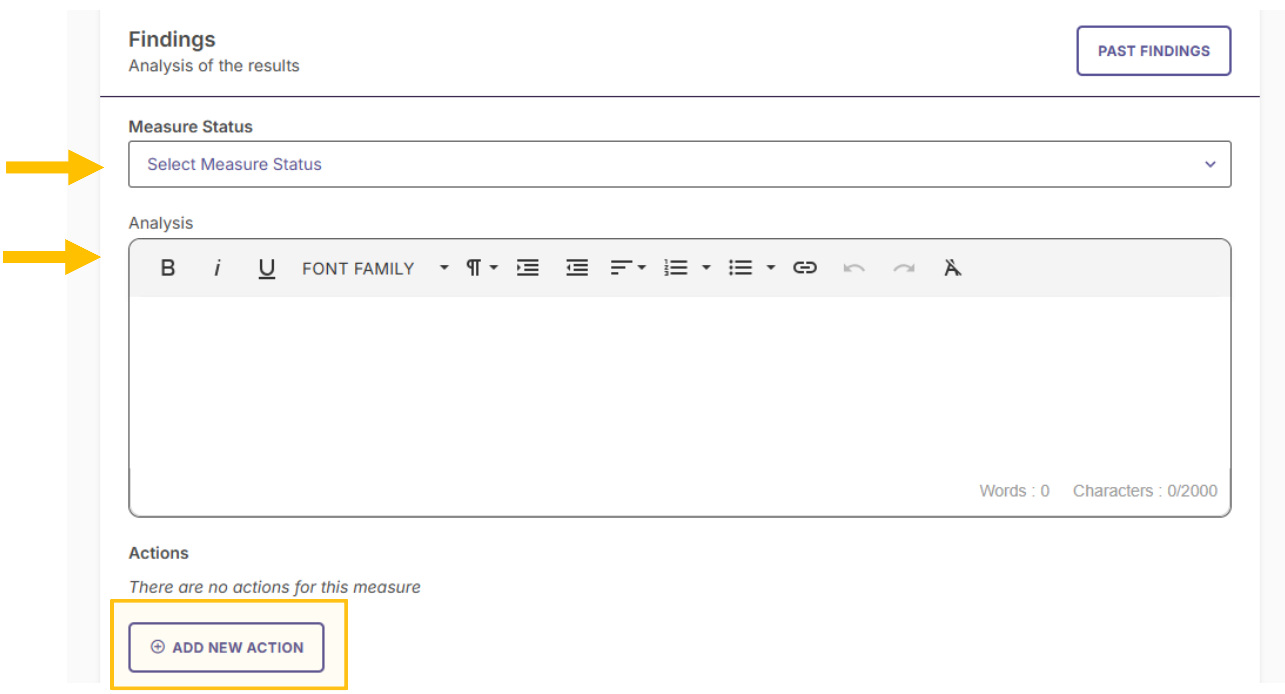


Figure 39

An Add New Action pop up will appear on the side of the screen with a list of action types. Selection the action type that most aligns with what you plan to do based on your data. Click **CREATE ACTION**.

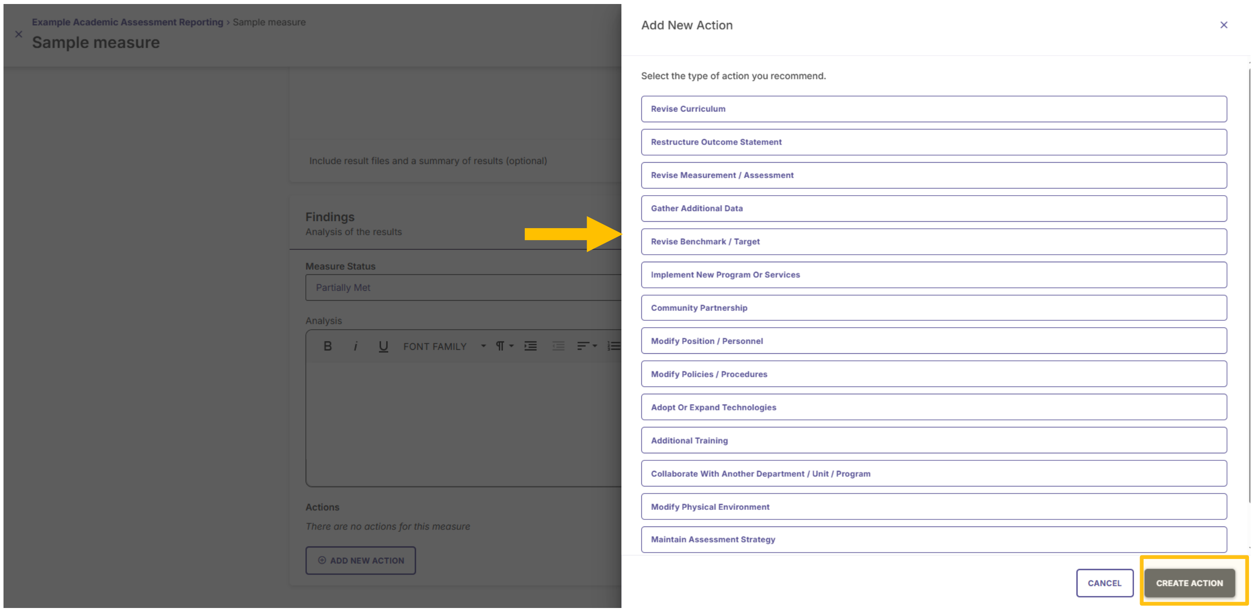


Figure 40

Use the Status dropdown to select the status of the action. In addition to updating action items in this area, you will be able to view all action steps and track any updates to the action item status through the Program Information area of Planning & Self-Study. Use the textbox to describe your action. If you have a recommended due date, you can also add that. Click **CREATE ACTION**.

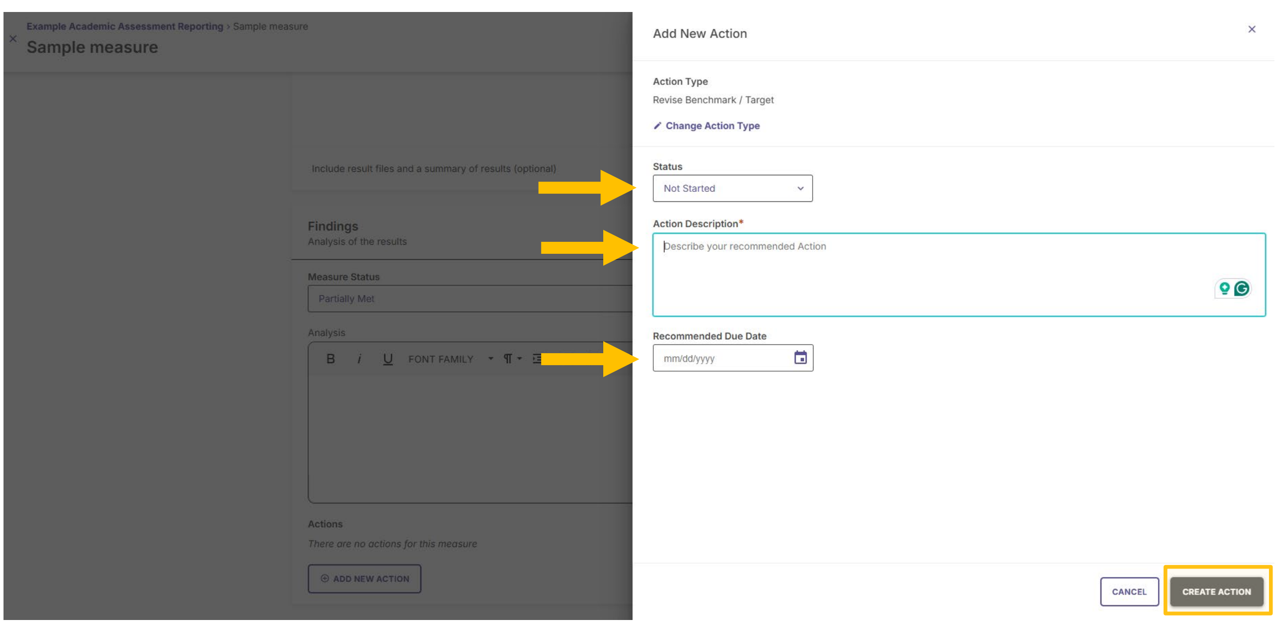


Figure 41

Your action item is now added and associated with the findings from this specific measure. You can add additional action steps by clicking **ADD NEW ACTION**.

