



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE AND ASSESSMENT

# ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

**Guidelines for Assessing Institutional Effectiveness**

**Last updated in May 2023**

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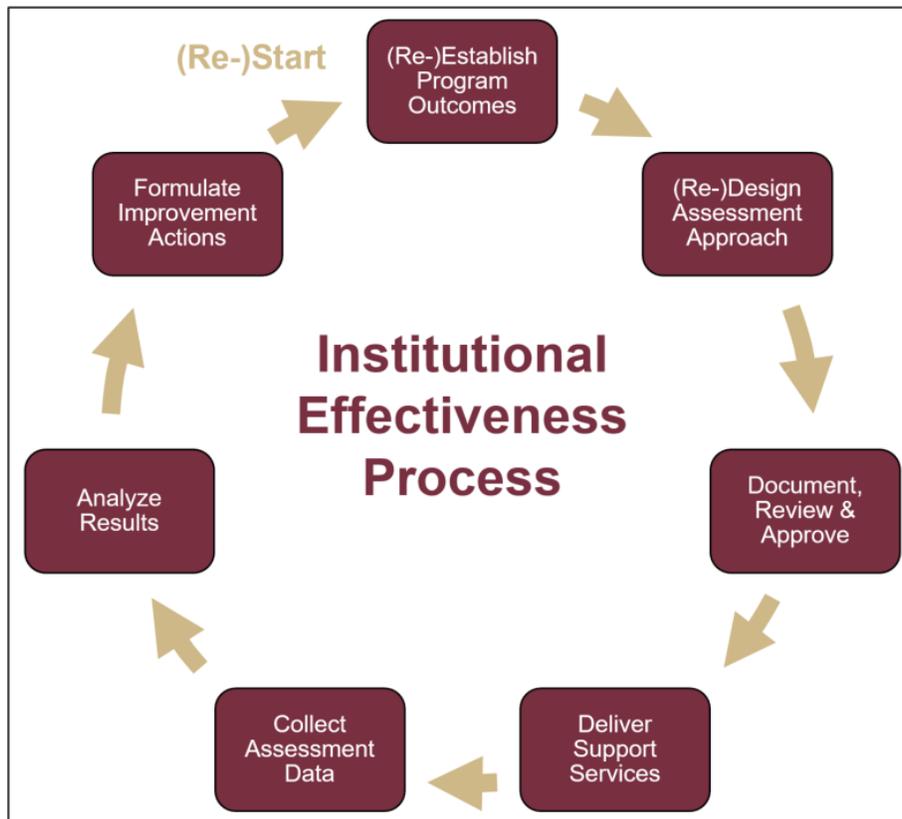
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## OVERVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### What is Institutional Effectiveness?

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) is a cyclical planning, implementation and assessment process that allows us to evaluate whether our practices are meeting our goals. The process reinforces academic and student support services quality and effectiveness through a systematic review of performance against FSU's [mission](#).

It is important to understand that we already, on a regular basis and mostly informally, evaluate and enhance how well our departments and offices provide direct and indirect support to students and faculty. Structured, formal assessment allows us to be more organized and intentional in documenting and telling the story of the valuable work we do.



### Why do we evaluate Institutional Effectiveness?

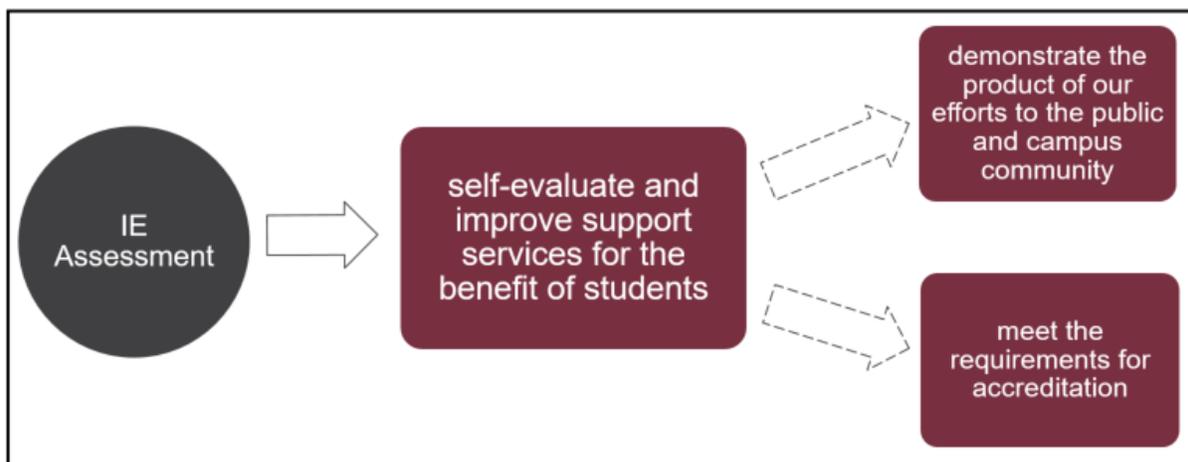
The IE process is a key way to measure how well we are meeting important program goals. The main reason for IE assessment is to self-evaluate and improve services for the benefit of faculty, staff, and students. Assessment helps quantify the daily work that is put into advancing the educational mission of FSU. Assessment helps us know, for a

fact, that our university services help students learn and develop as individuals and prepare them for a successful post-graduation launch. Assessment also informs us of where we are already excelling and where we need to focus next.

As a by-product and a consequence of our assessment and quality enhancement work, we also meet important expectations that various state, regional and national organizations have for FSU as an institution of higher learning. Over the last few decades, accountability for public funds has increased and expectations became more output-focused. In the state of Florida, the Board of Governors determines funding based on how well each public university meets [specific student success benchmarks](#). IE assessment strengthens our position in demonstrating the products of our efforts to the public and campus community.

