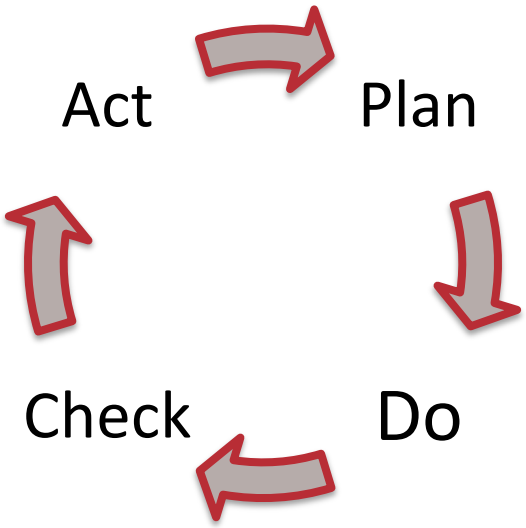
YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

Co-Curricular Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Handbook

A Guide to Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes Assessment at Youngstown State University



YSU Institute for Teaching and Learning

Adapted with permission from Marymount University

Help us improve!

This handbook is meant to provide guidance on assessment processes and YSU's reporting requirements. However, it is a work in progress. If you have suggestions for improvement, please email ysuitl@ysu.edu.

Revised October 2025

Contents

Overview of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Processes

Learning Outcomes Assessment

Learning outcomes assessment is the systematic examination of student learning during their time as a student. Its primary goal is the continued improvement of quality for the institution. Effective learning outcomes assessment answers three questions:

- What knowledge, skills, and attitudes will successful students have acquired upon interaction with a co-curricular program?
- How well do students perform relative to these learning outcomes?
- How can co-curricular programs improve to provide a better learning environment for students?

YSU Institute for Teaching and Learning

The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) leverages data and best practices to guide innovative, inclusive, and integrative teaching. ITL elevates reflective practice and a focus on student success. ITL coordinates annual assessment reporting for both academic and co-curricular programs. We support the accreditation standards of the Higher Learning Commission by assisting faculty and staff in systematic, comprehensive assessment and improvement of student learning. ITL is guided by the YSU mission and strategic plan and works to build a positive culture of assessment, using data responsibly to improve institutional practice, and using assessment to support and promote student success.

ITL supports its mission through numerous services and programs, including workshops, consultations, professional development opportunities, mini-grant programs, and administration and dissemination of campus-wide student assessments (such as the National Survey of Student Engagement). More information on ITL services can be found on our website.

Purpose of the Assessment Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to assist YSU assessment coordinators in conducting learning outcomes assessment. It is a step-by-step resource that explains the basic concepts and processes, provides examples and strategies for meeting the specific requirements, and offers approaches for making assessment a useful tool in program renewal. It also provides guidance on the reporting schedule and expectations for co-curricular programs.

Benefits of Learning Outcomes Assessment

When conducted properly, learning outcomes assessment has benefits for the entire institution. Students benefit through interacting with co-curricular programs that are responsive to student needs and give attention to student learning. It benefits co-curricular programs by providing the tools necessary to lead to the renewal and development of services. Finally, it benefits the entire institution by giving the institution documented evidence of student learning and achievement outside of the classroom, thereby validating the institution faithfully meeting its mission and goals.

Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation

Since the 1990s, issues of accountability in higher education have been increasingly common concerns of federal, regional, and state regulators. Often the standards of learning are discussed during hearings on the reaffirmation of the Higher Education Act, but to date higher education has been able to argue convincingly that self-regulation is the most effective method for ensuring academic quality and accountability. To achieve this goal, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), YSU's regional accrediting body, has greatly increased its emphasis on learning outcomes assessment.

While the HLC's Criteria for Accreditation clearly emphasize the importance of assessment and evaluation, the standards are written with intentional breadth to allow individual member institution flexibility in their assessment activity. Institutions and programs are simply required to illustrate that they have defined learning outcomes, that student performance is evaluated to measure effectiveness relative to those outcomes, and that there is a focus on ongoing, continuous improvement to support student achievement of learning outcomes. **There is also the clear expectation that program staff participate substantially in the assessment process.**

Various Roles and Expectations in Learning Outcomes Assessment at YSU

For learning outcomes assessment to be truly effective, it must be a university-wide process. At YSU, there are four primary groups directly involved with co-curricular assessment activity.

- **DIRECTORS** and/or **ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS** manage the assessment process within their programs and submit yearly assessment reports that provide evidence of activity.
- **CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAM STAFF** assist in developing learning outcomes, assessing student performance, and providing the necessary analysis to understand learning outcomes in their programs.
- The **INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING** coordinates and supports the overall effort and provides methodological and technical support throughout the process. ITL also posts the student learning outcomes reports to the online archive annually.
- The **ASSESSMENT COUNCIL** (AC), consisting of representatives from all the colleges and several divisions in the University, reviews and advises assessment activity to ensure that program-level assessment processes are effective and to keep the university in line with requirements of regional accreditation. The AC, with assistance of faculty and staff reviewers, conducts its work by reviewing all program student learning assessment reports from which specific recommendations for improvement are generated to be addressed by programs.

Seven Steps of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

There are seven steps of learning outcomes assessment:

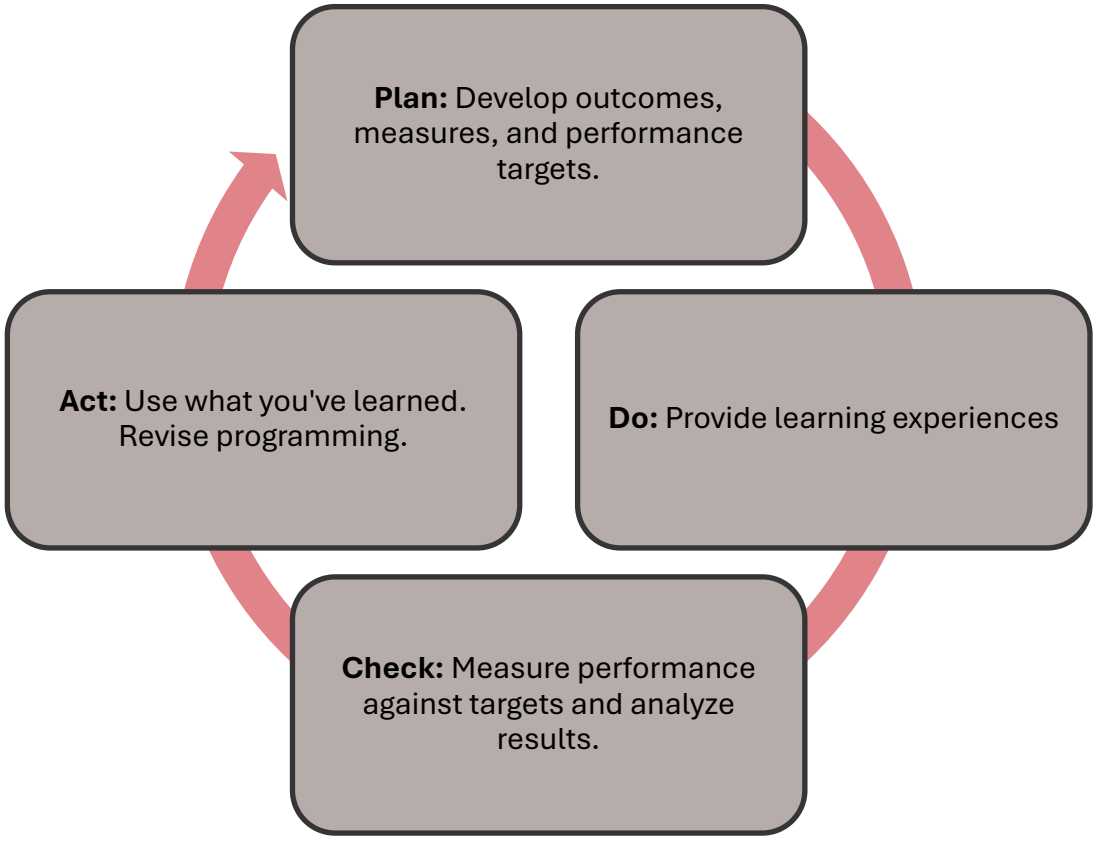
1. Develop learning outcomes,
2. Develop a learning opportunity map,
3. Design outcome measures,
4. Collect data,

5. Analyze and evaluate assessment data,
6. Share results, and
7. Reflect on process and start again.

Part 1 of the Assessment Handbook is divided into sections addressing each of these steps. Each section provides a basic overview of the goals and purpose of the step, lists the specific activities for programs associated with the step, and offers suggestions and potential strategies for effectively completing the step. Part 2 of the Assessment Handbook focuses on YSU's assessment reporting requirements, including drafting templates and detailed instruction guides for Watermark Planning and Self-Study submission.

Included in the Handbook are ideas and suggestions that are intended to provide useful information for program staff. Since each co-curricular program differs in terms of size, approach, and outlook**, it is important to ensure that a program's assessment approach matches the unique needs of the program**. ITL staff is available to discuss any thoughts or ideas to help programs build a learning outcomes assessment program that meets its needs.

Cyclical Nature of Learning Assessment



Since the primary goal of learning outcomes program assessment is continued improvement of the quality of education offered by Youngstown State University, the process is cyclical in nature. Assessment is an ongoing process that should grow and change as programs evolve and develop.

Assessment Reporting Requirements at YSU

The central reason for co-curricular programs to participate in the assessment process is to ensure high quality programs and learning support that develop and prepare students for life after college; however, we are also obligated to provide evidence of these processes and efforts to continuously improve. This handbook outlines the core focus, that of evaluating student learning as best practice, but it is also helpful to understand how the steps relate to reporting. See Part 2, Reporting Requirements at YSU for more detail on reporting requirements and formats.

Generally, this is how the assessment process and reporting relate:

Handbook Part 1: Assessment Steps	Handbook Part 2: Associated Reporting
Step 1: Develop Learning Outcomes	Year 1/Planning Year
Step 2: Develop Learning Opportunity Map	Year 1/Planning Year
Step 3: Design Outcome Measures	Year 1/Planning Year
Step 4: Collect Data	Yearly Updates
Step 5: Analyze and Evaluate Assessment Data	Yearly Updates
Step 6: Share Results	Yearly Updates
Step 7: Reflect and Begin Again	Reflection (after 5-years of updates)

Handbook Part 1: Assessment Processes

Section I: Developing Student Learning Outcomes

The first step in student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment is the creation of outcomes, which reflect the core components of the co-curricular program. Most co-curricular programs have previously developed SLOs, so this process allows for re-examination and potential revision. The development of SLOs should capitalize on the depth of knowledge of program staff and thereby help shape the nature and direction of the program. This section describes characteristics of strong SLOs, provides suggestions on how to develop SLOs, and discusses a process by which programs can scrutinize SLOs to ensure their strength.

Checklist of Needed Activity for Developing SLOs:

- ☐ A comprehensive but manageable number of SLOs (typically between 3-5 depending on program activities)
- ☐ Program staff participation in developing learning outcomes
- ☐ Verification that outcomes are appropriate for program, important, observable, and measurable.

Goals versus Outcomes

Goals are an important part of planning in programs, but they differ from learning outcomes. Goals tend to be broader, more intangible, focused on the learning activities of the program, and/or outline on what faculty may do in the program. They differ from SLOs, as SLOs focus on what the student will take away from the program once complete.

Effective Student Learning Outcomes

SLOs are statements that specify what students will know or be able to do as a result of interacting with a co-curricular program. **Effective SLOs are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, or abilities that students will possess upon interaction with a program**. They provide guidance for program staff regarding content and evaluation and serve as the basis for ensuring program effectiveness. Because we evaluate student performance in terms of specific actions, the strongest learning outcomes are measurable and observable.

Strategies for Developing Effective SLOs

Prior to beginning the program's learning outcomes assessment activity, the program's director and/or program staff may wish to meet with ITL Staff. This person can discuss the entire process, explain potential university resources, and answer questions on the process. To start the process, program staff may want to compile a list of the key knowledge skills and attitudes that students acquire interacting with the program. The program director may call a meeting of program staff or seek suggestions via e-mail. *"Tool 1: Key Questions to Consider When Drafting SLOs"* may be useful to generate the list of core components.

Tool 1: Key Questions to Consider When Drafting SLOs

- ? What is the most essential knowledge students need to have acquired upon interacting with the program?
- ? Are there specific skills or abilities students need? What are they?
- ? How does interacting with the program attempt to shape students' attitudes or views?
- ? How do these skills, abilities, or perceptions relate to the university's mission and core competencies?

After identifying the knowledge, skills and abilities that the program staff want to assess, actual SLOs are drafted. Drafting outcomes is an iterative process that may require several versions to capture the true essence of core ideas. One way to help simplify the process is use an opening such as **"Upon interaction with this program, students will be able to…"** and then focus on the actual essence of the outcome. The goal is to develop a comprehensive set of learning outcomes and examine them on a regular cycle.

Bloom's Taxonomy

In developing SLOs, it is helpful to consider the level of learning expected of students. In co-curricular programs, outcomes vary based on the type of program, so it is important that learning outcomes accurately reflect the level of expectation.

SLOs are often organized around Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), which is a classification of different ways of learning, from lower- to higher-order levels. In a non-academic setting, we most often write learning outcomes in the cognitive (knowledge) domain. Bloom also developed taxonomies around psychomotor (physical skills) and affective (attitudes) domains, which may be of use in some programs. These taxonomies organize learning from the less sophisticated to the more sophisticated. Here are some examples of verbs that may help you and your program staff articulate and frame outcomes at the appropriate level for the program.

Selecting the Right Verb

Given that SLOs focus on observable and measurable actions performed by students, the selection of an action verb for each outcome is crucial. Determining the best verb to use in a learning outcome can be challenging because of its need to accurately reflect the knowledge, skills and abilities being demonstrated. *"Tool 2: Common Learning Outcome Action Verbs"* provides a brief list of verbs that are used in writing learning outcomes at the collegiate level.

Tool 2: Common Learning Outcome Action Verbs

Define	Identify	Describe
Explain	Interpret	Compare
Solve	Apply	Illustrate
Analyze	Correlate	Criticize
Evaluate	Design	Compose
Create	Plan	Formulate
Hypothesize	Integrate	Categorize
Estimate	Select	Conclude

Certain verbs are unclear and subject to different interpretations in terms of what action they are specifying. Verbs/verb phrases such as "know", "become aware of", "appreciate", "learn", "understand", and "become familiar with" should be avoided; they frequently denote behavior that is not easily observed or measured.

Strengthening Weak SLOs

The process for strengthening SLOs re-examines the original characteristics used of strong outcomes. By asking the four questions in *"Tool 3: Evaluating Learning Outcomes"*, weaknesses in learning outcomes emerge.

