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Improving your Benchmarks & Setting Realistic Assessment Cycle Timelines

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OEE Fall Workshop Series: Assessment Process 2.0

- OEE & the Assessment Process

- Improving your Program Goals & Learning Objectives

- Improving your Curriculum Map & Ensuring Your Metrics are Aligned

- **Improving your Benchmarks & Setting Realistic Assessment Cycle Timelines**

- Aligning Results, Actions & Improvements

Housekeeping: 23-24 Assessment Reports

- **Who:**   All Programs & Assessment Coordinators

- **What:**   Assess at least one PLO and update top section on accomplishments/improvements

- **When:**   February 23, 2024

- **How:**   Use OEE templates

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School or College	
Department	
Degree Program	
Program Goals	
Accomplishments	
Improvements	
Evidence that Prompted Improvement	

Program Learning Objective 1: Upon completion of the degree, students should be able to…	
Location in Curriculum Map (Course Name)	
Assessment Method	
Timeline/Frequency	
Benchmark	
Results/Findings	
Actions/Improvements	

SBU Program Assessment Template

OEE Workshop Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Describe the purpose of benchmarking.

- Improve the performance benchmarks in your program assessment plan.

- Establish realistic cyclical timelines for your program assessment activities.

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Quick Review: Mapping & Metrics

Mapping & Metrics Influence Your Benchmarks

- Identify **1-2 specific courses that most closely align** with the PLO, or that align at the most advanced level as representative samples of student performance.

- **Identify an assessment method** (exam, paper, group project…) for each course you list.

- **Identify a performance benchmark for each assessment method** you list, or use a common benchmark across all methods.

- The more you list, the more you'll need to assess. Streamline your assessment plan to keep it manageable and sustainable!

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Setting Benchmarks

Benchmarks: Template Excerpt

Program Learning Objective 1: Upon completion of the degree, students should be able to…	
Location in Curriculum Map (Course Name)	
Assessment Method	
Timeline/Frequency	
Benchmark	
Results/Findings	
Actions/Improvements	

Why do we need to set benchmarks?

- A score or grade in isolation doesn't necessarily explain whether the outcome is good or not.

- "Good" is **relative** and may vary by context/discipline - we need a reference point!

Is an 80 a good score?

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Why do we need to set benchmarks?

- Clarify performance expectations

- Spark students' motivation

- Resource allocation

- Information to guide teaching practices

- Determine student mastery in relation to a final grade

- **Understand if and how well students meet your PLOs**

Benchmarking 101

- Set benchmarks that reflect your program's needs. There is no one-size fits all approach!

- Benchmarks are **not** used to evaluate faculty for APT. They are used to identify areas where student learning can be improved.

- **How you use your benchmark data is more important than the facts & figures themselves.**

Types of Benchmarks

Benchmarks

Local/Internal (OEE Recommended)
Are students meeting our own standards?

External
Are students meeting external standards of the field?

Peer
How do our students compare to peer programs or schools?

Value Added
Are our students improving? (Pre/Post)

Historical
Is our teaching improving? Is our curriculum improving? (Longitudinal)

Productivity
Are we getting a return on our investment of time, effort or money?

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Things to Consider: Quantitative

What percentage of the student body should achieve the benchmark to demonstrate broad understanding?

What letter or numerical grade is expected to show sufficient learning, integration and retention of concepts?

80% of students will achieve a score of 85 or better on the final exam.

Things to Consider: Qualitative

Can you pull language or criteria from existing rubrics to describe performance expectations?

80% of students will achieve a score of "proficient" or "advanced" on the assignment rubric.

Even when the benchmark is met, there are likely still ways to improve teaching and learning!

Examples of Unclear or Ineffective Benchmarks

"Successful performance in course as per course requirements"

"Pass SBU 251, 252, 277, 300 with a grade of C or better."

"Satisfactory Grade required in SBU 599, 699."

"High level of originality and sophistication in how the research question is developed, presented and solved."

"Percentage of PhD students who completed the online and in-person Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship (RCRS) training courses"

"Almost all have scored in the upper 80th to 90th percentile."

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17

Diving Deeper: What makes these unclear?

- **"Successful performance in course as per course requirements"**

  o What is considered "successful performance?"

- **"High level of originality and sophistication in how the research question is developed, presented and solved."**

  o How are you defining/measuring "originality and sophistication?" Tell us about your rubric or evaluation criteria for these components.

- **"Percentage of PhD students who completed the online and in-person Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship (RCRS) training courses"**

  o On the right track! What percentage of students do you hope complete the RCRS training?