Furthermore, by engaging in the systematic, explicit and documented assessment of IE, the university meets several accreditation requirements. In the United States, institutional accrediting organizations are charged with the oversight of universities' quality and effectiveness. Federal funds, such student financial aid, are tied to accreditation. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the current institutional accreditor for FSU. SACSCOC's accreditation standards require evidence that the university engages in genuine, systematic and ongoing reflective evaluation practices and uses the results of these assessments to enhance instructional and student support services. FSU will seek its [next reaffirmation](#) of accreditation in 2024.

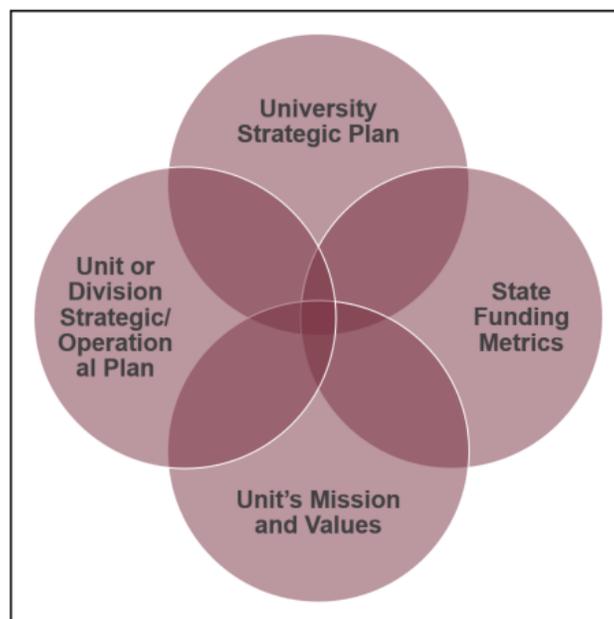
“Student outcomes – both within the classroom and outside of the classroom – are the heart of the higher education experience. Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support appropriate student outcomes for its educational programs and related academic and student services that support student success. To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution is always asking itself whether it has met those goals and how it can become even better.” (pp. 67-68 in [SACSCOC Resource Manual](#)).



## **How do we assess Institutional Effectiveness?**

IE is typically assessed at the level of individual academic and student support services (A&SSS) units, which are defined as the basic units of organizational hierarchy, usually with a director as the head of the unit/office. For example, FSU Career Center, Office of Faculty Development and Advancement, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, etc. are considered to be individual A&SSS units for IE assessment purposes. A full list of the A&SSS units can be viewed in the [IE Assessment Status Report](#) visualization on the Office of Institutional Performance and Assessment website.

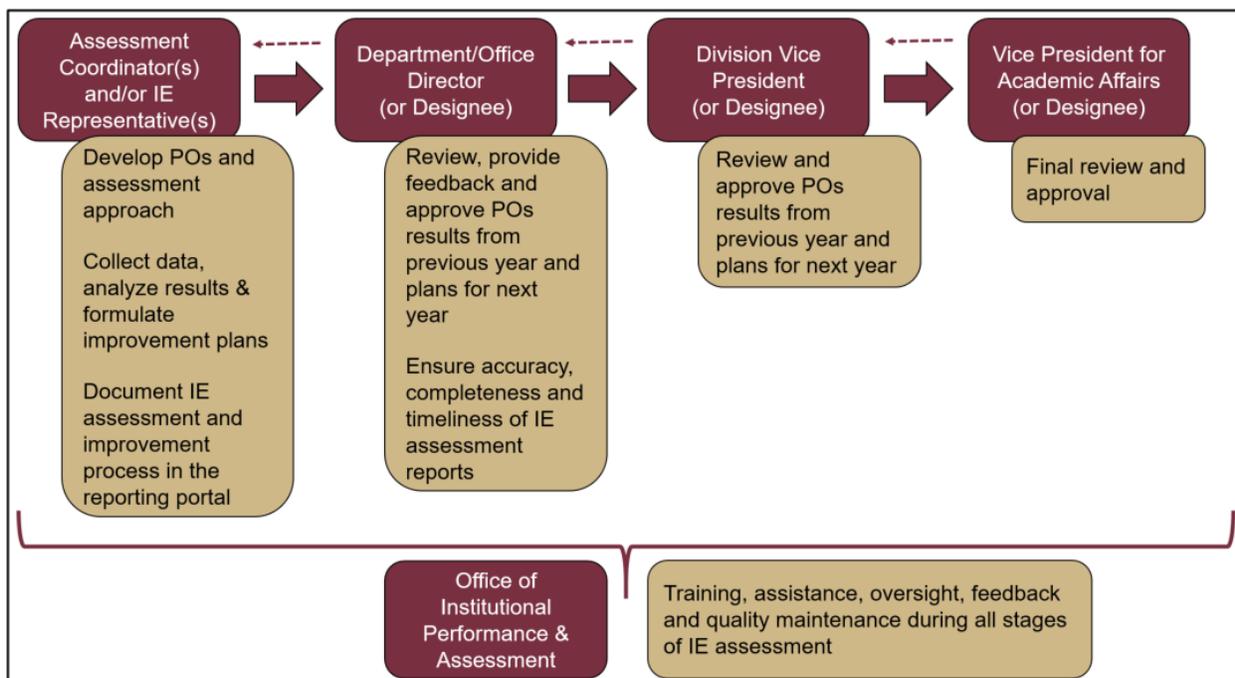
All university units (educational programs, administrative, and academic/student support services) define and set annual performance goals that are measured and evaluated to determine how well they performed in a given year. These goals are referred to as Program Outcomes (POs). They must directly or indirectly align with FSU [Strategic Plan](#) and they may support state funding [metrics](#), [strategic/operational plans](#) of the unit or its division, and/or the unit's mission, vision and values statements. Each A&SSS unit should formulate and actively advance at least two POs in any given year.