Tool 3: Evaluating Learning Outcomes

- ? Is the action done by the students?
- ? Is the specified action observable?
- ? Can the specified action be measured?
- ? Is it important?

Revising SLOs

The process of writing SLOs is not simple. Determining the outcomes a co-curricular program wants to examine can pose the first challenge. In addition, drafting the outcome often takes several revisions to develop a strong one that reflects the intentions of the program staff. However, the effort put into drafting strong outcomes will be returned through easier time developing measures, collecting data, analyzing the results, and ultimately making recommendations for improvement. **Strong outcomes will help to focus the entire process and allow for the most useful results from the assessment process.**

In addition, strong outcomes communicate to students what they will gain from interacting with a co-curricular program.

Section II: Designing Learning Opportunity Maps

The learning opportunity map is a tool that can help diagnose student learning and improve co-curricular program offerings. Sharing it with program staff and with students can enhance understanding of the program and offer an important guide for student learning. It can be updated periodically and added to the program's website. It is vital to understand where students have opportunity to learn concepts defined in a program's SLOs. Mapping learning outcomes to places where students interact with a program is the first step in understanding where students have exposure to the material they need to master.

Creating a Learning Opportunity Map

The basic construction of a learning opportunity map includes a program placing their student learning outcomes along one axis of a matrix or table and then placing instances where a student interacts with an office and has opportunity to learn on the other axis. This creates a table where each learning outcome may intersect with each learning opportunity listed.

Once this table is created, a program may consider if the student has opportunity to learn a particular outcome during that interaction. Some program opportunities may provide opportunity to learn multiple SLOs, while other opportunities may focus on only one or two. For example, if a learning outcome for the Office of Career Services is to "demonstrate professional interviewing skills," there may be opportunity to learn that in a mock interview session, but not in an interest inventory to help choose a major.

Intersections between an SLO and a learning opportunity may simply be indicated by an "X" for occurrence, or program staff may wish to create a taxonomy/structure/hierarchy to the interactions, such as introduce/reinforce/master, or even Bloom's taxonomy (often grouped into three levels: K=knowledge/comprehension, A=apply/analyze, E=evaluate/create). The decision regarding occurrence or hierarchy often depends on the level of learning required by SLOs and the depth of the learning opportunities that a program decides are appropriate. Programs with less frequent or more casual interactions may have learning outcomes that lend themselves to a simpler structure than those that

have prolonged or rigorous learning opportunities. The program staff must decide the best structure for their own programs' SLOs and learning interactions.

Using a Learning Opportunity Map to Identify Gaps

Once constructed, a learning opportunity map provides an overview of the program's offerings, as well as the distribution and opportunities programs provide for students to achieve SLOs. The learning opportunity map allows program staff to ask, "Are our SLOs supported by the learning opportunities our program provides?" The map may also reveal gaps or areas that do not provide sufficient opportunity to learn or where offerings may be adjusted to maximize learning opportunities. Four common gaps are listed below.

Examining Learning Opportunity Sufficiency: Sometimes a SLO does not appear to have any learning opportunities. In those cases, program staff should revisit the learning opportunities and consider if the learning outcome is truly needed. If the SLO is important, then consider if additional learning opportunities are needed to achieve that SLO.

Examining Student Learning Outcome Sufficiency: Sometimes a learning opportunity does not appear to cover any SLOs. In cases like this, the program staff should consider if there is essential learning contained in that activity that may not be reflected in the program SLOs. There may be the need to modify or add to the program's SLOs.

Examining Concept Reinforcement: Often programs will discover that students are introduced to a concept, but planned experiences and interactions are not sufficient to help students master those concepts. This may lead program staff to consider modifications in programming to reinforce concepts with students. Program staff may also discover that a new activity needs to be created to sufficiently address a learning outcome.

Examining Activity Sequencing: Sometimes program staff will discover that an activity provides sufficient support for the student to master the material, but activity sequencing should be adjusted so that students are introduced to concepts that build on and complement each other. The student learning assessment process can be used as an audit of a co-curricular program's complete experience.

Using a Learning Opportunity Map to Plan Assessment

Once a program has finished their learning opportunity map and used it to diagnose and correct any learning gaps, the map becomes a useful tool to identify the best locations to evaluate student learning and most efficiently collect data on student learning. Program staff may identify learning opportunities that cover multiple SLOs, so that data collection points may provide the most information with the least amount of effort.

Tool 1: Sample Learning Opportunity Map

How Students Interact With Your Program	Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 3	Learning Outcome 4	Learning Outcome X
Activity 1					
Activity 2					
Activity 3					
…					
…					
…					
…					
Activity X					

Section III: Designing Outcome Measures

After developing learning outcomes and a learning opportunity map, the next step in the assessment process is to select outcome measures. While learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students should possess after interaction with a co-curricular program, outcome measures are the specific tools and methods that generate data and information about students' performance relative to learning outcomes

There are two types of outcome measures: direct measures and indirect measures, as well as supporting proxy data. Each serves an important function in assessment, and when used together they provide a richer perspective on student learning by providing direct evidence and context to understand student performance.

- **Direct measures** are methods for assessing actual samples of student work to provide evidence of student performance relative to the learning outcomes.
- **Indirect measures** are methods for assessing secondary information on student learning that do not rely on actual samples of student work, such as self-reported learning.
- **Proxy measures** are data that can corroborate the data found in direct and indirect measures, but do not directly provide evidence of student learning. They should only be used in combination with other data.

Each type of outcome measure serves a particular purpose. Direct measures assess the extent to which students' work meets the learning outcome performance criteria. Indirect measures compliment direct measures by providing supportive evidence, information, and student perspective. Proxy evidence can help triangulate and substantiate other forms of evidence. Proxy evidence should only be used to support other direct/indirect measures; proxy data alone does not provide sufficient evidence of learning. Together they provide a richer perspective on student learning by providing evidence and context to understand student performance. It is suggested that each SLO has at least two measures.

Regardless of the type of measure used, strong measures share three basic qualities:

1. Provide sufficient data and information to measure the learning outcome
2. Are not overly burdensome for programs to collect
3. Have established performance criteria and expected results to help guide the analyses

Table 1: Examples of Measures

Proxy	Indirect	Direct
Might provide some supporting evidence, but not on its own. Examples include: • Usage data • Program effectiveness • Satisfaction • Employment rates • Social media shares	Self-reported achievement of SLOs Examples include: • Surveys • Group discussions • Focus groups • Exit interviews • Reflection essays	Direct evidence or observation of learning outcome performance. Examples include: • Work samples • Observations • Performances • Simulations • Supervisor Evaluations

Selecting Direct Measures

There are many issues to consider when selecting direct measures of learning. Programs should determine the most useful way to measure student performance and ensure that the methods allow for appropriate interpretation of results. "Table 1: Examples of Measures" provides a list of some of the more common methods within higher education and can help in brainstorming additional ideas for developing measures. While direct measures are appropriate for co-curricular assessment, they are less commonly used than indirect measures.

Selecting Indirect Measures

Similar to selecting direct measures, there are many issues to consider when selecting indirect measures of learning. Programs should determine the most useful way to measure student performance and ensure that the methods allow for appropriate interpretation of results. "Table 1: Examples of Measures" provides a list of some of the more common methods within higher education and can help cultivate ideas for developing indirect measures.

The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) conducts campus-wide surveys that may be analyzed as indirect measures of student learning. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks students about their educational experiences and perceived learning gains. The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) asks students about the importance of, and their satisfaction with, different aspects of their educational and co-curricular experience.

While University surveys may provide some insights into students learning experience, they sometimes lack the specificity needed by co-curricular programs in their assessment activity. Accordingly, the programs may need to conduct their own inquiry to address the issues. These methods may be quantitative or qualitative in nature.

Selecting Proxy Measures

While proxy measures should not be the only source of evidence for a learning outcome, they do provide supporting evidence to compliment direct and/or indirect measures. Many co-curricular programs are already collecting data around usage, student satisfaction, and program effectiveness. Ensure that the proxy data connects with the appropriate learning outcome. For example, average number of times a student visits the Office of Career Development and Exploration (OCED) can complement a direct measure of observation sheets filled out by career advisors when assessing the impact of OCED appointments on students articulating career competencies. This quantitative or qualitative data can be used to support learning outcomes but make sure to not have it stand alone as the only source of evidence.

Establishing Performance Criteria

When interpreting assessment results, it is useful to set a performance criterion that specifies the acceptable level of student response. For each learning outcome the program should ask, “What is an acceptable performance level for this learning outcome?” This performance level may be any indicator of the quality of student learning

Establishing Expected Results

By setting expected results for the percentage of students meeting or exceeding performance criteria before data collection begins, the program can gauge its effectiveness in helping students meet the learning outcomes. For example: Seventy-five percent of students met the performance criterion set by the Office of Admissions for the outcome measure on successfully applying to the university. This can be compared. To the expected result of 85% meeting the performance criterion, which reveals an area for improvement.

Evaluating Measures

It is possible to evaluate outcome measures by asking the three questions found in *Tool 1: Questions for Evaluating Outcome Measures*. If program staff can answer “yes” to all three questions, it is likely that a strong set of measures has been developed.

Tool 1: Questions for Evaluating Outcome Measures

- ? Does the measure provide sufficient data and information to analyze the learning outcome?
- ? Does the measure require a reasonable amount of work to collect?
- ? Does the measure establish performance criteria to help guide the analysis?

Example: **Improving Outcome Measures**

The following illustration shows how the questions in *Tool 1: Questions for Evaluating Outcome Measures* can be used to evaluate outcome measures.

- **Student Learning Outcome**: Students engaged in student organizations will be able to articulate the skills they have developed through their co-curricular involvement.

A program has decided to use the **outcome measure**: Two questions from a student survey.

For each of the following skills, please indicate how well you believe your participation in co-curricular activities prepared you to:

1. Determine the most appropriate response to a situation.
2. Work together with others to accomplish a task.

We will evaluate this outcome measure by asking the questions found in *Tool 1: Questions for Evaluating Outcome Measures*.

1. Does the measure provide sufficient data and information to analyze the learning outcome? **Yes**, because this evidence is the student's opinion. **Note**: While indirect measures are valid and appropriate for co-curricular assessment reporting, it is important to have at least two measures of student learning.
2. Does the measure require a reasonable amount of work to collect? **Yes,** the amount of work required is reasonable.
3. Does the measure establish performance criteria to help guide the analysis? **No,** it does not provide a performance criterion to help guide the analysis though one could be developed regarding the student opinion. For example, adding a desired performance level such as students rating a 3 or 4 on a scale of 1 (none) to 4 (very much) could be developed. To improve the measure, develop a performance criterion, i.e. an expectation that students will rate an average of 3 or higher.

Section IV: Collecting Data

Data collection is the next step in the assessment process. This section will cover the process of collecting student data. The collection process may seem like a daunting task, but with planning, it can move more smoothly and provide quality data and information about the co-curricular program's learning outcomes.

The data collection process consists of three basic steps:

1. **gathering** necessary student work and other information
2. **evaluating** the results
3. **storing** the data electronically

The **Gathering**, **Evaluating**, and **Storing** process is used for both direct and indirect measures; however, some of the specific steps will vary. The key to simplifying the data collection process is planning. "*Tool 1: Questions to Ask in Planning Data Collection*" provides several questions to think about before gathering data.

Step 1: Gathering

The process of gathering materials for direct measures varies greatly depending on the measures used. When using indirect measures, the gathering phase consists of conducting the necessary research (survey, focus group, or other measures). Programs should set a schedule that outlines the materials needed to simplify follow-up and ensure all data is collected. Using a reasonable sample of your population is appropriate for collecting data.

Tool 1: Questions to Ask in Planning Data Collection

Direct Measures	**Indirect Measures**
▪ Where does the student work come from? ▪ Does the student work represent all participants involved in the program (even if it is a sample of student work)? ▪ How will the student work be organized and stored for evaluation? ▪ When will it be evaluated? ▪ Who will be responsible for evaluation? ▪ How will the performance data be stored? How will it be secured? ▪ Are there FERPA issues to consider?	▪ Who will conduct the research for the measure? ▪ When will research be done? ▪ Does the research represent all participants involved in the program (even if it is a sample of student work)? ▪ How will the results be tabulated or categorized? ▪ If you are using institutional data, will special data analysis need to be done?

Step 2: Evaluating

Direct Measures

The evaluation phase for direct measures includes the examination of students' work by program staff to determine the level to which it meets the learning outcome. Evaluation, and supporting tools, can take multiple forms; they can be as simple as a checklist of criteria or expectations to as complex as a multi-level, multi-dimensional rubric. Because assessment looks to evaluate specific aspects of the student work, rubrics are often used as guidelines in the process.

Effective rubrics are standardized evaluation forms used to assess student work toward meeting learning outcomes. We will discuss the elements of an effective rubric. Effective rubrics, standardized Rubrics can be developed in many ways to assist the evaluation process. They can describe qualitative as well as quantitative differences, and are often used to assess assignments, projects, portfolios, internships, and performances. They allow multiple evaluators to assess student work effectively by increasing the consistency of ratings and decreasing the time required for assessment. The development of rubrics is covered in the Rubric Toolbox.

Regardless of the type or style of rubric used, there are a few general principles to ensure they are effective. *"Tool 2: Steps for Using a Rubric to Evaluate Student Work"* outlines the basic process of using rubrics.

Tool 2: Steps for Using a Rubric to Evaluate Student Work

- Review the rubric with all raters to ensure it is consistently understood.
- Use the descriptors in each performance level to guide ratings.
- Assign the rating that best represents the student's work.

The key to achieving consistency between raters is conducting a "norming" session to allow faculty raters to reach consensus on the levels of student work at each level of the performance criterion. *"Tool 3: Steps to "Norming" a Rubric"* provides the basic process of a norming session.

Tool 3: Steps In "Norming" A Rubric

- Explain to the raters how to use the rubric.
- Provide a few samples of student work.
- Discuss each sample and determine how raters determine scores.
- Reach a general consensus on each level of the performance criterion.

Indirect Measures

For indirect measures that the program is conducting, the evaluation phase consists of the compiling of the results into a form that is meaningful to those doing the assessment. For survey data, this will generally include entering the data into a data set for analysis and generating the descriptive statistics. For more qualitative work such as focus groups, this part of the process may be the extraction of any themes or ideas. More information on these processes is in future sections.

Step 3: Storing

There are two different storage issues which co-curricular programs need to address. The first is an electronic storage system of all the data that are compiled from students' work and results from indirect measures. Whatever methods are used, it is generally a good idea to use a password protective shared drive to store the data. This makes submitting and accessing the data convenient as well as ensures that the data is backed up by YSU's data servers.