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Diving Deeper: What makes these unclear?

- **"Pass SBU 251, 252, 277, 300 with a grade of C or better."**
  - Can they pass just one of these with a C or better to meet the benchmark, or must they pass all of them to meet it?
  - Does the course grade really tell us enough information to support the PLO?

- **"Satisfactory Grade required in SBU 599, 699."**
  - Are we using A-F a letter grades, or a S/U (Pass/Fail) designation?
  - What is a "satisfactory grade" in your discipline?
  - Does the course grade really tell us enough information to support the PLO?

- **"Almost all have scored in the upper 80th to 90th percentile."**
  - This reads as a result – reframe it as a benchmark: Define "almost all" and set a target percentile.
  - Ex: 90% of students will score in the 85% percentile or higher on X assignment.

Articulating your Benchmarks Clearly and Effectively

1. **Set measurable target for how many students should achieve it.**
   - Is it something all program students must do (100%)?
   - Is it something that students in a specific population should do (100% of students in the Specialized Study Track…")
   - If not, what result would you be satisfied with? 50%... 70%... 80%...? You set the mark!
   - Are you looking for an average outcome across the student body?

2. **Set measurable target for the desired score or quality students should achieve.**
   - Can be a numerical score or qualitative rubric element
   - "...a score of 75% or better…"
   - "...at least a 3 out of 5 on the assignment rubric…"
   - "...an evaluation of "Intermediate Proficiency" or better on the adjudicator's rubric…"
   - Can even be a Y/N or Met/Not Met: "will submit an ePortfolio; will publish an article in a professional journal…"

3. **Identify the assignment or assessment method clearly.**
   - Provide a benchmark for each assessment method and/or course you list, unless using an average across methods
   - Does the benchmark apply to a course grade? If so, can you drill down to a specific assignment instead?
   - Be sure to name the relevant assignment (or subset of the assignment - Ex: "Questions 1-5 on Quiz 2").

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Examples of Clear and Effective Benchmarks

We expect at least 80% of students to earn a "C" or higher in their written response to a final exam essay question directly addressing this PLO.

90% of students should have a first-author manuscript accepted for publication in a peer reviewed journal by graduation.

60% students will correctly answer questions related to Program Learning Objective 1 on the final exam (worth 42.5/100 points).

Better than 95% of students who attempt a dissertation defense and complete a dissertation should pass the exam and secure approval of the dissertation committee

75% of students or more will provide a minimum rating of 4 (Agree) out of 5 (Strongly Agree) on the survey likert-scale question.

100% of students will complete a style paper of publishable quality, as reviewed by two faculty reviewers. 8/10 points on the checklist rubric is considered "publishable quality".

- You can modify your assessment plan as you go.

- You may want or need to modify your benchmarks as you learn more from your assessment data.

- Consistently hitting your benchmark? Try making it more challenging!

- Consistently missing your benchmark? Adjust to a more realistic target, and focus on how you can improve your results next time around!