## **Who governs Institutional Effectiveness?**

The Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for the overall coordination of the university IE assessment processes. The Office of Institutional Performance and Assessment (IPA) within the Office of the Provost provides oversight, quality maintenance, training, and assistance to all reporting units during all stages of their IE assessment process. The final review and approval of IE assessment reports is the responsibility of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or authorized designee(s).

At the level of individual A&SSS units, the IE assessment process is a shared responsibility between the division’s senior leadership, department heads/directors, unit assessment coordinators, IE representatives, and staff members. As such, they are all involved in an annual workflow that assures that defined outcomes are appropriately designed, measured, analyzed, improved and reported in a timely fashion. Typically, each A&SSS department/office has one **assessment coordinator** who leads and manages the assessment process and implementation of improvements. This individual can also function as the unit’s **IE representative**, who is responsible for documenting the unit’s IE assessment in the university IE portal housed in the Nuventive platform at [iep.fsu.edu](http://iep.fsu.edu). Each unit creates an assessment governance structure most suitable to its size and functions. In units with few employees, the head/director of the department can assume all three roles: function as the unit’s assessment coordinator, IE representative and the **unit’s head/director** who approves final IE assessment report. Regardless of the unit’s size, it is expected that all employees of the unit understand, provide input for, agree with, and participate in the IE assessment and improvement process.



### **When do we assess Institutional Effectiveness?**

While the process of program improvement is always continuous and ongoing, we only formally evaluate attainment of POs once a year, at the end of each unit’s annual cycle. Each A&SSS unit determines the best start and end dates for their IE assessment timeline. Generally, most departments/offices that provide academic and student support services operate on an academic year cycle. Common academic year cycle timeframes are: 1) Fall and Spring semesters, 2) Summer, Fall, Spring semesters, 3) Summer B, Fall, Spring, Summer A semesters.

The recommended [calendar](#) for engaging in and completing various components of the IE assessment process is provided by IPA. The timeline for submission of POs' prior year results and next year plans is aligned with yearly cycles of different campus units. For the A&SSS units, the IE assessment reporting calendar begins in July, which allows the units to use information/data from the finalized reports for the academic year that just ended to inform improvement actions for the academic year that is about to begin.

Completing IE assessment components in the recommended order and by the recommended due dates best positions the university to engage in meaningful evaluation and enhancement of academic and student support services. Importantly, all campus units are allowed and encouraged to complete their IE assessment documentation before the specified deadlines. IPA advises to adhere to the following timeline and step order:

- **STUDY RESULTS**

By the second Friday in July, every A&SSS unit should collect information/data from the previous academic year and assess the levels at which the POs were achieved. Results should be analyzed and discussed with appropriate parties within and outside the department/office. Based on the analysis of results, every unit should develop a set of improvements that will be implemented in the upcoming year to enhance operations, services, or other aspects of the unit.

- **FORMULATE PLANS**

By the third Friday in July, every A&SSS unit should decide which current POs will be continued into the next academic/fiscal year and which current POs will be sunset. If new POs are selected, their assessment methodology should be designed and their numeric targets should be chosen. All new POs must be aligned with 1-3 Initiatives of the FSU Strategic Plan using corresponding functionality in the university IE Portal.

- **DOCUMENT RESULTS AND PLANS**

By the fourth Friday in July, all A&SSS units should report previous year's results, analysis of results, and improvement actions in the IE portal housed in the Nuventive platform at [jep.fsu.edu](http://jep.fsu.edu). Respective POs should be 'continued' into the next year and/or new POs with their assessment processes and numeric targets should be added. The unit may use the [IE assessment reporting templates](#) to expedite the documentation process.

- **PROVIDE FEEDBACK**

By the second Friday in August, IPA staff should provide feedback to each A&SSS unit regarding the quality of the submitted IE assessment narratives. Each unit will either receive a written confirmation that their report meets the standards or will receive a written request for revisions. IE assessment reports submitted late may receive feedback with delay.

