IACBE

International Accreditation Council for Business Education

Outcomes Assessment Plan Guide

IACBE

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Outcomes Assessment Plan (OAP) Guide

Introduction

Excellence in business education and the assurance of academic quality require the academic business unit to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for assessing educational outcomes. The IACBE does not prescribe a particular approach for the development of an overall assessment process. Instead, the IACBE focuses on achievement of outcomes in comparison to a business unit's unique mission, programs, goals, and environmental setting. The IACBE Outcomes Assessment Plan (OAP) establishes and documents the general framework for the business unit's outcomes assessment process, and its efforts for continual quality improvement.

Getting Started: Outcomes Assessment Plan (OAP)

To begin, download required and recommended resources. These can be found on the IACBE website under Resources > Member Only Resources. A member login is required to access the Member Only Resources. If you need to request a login, please email iacbe@iacbe.org You will need to download the required IACBE OAP template. (If you are creating an Accounting Outcomes Assessment Plan, download the OAP template designed specifically for accounting.) The OAP template is a fillable Word document with instructions included. Other recommended resources are:

- The Outcomes Assessment Plan Checklist
- Key Learning Outcomes for Business Programs
- Blooms Taxonomy and Writing Intended Student Learning Outcomes
- Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning: Samples

After assembling the assessment team and resources needed from your business unit, you are ready to begin building the OAP. Creating an Outcomes Assessment Plan for IACBE is required on various occasions.

<u>First-Time and Reaffirmation of Accreditation:</u>

- An OAP is created prior to the self-study year so that schools can gather appropriate data for the self-study.
- An updated, forward-looking OAP is also required. This OAP will be designed at the end of the self-study year - after you have completed an analysis of data collected from implementation of the OAP created prior to the self-study year. This forward-looking OAP is expected to demonstrate effort toward continuous quality improvement.

<u>Candidacy Applicants:</u>

- A forward-looking OAP is required for business units seeking status as a Candidate for Accreditation to demonstrate their readiness to move forward.
    - o   Please note that no outcomes results are required for Candidacy applicants

- See "Application for Candidacy Part 2" and "Self-Study Materials" links under Member Only Resources for more information.

Other:

- An updated Outcomes Assessment Plan is required with submission of the Interim Quality Assurance Report (IQAR). Submission of an IQAR is required of members with accredited programs midway through their awarded period of accreditation.
- An Outcomes Assessment Plan may be required in conjunction with other accreditation actions.

The Outcomes Assessment Plan serves as a framework for the process of outcomes assessment. It contains five sections that are interrelated and, together, form a design for implementation. Completion of these sections supports continuous quality improvement.
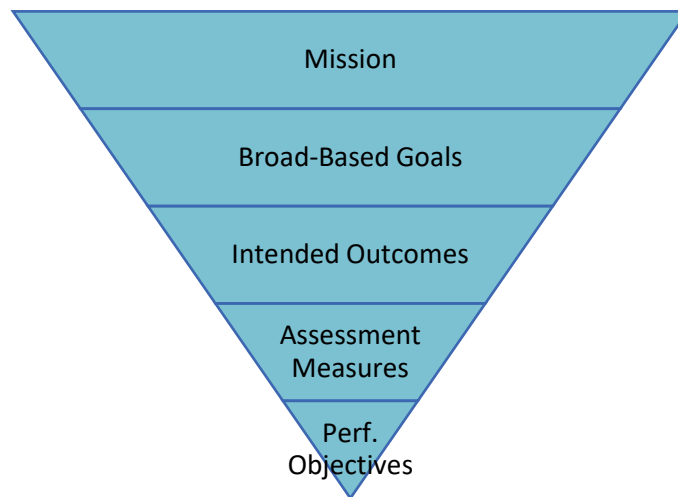
Section I: Mission and Broad-Based Goals

Mission of the Academic Business Unit

The IACBE outcomes assessment is mission-driven. Therefore, we begin with the academic business unit's unique mission statement which provides direction for and guides decision making of the academic business unit (ABU). The mission of the ABU should be consistent with the institutional mission. A sample of an ABU's mission statement is provided below.