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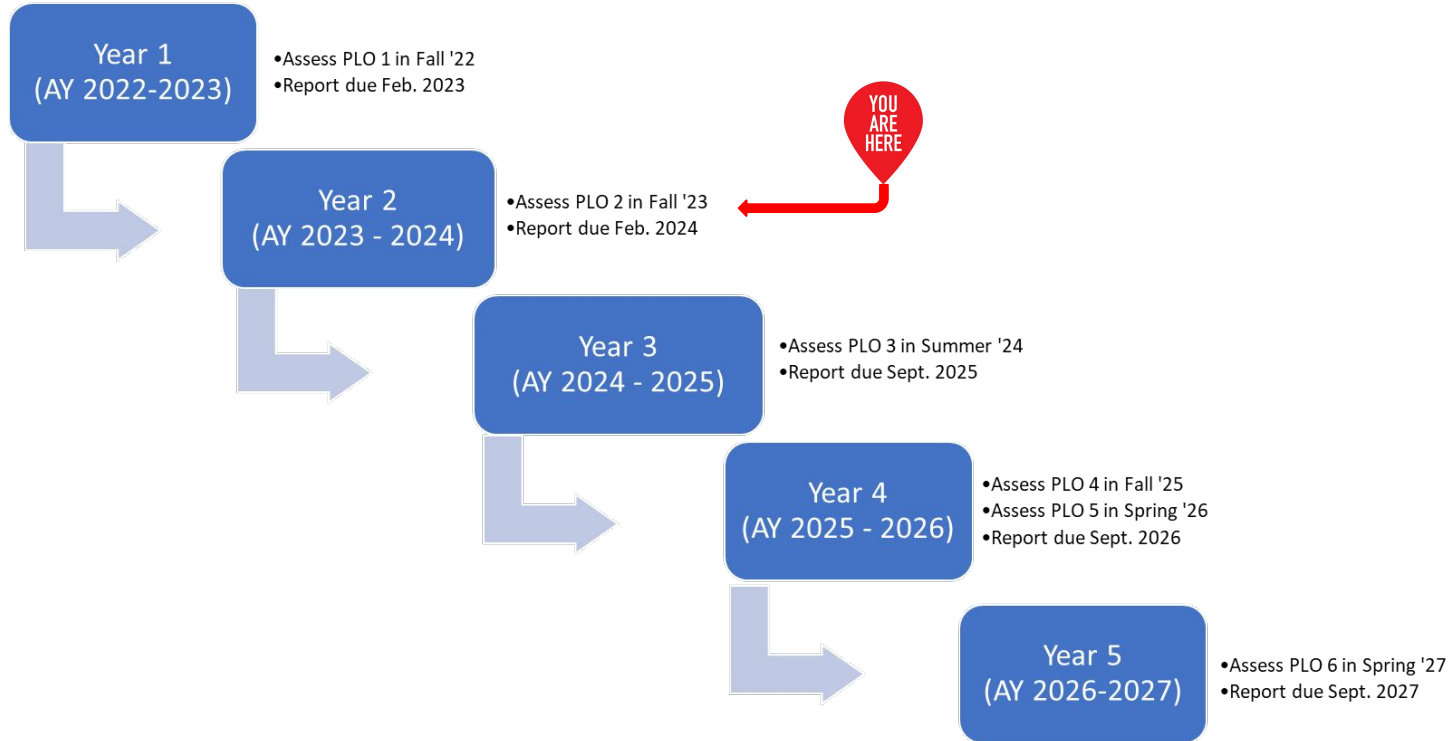
Establishing a Realistic Assessment Cycle Timeline

Timeline: Template Excerpt

Program Learning Objective 1: Upon completion of the degree, students should be able to…	
Location in Curriculum Map (Course Name)	
Assessment Method	
<mark>Timeline/Frequency</mark>	
Benchmark	
Results/Findings	
Actions/Improvements	

Assessment Cycle Timeline

- You **do not need** to assess all PLOs every year.

- You **do need** to assess <u>at least one PLO per year</u>.

- SBU uses a **5-year** program assessment cycle (2022 - 2027).

- Assessment is a cyclical, ongoing process. Start over again once all PLOs have been assessed!

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Sample Assessment Cycle Timeline

Year 1 (AY 2022-2023)
- Assess PLO 1 in Fall '22
- Report due Feb. 2023

Year 2 (AY 2023 - 2024)
- Assess PLO 2 in Fall '23
- Report due Feb. 2024

YOU ARE HERE

Year 3 (AY 2024 - 2025)
- Assess PLO 3 in Summer '24
- Report due Sept. 2025

Year 4 (AY 2025 - 2026)
- Assess PLO 4 in Fall '25
- Assess PLO 5 in Spring '26
- Report due Sept. 2026

Year 5 (AY 2026-2027)
- Assess PLO 6 in Spring '27
- Report due Sept. 2027

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Examples of Unclear Timelines

~Half of all 22-23 reports had room to improve how they articulated their program assessment timelines.

"Every three years"

"Spring 2024"

"Twice a year"

"Weekly (one assessment per lesson)"

Tell us when we can expect your results - which years? which semesters?

Good start! Tell us what year this is in your cycle.

Tell us when we can expect your results - which semesters? Which years in your cycle are affected?

This is your *course-level timeline*. When do you reflect on this data holistically as a program?

Articulating your Assessment Cycle Timeline with Clarity

"Semester 20XX, Year X of 5-year assessment cycle."

I wrote down when my assessment occurs in my plan. What else does OEE need to know here?

- PLO 1 is assessed in Fall 2022, Year 1 of 5-year assessment cycle.
- PLO 2 is assessed in Fall 2023, Year 2 of 5-year assessment cycle.
- PLO 3 is assessed in Summer 2024, Year 3 of 5-year assessment cycle.
- PLO 4 is assessed in Fall 2025, Year 4 of 5-year assessment cycle.
- PLO 5 is assessed in Spring 2026, Year 5 of 5-year assessment cycle.

Sign up for our events: bit.ly/OEECalendar

Assessment Workshop Series 2.0

Sept. - Nov.

Schedule a consultation at your convenience

Annual Recognition Event

Spring 2024

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