For tracking direct (and some indirect) measures programs may create an electronic database/Excel spreadsheet to store all their assessment data for later analysis. The database will typically list all students and their performance on the measure. *"Tool 4: Example of a Program Database"* illustrates how to compile a database of assessment data.

Tool 4: Example of a Program Database

Last Name	First Name	Year	LO 1: Questionnaire	LO 1: Exit Interview	LO2: Focus Group
Allan	Jane	Senior	Complete	More interaction needed	Positive Overall Experience
Miller	Larry	Senior	Complete	Not Present	Positive Overall Experience
Smith	Bob	Senior	Did not submit	Satisfactory	
Bloom	Desmond	Junior			Negative Overall Experience
Jones	Robin	Junior			Positive Overall Experience
Smith	Troy	Junior			Negative Overall Experience

Because this database will have individual student information, it is very important to ensure it remains secure and that only program staff involved in the assessment activity have access to the contents. Many times, indirect measures may not be trackable by specific students. These types of measures are frequently shared in a descriptive report of aggregated results. The second storage issue facing the co-curricular program revolves around copies of individual responses to surveys or questionnaires. It is generally advisable to retain copies of or access to the direct measures until the report feedback has been returned. It is best practice to not include students' names or student id numbers on copies of student data.

Additionally, it is recommended that raw data be stored to document the assessment process. Electronic copies of student data can reduce space required for storage. These documents can be scanned and stored as PDF files to help limit the amount of storage space necessary. Best practices suggest that these records should be archived for 10 years to ensure that any records for accreditation would be available if requested.

Student Awareness of Assessment Activity and Privacy Issues

Students should be aware that their responses may be used for assessment purposes. As noted in the section about keeping data work secure, student work is protected by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). To comply with FERPA regulations, student work should either be maintained in a secure system with access limited to those involved in assessment or should have all personal identifiable information removed. Even without a name, some student work is considered identifiable if it contains sufficient information about the student to enable the author to be identified.

Tool 5: Common Data Collection Roadblocks

1. Data is not collected for stated outcomes measures.
2. Copies of student work are collected but cannot be found at the time of evaluation.
3. There is no clear system for the evaluation of student data resulting in no data for analysis.

Strategies for Collecting Data

By reviewing the original planning questions in "*Tool 1: Questions to Ask in Planning Data Collection*" before collecting data, programs can avoid many potential roadblocks in the data collection process. "*Tool 5: Common Data Collection Roadblocks*" outlines the most common problems encountered. The following examples list the three common roadblocks that can occur during this process and illustrate an effective plan for data collection.

Example: **Collecting Assessment Data from Direct Measures Effectively**

There are three common roadblocks that can stifle the collection of assessment data.

1. Data is not collected for stated outcome measures
2. Copies of student work are collected but cannot be found at the time of evaluation
3. There is no clear system for the evaluation of student work resulting in no data for analysis

The following example illustrates how to avoid these roadblocks and plan for effective data collection. By answering the questions in *Tool 1: Questions to Ask in Planning Data Collection* before data is to be collected, an effective plan can be developed. The example uses the learning outcome and outcome measures found in previous sections.

- The learning outcome chosen by the program is: **Students engaged in student organizations will be able to articulate the skills they have developed through their co-curricular involvement.**
- It will be measured by a direct measure**: A reflective essay written by students at the end of their co-curricular participation.**

The first common roadblock, data is not collected, can be avoided by identifying where the student's work is coming from. The program director decides that the leaders of student organizations will collect copies of student work from group meetings. The leader will remove the students' names from student work and affix unique numeric assessment codes to the essays.

The second roadblock, copies of student work cannot be found for evaluation, is discussed by the program staff and a system for organizing and evaluating the student work is developed. The organization leader will submit electronic copies of the students' essays to the program director. The program director will store essays on the secure network drive. This will ensure the data is available for evaluation.

The third common roadblock, no clear system for evaluating student work, is avoided by developing a schedule for evaluation of student work. The program staff agree to serve as evaluators for a sample of student essays on a rotating schedule to divide the work equally. Each essay will be reviewed by two program staff members using the

rubric developed for this outcome measure. If the reviewers' ratings do not agree, a third program staff member will review the essay and assign a final rating. Ratings will be recorded on a 1 to 5 scale.

Ratings of student work will be stored in an Excel database located on the secure YSU shared drive and maintained by the program director. Examples of student work for each level of student performance will be stored as PDF files on the network drive and maintained by the program director. By keeping the data on the YSU shared drive, the data are automatically backed up in case of computer failure.

Example: **Collecting Assessment Data from Indirect Measures Effectively**

There are three common roadblocks that can stifle the collection of assessment data.

1. Data is not collected for stated outcome measures
2. Copies of student work are collected but cannot be found at the time of evaluation
3. There is no clear system for the evaluation of student work resulting in no data for analysis

The following example illustrates how to avoid these roadblocks and plan for effective data collection. By answering the questions in Tool 1 before data is collected, an effective plan can be developed. The example uses the learning outcome and outcome measures found in previous sections.

- The learning outcome chosen by the program is: **Students engaged in student organizations will be able to articulate the skills they have developed through their co-curricular involvement.**
- It will be measured by an indirect measure: ***Indirect Measure:*** **Two questions from the Student Survey** - For each of the following skills, please indicate how well you believe your participation in co-curricular activities prepared you to: (1) Determine the most appropriate response to a situation. (2) Work together with others to accomplish a task. Students respond to these questions by indicating their choice on a scale ranging from "None" to "Very Much"

The first common roadblock, data is not collected, can be avoided by identifying where the information is coming from. For this indirect measure, survey data will be obtained from the Institute for Teaching and Learning. The survey data is collected across the institution annually, and the first roadblock is avoided.

The second roadblock, copies of student work cannot be found for evaluation is discussed by the program staff and a system for obtaining the data on the program's students is developed. The program director volunteers to request the survey data for students. This requires a special extraction of the responses for the program's students from the main survey database.

The third common roadblock, no clear system for evaluating student work, is avoided by developing a schedule for evaluation of student data. The data will be analyzed by a designated staff member to determine the percentage of students responding at each level of the measurement scale for each question. The results of this analysis will be stored in the secure Excel database on the program's secure YSU shared drive. This avoids roadblocks two and three in this example.

Section V: Analyzing Assessment Data

Analysis of data is the next step in the assessment process. Analysis is a process that provides better understanding of data and allows inferences to be made. It summarizes the data, enhances the value of information gathered, and provides direction for decisions regarding co-curricular improvement. While data analysis can be relatively complex, for the purpose of assessment it is usually straightforward.

This section discusses the core elements of data analysis and provides strategies for and examples of analysis. The underlying theme of this section is to illustrate how to link data to the learning outcomes and provide a basis for using data to improve student learning.

Checklist of Needed Activity for Collecting Data:

- ☐ An indication of the number students participating in the assessment activity for each outcome measure
- ☐ The percentage of students who met or exceeded the performance criterion for each outcome measure.

Before Analyzing Data

Two important steps should be taken before analyzing data. The first step is to review the data visually. Reviewing data has two benefits, it allows for the identification of outliers and possible mistakes, and it enables basic patterns or trends to emerge. For example, it may be clear that all students who participated in an activity had difficulty with a particular outcome.

The second step of the process is to determine the appropriate method for analyzing the data. This can range from simply counting the number of successful students to higher powered statistical analyses. The two key factors are first to make sure the analysis method fits the data; and second, to ensure that method aligns with the program's needs. There are two types of data used in assessment, each with different methods of analysis.

1. **Categorical data** are based on groupings or categories for the evaluation of student performance. For example, a simple yes/no answer on a survey is categorical because there are two groups into which students can be placed.
2. **Numerical data** are based on scales that reflect student performance. For example, a survey question that asks students how satisfied they are on a satisfaction scale.

Direct measures can generate either categorical or numerical data. Students' reflection essays rated on an assessment rubric may be categorized as "meeting standard" or "failing to meet standard." However, the essays may alternatively be scored on a numerical scale indicating the overall quality of the essay with respect to the outcome.

Indirect measures can also generate either categorical or numerical data. By asking students on a questionnaire, "Did you have sufficient skill development in the leadership program?" a program would

compile categorical data based on those saying "yes" and those saying "no." However, by asking students to indicate how strongly they agree with a statement like, "There was sufficient leadership development during this program," numeric data could be generated by applying an agreement scale. (5 – Strongly Agree, 4 – Agree, 3 – Neither, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree).

Analyzing Assessment Data

Once the data have been reviewed and the type determined, the process of analyzing data follows. *"Tool 1: Methods for Analyzing Data"* provides a brief overview of the basic methods used to analyze assessment data. Assessment's focus on student achievement of learning outcomes typically requires the determination of counts and percentages. Together they show clearly the number of students involved in the activity and the rate of successful display of the outcome. All data, regardless of type can be analyzed using counts and percentages.

Numeric data has the additional benefit of being able to be analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean, median, and mode provide useful information to interpret data by allowing for easier comparison between groups and tests for significant differences.

Tool 1: Methods for Analyzing Data

- **Percentage**: Proportion of total cases falling into a category
- **Mean**: Average of a set of scores
- **Median**: Middle value in an ascending list of scores
- **Mode**: Most frequent score
- **Standard Deviation**: Average distance of scores from the mean
- **Percentile**: Percentage of a distribution of scores that is equal to or below a specified value

The Impact of Dispersion

By examining how data are distributed around measures of central tendency, particularly the mean and median, a richer understanding of the data emerges. The standard deviation represents the average deviation of scores about the mean. Small standard deviations in student performance indicate that performance levels varied little across students in the sample. Large standard deviations indicate a greater variability in levels of student performance. Standard deviations are commonly reported with the mean. Percentiles represent the percentage of a distribution of scores that are at or below a specified value. They are calculated by the formula $Percentile = S_b/n \times 100$, where S_b is the number of scores below the score of interest, and n is the total number of scores. They are often reported with the median which by definition is the 50_{th} percentile.

Missing Data and Valid Responses

Working with assessment data, there are many instances when data will not be available for every student. Generally, missing data should be excluded from calculations of percentages and descriptive statistics. If a program has ten (10) students, and eight (8) submit a needed paper for the assessment of an outcome; then eight (8) submitters become the basis of the analysis. Extending the example, if six (6)

of the submitted essays meet or exceed the performance criterion, then a program would indicate 75% of students submitting essays showed mastery of the outcome rather than 60% of all students in the program.

Analyzing Data in Small Programs

In co-curricular programs with a small number of participants, or a small sample of data, it may be appropriate to aggregate multiple collections of data for analysis to be able to use findings for program improvements. For example, data may be collected from a culminating activity yearly to evaluate an outcome but would only be analyzed once in an assessment cycle using three years' worth of data.

Presenting Analysis

Tables and graphs are useful in presenting analysis because they focus attention to specific results. Tables are useful for reporting multiple percentages and frequencies, comparison of student performance with stated performance criteria and some descriptive statistics. They provide an ordered way for readers to see results quickly for each outcome measure without having to search through text to find a particular result. Graphs can further enhance the visual impact of assessment. Graphical representations of results show differences in variables, which makes graphs highly effective in showcasing assessment results.

When sharing the results of program assessment, it may be useful to report each learning outcome and outcome measure paired with the corresponding results of the analyses, which joins the multiple outcome measures (direct, indirect, and proxy) for each learning outcome. Next, compare the results with the specified performance criterion and discuss the implications of the data as they relate to the program. Both strengths and areas for improvement are discussed, because showcasing program success is just as important as identifying areas for improvement, when it comes to making data-based decisions about the program.

Tool 2: Example of a Table of Counts and Percentages

	# of students evaluated	% Below Performance Criterion	% Meeting Performance Criterion	% Above Performance Criterion
Articulate career readiness competencies	20	**30**	**50**	**20**
Discuss career fields that are in-demand in Ohio	18	**6**	**6**	**88**

When comparing student performance to specified performance criteria, a table with the counts and percentages may be useful to summarize the data. The example in *"Tool 2: Example of Table of Counts and Percentages"* shows data collected from 20 students participating in a student assessment related to two Office of Career Exploration and Development learning outcomes. It indicates the number of students completing the component and the percentage who were below, met and above the performance criterion.

Example: **Presenting Analysis of Assessment Data**

Once the student survey data has been evaluated by program staff, the data is recorded and analyzed for interpretation. Analysis provides summaries of the data in a form that is more easily understood than raw data. To do this the assessment coordinator reports the number of students who meet or exceed the standard for this learning outcome measure. This count might be displayed in the chart below:

Students Meeting or Exceeding the Performance Criterion for Co-Curricular Skills
35

While this gives a count of the number of students meeting or exceeding the performance criterion; it is also valuable to further classify their students' abilities.

Students Meeting or Exceeding the Performance Criterion for Co-Curricular Skills

Below Standard	Met Standard	Exceeded Standard
5	20	15

This table shows that fifteen (15) students in the program exceeded the standard, but numbers by themselves are sometimes difficult to interpret. To facilitate greater understanding, reporting the percentage of students below standard, those meeting the standard and those exceeding the standard aid in interpretation of the data. The table below shows this.

Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding the Performance Criterion for Co-Curricular Skills

Below Standard	Met Standard	Exceeded Standard
12.5% (5)	50% (20)	37.5% (15)

Choosing how much information to provide from any data analysis should be guided by the type of data gathered and the needs of the readers that will be interpreting the results. The analyses may vary for each learning outcome measured.

The Role of Advanced Statistical Analysis

As a program's assessment activity and data increase, more advanced analysis may be useful in understanding student learning. It is possible to:

- Study differences in performance to examine the effects of program changes,
- Conduct pre and post assessments to evaluate impact of specific experiences, and
- Compare program participants to national performance benchmarks.

The Institute for Teaching and Learning can work with programs looking to incorporate these and other types of analysis into their assessment activity.

Section VI: Share Results

The next step of the cycle is sharing results of program assessment. This phase focuses on interpreting strengths, challenges/areas for improvement, and identifying recommendations and action steps to enhance student learning. There are three steps in sharing results.

Checklist of Activity for Sharing Results:

1. Work with program staff to understand assessment results.
2. Decide stakeholders with whom to share the results.
3. Create appropriate materials for stakeholder groups.

Work with Program Staff to Understand Assessment Results

Including program staff in all steps of the assessment process is important to ensure its meaningfulness and effectiveness. The inclusion of staff insights is probably most important in interpreting results and identifying strategies/action steps for improving student learning. In addition, **it is a specific expectation of our accrediting body that program staff substantially participate in assessment--at a minimum all should participate in interpreting results, identifying action steps, and implementing improvements.** The methods used for sharing results are driven by the staffing structure of the co-curricular program, with some pouring over all the data generated and others simply reviewing summary analysis outlined in Section V of the handbook. Using summary reports of assessment results, and the university Assessment Council's review of the previous year's report will typically facilitate rich discussion and generate useful interpretation for the assessment report.