- **REVISE RESULTS AND/OR PLANS**

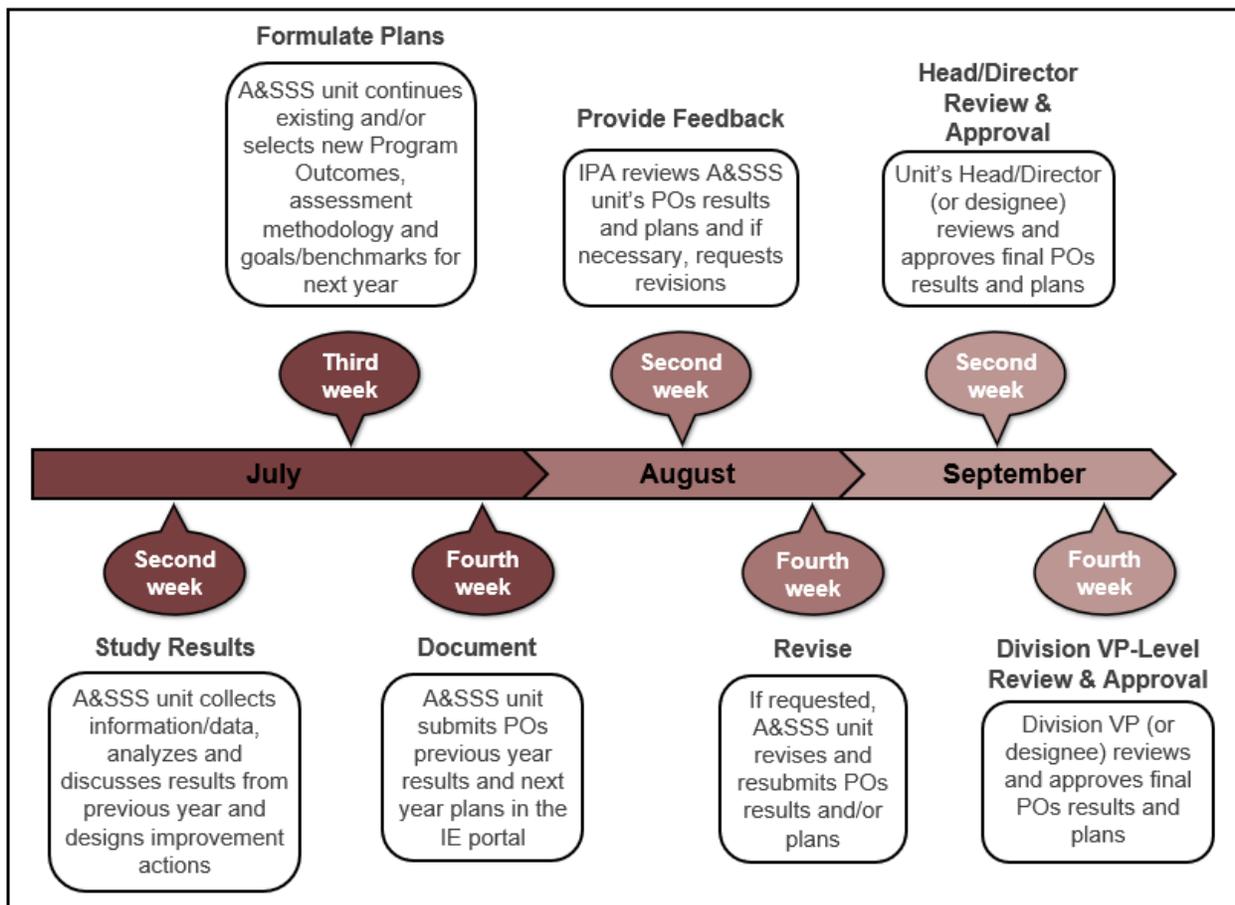
By the fourth Friday in August, A&SSS units asked to improve their IE assessment report should revise and resubmit it. Shortly after, the unit will receive a written confirmation if their revised report meets the standards. It is rare to receive a second request for revisions from IPA.

- **DIRECTOR-LEVEL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

By the second Friday in September, A&SSS unit's head/director (or designee) should review the final IE assessment report and certify in writing that the report accurately represents results and plans for the department/office POs. Early and continual involvement of the unit's head/director in the IE assessment process ensures that there will be no or minimal number of revisions requested at this stage of the reporting cycle.

- **DIVISION VP-LEVEL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

By the fourth Friday in September, A&SSS unit's IE assessment report should be reviewed by the division VP or designated representative(s). If no revisions are requested, the submission should be approved and the fact of its review and approval should be communicated in writing to the Provost-level representative and/or Office of IPA.



## MISSION STATEMENT

Every A&SSS unit should have an active mission statement, which is “a broad statement of the direction and values of the [academic and student support services department/office/center]. For each unit the mission statement should reflect how the unit contributes to the education, development, and experiences of students at the institution. The mission statement also should describe the services provided by the unit.” (p. 14 in [UCF Administrative Assessment Handbook](#)).

A well-defined mission statement includes the following components:

1. **Purpose of the unit** – the reason(s) why you perform your major activities or operations. Your office’s focus may be helping students graduate on time, assisting faculty with research proposals, or supporting transfer students at FSU.
2. **Unit’s stakeholders** – groups of individuals who participate in your programming and/or are benefiting from the provided services. For example, graduate students, female students in STEM disciplines, assistant professors seeking tenure, university staff employees.
3. **Primary functions** – your unit’s most important functions, operations, services and/or offerings that directly or indirectly support student success. For instance, offering course design seminars to instructional faculty, coaching students from under-resourced backgrounds, or providing data-based decision support to university leadership.
4. **Connection to University’s mission** – alignment between your unit’s mission statement and the [mission statement of FSU](#). Your unit’s mission may be focused on leadership education and community engagement, which supports part of FSU’s mission to “instill strength, skill and character”. Another example is a university unit striving to “support the faculty in the important and difficult work of crafting transformative learning experiences”, which directly aligns with FSU’s dedication to excellence in teaching.

Below is an example of Office of Institutional Performance and Assessment mission statement, with the four components of a well-defined mission statement underlined.

<b>(unit’s stakeholders)</b>
We are dedicated to <u>supporting the University community in our continuous improvement efforts.</u>
<b>(unit’s purpose)</b>
Our goal is to <u>facilitate systematic, comprehensive, and data-based planning and evaluation processes</u>
<b>(primary function)</b>
focused on enhancing <u>institutional quality and effectiveness.</u>
<b>(connection to University’s mission)</b>

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

### **Selecting and Stating Program Outcomes**

POs of A&SSS units should focus our efforts on improving direct support to faculty and students, enhancing indirect support for student learning, or serving a specific co-curricular mission that supports the college experience. Most Outcomes for A&SSS units are chosen because of their assumed or proven positive impact on faculty and student success. Chosen POs should be a result of a unit's analysis of its program's strengths and weaknesses and should reflect its commitment to improving the most important services and outcomes. Dependent on the purpose and primary functions of the A&SSS unit, POs selected by an individual department/office/center typically fall into three categories:

