Creating an Effective Academic Assessment Plan

Action Plans

Action plans are the concrete steps the program will take to maintain or improve student learning. These are developed through a review and analysis of the assessment findings with the chair or other faculty in the program. Ideally, action plans support a collective responsibility from a group of faculty, from a course section, or from the program as a whole. The strength of assessment is not that it provides quick fixes for a problem, but that it promotes active, informed, and systematic improvement of all aspects of a program through discussion among faculty.

A well-written action plan should answer the following questions:

1. How will the program use these results to improve student learning?
2. What concrete steps can faculty within the program take to improve or sustain this outcome? Or, what changes are necessary to more accurately assess student learning? (e.g. assessment plan, assignment design, etc.)
3. What is the timeframe?

Meets Standard Criteria:

Action plans are developed directly from, and are aligned with, the findings; actions are intended to improve program, teaching methods, or curriculum; actions may also modify learning outcomes or assessment strategies as necessary.

Example 1: Undergraduate

1. Use of results
   [1] The department has purchased a license for the North Star exam preparation software system. North Star can be used to prepare for the PRAXIS Core and VCLA Assessments. [2] All IDS-TP students will be advised of the availability of the on-line North Star PRAXIS Core Prep package purchased by the university and offered to students for free. [3] This will occur during all academic advising sessions with a student.

2. Concrete steps

3. Timeframe

Example 2: Graduate

[1] As our findings indicate, students are able to effectively present a prepared oral presentation, yet struggle when required to respond to ad hoc verbal questions regarding their presentation in the time immediately following. [2] Our action plan is to review the capstone course syllabus to identify an additional opportunity for students to respond to verbal lines of questioning. [3] The review of the course syllabus will occur during the spring semester for implementation in fall of new academic year.
Example 3: Certificate

[3] In the next academic year [2] we will require an online meeting with online students and the instructor before the paper is due to discuss their paper.

Additionally, we plan to use these results for continuous improvement by holding a meeting with instructors in the certificate program to review the structure of writing assignments throughout the program [1] to better prepare all of our students for the final paper.

For more information, please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

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