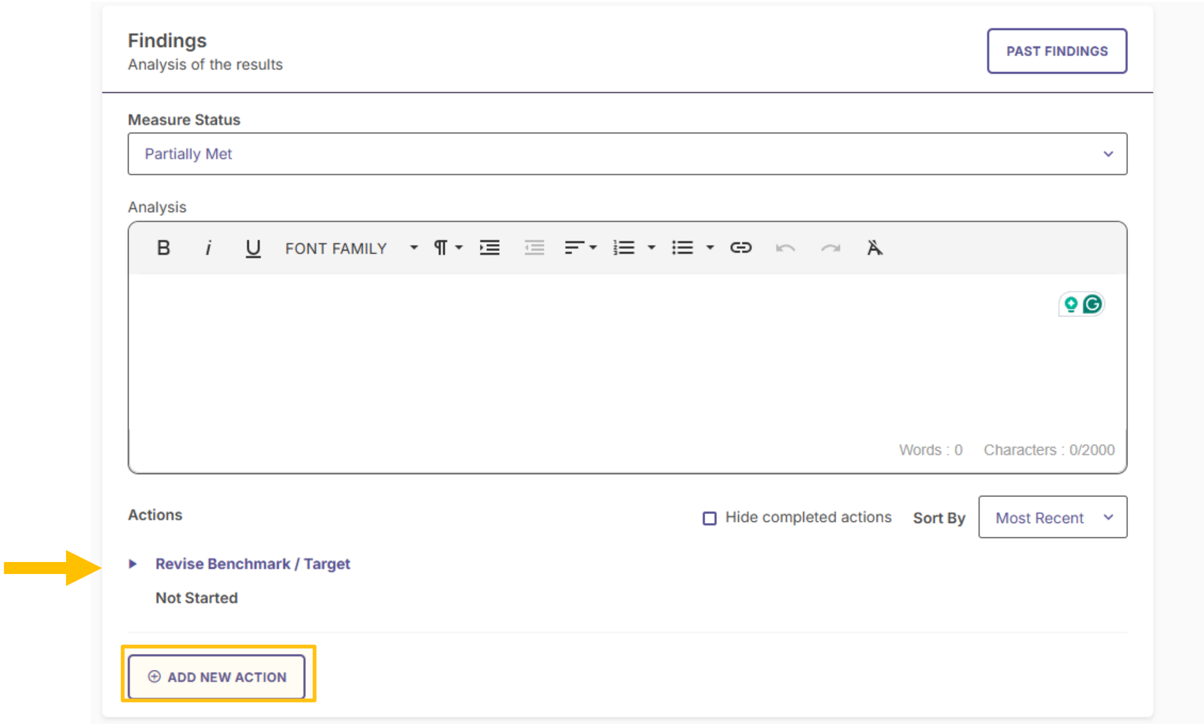


Figure 42

When you are finished adding results, findings, and action items, click **SAVE & CLOSE.**

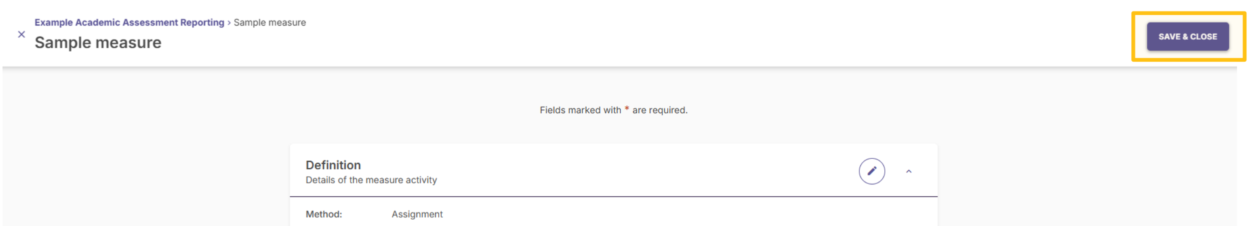


Figure 43

You will be directed back to the outcome screen. For your additional outcome measures, follow the same steps to add additional data, findings, and action steps. After you've entered all your measure data, click **ANALYZE OUTCOME**.

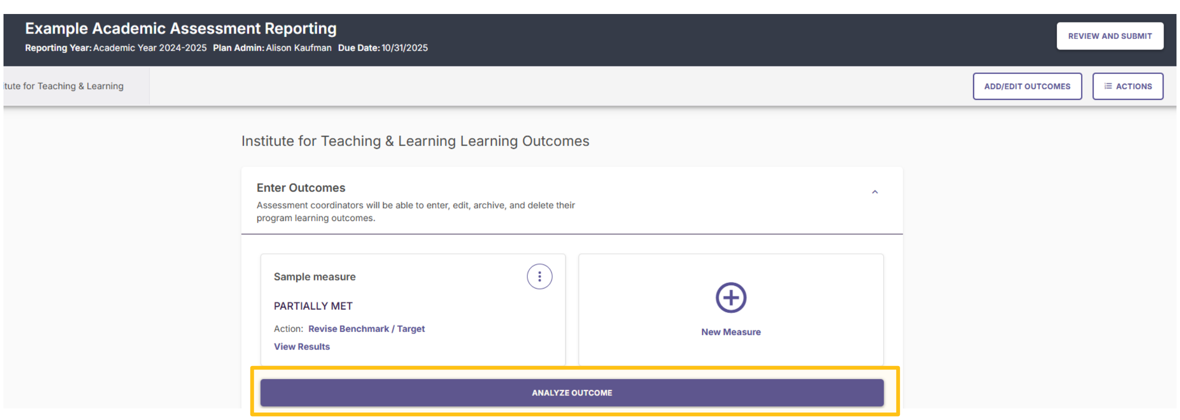


Figure 44

Based on the data across ALL your measures for the outcome, write a short **Outcome Analysis**. Next, select an **Outcome Status** from the dropdown. Finally, if you have any action steps at the outcome level rather than the measure level, add them here by clicking **ADD NEW ACTION**. Save and close this screen.