Decide Who Needs to See the Results

In addition to staff within the program, there are potentially other audiences that wish to see the work programs are doing to improve student learning. The first and most important group to share results with are the students themselves. Sharing results with students is both a strong message quality programming and can also inform them on how best to be successful. For example, ifs students who participate in a key activity tend to excel in other areas, then sharing that with new students could help them plan their schedules to include that activity. Similarly, sharing results with graduating seniors could provide rich information regarding context of results and/or suggestions for improvement.

In addition to students, sharing results with program alumni, other departments, or your division provides opportunity to demonstrate program continuous improvement through student learning assessment, as well as get feedback from colleagues who might be able to make suggestions and/or assist in making program improvements.

Finally, because we are expected by our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), to demonstrate program quality through student learning outcomes assessment, it is critical that programs share results with the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL). By reporting results to ITL, it both provides evidence of assessment processes and opportunity for ITL to provide resources, suggestions, and

feedback to improve program assessment processes and outcomes. Part 2 outlines the types of reports that programs must submit on a yearly basis.

Create Appropriate Materials for Your Audience

With many stakeholder groups, it may be appropriate to just share a small portion of the data. For example, the Office of Career Exploration and Development might share just the results from the evaluation of career readiness at the division level as it may be of interest to others in related co-curricular programs. In other cases, you may just wish to focus on the action steps taken as a result of assessment data, such as in an newsletter.

With reports to ITL, it depends on where the program is in the assessment cycle. Plans should provide detail on how programs plan to collect and evaluate data; with yearly updates the focus should be on the evaluation/interpretation of the data, and what action steps were identified/undertaken as a result; the assessment cycle reflection should provide a more holistic analysis of the assessment cycle as a whole and how program improvements have impacted learning. More details on specific reporting requirements are in Part 2.

Section VII: Reflect and Begin Again

Assessment is a cyclical process that builds on previous work and activity. The “assessment loop” is closed once a program takes findings from its assessment results and implements changes based on those findings. Though not always, assessment findings often indicate a need to modify the assessment process or the co-curricular program. Making any change also requires consideration of resources and developing a plan of action. The following section provides a framework for thinking about taking action to close the assessment loop.

When and Where “Closing the Loop” Occurs

Change for improvement happens all the time in a co-curricular program, for example, events respond to trends, or program staff adjust their activities based on student participation and their professional judgement. In assessment processes, however, there tend to be two key places in which changes are mainly concentrated.

Changes in the Assessment Process

When reviewing the assessment results, it is also important to evaluate the assessment process. This involves considering all aspects involved in creating the assessment report. Reviewing learning outcomes as well as approaches to gathering data will provide direction on improving the assessment process. **Changes in the assessment process are generally made during the development of an assessment plan**, though sometimes may happen during data collection and evaluation.

Learning Outcomes

Tool 1: Re-Assessing Learning Outcomes

Results From Assessment Activity	Likely Use of Outcome During Next Cycle

Students not performing adequately relative to outcome	• Consider making outcome a priority focus in next cycle; consider potential action steps for improvement; re-assess more than once in next cycle.
	• Evaluate any action steps taken during last cycle:
	  ○ If action steps impact student learning immediately, re-assess outcome using same measure early in plan.
	  ○ If recommendations impact student learning over an extended timeframe; schedule re-assessment for further out in plan

Students performing adequately relative to outcome	• If same results for the past 3 years, consider scheduling re-assessment at an appropriate interval (e.g. only once in cycle)
Students' performance relative to outcome yields unclear current results	• If difficulty in determining appropriate level relates to outcome; re-write outcome and reassess during next cycle • If difficulty relates to measures; retain outcome; revise measure; and re-assess during next cycle

"*Tool 1: Re-Assessing Learning Outcomes*" provides a structure for reviewing student learning outcomes. Based on findings from the student learning outcome assessment results, a program may want to retain, modify, or eliminate an outcome.

Measures

In addition to changing outcomes, there might be a need to change the type of data collected. If results obtained were not as expected, it is also important to know if better information could be collected to demonstrate student learning. This change could vary from modifying items on a survey to creating a new metric.

Data Collection Procedures

In addition to having the correct measures, it is also important to consider how data were collected in previous student learning assessments. Knowing who was included in the assessment data and when data were collected are important to understanding if changes need to be made in data collection procedures.

Changes in the Academic Program

Results from the student learning assessment may indicate that programming needs to be reviewed and adjusted. These are the types of changes as a result of the yearly practice of measuring and evaluating student learning outcome data. Changes tend to be very specific to the results of the assessment data. For example, a program may determine that an outcome in the program is not achieved by a specific intervention, and a program may appropriately decide on several possible action steps, such as

developing intervention guidelines or requiring an additional intervention. Any or all of those action steps could serve to improve the outcome in the program.

Consider Resources

Closing the assessment loop for the assessment process or program may require the use of additional resources. Discovering the need for additional activities or programming may require resources beyond current budgets. In addition to fiscal resources, there are other resources such as time to consider. Modifying programming requires time, which is a valuable resource.

Taking Action

Opportunities to improve the assessment process and programming may emerge from assessment results but will not be realized without planning and implementation. The assessment loop is only closed if actions are taken to make modifications where necessary. Answering who, what, when, and where questions about assessment modifications are helpful for planning and implementing any changes. "*Tool 2: Questions for Planning Change*" provides a few questions to assist with mapping and implementing changes.

Tool 2: Questions for Planning Change

- ? Who will implement the changes?
- ? Who needs to be involved to make these changes successful?
- ? What will be changed?
- ? What needs to occur for things to change?
- ? When will the changes be put in place?
- ? Where will they be implemented?
- ? How will they be implemented?

Appendix 1A: Rubric Toolkit

Rubrics are sets of guidelines that aid in the assessment of student work or activities. Rubrics are often derived from careful analysis of varying qualities of student work. For example, a professor has student work from a recent assignment. By examining the student work and defining the characteristics of "below performance criterion" papers, papers that "meet the performance criterion," and papers that "exceed the performance criterion," the professor has a good start on developing a rubric that will categorize the students' papers based on quality. Rubrics increase the reliability of assessment by making the process of scoring student work more consistent. This helps eliminate bias by ensuring student work is rated on the same criterion. ITL's suggests utilizing Blackboard to create any course or program level rubrics.

Types of Rubrics

There are three basic types of rubrics: **checklists**, **holistic rubrics** and **analytic rubrics**. **Checklists** are the simplest type of rubric and list accomplishments that are evident in the students' work. **Holistic rubrics** describe levels of performance with regards to the overall quality of the paper or project, without considering the components of student work separately. **Analytic rubrics**, guide the scoring of student work on multiple traits first, and then sum the individual scores to arrive at a total score. "*Tool 1: Description of Types of Rubrics"* illustrates the differences among rubrics.

Tool 1: Description of Types of Rubrics

Type of Rubric	Description
Checklists	Provide a check-off list of accomplishments completed/present
Holistic Rubrics	Contain narrative descriptions to focus on the quality of the entire document/performance/project rather than the components of specific traits
Analytic Rubrics	Contain descriptions of each level of performance for each component/criterion/trait

Checklists give a list of content that should be included in students' work. The content may be listed sequentially indicating the order in which it should occur. The rater marks each item on the checklist that the student has completed or included in their work. Checklists do not give an indication of the quality of student work.

Holistic rubrics assess the overall quality of student work by providing descriptions of student work at different levels of performance. These descriptions define the overall characteristics of student work at each level of performance. Holistic rubrics provide an overview of student performance and have the advantage of quick scoring. However, holistic rubrics do not differentiate between multiple traits and therefore may not provide as detailed a picture of student performance as an analytic rubric. They are most useful when a single trait is sufficient to define the quality of student work.

Developing Holistic Rubrics

The first step in developing a **holistic rubric** is to identify the components in the student work that are related to the learning outcome. These components should be linked to the student learning outcomes developed as part of the program assessment plan. After the components are identified, the next step is to decide how many levels are necessary to classify the quality of students' work. The descriptors chosen for the mid-point level of the rubric should describe the primary characteristics of the students' work that meet the minimum acceptable program standard.

Analytic rubrics provide separate evaluation of student work on multiple traits. They can pinpoint particular areas where students need improvement, which can be used during planning to suggest opportunities to improve instruction. One drawback to the use of analytic rubrics is that they require more time to use than holistic rubrics.

Developing Analytic Rubrics

The first step in developing an **analytic rubric** is to identify the trait or traits (knowledge, skills or abilities) to be measured. For example, the ability to choose an appropriate statistical technique for data analysis is a trait. Traits should be linked to the student learning outcomes and developed as part of the program assessment plan. The number of traits to include in the **analytic rubric** should be guided by the learning outcome.

The next step is to decide how many levels are necessary to classify the quality in student work for each trait being measured. The descriptors chosen for each level of the rubric should describe the primary characteristics of students' work for each of the selected traits. Sometimes it can be difficult to find meaningful descriptors for several levels of performance. Remember, all of the characteristics listed must be reflected in the students' work to be scored as meeting that level of the rubric.

Example Checklist Rubric

Articulating Skills: The essay…	**Yes**	**No**
Identifies co-curricular level of participation	☐	☐
Discusses two skills learned through participation	☐	☐
Shares example of ways to apply skills in personal and/or professional life	☐	☐

Example Holistic Rubric

Below Standard	**Meets Standard**	**Exceeds Standard**
The essay: identifies little to no information about levels of co-curricular participation discusses one or no skills learned through co-curricular participation does not share examples of how to apply skills in personal and/or professional life	The essay: identifies co-curricular level of participation discusses two skills learned through co-curricular participation shares examples of ways to apply skills in personal and/or professional life	The essay: identifies co-curricular level of participation referencing specific organizations, activities, and experiences discusses two skills learned through co-curricular participation linking them to the activities where they were learned shares examples of ways to apply skills in both personal and professional life

Example Analytic Rubric

Characteristics/Traits	**Below Standard**	**Meets Standard**	**Exceeds Standard**
Identifies level of co-curricular participation	Identifies little to no information about participation	Identifies co-curricular level of participation	Identifies co-curricular level of participation referencing specific organizations, activities, and experiences

Discusses skills learned through co-curricular participation	Discusses one or no skills learned through co-curricular participation	Discusses two skills learned through co-curricular participation	Discusses two skills learned through co-curricular participation linking them to the activities where they were learned
Shares examples of how to apply skills in real world settings	Fails to share examples of how to apply skills in real world settings	Shares examples of ways to apply skills in personal and/or professional life	Shares examples of ways to apply skills in both personal and professional life

Appendix 1B: Glossary

- **Action Verb:** A verb that reflects overt behavior that can be observed
- **Analysis:** Process of summarizing information to make inferences about student learning and program effectiveness
- **Assessment Council (AC):** interdisciplinary group composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrators who, with ITL, works together with the aim of improving learning on campus
- **Assessment Cycle Reflection:** A program's comprehensive look at the past assessment cycle.
- **Assessment Plan:** A program's plan (usually 3-4 years) for student learning outcomes assessment.
- **Assessment Update:** A program's yearly submission of progress on student learning outcomes assessment
- **Categorical:** Data that are grouped by performance
- **Closing the Assessment Loop:** Implementing changes based assessment findings
- **Co-Curricular:** Programs on campus that provide opportunities for student learning, but are not an academic program.
- **Data:** Quantitative or qualitative scores attributed to student work or responses to indirect measure data collections
- **Database:** Electronic collection of data relating to student performance or responses
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Standard formulas that generate numeric indicators of data allowing easier interpretation and comparison of data
- **Direct Measures:** Assessments that evaluate actual samples of student work
- **Expected Results:** Pre-specified percentage of students expected to meet or exceed the performance criterion
- **Indirect Measures:** Assessments that analyze supportive evidence, information, and student perspective of learning
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Outcomes that can differentiate the quality of student performance
- **Numerical:** Data that are measured on scales that reflect student performance
- **Observable Outcomes:** Outcomes that can be evidenced by student work or other data
- **Outcome Measures:** Methods for assessing student mastery of learning outcomes
- **Outliers:** Extreme values outside the expected range that should be reviewed for data entry or other errors
- **Performance Criterion:** Pre-specified level of acceptable of student performance (direct measures) or response (indirect measures)
- **Rubrics:** Standardized evaluation forms used to assess student work toward meeting learning outcomes
- **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):** Statements that specify what students will know or be able to do as a result of earning their degrees
- **Success Rate:** Percentage of students meeting the program standard
- **Table:** A listing of data in a systemic format to facilitate comparison and analysis.

Handbook Part 2: Reporting Requirements

Section VIII: Assessment Reporting Requirements at YSU

The following information is designed to provide a timeline for program assessment over the life of an Assessment Cycle (typically between 3 and 5 years but selected by the program).

Table 1 can be used to find the suggested assessment activities for each year in the Assessment Cycle for co-curricular programs. Templates for suggested activities, as well as information on submitting reports through Watermark Planning and Self Study (PSS) are in the Appendices following this section. An Assessment Cycle begins with an Assessment Plan and ends with a Cycle Reflection.

Types of Reports

Assessment Foundational Documents: Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and a Learning Opportunity Map are created at a program's inception and reviewed for currency when developing or revising Assessment Plans. These submissions help provide the goals of the program translated into outcomes and provide a holistic overview of where and how learning is developed throughout the program. These can be updated and managed via Organization Management in PSS.

Assessment Plan: For new programs, an Assessment Plan is created. For programs currently engaged in assessment, plans will be reviewed after completing a reflection of the past cycle or making significant program changes. An Assessment Plan is an opportunity for programs to review their student learning outcomes, measurement tools, and assessment strategies for the following cycle. Plans should reference and reflect on the strengths and challenges of student learning identified through the prior Cycle Reflection. Assessment Plans detail the measurement of all student learning outcomes in the program over the next four (or more) years.

Yearly Assessment Update: Active programs report on the progress of the Plan for 3-5 consecutive years through Assessment Updates. Updates focus on the student learning outcome(s) the program focused on the prior year, how the program measured the outcome, what the program learned from the data, and how the program will make modifications to improve student learning. Each year's update will focus on a different student learning outcome(s). Between the consecutive years of updates, a program will touch on all student learning outcomes at least once in an assessment cycle.

Assessment Cycle Reflection: The Assessment Cycle Reflection is meant to be a summative look at the past 3-5 years of assessment (including planning, outcome measuring, analysis of student learning, and action steps for improvement). The Cycle Reflection is completed the same year a program reviews/edits/affirms their Assessment Plan. Cycle Reflections are meant to gauge the health and status of student learning and assessment processes in your program. Cycle Reflections will also be used when programs are making significant curricular changes.