Mission of the *Name of your Academic Business Unit*:
The mission of the College of Business is to cultivate a student-centric, innovative learning platform that promotes academic excellence. We prepare students to become professionals in their chosen business fields, responsible global citizens, and leaders in the workforce and their communities. The College of Business provides a challenging yet supportive environment to foster individual growth and diversity so that students are prepared to succeed.

Broad-Based Student Learning Goals

The Broad-Based Student Learning Goals (BBSLGs) break down the components of the overall mission into your vision for student learning. These general goals are visionary and aspirational. BBSLGs are to be applicable for all students in your business programs. They should not be so specific that they can be measured. Think of the vision that you have for students as they graduate from your programs. What do you want students to become, learn, acquire, or aspire toward? Below is a sample of a few Broad-Based Learning Goals. Notice that they are not measurable.

TIPS: Begin each BBSLG with the phrase "Students will . . ." Consider using aspirational verbs such as learn, become, be, acquire, know, understand, respect, appreciate, develop, value, etc.

Broad-Based Student Learning Goals:
1.   Students will gain the relevant disciplinary knowledge and competencies appropriate to their programs of study.
2.   Students will be globally aware business professionals.
3.   Students will become ethical, responsible decision makers able to relate in an ever-changing world.

Broad-Based Operational Goals

The Broad-Based Operational Goals (BBOGs) are aspirational statements for the business unit itself. What is your vision for how the business unit will support excellence in business education? These are *not* student learning goals but instead, reflect the aspirations of the business unit. They are high-level, broadly stated goals. Consider the question: What will the ABU pledge, do, provide, offer, or accomplish in its overall organizational and functional performance? As visionary statements, these goals are *not* measurable. A sample of Broad-Based Operational Goals is offered below.

TIPS: Begin with the phrase "The (insert the name of your ABU) will . . ." Ensure that these statements are broad and aspirational, and not measurable. Look to the business unit's mission statement for guidance in writing these Broad-Based Operational Goals.

Broad-Based Operational Goals:
1.   The College of Business will maintain contemporary, relevant programs that prepare students for success in academic and professional careers, graduate school, and professional advancement.
2.   The College of Business will attract and retain highly qualified faculty who are effective teachers and are engaged in significant professional development activities.
3.   The College of Business will foster a supportive learning environment that promotes innovation and student success.

Section II: Student Learning Assessment

This section moves from vision to measurable outcome, and from aspirational to focused goals. Intended student learning outcomes (ISLOs) are clear statements that describe in precise and measurable terms the specific outcomes of student learning. They flow from the academic business unit's broad-based student learning goals. The purpose of student learning assessment can be found in seeking the answer to two questions.

- Did students acquire the knowledge and skills that they were supposed to have acquired in the business program?
- Did students achieve the learning outcomes the program was designed for?

The Outcomes Assessment Plan (OAP) is the tool to be used for assessment of each core business curriculum. Concentrations, specializations, and emphases are not included in the OAP. For programs seeking accreditation, these components of the programs will be reviewed in Principle 4 of the self-study (see Self-Study Manual).

Intended Student Learning Outcomes

The ABU will create one list of intended student learning outcomes for programs in each degree level that share a common core curriculum. If there are programs in the same degree level that do not share a common core curriculum, then an intended student learning assessment table will be provided for each program. If you are unsure how to structure your learning assessment tables, please reach out to your IACBE liaison for assistance. Guidance for writing intended student learning outcomes (ISLOs) is provided below:

- Articulate key skills, abilities, and competencies that students will be able to demonstrate at the completion of the program. Not all the skills and competencies students achieve through the program will be ISLOs. The ISLOs for each program will be those that are the business unit's highest priority for assessing.
- Each ISLO must be measurable. Use action verbs such as demonstrate, describe, apply, analyze, and evaluate, **not** understand, learn, appreciate, value, acquire, develop.
- Each ISLO is a statement of a single outcome. For instance, analyze, not identify and analyze. If your ISLO includes two actions, consider choosing the higher-level action to measure.
- Each action must be observable for every student individually.
- Outcomes should be appropriate to the program degree level. For guidance on this, consider reviewing Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (available in Member Only Resources).
- ISLOs are stated from the students' perspective. "Students will . . ."
- The ISLO statement is structured in one of the following forms:
  - **Students will be able to** + **verb** (desired action or performance) + **object** (business or business-related learning) + **optional modifiers** (performance criteria/conditions or targeted learning descriptors).
  - **Students will be able to** + **verb** (desired action or performance) + **optional modifiers** (performance criteria/conditions or targeted learning descriptors) + **object** (business or business-related learning).
- Limit optional modifiers which can be restrictive and more burdensome for data collection. Typically, these criteria are included within the measurement instrument (rubric, exam, etc.).

