UDC-CC Program Outcomes Assessment Plan Template Instructions

Each academic program at UDC-CC is expected to engage in a continuous improvement process of outcomes assessment. This process is to be formalized and repeated on a regular cycle (every five years) and must include the essential elements of:

1. Setting desired program outcomes
2. Selecting measures that can be used to evaluate progress toward achieving those outcomes
3. Gathering and analyzing data to determine achievement
4. Recommending and implementing program changes that facilitate further progress in achieving the desired outcomes.

The regular cycle of assessment involves items 2 through 4 above, and is designed to provide to the faculty information that gives an accurate picture of student performance, and allows timely and well considered program revisions. Assessment often leads to the revision or refinement of program outcomes. They are a central part of any effort toward maintaining and improving quality. They are required as part of the overall UDC-CC academic plan and specified as an essential activity for all programs as part of UDC-CC’s continued institutional accreditation.

This template is designed to assist you in the development of an Outcomes Assessment Plan that:

1. Includes all of the essential elements required for program assessment
2. Is adaptable to a large number of programs
3. Is straightforward to use, modify and understand
4. Places the minimum burden on faculty, assessment coordinators, and the Outcomes Assessment Committee, and
5. Provides the information necessary to make intelligent decisions about all aspects of program content and delivery.

Note: Intelligent decisions must come from the organizational level where our programs are defined and our students are served. This means that the primary audience for the recommendations and reports generated by the continuous improvement process is the faculty. Faculty must determine the effect that they want to have on their students, establish programs to achieve that effect, measure the effectiveness of those programs, and then adjust those programs to do better.
Specific Template Instructions
The following pages contain the template to be used when creating or modifying your program’s Outcomes Assessment Plan. Please keep the same general format and all the given required components.

Sprinkled throughout the document are instructional comments in blue font and normally enclosed in angle <> brackets. In some cases you will replace the comment with the indicated information and change the font color back to black. The instructional comments should be deleted from your final plan. They are there solely to provide instructions and helpful ideas.

Your plan should be developed with the aid of all the affected faculty and constituent groups. The outcomes, in particular, should have input from all groups that have a stake in your degree program. The Office of Academic Affairs is willing to assist you in this process as needed. Please feel free to contact chairperson of the Outcomes Assessment Committee with any questions or requests for assistance.
<Program Name and Degree Level>

Educational Effectiveness

Assessment Plan

Version <X.X>

Adopted by

The <Program> faculty: <date>

Submitted to

The Dean/Director of the <School or College Name>: <Date>
The Office of Academic Affairs: <Date>
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MISSION STATEMENT

<Include your program mission statement here. A program purpose or overall goal is useful and should be supported by program outcomes. That goal may be related to employability and professional advancement; opportunities in continuing education; students’ personal development or pursuits; an educated, enlightened and engaged citizenry; moral and civic behavior; or other goals of higher education.>

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

<Use this space to provide additional context about the program beyond the Mission Statement. Does the program have special accreditation? If so, what is the status of that accreditation? Are there special accreditation or industry standards that affect how the assessment process is conducted in the program? If the assessment language is different for your discipline than the standard UDC-CC template (i.e. “learning goals” rather than “outcomes”), please explain those differences.>

ASSESSMENT PROCESS INTRODUCTION

<Write a brief description of the process that was used to determine your program’s outcomes and assessment strategy. Include such information as to who was involved in the process, how the outcomes and assessment strategies were determined, and when it all took place. This should be a brief history behind the development of your assessment plan. Feel free to edit or replace the following example as needed to meet your needs.>

This document defines the expected student learning outcomes for the <program name> program and outlines a plan for assessing the achievement of the stated outcomes.

The development of the outcomes consisted of ... (Review of professional standards from..., consultation with community advisors..., faculty discussion, graduate feedback, program accreditation recommendations..., etc.) <It is useful to provide context for the Assessment Peer Review Committee about what changes have been made through the history of the assessment plan. Has it only undergone minor revisions since its creation, or have there been major revisions?>

The faculty met and accepted the outcomes and assessment processes on <date>.>
PROGRAM OUTCOMES

At the completion of this program, students are able to:

The outcomes below are sample outcomes, from different programs in UDC-CC. This section should reflect your program’s expectations for student learning. Please see the next page for descriptions of appropriate outcomes. Outcomes should be phrased in active, measurable terms. They should also focus on student learning, rather than on student satisfaction.