1. Outcomes focused on the **efficiency, breadth and/or quality** of unit's support services. For example, FSU Office of Financial Aid may have a PO to optimize processing time in order to disburse financial aid at least two weeks before classes begin. Office of Faculty Development and Advancement may have a PO focused on strengthening junior faculty mentoring by providing additional programming and incentives.
2. Outcomes focused on developing certain **knowledge, skills, behaviors, values and attitudes** among students, faculty and/or staff. FSU Academic Center for Excellence may have a PO aimed at improving student study skills and habits. FSU Health Services may have a PO aimed at increasing financial literacy among students and employees. FSU Office for Human Subjects Protection may choose a PO that targets adherence to ethical principles and laws.
3. Outcomes directly focused on a **specific aspect of university Mission and/or Strategic Plan**. FSU Innovation Hub may have a PO that captures their unit's efforts in promoting innovation by fostering certain scholarship and projects among undergraduate students. FSU Fraternity and Sorority Life may have a PO focused on service through fundraising and stewardship that benefit local families.

In addition, POs are typically conceptualized as:

- Desired final products and results (e.g., increased graduation or retention rates, greater number of event attendees, improved reported well-being among students, more diverse departmental faculty);
- Activities and strategies aimed at achieving a goal (e.g., enhancing the quality of academic advising as a way to support timely graduation, increasing the number of students completing Financial Wellness course module as a way to decrease graduates' student loan default rates).

Depending on the level of control an A&SSS unit has over a specific outcome, either the activities/strategies or their final result may be chosen. POs, like many university-wide metrics, may require planning for an outcome that is a product of multiple strategies. For example, increasing student graduation rates is a PO that requires successfully implemented efforts aimed at retaining students at FSU, their timely completion of gateway courses, ensuring they have financial means to attend college, etc. In addition, enhancements put into effect in a given academic year may yield noticeable results at a later point. For instance, it may require several years for new graduation-focused strategies to lead to sizable changes because it may take a new cohort of students 2-4 years to fully benefit from the expanded range of programmatic improvements.

It is unusual to have a PO that is pursued for only one year; typical 'lifespan' of a PO is 3-6 years. A longer implementation period allows for more thoughtful planning, consistent multi-year assessment, and data-based, sustained enhancement efforts. Reasons for 'retiring' a PO may include: the Outcome that the department/program wanted to attain has been achieved, the Outcome is no longer a priority or is no longer under the purview of the unit, the existing Outcome has been modified and replaced by its much narrower or much broader version, etc. A&SSS units may contact the Office of IPA to consult on sunsetting existing POs and/or selecting new POs.

Do not select POs that resemble a 'to-do' list or a plan to accomplish a task or a series of tasks, especially if they can only be completed if new funding is requested and received (e.g., hiring an employee, renovating office suite, buying new computers).

Below and in subsequent sections, all IE assessment report components (as they are requested in the IE portal) are illustrated using an example PO from the FSU Advising First program.

- Provide a succinct name for the PO:

**PO Name: PO - Academic advising services.**

- Identify the expected outcome that the A&SSS unit will strive to achieve:

**PO Statement: The quality of academic advising sessions provided by Advising First advisors to students will be high.**

### **Aligning Program Outcomes**

Importantly, all POs should be clearly connected to the institutional goals as they are outlined in the FSU [Strategic Plan](#). In addition, the Goals and Initiatives of the FSU Strategic Plan and A&SSS units' POs should be in alignment with budgetary decisions and resource allocation. Finally, all planning, assessment, and implementation activities should relate to, and advance, the [University's mission](#). The system of relationships between these elements is illustrated in the figure below (adapted from [Hoefler, 2019](#)).



The University’s mission is stated as follows:

**Florida State University preserves, expands, and disseminates knowledge in the sciences, technology, arts, humanities, and professions, while embracing a philosophy of learning strongly rooted in the traditions of the liberal arts. The university is dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, creative endeavors, and service. The university strives to instill the strength, skill, and character essential for lifelong learning, personal responsibility, and sustained achievement within a community that fosters free inquiry and embraces diversity.**

The 5 Goals, 15 Initiatives, and 2 Strategic Opportunities of the [2023-2027 FSU Strategic Plan](#) are:

I	<b>RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE</b> <b>Expanding Research and Academic Excellence</b>
I.1	Increase the recruitment, development, and retention of high-impact faculty
I.2	Catalyze Translational Scholarship, Arts, and Research
I.3	Expand and Promote the Arts, Performance, Humanities, and Creative Activities

I.4	Build upon and Create Graduate Opportunities
<b>II</b>	<b>STUDENT SUCCESS</b> <b>Ensuring Student Success on Campus and Beyond</b>
II.1	Enhance Curricular Practices for Engaged Learning and Robust Outcomes
II.2	Create an Environment That Encourages Healthy Behaviors and Wellness
II.3	Expand and Strengthen Academic Advising and Student Support Services
II.4	Bolster Students' Co-Curricular and Career Development Opportunities
<b>III</b>	<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT</b> <b>Nurturing and Inspiring FSU's Entrepreneurial Spirit</b>
III.1	Cultivate a Creative, Innovative, and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
III.2	Commercialize Creative, Innovative, and Entrepreneurial Endeavors
<b>IV</b>	<b>INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE</b> <b>Committing to Inclusive Excellence and Civil Discourse</b>
IV.1	Create Rich Experiences and Opportunities for All Populations
IV.2	Increase International Engagement and Cultural Competencies for Students, Faculty and Staff
<b>V</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL BRAND EXCELLENCE</b> <b>Enhancing Our Brand to Reflect Institutional Excellence</b>
V.1	Focus the FSU Brand to Bolster Our Reputation
V.2	Leverage Diversified Financial Resources to Invest in Institutional Excellence
V.3	Become a National Leader in Operational Excellence
	<b>STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES</b>
	Positioning ourselves for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU)
	FSU Health will improve health outcomes and change lives