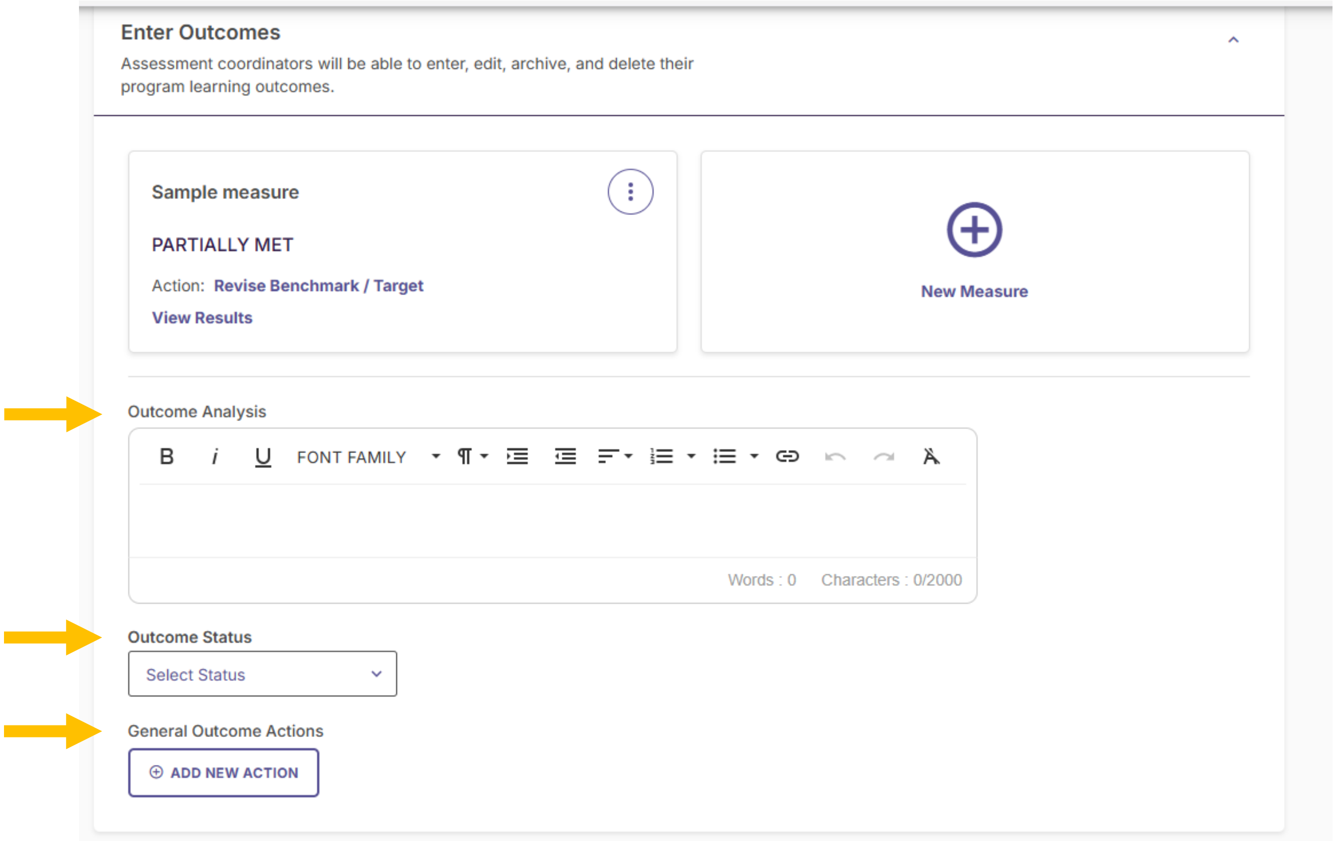


Figure 45

Submitting and Sharing a Report

After you've entered all the measure and outcome data, click **REVIEW AND SUBMIT**.

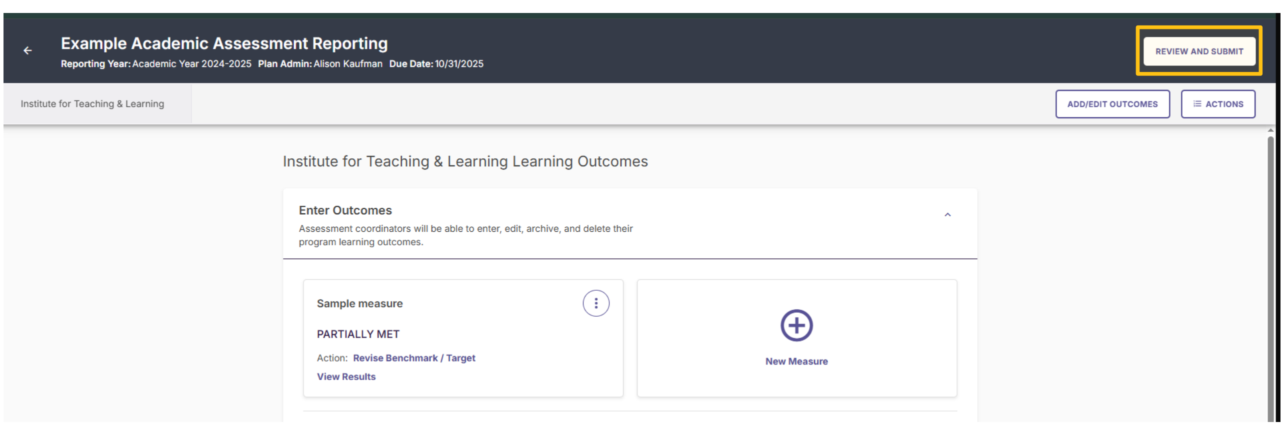


Figure 46

You will be directed to a screen where you can review your assessment report. You can also download the report as a PDF for access outside of the Planning & Self-Study system.

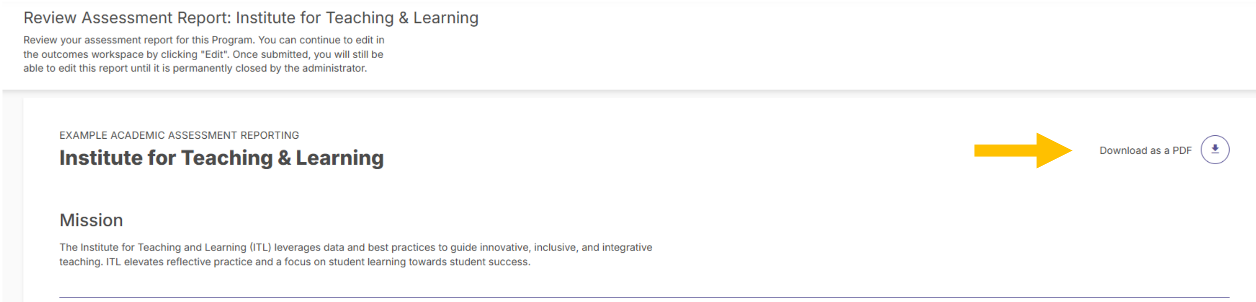


Figure 47

Your report is organized around outcomes that align your measures with results and action items.

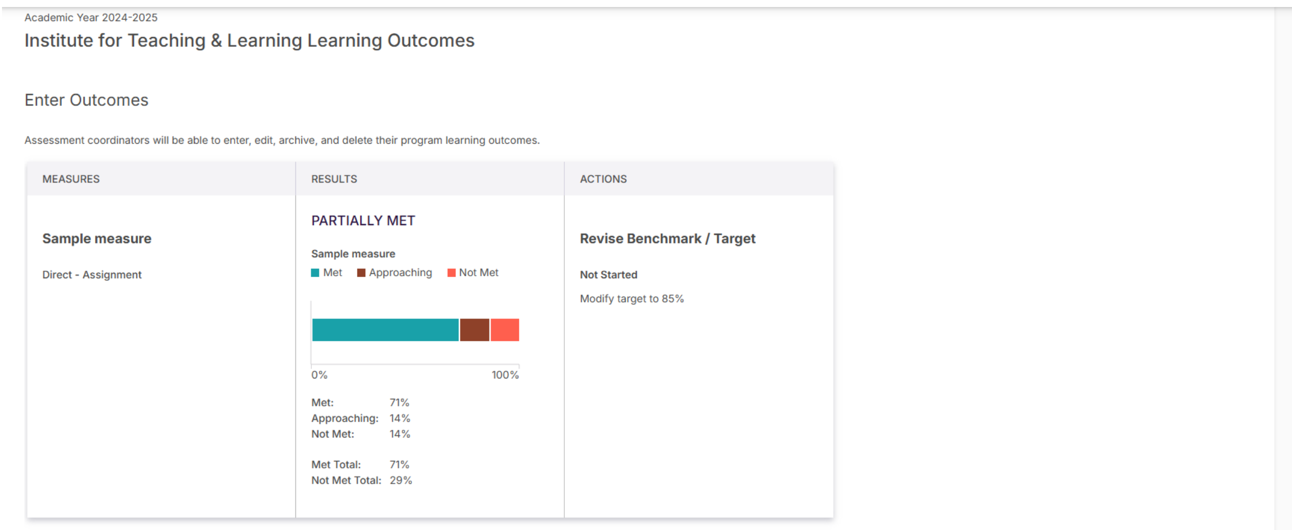


Figure 48

After reviewing your report, if you have any changes click EDIT. If you are satisfied with the information included, click **SUBMIT**.