- <Demonstrate the ability to develop interventions that meet the needs of diverse atypical learners. (ECE)>  
- <Explain the importance of entrepreneurship to the wealth of an economy. (Business Technology)>  
- <Interpret construction documents to accurately predict project costs and assign resources. (Construction Management)>  
- <Use nursing process to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate care of patients and their families in institutional and community-based settings. (Nursing)>  
- <Identify and analyze internal control problems and make recommendations for safeguarding the assets of a business. (Business Technology)>  
- <Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law to appropriate professional practice. (Business Law)>  
- <Show proficiency in the use, calibration, repair, maintenance, and care of all precision measuring tools. (Construction Management)>  
- <Demonstrate technical skills that allow effective use of office automation hardware and software. (Automotive Technology)>  
- <Identify project goals and users requirements and generate a project scope of work through project charter. (Business Law)>  
- <Demonstrate critical and analytical reading of challenging texts and effective writing, using the accepted practices and approaches of the disciplines in which writing is assigned and incorporating a variety of resources into arguments of the student’s own devising. (All programs)>
Faculty review of student performance is the core of assessment. An assessment plan that lists outcomes, measures and expected levels of student achievement, together with a process for evaluating the **program** performance in enabling student achievement is an essential first step in determining educational effectiveness.

**Outcomes**

**Student Learning Outcomes** are a list of specific abilities, skills, and/or knowledge that students are expected to demonstrate while they are enrolled in the program.

- Outcomes should be “SMART”
  - S = Specific
  - M = Measurable
  - A = Achievable
  - R = Relevant
  - T = Timely

- Outcomes should be sufficiently comprehensive to define the program in both content and level. They should include clear expectations of student abilities and levels of competence in the required knowledge and skills (e.g. familiarity, proficiency, mastery).

- They should be written with the student in mind. A student’s selection of a program of studies should be informed by the descriptions of knowledge, skills and dispositions that will be attained in the program. This is also why outcomes must be published in a place accessible to prospective students. Some programs choose to publish their outcomes in their catalog copy; others publish them on the College’s website.

- Resist the urge to be too exhaustive in the outcome list. The objective of assessment is to gather evidence that allows faculty to make competent decisions on the effectiveness of the program. Concentrating on student performance in a few culminating experiences may be preferable to assessment of more limited accomplishments. The intent is to gather enough information to understand the key components of the program and to make changes to improve.

- The Middle States Commission on Higher Education in their *Assessing Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness* states that “effective assessment processes are useful, cost-effective, reasonably accurate and truthful, carefully planned, and organized, systematic, and sustained” (Middle States, 2005, p. 4).
Measures
Assessment of outcomes **must** include the use of direct measures. Examples of direct measures include student performance on:

- Assignments
- Tests
- Labs
- Presentations
- e-Portfolios
- Professionally judged demonstrations or performances.

*Course grade data and GPA are not effective direct measures because non-academic factors can play into these numbers. It is also difficult to separate just one outcome from an entire course or program.*

Programs may choose to supplement their direct measures with indirect measures. Examples of indirect measures include:

- Student self-perceptions
- Employer surveys
- Focus groups.

*On the Middle States website - Guidelines for Institutional Improvement describes properties of good evidence.*

**These properties include:**

- Comprehensiveness—full range of outcomes measured
- Multiple judgment—use of several sources
- Multiple dimension—indicate different facets of student performance related to outcomes to show strengths and weaknesses, and
- Directness—involve direct scrutiny of student performance.

Click [here](https://www.middlestates.com/assess/guidelines) for a list of examples of evidence of student learning provided by Middle States.
**TABLE 1: ASSOCIATION OF ASSESSMENT MEASURES TO PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

This table is intended to help organize outcomes and the measures that are used to assess them. Each measure contributes information on the students’ achievement of a different set of outcomes. That contribution is tracked in this table. The table also provides a plan for assessing student outcomes at critical points in the students’ matriculation at UDC-CC, At entry into the program, as they matriculate in the program, at the time they exit the program and one to four years after graduation.

This table also forms the basis of the template for reporting and analyzing the combined data gathered from these measures. That is shown in the report section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>When is this outcome assessed? [Please specify - at entry, during, exit from program, after graduation.]</th>
<th>Measure 1</th>
<th>Measure 2</th>
<th>Measure 3</th>
<th>Measure 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Outcome #1&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;0,1&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;0,1&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;0,1&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;0,1&gt;</td>
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<td>&lt;Outcome #2&gt;</td>
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<td>&lt;0,1&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;Outcome #3&gt;</td>
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<td>&lt;Outcome #5&gt;</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&lt;0,1&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0 = Measure is not used to measure the associated outcome.
1 = Measure is used to measure the associated outcome.

