Austin Peay State University
Institutional Effectiveness Planning Guide

What is IE Planning?

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Planning is a vital component of the overall health of our university. Through the IE planning and review process, campus units gain a clear picture of their overall performance and use data to make informed decisions. Some benefits of IE Planning include:

- Data-driven decision making
- Improved student performance and student success metrics, such as retention and completion
- Increased quality in academic programs
- Support for current and future accreditation efforts
- Documentation for strategic planning and decision-making

> *"An assessment plan captures agreement about what matters, gives direction for actions, and provides a means to determine if progress is being made."*
> Banda & Palomba, 2015, p. 20

Some terms to know for the IE Planning Process…

Additional terms can be found at the end of this guide

- Student Learning Outcome (SLO) – Statements of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and/or values demonstrated by students upon completion of a degree, program or experience.
    - A program or office assesses SLOs to evaluate and improve its effectiveness in designing and delivering its intended educational objectives.
- Administrative Unit Outcome (AUO) – Focus on improvement in the unit's operations and services in support of the Strategic Plan or University Mission, apart from student learning.
    - A unit assesses AUOs to evaluate and improve its effectiveness in meeting strategic and operational goals.
    - Involves concepts such as efficiency, accuracy, effectiveness, client satisfaction, quality, comprehensiveness, compliance, or employee learning.
- Direct Measure – utilize actual student products or performances (exams, essays, reports, projects, oral performance) to assess an SLO
- Indirect Measure – rely on students' perceived or self-reported learning (surveys, reflections, self-assessments, focus groups, interviews), or provide proxy information about student learning (enrollment trends, grades, graduation rates)

IE Planning Process at APSU

The Office of IEA at APSU has categorized offices that participate in the IE Planning process into 3 groups based on SACSCOC standards. These groups, and their IE Planning requirements are as follows:

- **Degree and Certificate Programs** – includes all academic programs that are defined by the institution as a credential, such as a degree with a defined major. Note that different levels of a degree (i.e., BBA and MBA) should be assessed as separate programs. (SACSCOC Standard 8.2.a)
    - ***IE Planning Requirements:***
        - 2 SLOs for each IE Planning Cycle
        - 2 Assessment Measures for each SLO (at least one of these must be a direct measure of student learning)
- **Academic and Student Support Services** – units that provide direct support to faculty and students as related to their education programs, indirect support for student learning, or a specific co-curricular mission that supports the college experience. Examples of units included in this category are the library,

learning/information resources, faculty resource centers, tutoring, writing centers, financial aid, residence life, admissions, etc. (SACSCOC Standard 8.2.c)
- ○ *IE Planning Requirements*:
  - ▪ 2 outcomes for each IE Planning Cycle – may be either SLOs or AUOs
  - ▪ 2 Assessment Measures for each outcome (at least one of these must be a direct measure)
- **Administrative Units** – units that serve the educational mission of the institution in a more indirect, yet still critical, manner. (SACSCOC Standard 7.3)
  - ○ *IE Planning Requirements:*
    - ▪ 2 AUOs for each IE Planning Cycle
    - ▪ 1 Assessment Measure for each outcome

For additional help with the IE Planning process, please reach out to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. We offer individual meetings with departments and units to assist with the planning and development of outcomes. Please complete the online form to request services from our office.

IEA Service Request Form: www.apsu.edu/institutional-effectiveness/iea-service-form

Dr. Amanda Wornhoff Director, IEA wornhoffa@apsu.edu *Assistance with IE Planning, specifically for Degree and Certificate Programs*	Allie Michael Assistant Director, IEA michaela@apsu.edu *Assistance with IE Planning, specifically for non-degree programs*	Brandi Bickham Technical Support Coordinator bickhamb@apsu.edu *Assistance with software and technical training*

Institutional Effectiveness Glossary of Terms
- **Academic program:** The combination of courses and/or requirements leading to a degree or certificate awarded by APSU. Each academic program assesses itself. In contrast, a concentration is a focus within an academic program; APSU does not require assessment of concentrations.

- **Achievement Target** (also Criterion for Success): A statement of how to interpret the results of a specific assessment method: the minimum requirements for what constitutes expected success for student learning in a program or success for an administrative outcome.