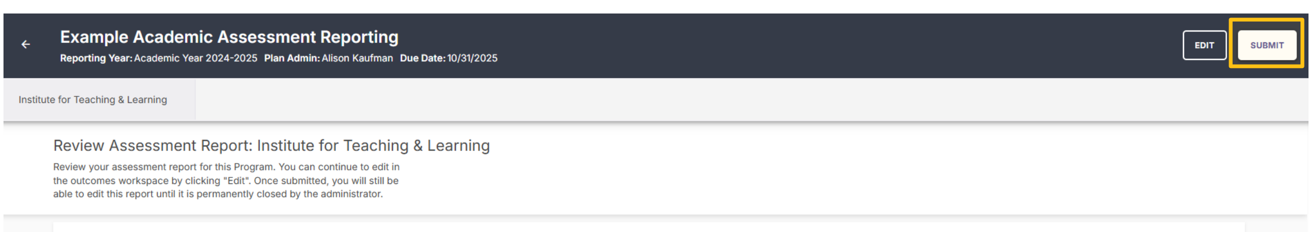


Figure 49

There is an additional feature that may be of use to some users/programs in this area. After you submit your report, you can leave comments related to the report. Click the comment icon and then enter a comment in the textbox. If you utilize the **@** symbol, you can notify another user of the comment. For example, “@NAME, this report if ready for your review.” After you type your comment, click **SAVE COMMENT**.

Until your submission is formally reviewed, you can go back in and edit anything. After editing, the last date updates. You can use the comments to note your updates. Assessment is a continuous improvement process; it is okay to go in and update information.

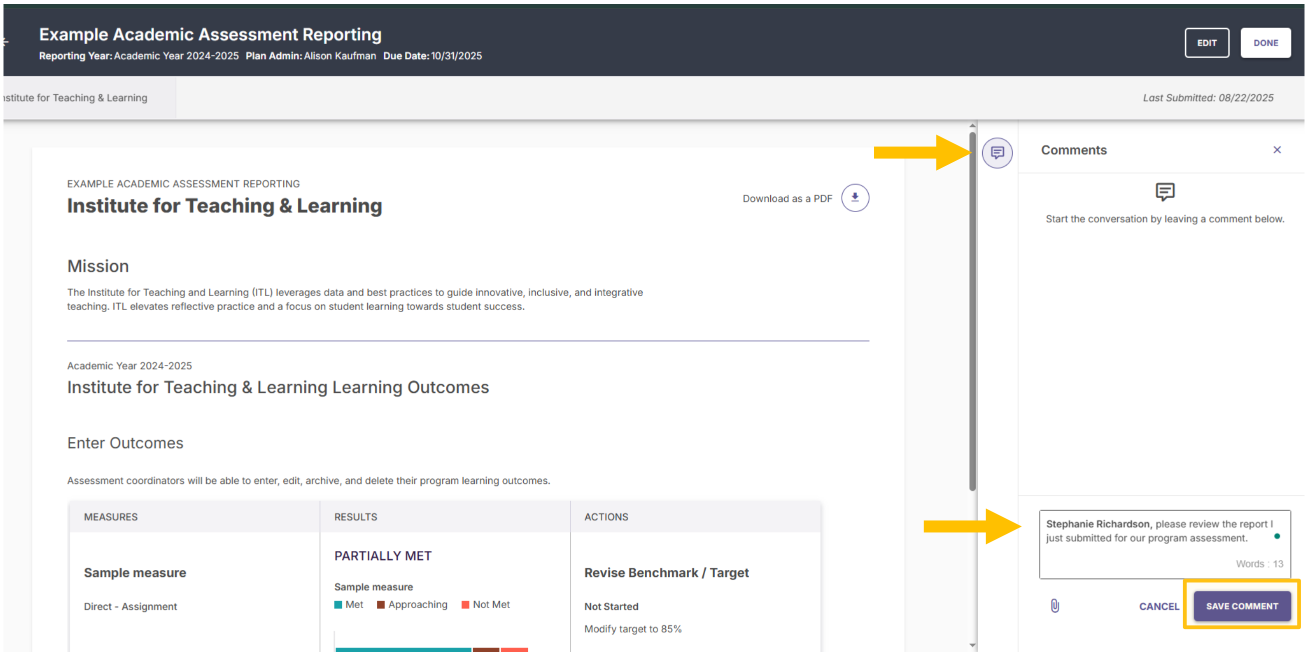


Figure 50

Updating Progress and Completion of Action Steps

When you are ready to add notes about progress or completion of actions steps, click **ENTER PROGRAM** from your home screen.

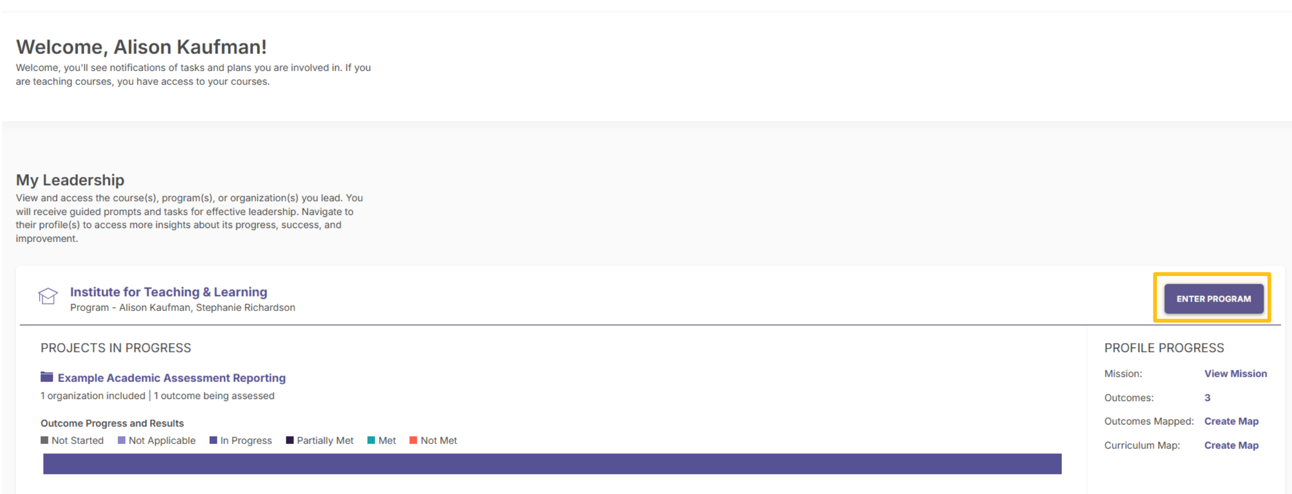


Figure 51

Click **Actions** from the toolbar on the left side of your screen. You'll then see a list of all the action items you've added through the assessment reporting process.

To open an action step and add notes or a status update, click the action item. In this example, click Review Benchmark/Target.

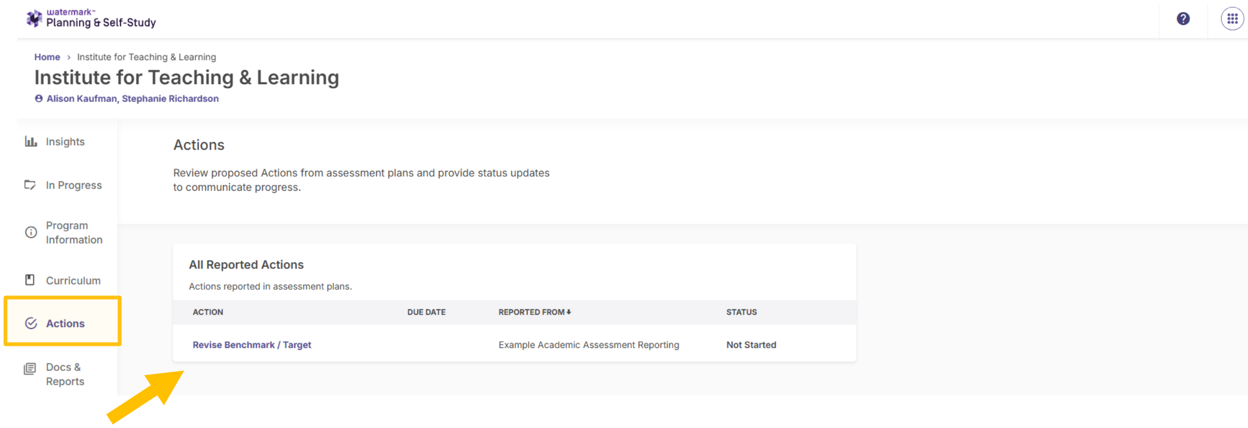


Figure 52

Using the dropdown menu, you can update the status of the action step. Click **ADD UPDATE** to enter comments.