In order to sustain “a systematic and documented process of assessing institutional performance with respect to mission” (p. 57 in [SACSCOC Resource Manual](#)), A&SSS units are asked to align POs they identified and (plan to) pursue with 1-3 Strategic Plan Initiatives. This process is known as ‘institutional back mapping’; it allows for a visual representation of the link between the goals of individual university units and strategic priorities of the institution (pp. 62-66 in [Nichols & Nichols, 2005](#)). Below are several examples of different POs’ alignment with the Initiatives of the FSU Strategic Plan.

	I.1	I.4	II.1	II.2	II.3	II.4	III.2	IV.2	V.1	V.2	V.3
PO – Student participation in internships will increase			Y			Y					
PO – Improve tenured and tenure track faculty retention	Y										Y

PO – Establish and maintain strong and positive social media presence									Y		
PO – More faculty will engage in cross-institutional academic leadership programs	Y										
PO – Promote student course load adequate for timely graduation		Y	Y								
PO – Attract a more diverse pool of college applicants											
PO – Expand departmental participation in the Proactive Referral and Engagement program				Y	Y						
PO – Promote student participation in FSU's Study Abroad program								Y			
PO – Increase Number of Commercialized FSU Technologies							Y				
PO – Develop and offer sustainability-related co-curricular opportunities											Y
PO – Foster interdisciplinary contract and grant proposal writing										Y	Y
PO – Implement the Classroom Space Optimization recommendations											Y

### **Designing Assessment Process**

Assessment methodology for a PO should be focused on accurately measuring the extent to which the established Outcome was achieved. The unit may choose to assess a unit-level PO through measuring the efficiency of its day-to-day operations, quality of provided services, number of individuals who received support, etc. It is important to evaluate POs with appropriate assessment instruments, within the context of a unit's functions, and in a methodologically consistent fashion to allow for year-over-year assessment. When designing and describing an assessment process, it is useful to answer the following questions:

- 1) Why is this PO important? How does it benefit the university?
- 2) How will the data/information be collected? Via a student survey, attendance rosters, third-party analytics reports, internal records, etc.?
- 3) Who or what will be counted? Which student/faculty/staff groups will be included/excluded?
- 4) How will the PO be measured? What will be tallied, multiplied, divided?
- 5) Who, when, and from which source will be pulling data/information for PO assessment and reporting?

- Describe how the assessment of the PO will be conducted:

**Description of the Assessment Process:** Quality and quantity of academic advising is one of the strongest predictors of student second- and third-year retention and timely graduation. The quality of provided advising services at FSU will be measured via a post-advising session survey, the link to which will be sent to students through email. Student responses will be aggregated per academic year defined as Fall and Spring terms.

The survey was created internally several years ago and is being used to measure various aspects of advising meetings. It contains several items/questions. The question that will be used to measure this PO asks students to rate on a 5-point Likert scale the following statement: “How satisfied were you with your advisor’s knowledge about liberal studies, major, and university wide requirements?”

### **Setting Numeric Targets**

The preferred approach to ascertaining whether a PO is achieved is setting multi-year quantitative targets using data that can be counted, measured, and expressed using numbers. Qualitative (descriptive, verbal, non-numeric) information may also be used to measure POs, but this assessment approach is not recommended due to the potential difficulty to ascertain whether the PO has been achieved or not.

An A&SSS unit can choose to set a goal for a PO, a benchmark, or both. For the purposes of IE assessment, a **goal** denotes a desired numeric change between two values. For example, a 5 percent increase can mean growing the number of students who attended an event from 20 students to 21 students. Alternatively, a 5 percentage point increase can mean growing the headcount from 70% to 75%. (There is [more information](#) available about the difference between a percent and a percentage point.)

A **benchmark** denotes a minimum or a maximum numeric threshold that the unit will strive to meet. For example, having at least 90% of students exhibit desired behavior after they had participated in the unit’s programming. Or not exceeding two weeks between a service request date and the request being fulfilled.

When units decide how high they should set the PO numeric target, they should study relevant industry standards, performance of similar units at peer institutions, and/or review the unit’s own past levels of achieving the PO. The numeric target should be set at a level that is ambitious, yet achievable with some effort. Over the years, numeric target(s) for the same PO may be changed: if you choose to increase/ decrease the goal or benchmark, record those changes in the IE Portal in the ‘Numeric target’ field and specify the timeframe (e.g., “Beginning with the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the benchmark used to measure success of this PO will be increased from 300 training attendees per year to at least 350 attendees.”)

Importantly, “[w]ithin institutional effectiveness, departments (academic and nonacademic) are free to stretch themselves to the limit and to attempt innovative approaches to provide services without fear of failure. Within institutional effectiveness, departments are not held accountable for failure or success, only for having in place a process for stating outcomes, measuring accomplishments, and using the results to improve programming.” ([Nichols, 1995](#))

Within the IE Portal, units can include any documentation they deem relevant to the Description of the Assessment Process and/or the Numeric Target (e.g., copies of survey questions, consultant’s report, data tables and graphs, unit’s annual reports).

- Specify a measurable assessment standard that defines success:

**Numeric Target:** According to the most recent available data (2016-17 year), 88% of students who were surveyed and responded indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with advisor's knowledge. Over the next five years (with 2021-22 being the last), we want to increase this number to at least 93% at the rate of 1 percentage point increase annually.