Review Process

The review process of any assessment submission is focused on providing support and enabling a program to effectively and efficiently evaluate learning in the program. There is evaluation of assessment processes to ensure that programs are maintaining high standards in assessing learning, but it is the vitality of the program's assessment processes, not results, ITL will evaluate in its review. Once

submitted, a small group of co-curricular departments meet as a team to review the submissions and provide feedback in a group setting. ITL will compile suggestions and may provide additional feedback. The report is returned to the program with feedback and suggestions for improvement meant to inform assessment moving forward. Occasionally reports are returned for revision or a consult is scheduled to gather more information or work towards process improvements.

Reporting Schedule

With integration of assessment reporting into an assessment cycle, the needs and types of assessment reporting will follow a more set schedule. See below for a sample 5-year cycle.

Table 1: Sample Assessment Activities for Co-Curricular Programs Based on a 5 Year Cycle

Cycle Year	Typical Assessment Activities
Year 1 **New Program**	• Review and/or modify a complete set of SLOs for your program (these will be broken down and analyzed separately in each year and then comprehensively in Year 1 of your next cycle) and submit in PSS • Review and/or modify the learning opportunity map to reflect any updates • Add measures to Student Learning Outcomes, June deadline • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs
Year 2	• Analyze data on Year 2 SLOs • Submit Update in PSS detailing what you learned from analyzing Year 2 SLOs; June deadline • Suggest action steps to improve learning on select SLO's (if necessary) and input in PSS; June deadline • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs
Year 3	• Provide status report updates to action steps from previous year in PSS; June deadline • Analyze data on Year 3 SLOs • Submit Update in PSS detailing what you learned from analyzing Year 3 SLOs; June deadline • Suggest action steps to improve learning on select SLO's (if necessary) and input in PSS; June deadline • Implement Action Steps from Year 3 update (if necessary) • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs
Year 4	• Provide status report updates to action steps from previous year in PSS; June deadline • Analyze data on Year 4 SLOs • Submit Update in PSS detailing what you learned from analyzing Year 4 SLOs; June deadline • Suggest action steps to improve learning on select SLO's (if necessary) and input in PSS; June deadline • Implement Action Steps from Year 4 update (if necessary) • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs

Year 5 **End of cycle.**	• Provide status report updates to action steps from previous year in PSS; June deadline • Analyze data on Year 5 SLOs • Submit Update in PSS detailing what you learned from analyzing Year 5 SLOs; June deadline • Suggest action steps to improve learning on select SLO's (if necessary) and input in PSS; June deadline • Implement Action Steps from Year 5 update (if necessary) • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs
Year 1 **Next Cycle**	• Provide status report updates to action steps from previous year in PSS; June deadline • Analyze data/reporting/Action Steps from past 5 years on all SLOs included in the program's Assessment Plan • Complete Assessment Cycle Reflection detailing how you use the assessment process to improve learning for students in the program; June deadline • Review Foundational Documents and Assessment Plan • Make any desired adjustments to Foundational Documents and/or Assessment Plan • Identify subset of next year's SLOs • Collect data on next year's SLOs

Navigating to Planning & Self-Study

Navigate to your Penguin Portal. Click on the “Faculty Success/Watermark” card. If you do not see the card on your dashboard, you can use the search function by clicking VIEW ALL CARDS and searching for Watermark.

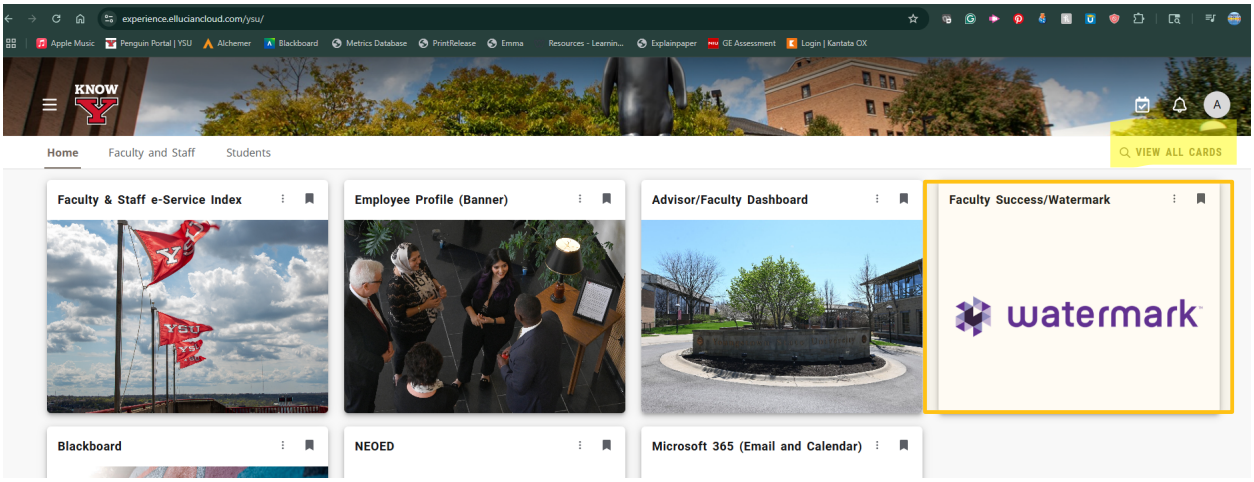


Figure 1

Click the rectangle that says Planning & Self-Study.

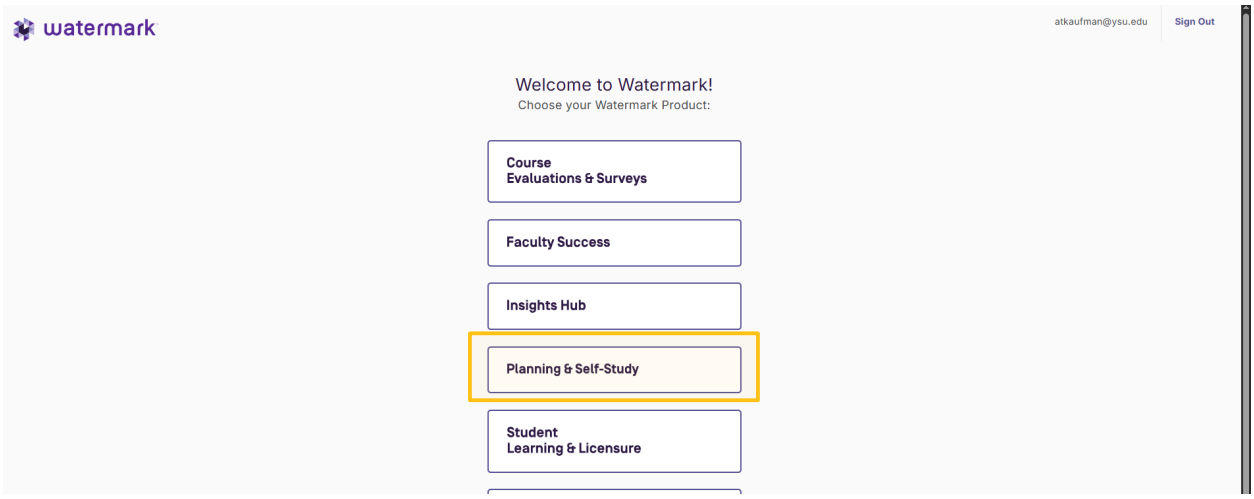


Figure 2

Adding or Editing Program Information

Your home dashboard should include your program(s). You may have projects listed on this page, but for now we are going to focus on the foundational program information. To do this, select the purple square that says **ENTER PROGRAM**.

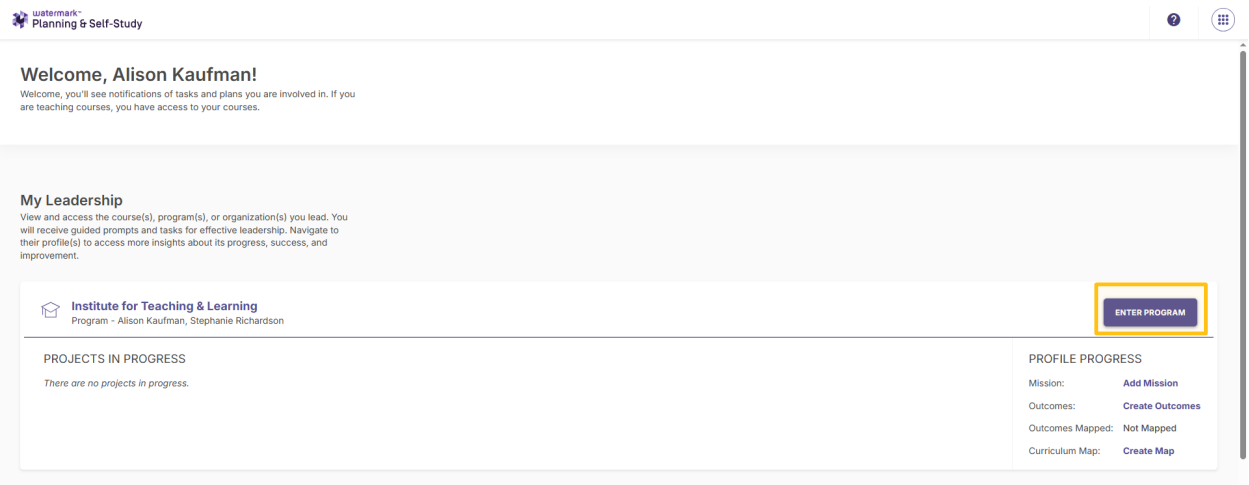


Figure 3

Your program's dashboard is going to look different based on where you are in the assessment process, but every program screen has a toolbar along the left side of the screen that will help you navigate your program's space. To start, click the **Program Information** link on that toolbar.

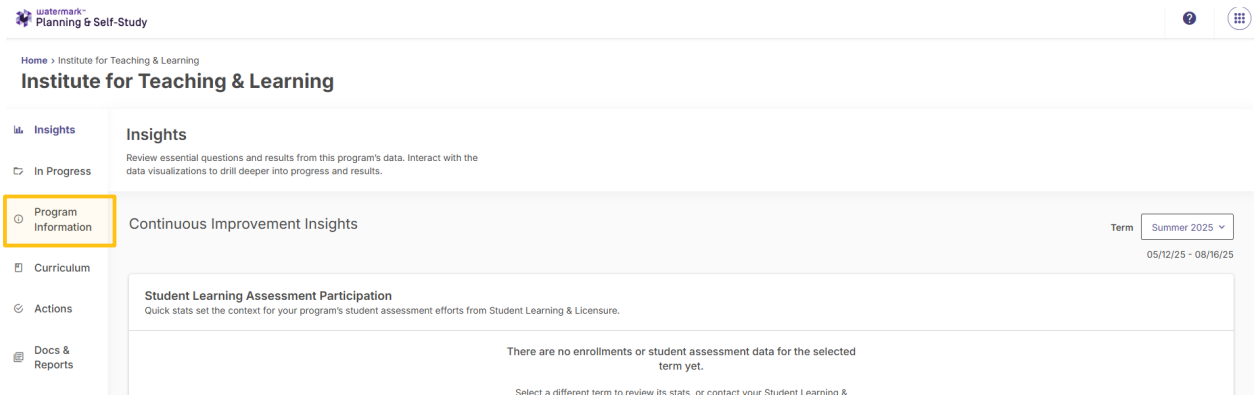


Figure 4

Adding or Editing a Mission Statement

If you don't have a mission statement associated with your program, the first thing you are going to do is enter your mission statement by clicking **ADD MISSION**.

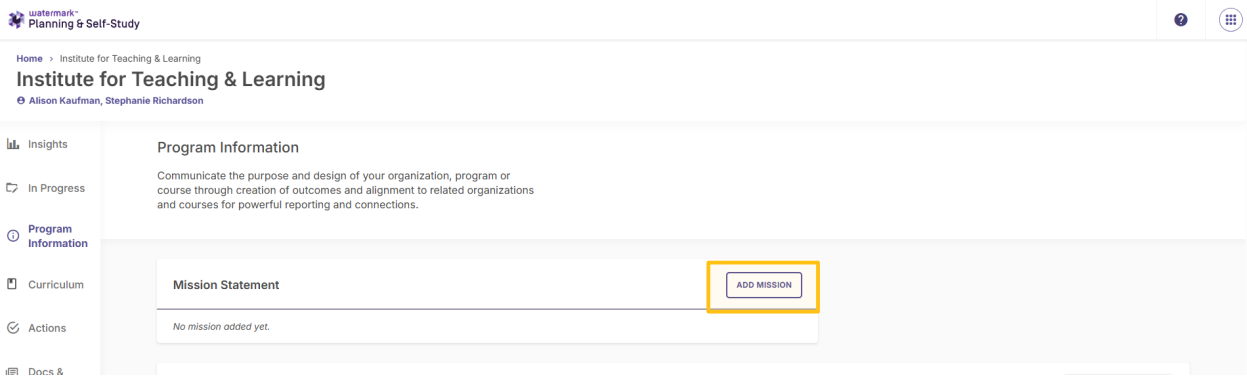


Figure 5

When you enter a mission statement in the Program Information section, it will exist in all other workspaces in Planning and Self-Study. At any time, you can navigate back to Program Information to edit your mission statement by clicking the three dots that will show up next to your mission statement.

Type or copy/paste your mission statement into the text box. Click the checkmark when you are finished.