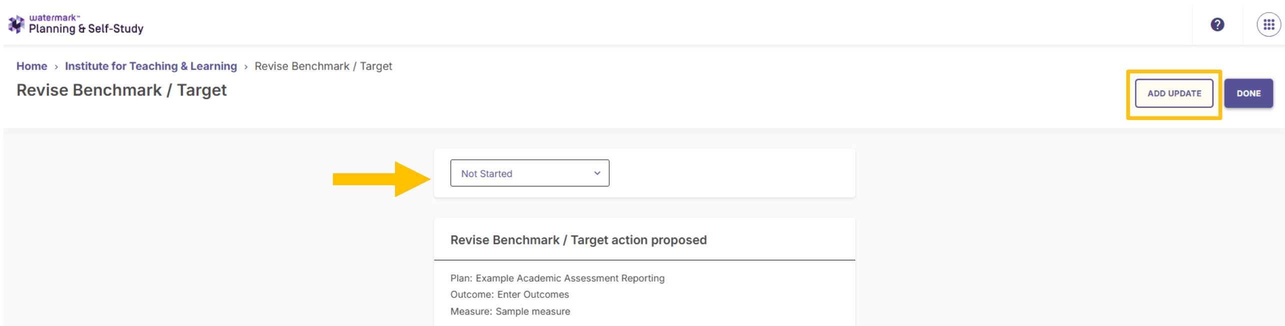


Figure 53

Enter your comments, then click the checkmark when you are finished.

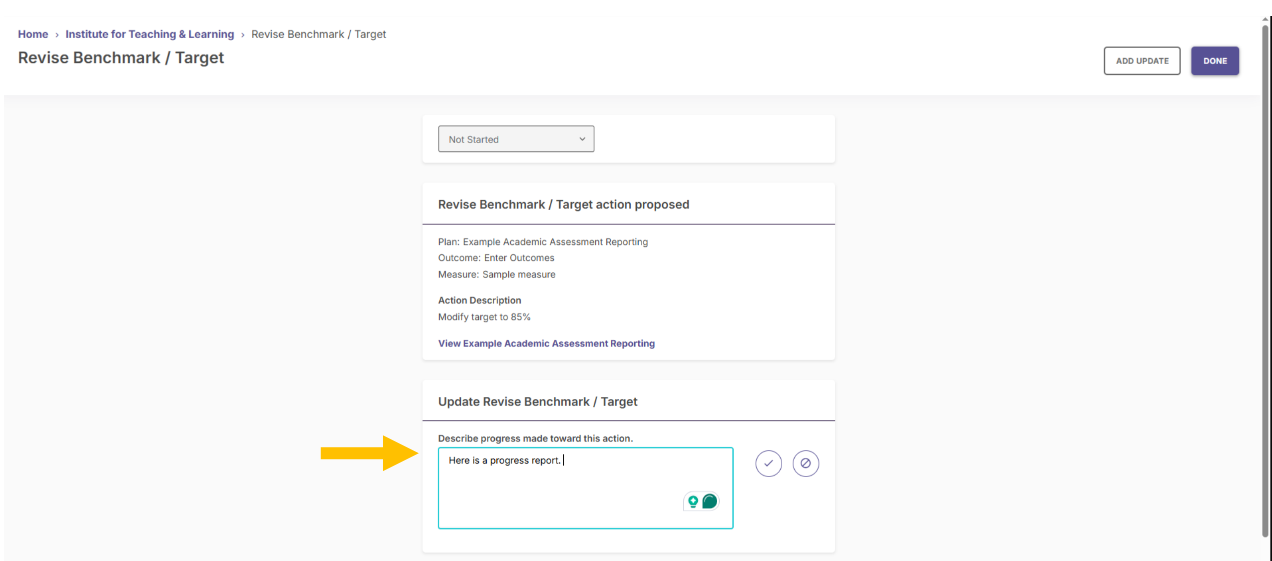


Figure 54

Youo can continue to add updates using the **ADD UPDATE** button. Each update will include a created by date and author. Be sure to use the dropdown menu to track overall status.

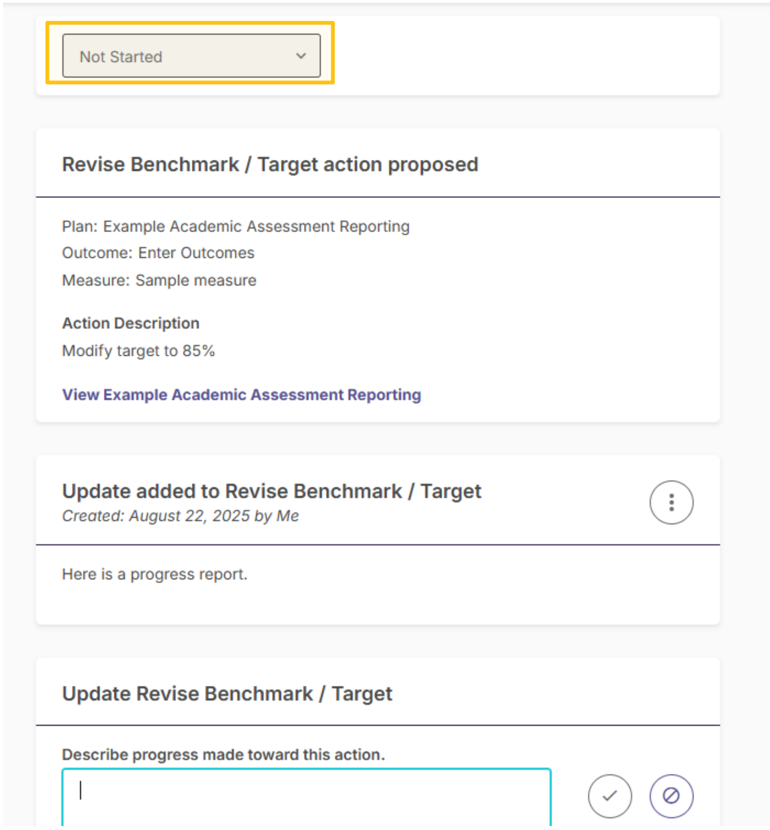


Figure 55

After selecting a status from the dropdown menu, the STATUS column on your home screen will update. If you click the action item, you can go back into the action area to review any notes.