### **Providing Results Statement**

During the academic/fiscal year, A&SSS units deliver support services to students, faculty, staff, and community members as planned at the beginning of the year. At the end of each assessment cycle, units aggregate necessary information/data and report the levels at which POs were achieved. A proper results statement for each PO is largely quantitative – it includes counts and percentages where appropriate. Results can be compared to last year’(s’) results to provide additional context. In some cases, qualitative/descriptive results statements can be appropriate.

- Present information regarding the levels at which the PO was achieved:

**Results Statement:** The quality of provided advising services was measured via a survey. In 2018-19 academic year (Fall 2018 and Spring 2019), 1,014 students responded to the survey. Out of them, 724 self-reported that they were ‘very satisfied’ and 184 self-reported that they were ‘satisfied’ with their academic advisor’s about liberal studies, major, and university wide requirements. In summary, 89.5% of students who were surveyed and responded indicated that they were satisfied. Compared to the student satisfaction level of 88.1% in 2017-18 academic year, a greater proportion of students reported satisfaction this year. The goal/benchmark for the 2018-19 year to increase the satisfaction level to 90.0% was not achieved, but there is a positive trend indicating improvement.

## **Analyzing Results**

The culmination of the annual IE Assessment process is the analysis of why the Outcome was achieved at the level that it was. Using facts and their expert opinion, each unit should try to identify any noticeable results trends or data patterns and determine the reason(s) why the PO was attained at this particular level. Most reasons will include specific factors, decisions, actions, and events that negatively and/or positively influenced the results. Units need to make sure that they 'close the loop' on prior year'(s)' improvement action(s) by explicitly stating whether those changes were indeed implemented as planned and whether they had the intended positive effect.

A strong analysis of results should:

- 1) compare most recent PO results to past year(s),
- 2) compare the results to the preestablished numeric target,
- 3) include identification of any important data patterns or trends,
- 4) include take-aways from internal discussions regarding the data,
- 5) form the link between the data and the improvement action(s),
- 6) highlight areas of success in addition to areas needing enhancements,
- 7) if warranted, include explanation of why the PO assessment process or instrument needs to be changed.

In the IE Portal, the file bank associated with each PO allows users to upload any relevant supporting documents, such as data tables and graphs, minutes/notes from staff meeting(s) where results were discussed. These kinds of records provide documented evidence of assessment and improvement efforts and are required by SACSCOC, so each unit should include these files when available.

- Examine the data and reason(s) for the attained results:

**Analysis of Results: We believe that the increase in student satisfaction was due to the enhancements to the training resources in the Advising First program. Specifically, before the start of the 2018-19 academic year, every continuing advisor participated in the refresher training and every new advisor participated in an enhanced training that included a new module explaining how best to address frequently occurring issues.**

**We hypothesize that the increase in student satisfaction was not as high as we set out to achieve because of a high turn-over rate. About 1/5 of our advisors left their positions, which required hiring 12 new employees. The newly hired advisors were not as experienced, and their student ratings were not as high. The voluntarily separated advisors cited inadequate pay as one of their main reasons for leaving.**

## **Formulating Improvement Action(s)**

The most intensive component of the IE assessment process is devising and implementing actions to enhance unit's services and operations. Formulating sound improvement plans requires participation, engagement and meaningful contribution from as many members of the A&SSS unit as possible. Whether POs have been met or not, it is the responsibility of the department/office leadership and assessment coordinators to determine a plan of action for the next year.

When an Outcome does not meet the desired numeric target, the unit should figure out why and then develop a way to improve its functions and services. These plans should be well-thought-out and describe specific new and/or different changes to be implemented, ranging from small-scale enhancements to significant changes in a unit's operations. Improvement actions may also include new or modified assessment approaches, changes to job responsibilities, purchasing third-party products, adopting new practices, attitudes and behaviors, etc.

In cases when a PO is being consistently achieved at a high level, it is recommended to either increase the desired numeric target, focus on a different aspect of the same PO, or derive a new PO that would address other important aspects of the unit's work. If these changes are not feasible, the units should consider how they expect to maintain a high level of performance.

Most importantly, "[t]he institution should be using the data to inform changes based on evaluation of its findings. Plans to make improvements do not qualify as seeking improvement, but efforts to improve a program that may not have been entirely successful certainly do." (p. 69 in [SACSCOC Resource Manual](#)).

- Describe specific plans to improve or sustain performance:

**Improvement Action(s): In order to continue improving student satisfaction levels with their academic advising services, the Assistant Director of Advising First program will design and oversee the training for new advisors and the Director will request increases in salary of the advisors whose compensation is below the median in their job class.**

**For additional details, please see the two attached supporting documents:**

- **The draft of the training protocol designed specifically for first-year advisors. It contains description of the new one-on-one peer mentoring program and outlines specific conversation topics to be covered during weekly meetings with supervisor;**
- **Salary analysis of all currently employed advisors and recommended increases. The 17 advisors whose compensation is below the median will be prioritized in salary increase considerations.**

## Appendix A: IE Assessment Components of a Program Outcome FSU Office of Undergraduate Studies Example

- **Mission Statement**: It is the mission of the Office of Undergraduate Studies to serve as a welcoming and supportive academic dean's office for all students who have not yet been formally admitted to their majors. By providing academic advising, program development and coordination with academic departments, colleges and the Division of Student Affairs, our Office strives to increase student retention and ensure that students are making timely progress toward the degree.
- **PO Name**: PO – Second Fall Reenrollment of First-Time-in-College (FTIC) Students.
- **PO Statement**: First fall-to-second fall reenrollment of full-time FTIC students will increase or will remain at a level comparable to the last cohort's reenrollment rate.
- **Description of the Assessment Process**: The fall cohort consists of full-time FTIC students from the fall semester and the preceding summer semester who continued into the following fall. The reenrolled count is the number of students from the original summer/fall cohort that were enrolled in the fall of the next year. Student reenrollment is obtained on the first day after the drop/add period every Fall term. Students who are enrolled in course(s) are considered to be reenrolled. This PO is tracked using an enrollment OBI query maintained by the IR Office.