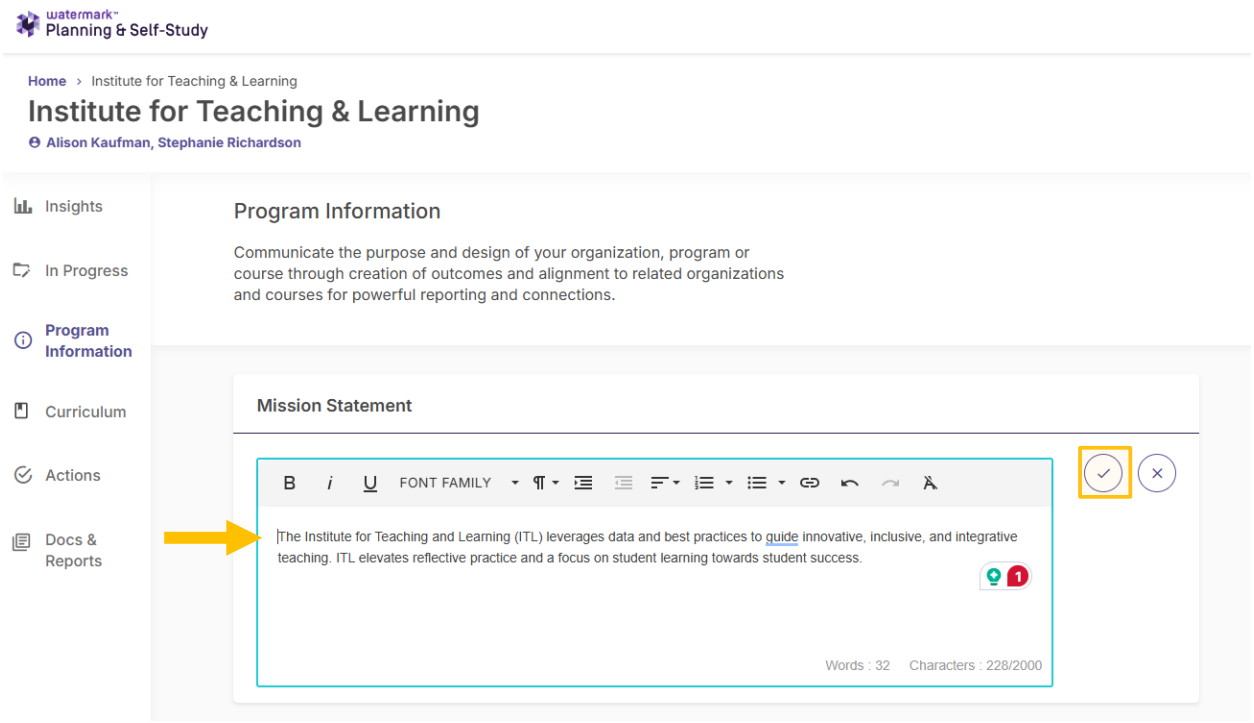


Figure 6

Adding or Editing Program Learning Outcomes

The next step in your Program Information section is to enter your program's Learning Outcomes. The Learning Outcomes you enter in this area should match the Learning Outcomes you have listed on the YSU Course Catalog. You will be able to archive, delete, or edit learning outcomes in the future, but be sure you are doing this in alignment with the process for program changes via Academic Senate. Click on either **MANAGE OUTCOMES** button to begin with adding your outcomes.

Just a reminder, Learning Outcomes typically start with "Students will be able to…" and are focused on what you hope students know, learn, or are able to do because of your program. Success Outcomes should be thought of as more program goals or effectiveness goals, and are goals related to things like graduation, retention, staffing, budget, etc. This system allows you to track both, but we are focusing here primarily on your program level Student Learning Outcomes.

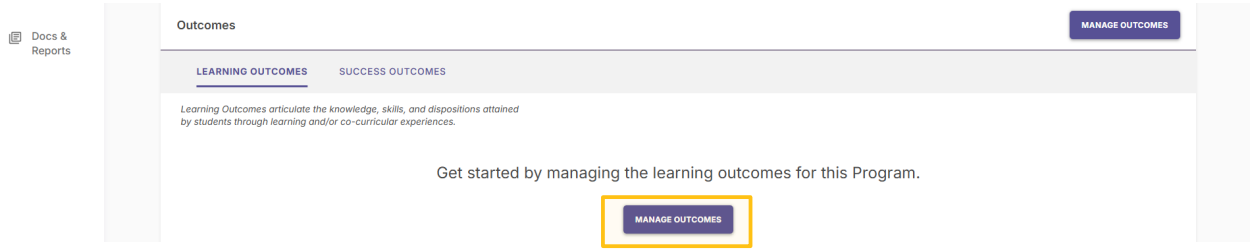


Figure 7

You are now able to manage both your learning and success outcomes. To add one of your program Student Learning Outcomes, click on the button that says **CREATE NEW OUTCOME**.

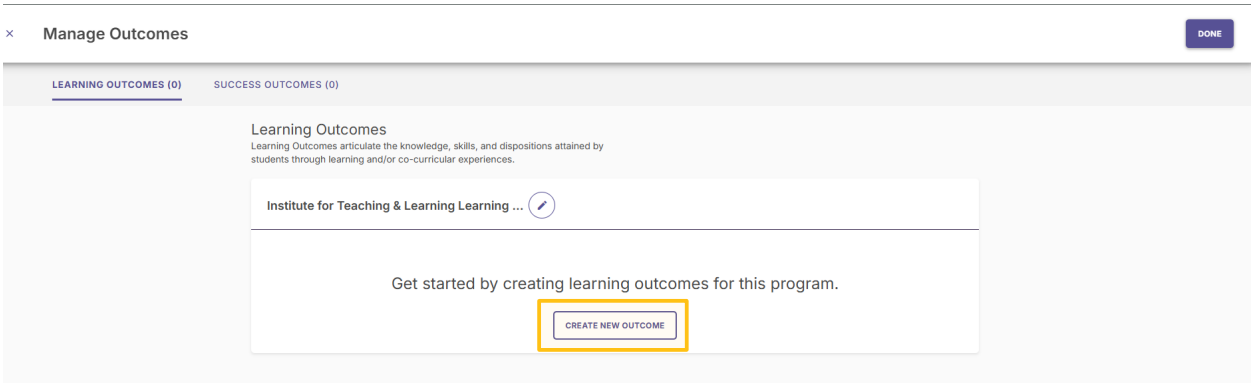


Figure 8

A pop up will appear allowing you to add your outcome. You'll first need to add a short Outcome Title (this is a required field). Your Outcome Title might include something like *SLO1: Communication*. Then you will enter your full program Student Learning Outcome in the Outcome Description textbox. The Outcome Description textbox might include text such as, *Students will be able to communicate original research*. You do not need to add any Tags, but if you'd like you can use tags related to Blooms Taxonomy levels (apply, create, etc.). Once you enter your information, click **CREATE**.

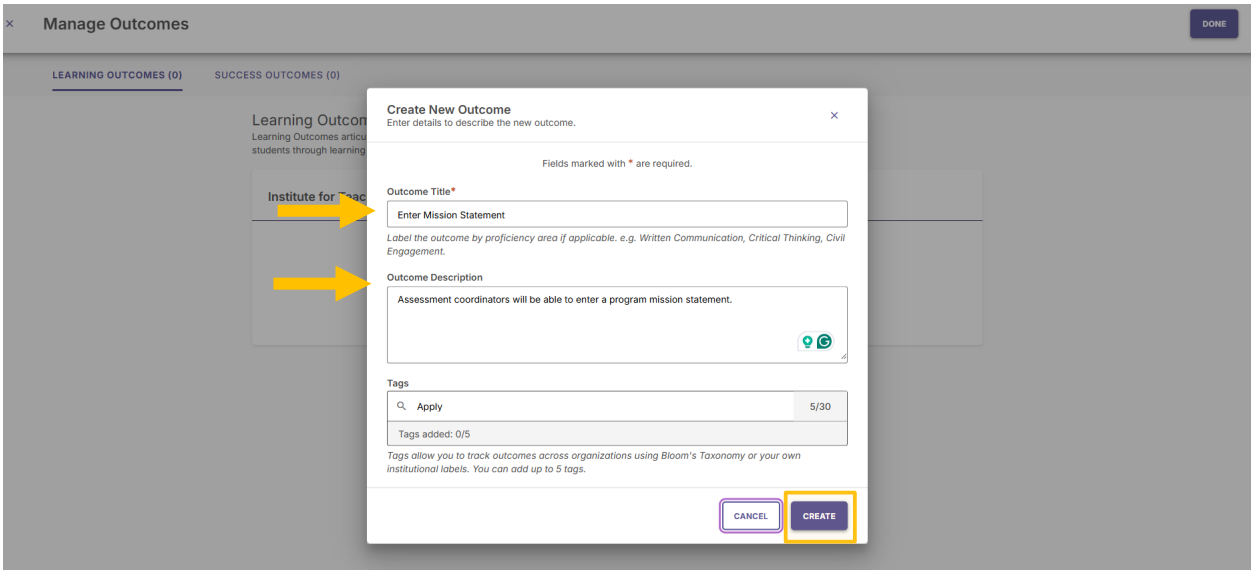


Figure 9

Your first outcome now appears, and you are directed back to the main screen of the Manage Outcomes section. If you added any tags, you'll notice them under your outcome. After you enter your outcome, next to the outcome is a button with three dots. If you click on the three dots, you can edit, archive, or delete your outcome.

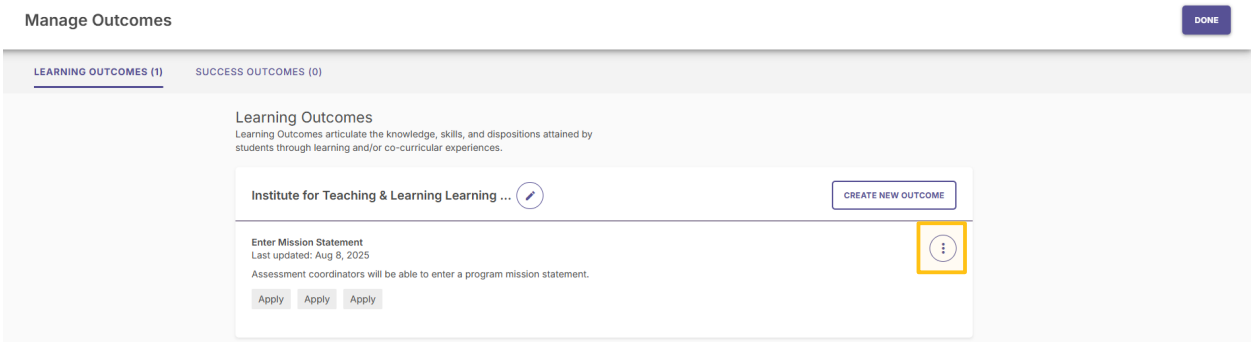


Figure 10

You can continue adding outcomes by clicking the **CREATE NEW OUTCOME** button. Just a reminder, the three dots next to each outcome allow you to edit, archive, or delete an outcome. The arrows allow you to change the order your outcomes appear. The order they show up here is how they will appear in your curriculum map.

If you'd like to add any Success Outcomes, click the Success Outcomes tab and follow the same process. Success outcomes are entered the same way but are optional for learning outcomes assessment. This could be a good place to manage any program effectiveness goals.

When you have finished entering your outcomes (and remember, these should match your program outcomes in the YSU Course Catalog), click **DONE** to go back to your program information screen.

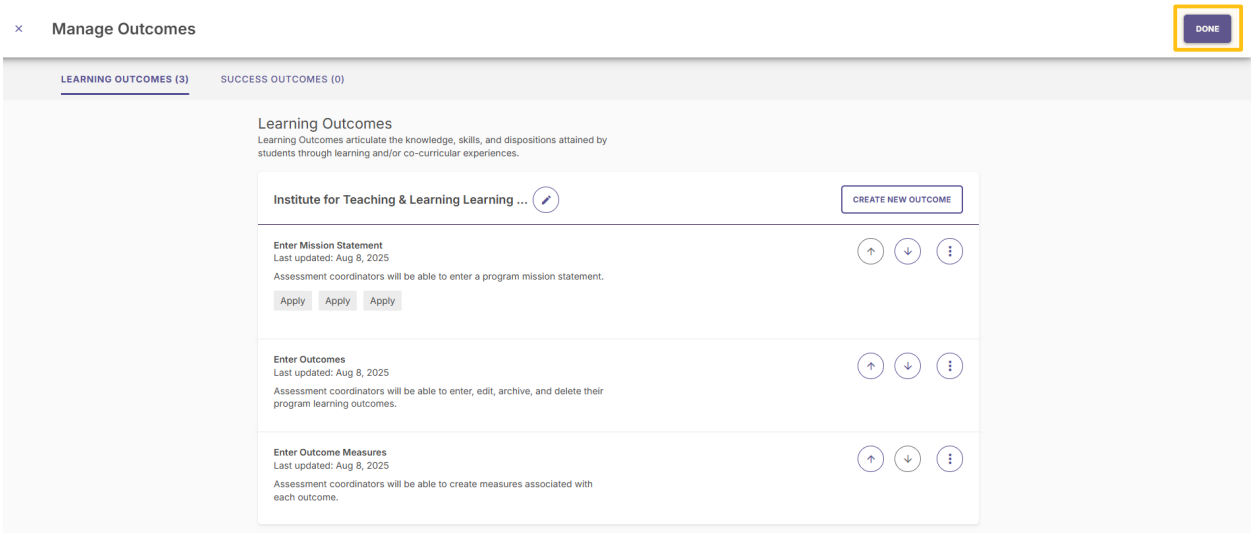


Figure 11

Mapping Learning Outcomes to University Outcomes

While not required, you can align (called Mapping in Watermark) your student learning outcomes to the University Wide Learning Outcomes (UWLO) or other strategic priorities of the University. For this example, we are going to show you how to map a program outcome to a UWLO. To begin mapping, click **EDIT OUTCOME MAP**.

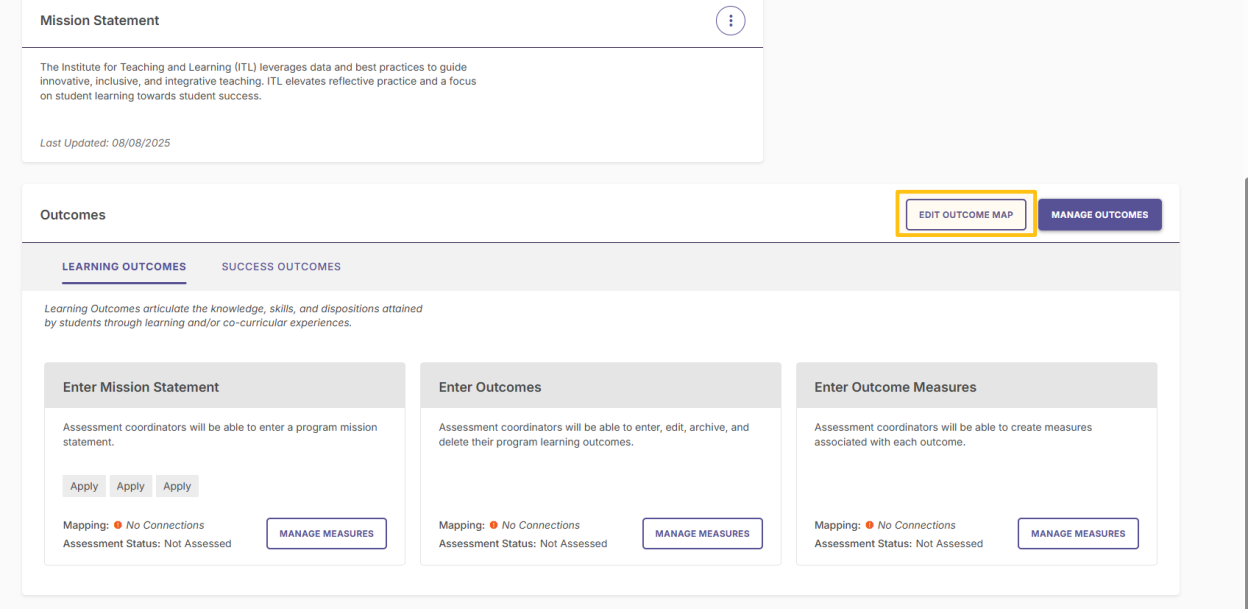


Figure 12

An outcome map screen will pop-up. On the left side of the screen are your program learning outcomes that you previously entered. Along the top are the organizational outcomes that are shared with your program. You cannot edit the organization outcomes available to your program, but if you need something added in this area, please email ysuitl@ysu.edu to request the outcome set.