- Each ISLO should support one or more of the Broad-Based Student Learning Goals. All Broad-Based Student Learning Goals must be supported by at least one ISLO. The OAP template provides an instruction prompt for linking each ISLO to a Broad-Based Student Learning Goal.
- Each ISLO should be linked to one or more of the IACBE Key Learning Outcomes (KLOs). These learning outcomes are associated with content and skills-related areas that comprise typical programs in business. (Refer to the Key Learning Outcomes table). The OAP template provides an instruction prompt for linking each ISLO to corresponding KLOs.
- All the Key Learning Outcomes must be covered in each program. Each set of program ISLOs must substantially cover the KLOs (minimum of 6/7). If one of the KLOs is not covered by a set of program ISLOs, then the business unit must be prepared to demonstrate where the 7th KLO is covered.

TIP: After writing program ISLOs, consider reviewing the applicable section in the OAP checklist. The checklist is provided as a tool for the business unit in developing the OAP. It is not submitted to IACBE. Sample table for student learning assessment:

Intended Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs)
1. Students will be able to apply the major concepts in the functional areas of business. Broad-Based Student Learning Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 1 Key Learning Outcomes to which this Outcome is Linked: 4
2. Students will be able to evaluate the legal, social, and economic environment of business. Broad-Based Student Learning Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 2, 3 Key Learning Outcomes to which this Outcome is Linked: 5
3. Students will be able to critique professional business communication. Broad-Based Student Learning Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 1, 2 Key Learning Outcomes to which this Outcome is Linked: 3, 4

Assessment Measures

The outcomes assessment plan must also identify appropriate measures of student learning that will be employed to assess the program's ISLOs. Assessment measures are tools administered for collection of data regarding individual student performance of intended outcomes. Each intended student learning outcome must be assessed by at least two different assessment measures, at least one of which must be a direct measure. The assessment measures are administered at the end of the program to every student.

Direct measures of student learning are tools that measure actual student work product, performance, or demonstration of knowledge or skills specific to the ISLOs. Direct measures are rated by subject matter experts such as instructors or internship supervisors. Student peer evaluations cannot be used as a direct assessment measure. Indirect measures of student learning are tools that measure opinions or perceptions about learning, but do not assess actual student work product, performance, or demonstration of knowledge or skills. Frequently, they are self-assessments by students of their perceived achievement of the ISLOs. Student exit surveys are a common example of an indirect measure. Please note that satisfaction with a program or element of the program is *not* an achievement of an ISLO. Sample rubrics and surveys are available in Member Only Resources (Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning: Samples)

Examples of program-end Direct Measures of Student Learning:
- Comprehensive Examinations
  - Standardized, normed, national exams
  - Locally developed exams
- Capstone Projects
  - e.g., case studies, business plans, research papers
- Simulations (e.g., Capsim, GloBus)
- Theses/Dissertations
- Internships or other professional-related field experience
- Performance-based projects or experiences

(Include both the item description/instrument and rating forms such as rubrics, if applicable, in the Appendices, Section 5.)

Examples of Indirect Measures of Student Learning:
- Student surveys
- Exit surveys
- Alumni surveys
- Self-evaluations of field experiences or other performance-based projects or tasks
- Exit interviews

Direct and indirect measures of intended student learning must directly link to the achievement of specific ISLOs. For example, a rubric will have at least one criterion that is identified as a measure of a specific ISLO. A rubric criterion can only measure one ISLO, but multiple rubric criteria can measure an ISLO. Comprehensive examinations (direct measures) must contain subsets of questions that are directly tied back, related, or mapped to each ISLO that they are intended to measure and must be clearly identified. Individual questions on surveys (indirect measures) must identify the specific ISLO to which each question is linked. A survey question can link to only one ISLO. Sample rubrics and surveys are available in Member Only Resources (Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning: Samples)