- **Actions for Improvement***:* The final part of the IE Report: What logical and specific actions, based on assessment results, has or will the program undertake to improve student learning? Do not enter vague plans for action: implementation should be specific with a clearly defined timeframe. Actions are often course/curriculum modifications or policy changes; see Nuventive *Actions for Improvements* screen in the Results Report for a drop-down list of examples.

- **Administrative Unit:** Administrative units are present in every division of the university and include student affairs, finance and administration, athletics, academic and student support services and academic departments as distinguished from academic programs. These units may also be termed non-academic units as opposed to academic programs.

- **Annual Timeline:** Yearly schedule establishing dates for the IE process (SLOs and AUOs) for academic-programs and non-academic units at the university; (1) academic programs, (2) student affairs, (3) academic and student support services and (4) administrative units (administrative units are present in every division of the university). See https://www.apsu.edu/institutional-effectiveness/iedocs/revised_ie_cycle_timeline_082019.pdf

- **Assessable/Measurable Verb** (see also Bloom's Taxonomy): When constructing SLOs consider what you will be able to measure. For SLOs: The student will demonstrate an understanding … is difficult to measure. The student will compare and contrast … (analysis) or the student will judge the effectiveness of x using y … (evaluation) are preferred. This issue is less critical for AUOs where behaviors to measure may be more concrete.

- **Assessment Data**: Results gathered from designated assessment methods, shared and discussed by unit stakeholders (faculty, staff) and then reported in the Results Report section of the IE Report.

- **Assessment Plan**: Part 1 of the IE Report in which the procedures for collection of assessment data for a given year are detailed. For student learning the plan includes:
    - SLO,
    - 2 assessment methods (at least one of which is direct), and
    - achievement targets for each method.
  For administrative unit outcomes effectiveness, the plan includes:
    - AUO,
    - 1 assessment method and
    - an achievement target.

- **Assessment Results Report**: A brief yearly report where academic departments can feature their successful actions based on assessment of student learning in all their programs. Four simple items:
    - Summarize changes and improvements in curriculum, instruction and learning resulting from assessment. (Celebrate how you have engaged with improving student learning as a result of this process.)
    - Share any improvements in your program's assessment process. (How are you wrestling with refining outcomes, improving assessment methods, streamlining data collection or promoting discussion?)
    - Findings Differences by Modality or Location. (If you answered yes to differences by modality or location in your Results Report, please discuss here.)
    - Dissemination of Assessment Findings. (faculty, students, webpage, alumni, etc.)

- **Assessment Type (also Method Category in AUs):** A required field in Assessment Plans that categorizes the Assessment Method. The drop-down listing in Nuventive for SLOs includes: capstone assignment, various kinds of exams, portfolio review, presentations/performances and more. The drop-down listing in Nuventive for AUs includes: activity volume, efficiency, service quality, standards and more.

- **Bloom's Taxonomy**: A hierarchical list (6 levels) of action verbs related to increasing levels of how students may demonstrate learning. Since program-level SLOs are based on what students know, can do and value at the end of the program of study, the use of higher-order verbs is preferred.

- **Committee Feedback** (also IEC Feedback): The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is charged with "review[ing] department institutional effectiveness reports of academic programs and non-academic

units" with the goal of increasing the quality of the process. The IEC reviews completed IE reports in the fall of each year with feedback published to the Nuventive website for units. Specifically, the IEC examines:

- o assessment procedures (explain how outcomes are assessed)
- o data analysis (clearly presented and complete)
- o results (are meaningful and can be acted upon)
- o plans for improvement (specific and formulated in response to results)

- **Concentration** (Academic Concentration): A focus within an academic program. APSU does not require assessment of concentrations, cf. program.

- **Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC):** A standing committee of the university with broad representation. The committee provides oversight, guidelines and resources for assessment and evaluation activities. The committee also review IE plans and reports.

- **Modality/Mode:** In the context of IE and SLOs, modality refers to delivery of instruction. Modalities at APSU include classroom (or F2F), online, and hybrid.

- **Results Report:** Part 2 of the IE Report in which assessment data (results), analysis and actions for improvement for a given year are detailed. Report fields include: Results, Reflective Analysis and Actions for Improvement.