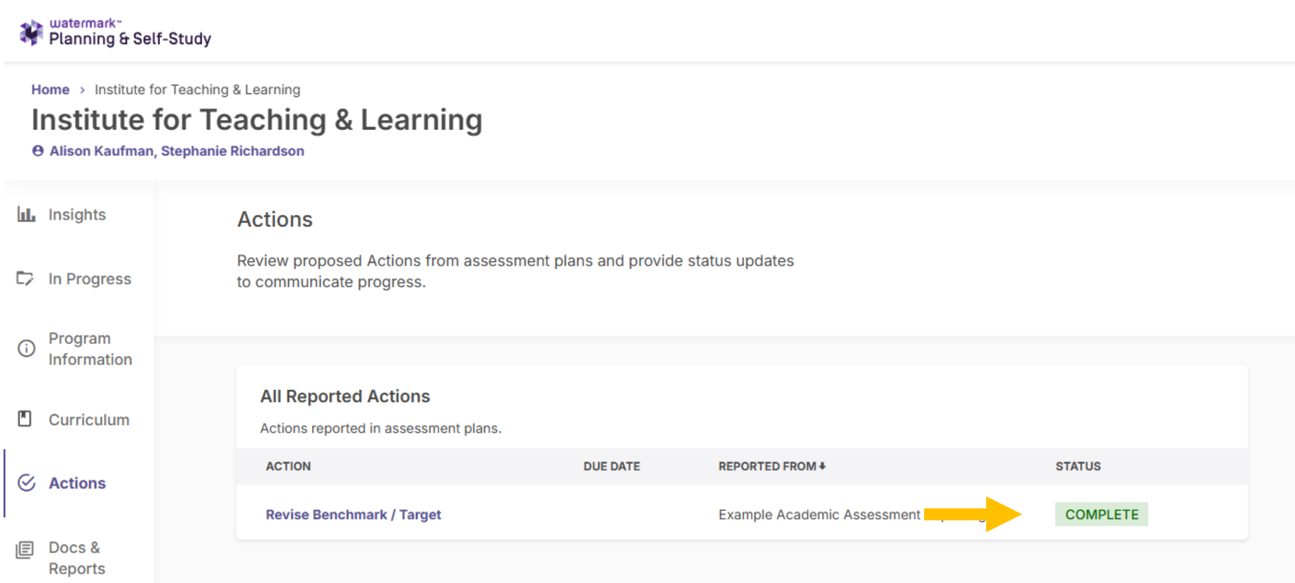


Figure 56

Accessing Archived Assessment Reports

The Institute for Teaching and Learning maintains past annual assessment submissions in a shared OneDrive folder, accessible to anyone with YSU login credentials. To access your program's folder, visit the Academic Assessment page.

Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the Assessment Archive link.

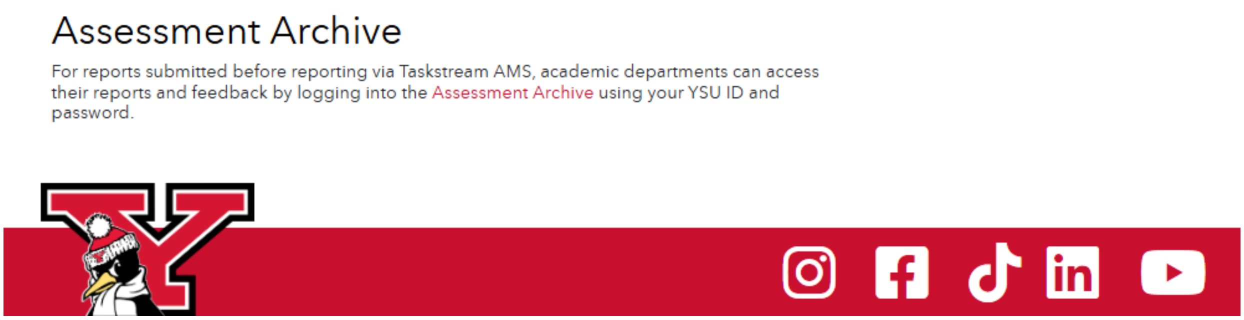


Figure 57

Navigate to your college, department, and then program folder. If you have any trouble accessing this information, reach out to atkaufman@ysu.edu.

Appendix 2A: Drafting Templates & Tools

Connecting Departmental Goals with Student Learning Outcomes

This document is an optional tool for programs new to assessment to begin translating their department or program goals into learning outcomes. This document does not need to be formally submitted, but you can book a consultation with ITL to review for feedback.

Mission/Goals of Department (especially as related to YSU Mission)	What do you hope students learn or value as a result these goals?	What skills do you hope students take with them because of these goals?	Reframe these goals/hopes as student learning outcomes (Students will be able to…)

Curriculum Map Drafting Template

Planning and Self Study allows has a great tool to build your curriculum map. However, we recognize that some people prefer to work outside of the system for drafting. This document is meant as a place where you can draft your program Curriculum Map outside of the PSS system. Use the curriculum map to map your required program courses to program learning outcomes. **You DO NOT need to complete this form or submit it to ITL.**

	2xxx	2xxx	etc.			3xxx	3xxx	etc.				4xxx	4xxx	etc.		4xxx OR	4xxx OR	4xxx	
Learning Outcome 1																			
Learning Outcome 2																			

While it is acceptable (and sufficient) to just place "**X**"s in the boxes on the template to show where a learning outcome is covered, we encourage you to consider using use a key that indicates the level of learning being asked of the student. The key used in Planning and Self-Study focuses on three levels of learning:

- Level 1: Introduce or Know
- Level 2: Reinforce or Apply
- Level 3: Master or Evaluate

YSU Student Learning Assessment Plan Drafting Template

Planning and Self-Study is the easiest place to complete your Assessment Plan. However, we recognize that some people prefer to work outside of the system for drafting. This document is meant as a place where you can draft your program Assessment Plan outside of the **PSS** system. You DO NOT need to complete this form or submit it ITL.

For the purposes of this plan, we ask that you describe how you plan to report all student learning outcomes for the entire cycle (typically 5-years). This planning will facilitate the ability for departments to focus on using data to provide evidence that students are achieving the learning outcomes expected in the program. Note that programs must assess learning in all the program learning outcomes during the cycle; programs may also choose to place an emphasis in a particular SLO area and evaluate learning in that area multiple times over the course of the plan.

Year 1: Assessment Plan

Year in Cycle	1. Student learning outcomes	2. Measures	3. Performance criteria
Year 1	Many programs have around 4-6 learning outcomes. You do not need numerous outcomes unless your accrediting agency requires it. Each SLO should be clearly written, measurable, and focused on a single skill or knowledge set. In Year 1 of your assessment cycle, you will enter your learning outcomes into PSS. Notes: You may focus on priority SLO's (ex: SLO2 below) across multiple years.	Each learning outcome should have two methods. At least one must be a direct measure. Explain where the measures will be taken (e.g. course number, capstone, and practicum). The same two measurement tools could theoretically cover all your learning outcomes. For example, you do not need 14 tools for seven outcomes, a final paper could be a method for several outcomes. In Year 1 of your assessment cycle, you will enter your methods into PSS.	How will learning in the program be evaluated? Significant development of criteria is expected—checklists, grading criteria, rubric for evaluation, etc. Describe performance criteria you will use (e.g. rubric, site supervisor evaluation form). In Year 1 of your assessment cycle, you will enter your performance criteria into PSS. You may also add supporting attachments.
Year 2			

Year 3			
Year 3			
Year 4			
Year 5			

It is of critical importance to the Higher Learning Commission that programs make strong connections between the data they are collecting on Student Learning Outcomes and using that data to reflect upon the current state of student learning; make changes to the curriculum (when necessary); share that data with stakeholders (both internal and external). The use of data will primarily be reported on the yearly Assessment Updates.

Consider the following questions when developing your assessment plan:

1. How will you share data in an ongoing basis will all faculty in your program?
2. How will you share the results of the data discussed with your students, your college, and other stakeholders?

YSU Student Learning Assessment Update Drafting Template

Planning and Self-Study is the easiest place to complete your yearly assessment update. However, we recognize that some people prefer to work outside of the system for drafting. This document is meant as a place where you can draft your yearly assessment update. You DO NOT need to complete this form or submit it ITL.

Directions:

1. Provide a status of action steps from previous years.
2. List student learning outcome(s) focus during the past academic year.
3. Summarize methods used to assess each SLO.
4. Summarize the student learning evidence and findings—what were student learning strengths and challenges based on the data?
5. Create action steps that show how this evidence will be used to improve student learning in the program.
6. Attach copies of any surveys, rubrics, data or other assessment tools as appropriate.