Performance Objectives

Performance objectives for student learning are the desired targets set for student performance in assessing achievement of each intended student learning outcomes. These targets are determined by the business unit: IACBE does not prescribe these benchmarks. Requirements for writing objectives:

- Use concrete, quantitative targets
- Measures of satisfaction are not achievements of learning outcomes.
- Course grades cannot be used. Refer to the assessment measure designed to evaluate the individual ISLOs.
- Overall scores or marks cannot be used. They are highly aggregated and do not measure achievement specific to any one ISLO.
- Because cohort averages do not identify individual student performance, they cannot be used.

Sample Performance Objective- Direct Measure of Student Learning

- Capstone project: At least 80% of students will achieve a performance rating of "acceptable" or higher on each of the rubric criteria associated with the specific ISLO measured. (Note: this is not the final capstone course or project grade.)
- End-of-program comprehensive examination: At least 80% of students will score 70% or higher on the subsets of examination questions related to each of the program ISLOs assessed by the examination. (Note: this is not an overall exam score, or a statement of a class mean.)

Sample Performance Objective- Indirect Measure of Student Learning

- Senior exit survey: 80% or more of all graduating students will rate their level of achievement of each ISLO at a 3 or better (on a 5-point scale).
- Alumni survey: At least 80% of all third-year alumni will indicate that they achieved a "proficient" or "advanced" ability in each of the program ISLOs that the survey assesses.

TIP: One direct and one indirect instrument can be used to measure all ISLOs. But multiple instruments can also be used to measure different ISLOs. There is not one best way to proceed. Refer to the IACBE Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning: Samples are available on the Member Resource page of the IACBE website.

Sample table for ISLO measurements and objectives:

Assessment of Individual Student Achievement of each ISLO	
Direct Assessment Measures of Student Learning	**Performance Objectives (Targets/Criteria) for Direct Measures:**
1. End-of-Program Comprehensive Examination Program ISLOs Assessed by this Measure: 1, 2, 4, 5	70% of students will score 65% or above on each subset of questions mapped to an individual ISLO to be assessed.
2. Capstone Project Program ISLOs Assessed by this Measure: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6	80% of students will receive a rating of 3 or higher (5-point scale) on each of the rubric criteria associated with a specific ISLO.
Indirect Assessment Measures of Student Learning	**Performance Objectives (Targets/Criteria) for Indirect Measures:**
1. Senior Student Exit Survey Program ISLOs Assessed by this Measure: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	At least 75% of all graduating students will rate their level of achievement of each ISLO as a 3 or better (5-point scale).

Section III: Operational Assessment

Since the quality of the academic business unit's performance depends on its ability to manage its human, physical, financial, and technological resources effectively, the academic business unit's outcomes assessment plan includes an operational assessment. Operational effectiveness is the degree to which an academic business unit's resources and educational processes are managed efficiently and effectively; the extent to which resources and processes are effectively developed, organized, coordinated, and deployed to achieve the **academic business unit's** goals, intended outcomes, and performance objectives. This requires the business unit to identify operational critical success factors (CSFs) or key performance indicators (KPIs) that contribute to its organizational and functional success.

In writing this section, you will find that the components are similar to the student learning assessment section. Identifying the top critical success factors and key performance indicators for your academic business unit is the first step. Some examples:

- Quality of teaching and advising
- Program curricula
- Faculty/staff performance
- Strategic plan/budget performance
- Academic/student support services
- Learning and technological resources, and facilities
- Co-curricular and experiential learning programs
- Retention, graduation, and placement rates
- Comparisons with peer institutions

In assessing the academic business unit's operational effectiveness, consider the following questions.

- Did the ABU achieve its intended operational goal?
- Did the ABU deliver the resources and educational processes effectively?

The OAP template has a place above the IOO table for you to copy and paste the Broad-Based Operational Goals listed in Section 1. This will be helpful as you create specific intended operational outcomes that support those BBOGs. In writing each Intended Operational Outcome (IOO), state one of the ABU's success factors or performance indicators to be evaluated. The outcome must be stated in terms that are measurable. The template will also prompt you to indicate which Broad-Based Operational Goal (BBOG) it is linked to. An IOO may be mapped or related to more than one BBOG. All BBOGs must be linked to at least one IOO.