*Add/Delete rows and columns as necessary*
ASSESSMENT MEASURES

A description of the measures used in the assessment of the program outcomes and their implementation are summarized in Table 2 below. The measures and their relationships to the program outcomes are listed in Table 1, above.

There is a separate appendix for each measure that shows the measure itself and describes its use and the factors that affect the results.

**TABLE 2: PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT MEASURES AND ADMINISTRATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Core Competencies</th>
<th>Frequency/Start Date</th>
<th>When is this measure administered? [Please specify - at entry, during, exit from program, after graduation.</th>
<th>Collection Method</th>
<th>Administered by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Measure #1&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;Measure #2&gt;</td>
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<td>&lt;Measure #4&gt;</td>
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<td>&lt;Measure #6&gt;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<Add/Delete rows as necessary>
ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION & ANALYSIS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

General Implementation Strategy

<Describe here how your program intends to implement the assessment plan. The description is to include a timeline for implementing the various components of your program. Include discussion of how you will implement the data collection aspects of your plan.>

Method of Data Analysis and Formulation of Recommendations for Program Improvement

<This section outlines how the data will be analyzed by the program faculty. The following is a suggested process. Feel free to rewrite this section to meet the needs of your program. You need to clearly describe the process that you intend to use to analyze the collected data and make recommendations for program improvement.>

The program faculty will meet at least once a year to review the data collected using the assessment measures. At these DATA SUMMITS, recommendations for program changes or improvements are designed to enhance performance relative to the program’s outcomes. The results of the data collection, an interpretation of the results, and the recommended programmatic changes will be forwarded to the Office of Academic Affairs (in the required format) by May 10th each year. A plan for implementing the recommended changes, including advertising the changes to all the program’s stakeholders, will also be completed at this meeting.

The proposed programmatic changes may be any action or change in policy that the faculty deems as being necessary to improve performance relative to program outcomes. Recommended changes should also consider workload (faculty, staff, and students), budgetary, facilities, and other relevant constraints. A few examples of changes made by programs at UDC-CC include:
  o changes in course content, scheduling, sequencing, prerequisites, delivery methods, etc.
  o changes in faculty/staff assignments
  o changes in advising methods and requirements
  o addition and/or replacement of equipment
  o adaptations of facilities to meet program needs

Modification of the Assessment Plan

<Use this section to identify how changes are made to the assessment plan. Note that it is common for assessment plans to evolve as experience is gained with their implementation.>

The faculty, after reviewing the collected data and the processes used to collect it, may decide to alter the assessment plan. Changes may be made to any component of the plan, including the outcomes, assessment measures, or any other aspect of the plan. The changes will be approved by the faculty of the program in conjunction with the Dean of Academic Affairs. The modified assessment plan will be forwarded to the dean/director’s office and the Office of Academic Affairs.
APPENDIX A: <MEASURE NAME>
This page is repeated to provide a detailed description for each measure used in the assessment process

Measure Description:

<Include a description and copy of the measure.>

Factors that affect the collected data:

<List the factors that affect the data collected by this measure and their likely effects on the results.>

How to interpret the data:

<What rubrics have been developed for consistent evaluation of the data gathered with this measure? Provide a copy of rubrics, if applicable.>
<What does this data say about the specific program outcomes?>

<Include sample instruments/tables/etc… as necessary to illustrate the measure and/or its application>

<ADD AN APPENDIX FOR EACH ASSESSMENT MEASURE. See the assessment website for appendices already written for some common assessment measures. You need only import them to this plan and modify them to fit your circumstances.>
APPENDIX B: <MEASURE NAME>
This page is repeated to provide a detailed description for each measure used in the assessment process

Measure Description:

<Include a description and copy of the measure.>

Factors that affect the collected data:

<List the factors that affect the data collected by this measure and their likely effects on the results.>

How to interpret the data:

<What rubrics have been developed for consistent evaluation of the data gathered with this measure? Provide a copy of rubrics, if applicable.>
<What does this data say about the specific program outcomes?>

<Include sample instruments/tables/etc… as necessary to illustrate the measure and/or its application>

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