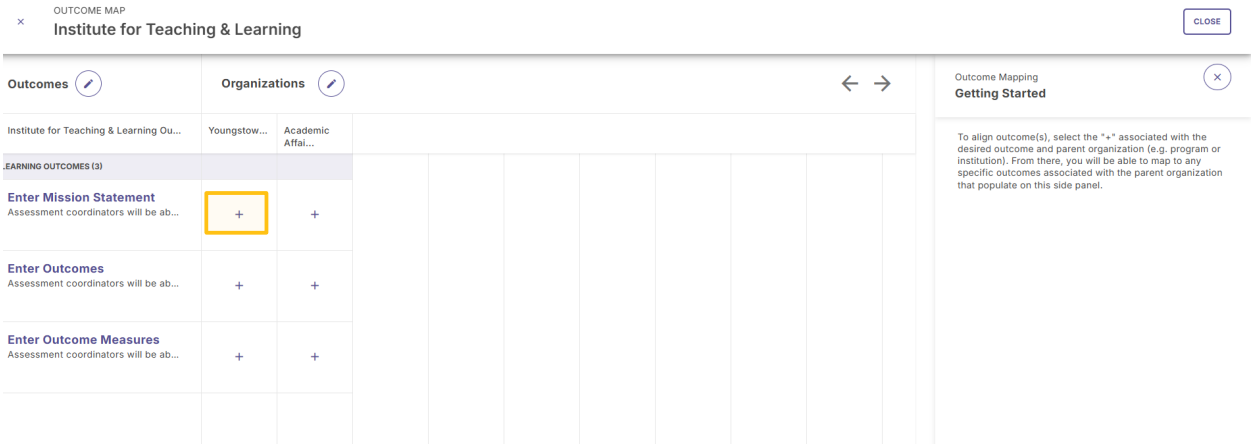


Figure 13

If you click the **+** (plus sign) in any of the boxes on the map, you can create an alignment between a program outcome and an organization outcome. In this example, you are going to click the **+** (plus sign)

aligning the first program outcome with the UWLOs. After clicking the **+** (plus sign), a pop-up appears on the right side of the screen that lists your outcome and the organizational outcomes you can align with.

You will need to toggle the “Aligned” option to **YES** to be able to check any of the UWLOs.

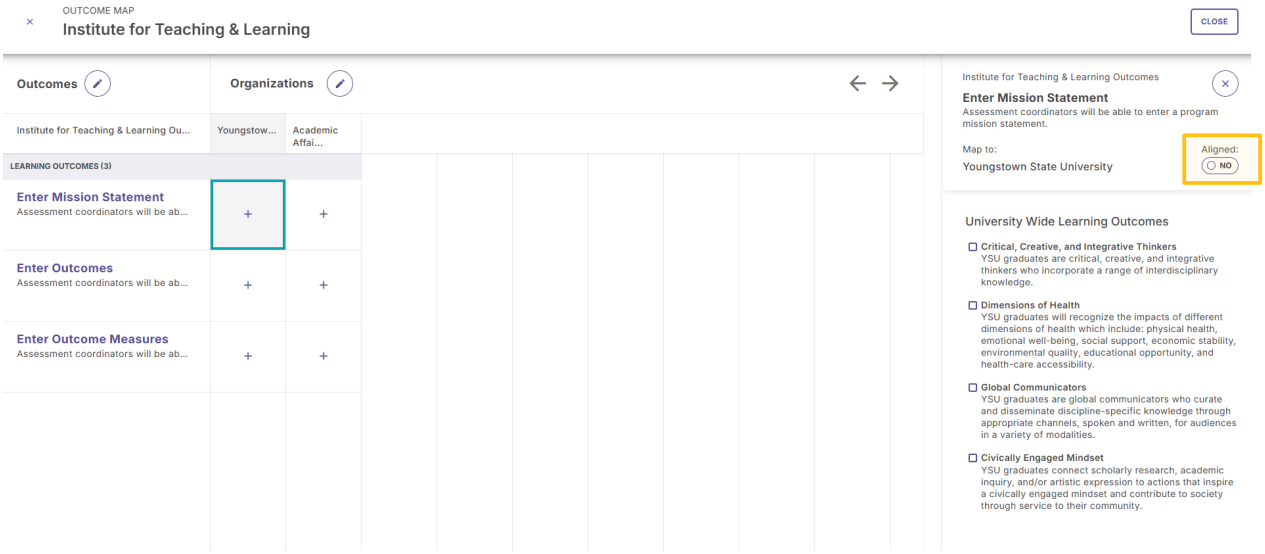


Figure 14

After you toggle alignment to **YES**, you can use the checkbox to align to one or several of the UWLOs by checking the checkbox next to the outcome. After you check the box next to the aligned UWLO(s) a checkmark will auto populate in the main Outcome Map.

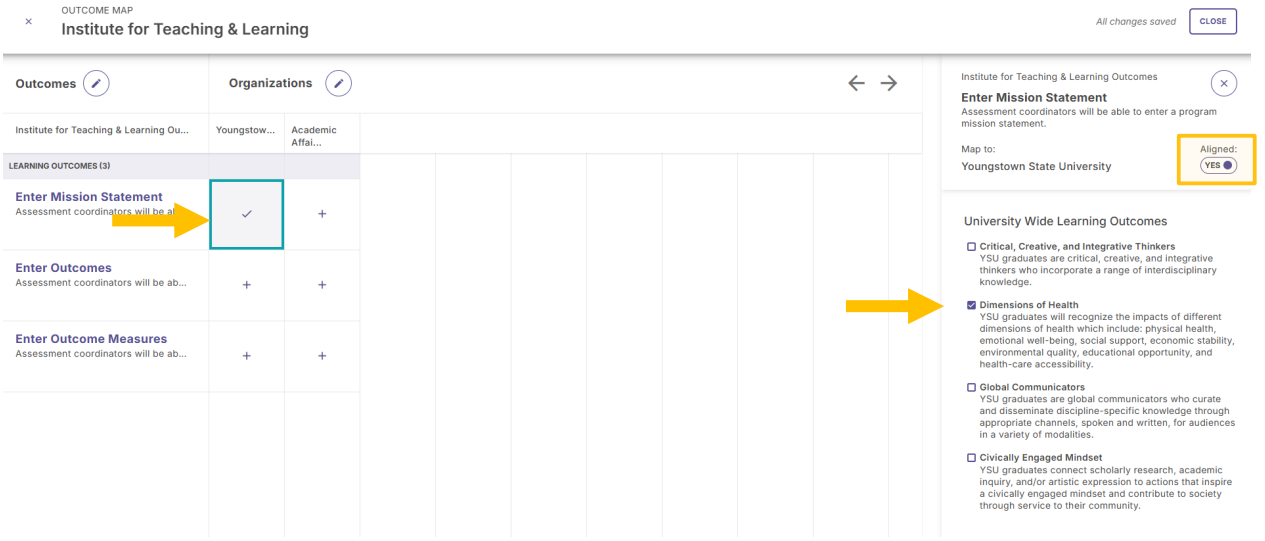


Figure 15

You can continue this mapping process for each of your program learning outcomes.

Adding a Learning Opportunity Map

If you have a Learning Opportunity Map that already exists as a file, you can upload that in the **Docs & Reports** section of your Program Information.

Adding or Editing Assessment Measures

The central way to add and manage assessment measures is via Program Information. There are several other ways to add measures, such as directly in the curriculum map or when you are annually reporting data (which is great for flexibility and when things change!), but our guidance is to start by first adding measures in this central location, **Program Information**.

Measures are associated with an outcome and can be added to any specific outcome by clicking **MANAGE MEASURES**.

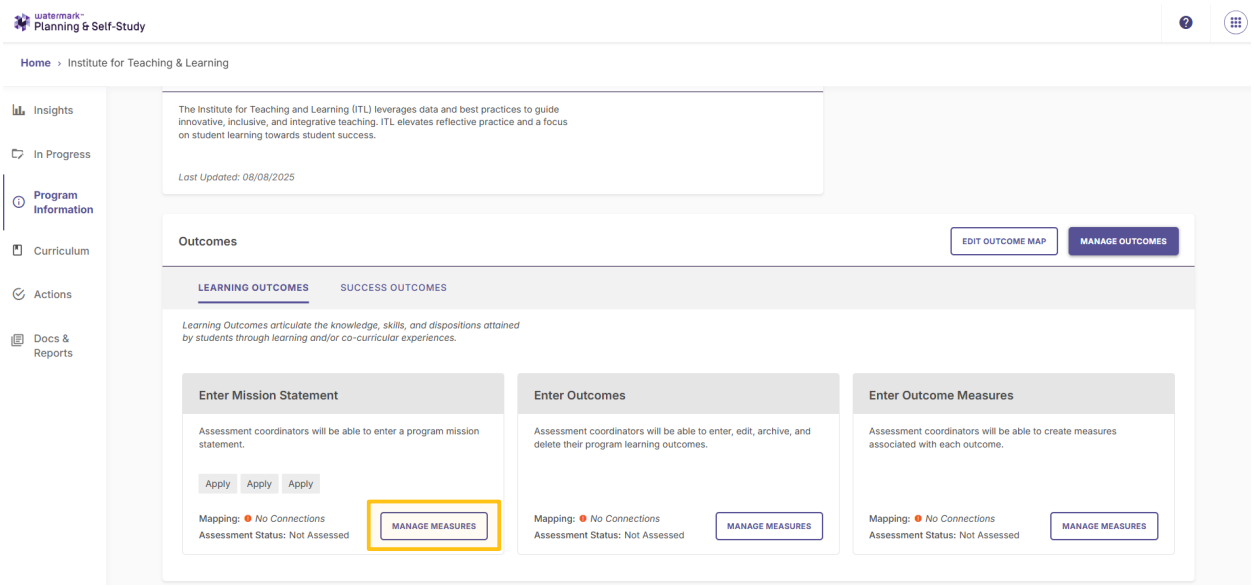


Figure 16

Click **CREATE NEW MEASURE** to add your first measure for the selected outcome. Just a reminder, measures are directly linked to an individual outcome. If you have a measure that repeats, you'll need to enter that measure again for a different outcome.

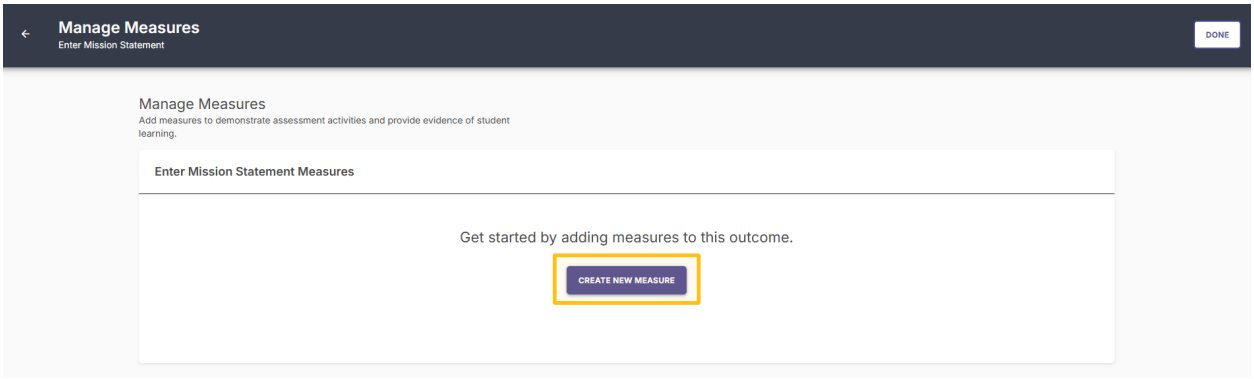


Figure 17

A pop-up window will appear for you to enter your measure. First give your measure a short title in the **Title** textbox. Next use the **Method** dropdown to identify your measure type. Here is a quick refresher on measure types:

- *Direct measures* are methods for assessing actual samples of student work to provide evidence of student performance relative to the outcome (for example, an exam or graded presentation).
- *Indirect measures* are methods for assessing information on student learning that do not rely on actual samples of student work (for example, self-reported survey data from an exit survey).

We recommend having at least two measures per outcome, with at minimum one of those measures being a direct measure.

After you select your **Method** type, enter a **Description** of your measure. This does not need to be long but should provide additional context with the **Title** textbox.

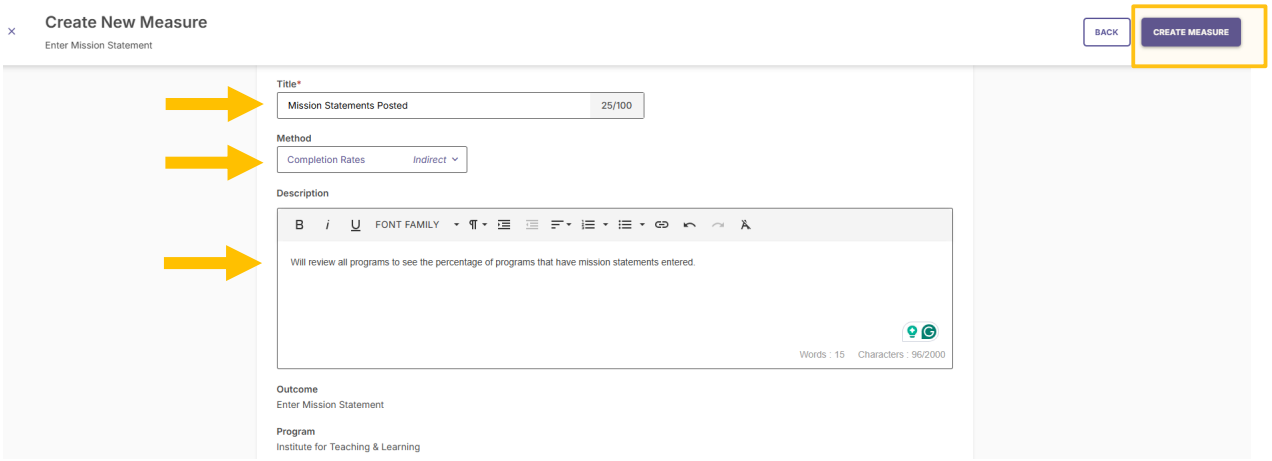


Figure 18

If your measure is not course based (such as an exit survey), click the checkbox that says, “This is a non-course-based measure.”