Intended Operational Outcomes (IOOs) for the College of Business:
1. The academic programs offered by the College of Business will be current and relevant for careers in business. Broad-Based Operational Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 1
2. Faculty members in the College of Business will be engaged in appropriate professional activities on an annual basis. Broad-Based Operational Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 2
3. The College of Business will be successful in providing effective academic advising to its students. Broad-Based Operational Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 3

Now that the IOOs have been written, the next step requires the business unit to determine how it will evaluate its progress toward achieving those outcomes. Identifying operational assessment measures and objectives is the next step. Operational assessment measures are tools, instruments, or methods that the ABU will use to measure the level of achievement of the Intended Operational Outcomes. Only one measure is required for each IOO, and it can be either a direct or an indirect measure. However, it must produce quantifiable data.

Performance objectives for operational outcomes need to be concrete, quantitative targets. Determined by the academic business unit, it could be a number, rating, or percentage success rating that demonstrates achievement of the IOO being measured. A sample listing of operational measures and objectives is provided:

Assessment Measures for Intended Operational Outcomes:	Performance Objectives (Targets/Criteria) for Operational Assessment Measures:
1. Annual Report of the Office of Career Planning and Placement IOOs Assessed by this Measure: 1	95% or more of undergraduate students will be employed in degree-related positions or in graduate school within six months of graduation.
2. MBA Alumni Survey IOOs Assessed by this Measure: 2	On the survey instrument, at least 90% of all MBA alumni will indicate that the MBA program provided a "significant" or "very significant" contribution to their advancement to higher-level positions within their companies/organizations or with other companies/organizations. Average return rate is 65%
3. Faculty Files IOOs Assessed by this Measure: 3, 4	(IOO 3) At least 90% of the school's full-time and adjunct faculty members will be either academically or professionally qualified to teach in their respective disciplinary areas. (IOO 4) Data from faculty performance review forms will show that at least 80% of the school's full-time faculty members attend two or more relevant disciplinary or instructional-development conferences, seminars, or workshops each year.
4. ASBA Student Exit Survey ; BBA Senior Exit Survey; MBA Student Exit Survey; Ph.D. Student Exit Interview IOOs Assessed by this Measure: 5	On the exit survey instruments at least 90% of all graduating students will indicate that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the guidance they received from their academic advisors.
5. Annual Report of the Director of Experiential Education IOOs Assessed by this Measure: 6	At least 80% of the school's undergraduate students will participate in internships related to their degree programs each year.

Section IV: Linkage of Outcomes Assessment with Strategic Planning & Budgeting

This section is a self-reflective segment that consists of a narrative explanation of how the business unit's process of outcomes assessment and analysis of its outcomes results impact decision making. Consider how the results of implementation of the OAP are incorporated into the bigger picture. Continuous quality improvement is central as you respond to the questions posed in this section. Specifically:

- If the outcomes assessment process identifies areas that warrant change, an action plan for improvement is developed.
- The outcomes assessment process must include a reflection on the linkage of outcomes assessment results and analysis of the strategic planning and budgeting processes. And ultimately, how does the business unit's strategic planning process link to that of the institution? How does implementation of any action plans developed as a result of this assessment process fit into the strategic planning process?

Section V: Appendices

The appendices section includes supporting documentation for the various elements of the OAP. Include blank copies of the assessment measures (tools) that are used in the academic business unit's student learning and operational assessment processes. Examples of instruments might include student project instructions, case studies, student internship requirements, etc. If a third-party comprehensive exam is used, provide a summary or example of the subject areas and learning outcomes assessed. The exam administrator should be able to provide this for you. Measurement tools are items such as rubrics, faculty-created exam questions, surveys, etc., used to assess the learning outcomes. Operational documents might be reports, data collection from various internal sources, surveys, etc.

TIP: Upon completion of the Outcomes Assessment Plan, consider reviewing it using the Outcomes Assessment Plan Checklist for inclusion of all required elements.