The reenrollment methodology is very similar to how fall-to-fall retention is calculated. The main difference is that the reenrollment rate is based on enrollment at the end of the first week of fall classes, whereas the retention rate is based on student enrollment in mid-October. Additional methodology information is provided at [https://ir.fsu.edu/graduation\\_retention\\_secure.aspx](https://ir.fsu.edu/graduation_retention_secure.aspx) and at [https://ir.fsu.edu/indicators/students/ftic\\_retention\\_rates.aspx](https://ir.fsu.edu/indicators/students/ftic_retention_rates.aspx). The Fall to Fall retention is a metric that contributes to the Preeminent University funding model.

- **Numeric Target**: Beginning with the 2017 full-time FTIC cohort, every subsequent cohort's fall-to-fall reenrollment will be at least as high as the reenrollment rate of the preceding cohort. The baseline is the 2017 cohort rate of 92.7% (5,902 reenrolled students out of the original cohort of 6,365). The benchmark for the 2018 full-time FTIC cohort is at least 92.7% second fall reenrollment rate.

[Added next year] As the actual reenrollment rate of the 2018 cohort was 92.9% (5,815 reenrolled students out of the original cohort of 6,259), the goal for the 2019 cohort reenrollment rate is 92.9% or higher.

- **2019-20 Results Statement**: The reenrollment rate of the 2019 cohort is 94.5%. Out of 7,056 full-time FTIC students from the Summer/Fall 2019 cohort, 6,670 were enrolled in at least one credit hour the day after the Fall 2020 drop/add period. The goal/benchmark to have an at least 92.9% reenrollment rate was achieved.

- **Analysis of Results:** For the fall 2019 FTIC cohort, we exceeded the PO goal, even with a record-breaking freshmen class size. The reenrollment rate is a reflection of expanding initiatives to engage students through increased academic and co-curricular offerings designed to ease students transition to the university and support their academic success skills.

The Demand Analysis Numbers Group (DANG) collaborated with colleges to ensure that course availability for fall 2019 and spring 2020 was expanded so that ample seats were offered for the increased FTIC cohort who entered the University.

The spring 2020 term was out of the ordinary as we moved to 100% remote/online instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We increased student outreach to encourage future course enrollment during the spring term and enhanced our efforts to help students enroll prior to the start of the fall 2020 term. We also utilized the texting feature in the EAB Campus Connect platform to communicate with students who were not enrolled for fall and to offer them one-on-one assistance.

It is possible that part of our success is related to the increased flexibility of course delivery in the summer and fall 2020 terms. With more online/remote offerings, students who may have transferred to an institution closer to home after their first year were able to stay home and continue their studies at FSU.

- **Improvement Actions:** Moving into the 2020-21 academic year, FSU will be focusing on continuing success in fall-to-fall student reenrollment through continued expansion of Engage 100 courses. These courses are designed to ease students transition to the university, help them build peer connections, and to provide them with academic success skills/resources. To best serve students studying remotely during the pandemic, the Division of Undergraduate Studies launched the Nole2Nole peer mentoring program available to all new FTIC students not already enrolled in an Engage 100 course to provide peer mentorship opportunities to all students in their first term. Additionally, Florida State Anywhere was launched in the fall 2020 term to connect students studying remotely with peers and resources in the virtual environment.

The EAB platform will continue being utilized to develop outreach campaigns to increase advisor-student communication and support. An advanced certificate for platform use will be launched in fall 2020 to increase the use of targeted outreach campaigns. Course registration help sessions will be offered to assist students in navigating enrollment and holds preventing registration.

The Gateway Success Course Committee has convened to address success in high D/F/W gateway courses often taken in the first year to improve teaching and support for academic success in these courses. Our Office will be using information about which courses have high rates of academic failure to increase co-curricular support provided to students enrolled in these courses.

**Appendix B:**  
**2023 IE Assessment Calendar for Academic/Student Support Services**

<b>General Timeframe</b>	<b>Due Date in 2023</b>	<b>Step</b>	<b>Component</b>
1) By second Friday in July	July 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Collect Data and Study Results	Unit gathers necessary information/data from Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 (and Summer session(s) if applicable), reviews, analyzes and discusses 2022-2023 results, and formulates improvement actions for 2023-2024 year
2) By third Friday in July	July 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2023	Formulate Plans	Unit continues existing and/or determines new Program Outcomes, assessment methodology and numeric targets for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 (and Summer session(s) if applicable)
3) By fourth Friday in July	July 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Document	Unit submits POs 2022-2023 Results and 2023-2024 Plans in the IE Portal
4) By second Friday in August	August 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Provide Feedback	IPA reviews unit's Program Outcomes 2022-2023 Results and 2023-2024 Plans and if necessary, requests revisions
5) By fourth Friday in August	August 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Revise	If requested, the unit revises and resubmits POs 2022-2023 Results and/or 2023-2024 Plans
6) By second Friday in September	September 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Head/ Director Review & Approval	Unit's Director/Head reviews and approves revised POs 2022-2023 Results and/or 2023-2024 Plans
7) By fourth Friday in September	September 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2023	Division VP-Level Review & Approval	Division VP (or designee) reviews and approves final POs 2022-2023 Results and/or 2023-2024 Plans