Update Component	Program Information
Prior Action Steps	
Prior Year Student Learning Outcomes	
Assessment Methods for each reported SLO	
Evidence & Findings Regarding Student Learning	
Use of Results/ Action Steps	

YSU End of Cycle Reflection Drafting Template

Planning and Self-Study is the easiest place to complete your end of cycle reflection. However, we recognize that some people prefer to work outside of the system for drafting. This document is meant as a place where you can draft your end of cycle reflection. You DO NOT need to complete this form or submit it ITL.

Please address the following questions: you may attach evidence as needed.

1. Thinking about the program's cycle as a whole, what were major strengths and/or challenges in student learning?

2. What key changes were made to address student learning challenges?

3. What is the impact of those changes on student learning in the program?

4. If there is no *evidence of impact*, what adjustments to your next plan will allow you to collect *evidence of impact*?

5. How does your assessment process adequately evaluate student learning in the program?

6. What are current concerns regarding student achievement of student learning outcomes in your program?

7. Programs may choose to place a priority focus on a particular program student learning outcome (e.g., student writing, contextual analysis, technical performance, etc.) as long as the other SLOs are measured once in the next cycle[1]. Is there a SLO the program is interested in focusing on in the next cycle?

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[1] For example, if a program with six SLOs wishes to place a priority focus on one area of learning concern—for example, writing—the program could focus its data collection, analysis, and action steps in that area each year with the intent of making changes and looking for learning improvements. Programs could use one method to measure the others over the next five years. The result would be: Y1, writing/SLO2; Y2, writing/SLO3; Y3, writing/SLO4; Y4, writing/SLO5; and Y5, writing/SLO6.

Appendix 2B: Examples and Guiding Rubrics

Assessment Plan: Example

Below you will find some fictional examples of the types of answers (though certainly not an exhaustive collection) that could be included in the plan. Note that plans that are considered proficient do not need to be examples of a textbook assessment process; rather, they show honest exploration of student learning and earnest intent to use data to make decisions and share information. By being clear and thorough in your Assessment Plan, you will lay a solid foundation for the next several years of assessment reporting. A six-year cycle is shown in this example, with Year 1 being the completion of the plan.

Year in Cycle	**Student Learning Outcomes**	**Measures**	**Performance criteria**
Year 2	• *SLO1: Students will deliver competent oral presentations.* • *SLO 2: Students will produce persuasive written work.*	• *SLO1: capstone project; senior exit interview* • *SLO 2: Research on best practices for ways to develop writing in the discipline; report out to program faculty*	• *SLO1: Capstone assessed with a comprehensive rubric; benchmark of 80% of projects "meets standards" or "exceeds standards;" Exit interview will be analyzed for student confidence in SLO 1* • *SLO2: revise writing portion of capstone rubric and seek departmental approval; revise research methods final paper rubric and pilot both rubrics*
Year 3	• *SLO 3: Students will demonstrate skillful teamwork in community group projects.* • *SLO 2: Students will produce persuasive written work.*	• *SLO3: capstone presentation; capstone project team member evaluation)* • *SLO 2: Revise research methods intro module for writing instruction; revise capstone project guidelines and possibly include draft report review deadline (TBD with faculty input)*	• *SLO3: capstone evaluated using same rubric, 80% for SLO 3 section; team member evaluation form (in use)* • *SLO2: revise writing portion of capstone rubric and seek departmental approval; revise research methods final paper rubric and pilot both rubrics*

Year 4	• *SLO 4: Students will synthesize accurate content knowledge.* • *SLO 2: Students will produce persuasive written work.*	• *SLO4: internship evaluation by supervisor and instructor* • *SLO 2: capstone project assessed with rubric; research methods final paper assessed with rubric*	• *SLO4: field site supervisor evaluation form and internship coordinator observation form (both in use now)* • *SLO2: capstone project assessed with revised rubric, 80% satisfactory or above with SLO2; research methods assessed with rubric*
Year 5	• *SL0 5: Students will apply knowledge in real world settings* • *SLO 2: Students will produce persuasive written work.*	• *SLO5: pre/post exam in all three junior year labs; rubric on capstone project* • *SLO 2: capstone project and research methods final paper*	• *SLO5: pre/post exam evaluation in all three junior labs; capstone using same rubric, 80% for SLO 5 section* • *SLO2: capstone project assessed with revised rubric, 80% satisfactory or above with SLO2; research methods assessed with rubric*
Year 6	• *SLO 6: Students will evaluate ethical dilemmas in the field of X.* • *SLO 2: Students will produce persuasive written work.*	• *SLO6: case studies from legal issues class assessed with rubric (in use, will include in future report); senior exit interview question analysis* • *SLO 2: capstone project and research methods final paper*	• *SLO6: rubric evaluation of case studies; exit interview question evaluation (question on professional preparation for unscripted problems)* • *SLO2: capstone project assessed with revised rubric, 80% satisfactory or above with SLO2; research methods assessed with rubric*

1. How will you share data in an ongoing basis will all faculty in your program?
    a. *This can include an annual faculty meeting to discuss assessment processes, as well as other ways the department is working to get more faculty involved—this does not necessarily have to be formalized (e.g., discussions in faculty meetings about student strengths/challenges could be summarized and documented). **The goal is to have all faculty participating in the assessment process in some way.***
    b. *Example: At one department meeting (prior to the annual department meeting on assessment) faculty discussed examples/artifacts of students' work at three different levels: proficient, adequate, and inadequate. This discussion led to*

revisions of the essential skill criteria for evaluating the senior capstone project. At the annual meeting, all faculty reviewed the revised criteria and approved the recommended changes.

2. How will you share the results of the data discussed with your students, your college, and other stakeholders?
   a. *Include information on both internal (e.g. students) and external (e.g. advisory groups) audiences. In particular, it is critical to share the information back to students.*
   b. *Example:*
      i. *Students:* *Faculty supervising students on their senior capstone provide a summary of patterns in senior students' capstones as the students begin their capstone project. Students provide input at the beginning of the capstone course about ways to improve writing skills and skill perception. Themes from the class discussion are shared in class and during faculty meetings.*
      ii. *College:* *Faculty present methods, findings, and action steps during one meeting of the college-wide assessment committee.*
      i. *Additional:* *Information on student learning is also included in the departmental newsletter (sent to students, alumni, faculty, and prospective students). The newsletter is produced semi-annually.*

Assessment Plan: Guiding Rubric[2]

Question	Proficient	Developing	Revisions Needed
Student Learning Outcomes	• All the programs' student learning outcomes are listed. • Learning outcomes are measurable. • Majority of learning outcomes are focused on a single skill or knowledge set.	• Attempt at learning outcomes included but may not be measurable or not focused on student learning. • May focus on program effectiveness goals only.	• Little or no reference to learning outcomes.
Assessment Methods	• Two methods for measuring learning outcomes are provided for each SLO. • At least one is a direct measure. • Includes reference to where measures will be used. • Includes performance criteria or development of criteria.	• Includes only one effective method for each SLO. • And/or methods may not be aligned with SLO or may not measure student learning. • And/or measures for each SLO are all indirect measures. • And/or incomplete information about where measures will be assessed or performance criteria lacking	• No measures identified. • And/or no information about those being assessed. • And/or no performance criteria evident.
Faculty Engagement	• Responsibility for assessment is not only in the hands of the assessment coordinator, e.g., other faculty assist in collection, review, and/or analysis. • Department faculty meet at least once a year to review data and develop action steps.	• There is some evidence that assessment is or is becoming a shared departmental activity, but significant portions are the responsibility of the assessment coordinator alone (and no explanation, such as a course reduction, exists). • Faculty may occasionally meet as a department, but on less than yearly basis.	• Vast majority of assessment-related activities are done only by the assessment coordinator. • Other faculty in the department do not assist in or discuss assessment.
Stakeholders	• Stakeholders identified (e.g. students, advisory groups). • Modes of communication of assessment data explained. • Students should be included as a stakeholder group.	• Stakeholders identified but may exclude significant stakeholders or major groups (e.g., students). • May incompletely explain ways of communicating with stakeholders.	• No relevant stakeholders identified. • And/or no description of how or when the unit communicates with stakeholders.

[2] This rubric is meant to provide understanding of a proficient Assessment Plan. It is used to help guide volunteer reviewers and ITL staff in providing feedback to programs.

Assessment Update: Example

Component	Program Information
Prior Action Steps	*Three years ago we recommended that the research methods class be a required course before admittance into upper-division coursework (SLO4); faculty discussions have indicated that students seem better equipped for the applied research courses. This SLO will be formally evaluated next year.* *Two years ago the assessments indicated a weakness in SLO3 due to too large a gap from 26xx courses to the next time it was covered in 48xx courses; the curriculum committee met last year to discuss, but it was tabled due to accreditation preparations. It will be addressed this academic year.*
Prior Year Student Learning Outcomes	*SLO 1: Students will be able to compare and critique major works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.* *SLO 2: Students will be able to write clearly, effectively, and creatively.*
Assessment Methods for each reported SLO	*These methods assessed both learning outcomes:* 1. *Senior Thesis, given in capstone course, the performance criteria matrix for writing proficiency is attached to this report. There were 16 capstone theses in 2013-14* 2. *Senior Exit Survey, given to graduating seniors when they register to graduate. 12 out of 21 students responded to the exit survey.*
Evidence & Findings Regarding Student Learning	***Thesis:*** *In reviewing the performance criteria components, it seems like those who did not submit a rough draft were not able to score in the proficient or above range for writing. Generally, students were able to adequately contextualize the main period or genre of their theses, but a significant portion struggled when comparing or drawing parallels across, particularly in historical periods. In addition, those who drew on sources from both within and outside the discipline tended to score highest on the assignment overall.* ***Exit Survey:*** *Question number 3 asked if their training in the major prepared them to produce well-written documents in their professional careers. They answered 66% (10)--strongly agree or agree; 20% (3)—neutral; 13% (2) -- disagree. In the open-ended response portion of question 3, 4 of those who responded neutral or disagree stated that they did not begin to write papers in their major courses until late into their junior year and two felt they needed more feedback from faculty about what constituted a well-written paper in the field.*

Use of Results	*Based primarily on the theses data, the department will:* 1. *Begin requiring a rough draft in the thesis course. The faculty assessment committee will also do a survey of other faculty to ascertain how often rough drafts are required or encouraged throughout the curriculum, as there were some differing practices when discussed at the last faculty meeting. The addition of this requirement, as well as the faculty rough draft survey, will also address the confidence issues raised by some students in the senior survey.* 2. *Attend more closely to the ability of individual students to make connections between historical periods, genres, and approaches in the development of their thesis papers. Some faculty were concerned that perhaps the current curriculum structure allows students to focus too much on the area of their interest and may not be providing sufficient breadth—this SLO will be evaluated again next year.*

Assessment Update: Guiding Rubric[3]

Component	Proficient	Developing	Revision Needed
Prior Action Steps Status	• Action step(s) status explained • Action steps may be listed as completed • If not complete, some next steps included	• Action step(s) status may not be fully explained	• No action steps or status provided
Assessment Methods	• 1 or 2 measures for each student learning outcome (SLO) (overlap in methods is acceptable) • At least one measure is a direct measure • Methods are appropriate and measure the target SLO • Reference to where and when measure taken	• Some/all methods may not be aligned with SLO or may not measure student learning • Outcome measured does not show progress through cycle (e.g. same SLO is measured each year, while others are left off) • May have incomplete information about students being assessed	• No measures identified • And/or no information about students being assessed
Evidence and Findings of Student Learning	• Strengths and/or challenges in student learning identified • Findings based on data collected, though other sources/professional judgment also may be used to support conclusions	• Identifies strengths and/or challenges but may not be related to the SLO or may not be based on data. • Findings focus on program effectiveness, rather than student learning strengths and challenges	• No strengths and/or challenges identified • Not related to students learning
Use of Results	• Action step(s) (no action, if supported by data) linked to student learning findings • Action step(s) are appropriate to the learning outcomes and can reasonably be carried out • In some cases, further study or confirmation of results by re-assessment is appropriate	• Action step(s) are mentioned, but not linked to analysis of SLO data (i.e., strengths and challenges analysis) • Action step(s) may not impact learning outcome • Action step (s) may be unattainable	• Action step(s) are not provided • Action step(s) are not related to student learning

[3] This rubric is meant to provide understanding of a proficient Assessment Update. It is used to help guide volunteer reviewers and ITL staff in providing feedback to programs.

Assessment Cycle Reflection: Tips

The basic question categories included in the worksheet are:

- *Questions 1-3—reflection on the entire past assessment cycle*
- *Questions 4-7—consideration for the next assessment cycle*

Please address the following questions: you may attach evidence as needed.

1. Thinking about the program's cycle, what were major strengths and/or challenges in student learning?

   This information should be easily gathered from yearly assessment updates. Provide an analysis, based on all reports in the last assessment cycle, of major strengths or challenges in student learning. Focus on the larger, more significant findings, rather than just listing every single finding in the last cycle. Programs should include at a minimum several of each (if they were previously identified).

2. What key changes were made to address student learning challenges?

   If there were challenges in student learning, what action steps were identified to improve student learning. This information should be easily gathered from yearly assessment updates. If the program decided that an action step was needed, was that action step completed and what is the evidence for completion? For example, if a curriculum change was made, did it receive approval from the curriculum committee? If an emphasis change was made in a course, do you have a sample of the revised syllabi? You may optionally attach any supporting evidence.

3. What is the impact of those changes on student learning in the program?

   To "close the loop" in outcomes assessment, a program must first go through the process of assessing student learning and evaluating the data. If changes are made to improve student learning, how does the program know if they are effective? To evaluate the efficacy of a curriculum change, the program must consider if the change made had the intended impact.

4. If there is no evidence of impact, what adjustments to your next plan will allow you to collect evidence of impact?

   If there is no current evidence for action step impact on student learning, how could you evaluate it within the next cycle? If there are multiple action steps to evaluate, then a timeline for assessment should be outlined. It is not necessary to have evidence of impact of every single curricular improvement, but every program should be able to show evidence of completing the assessment loop.

5. How does your assessment process adequately evaluate student learning in the program?

   How adequate is the assessment process in your program? Do you have sufficient participation, continuity, and structure? Do the methods and sampling adequately evaluate learning by the end of the program, or adequately respond to further investigating learning challenges? Does the sample include all types of students in your program (on-campus; online; off-site)? This question requests that faculty self-reflect on the structure of the assessment processes in the program.

6. What are current concerns regarding student achievement of program learning outcomes?

   Are there any areas that you have regarding student learning? Do faculty conversations about student learning veer towards the same areas again? Is there an area in which faculty would like to focus concentrated effort and/or see improvements?

7. Programs may choose to place a priority focus on a particular program student learning outcome (e.g., student writing, contextual analysis, technical performance, etc.) if the other SLOs are measured once in the next cycle. Is there a SLO the program is interested in focusing on in the next cycle?

   If the "two SLOs a year, with two methods of assessment each" approach has good faculty participation, is adequately evaluating student learning, and is working for the program, then you are welcome to continue this approach to program assessment. However, if you'd like to focus on a particular area or two, then the Institute for Teaching and Learning would like to provide sufficient flexibility for a program to design a five-year plan to focus on those areas of particular concern. As the footnote[4] explains, while it is still necessary that the program collect some data on all SLOs, it may be possible to craft a plan that will allow faculty to put more time and effort into those areas that may benefit from more focused and sustained effort.

[4] For example, if a program with six SLOs wishes to place a priority focus on one area of learning concern—for example, writing—the program could focus its data collection, analysis, and action steps in that area each year with the intent of making changes and looking for learning improvements. Programs could use one method to measure the others over the next five years. The result would be: Y1, writing/SLO2; Y2, writing/SLO3; Y3, writing/SLO4; Y4, writing/SLO5; and Y5, writing/SLO6.