Enter your **Target** performance level (if you have one). You may also include any attachments, such as rubrics or tools that would support your measure by clicking **ATTACH FILES**.

You do not need to do anything in the Alignments section. Eventually this system will be connected to Blackboard and this section will be relevant, but for now you are done adding your measure. Click **CREATE MEASURE** to finish.

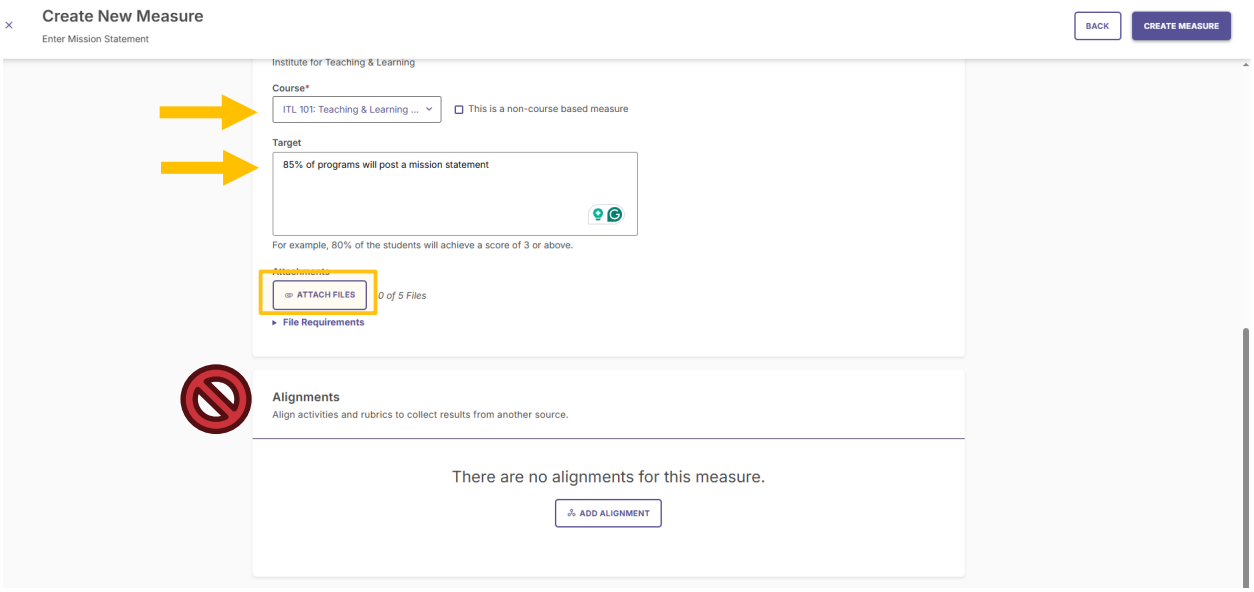


Figure 19

The measure you just added will show up under the selected outcome. If you click on the title of the measure, you can go in and make any desired edits or delete your measure. To add your second measure, click **CREATE NEW MEASURE**.

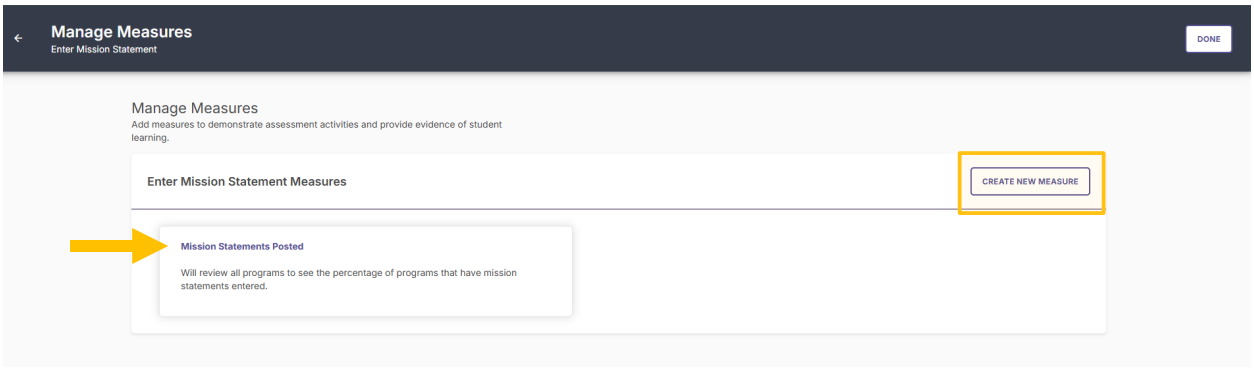


Figure 20

After adding an additional measure, the measures will show up as tiles listed under the outcome. This is the central location for adding measures, but in future reporting years, you will be able to add, edit, or delete measures directly from your reporting screen. When you are finished entering all your planned measures, click **DONE** to be brought back to your main program information screen.

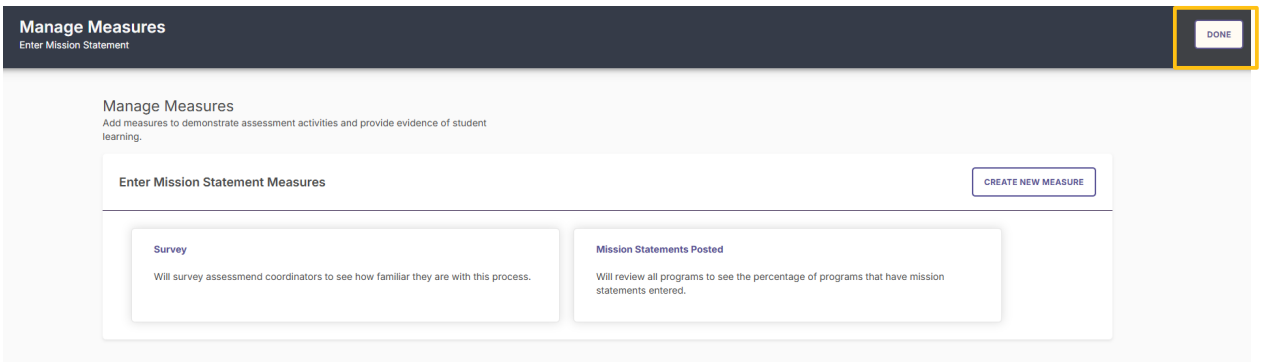


Figure 21

Reporting Program Assessment Data

When you are ready to enter data and complete your annual assessment report, you are going to log in to Planning & Self-Study. On your home screen, you will see a section that says, “Projects in Progress” and a clickable link that says Academic Assessment Reporting. By clicking that link you will enter your annual reporting space.

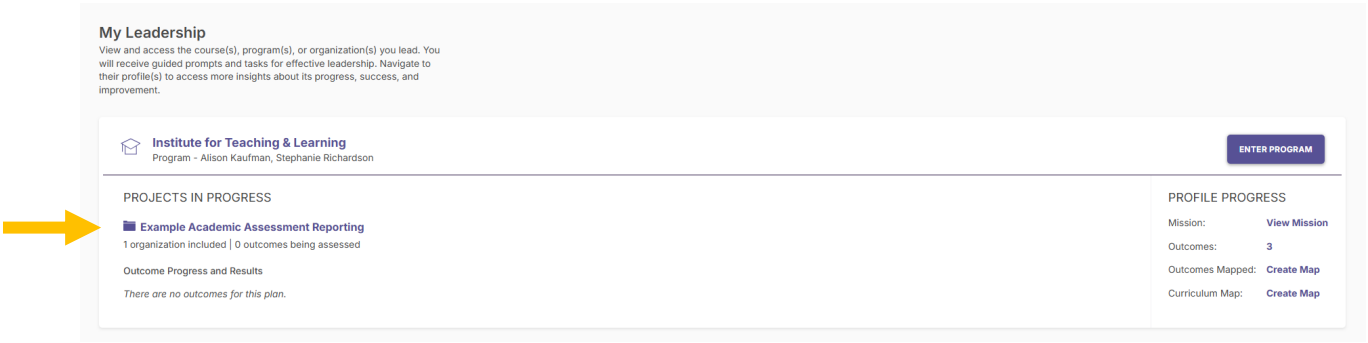


Figure 22

You can also enter your annual reporting, by clicking **ENTER PROGRAM** and navigating to the In Progress tab on the left side toolbar and clicking the Academic Assessment Reporting link.

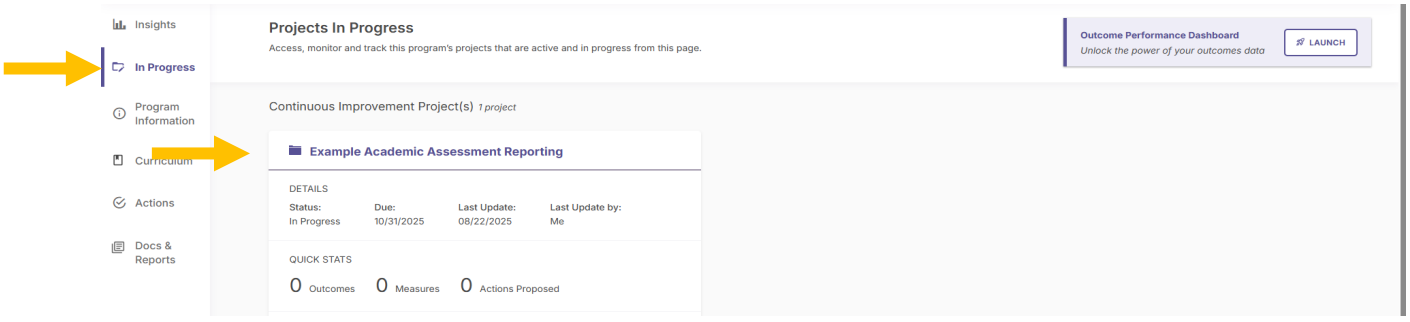


Figure 23

After clicking into the Academic Assessment Reporting space, you will first need to select the outcome or outcomes you plan to report on in the current year cycle. Click **SELECT OUTCOMES**.

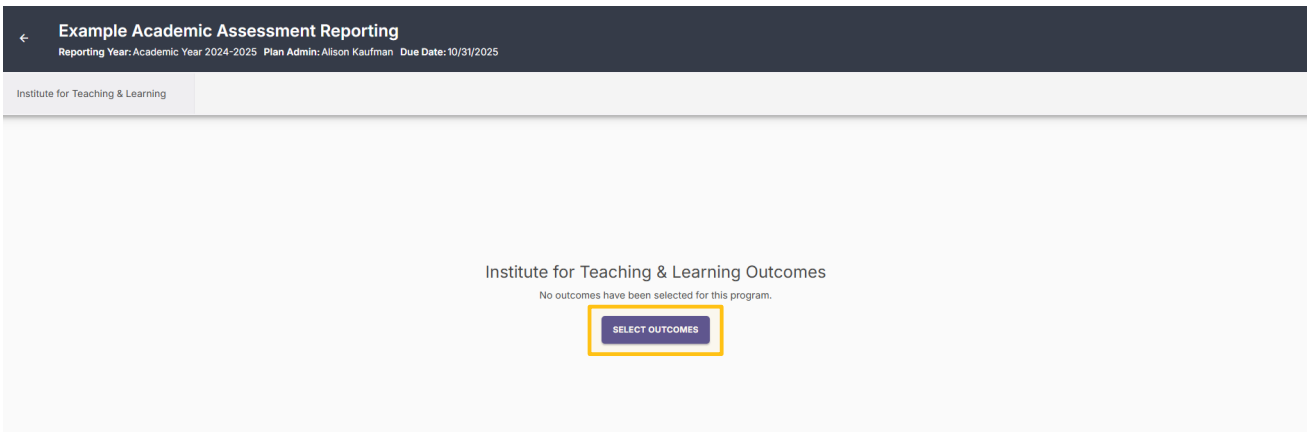


Figure 24

A pop-up window will appear that includes the learning outcomes associated with your program. All the program learning outcomes should be included, but if they are not, you can click **CREATE NEW OUTCOME** to add a program outcome. The three dots next to each outcome also allow you to edit if small changes are needed.

Use the checkbox on the left side of our outcome to select the learning outcome you want to report on for this year's reporting. Typically, programs select 1-2 outcomes to report data annually for institutional reporting. After selecting your outcome(s) click **APPLY SELECTION**.

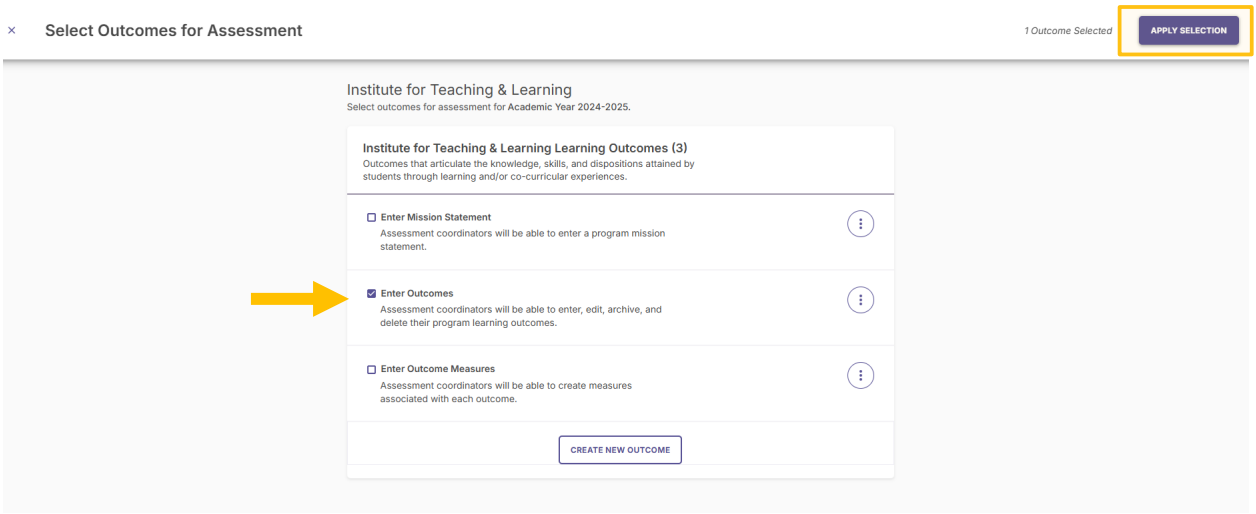


Figure 25

After selecting your outcome(s), any measures you have associated with that outcome(s) will appear on your screen. If you need to edit or delete the measure, click the three dots to make any changes. You can also click the **+ New Measure** box to add additional measures. If your measures look correct, click **ADD RESULTS** to begin entering your data/findings.

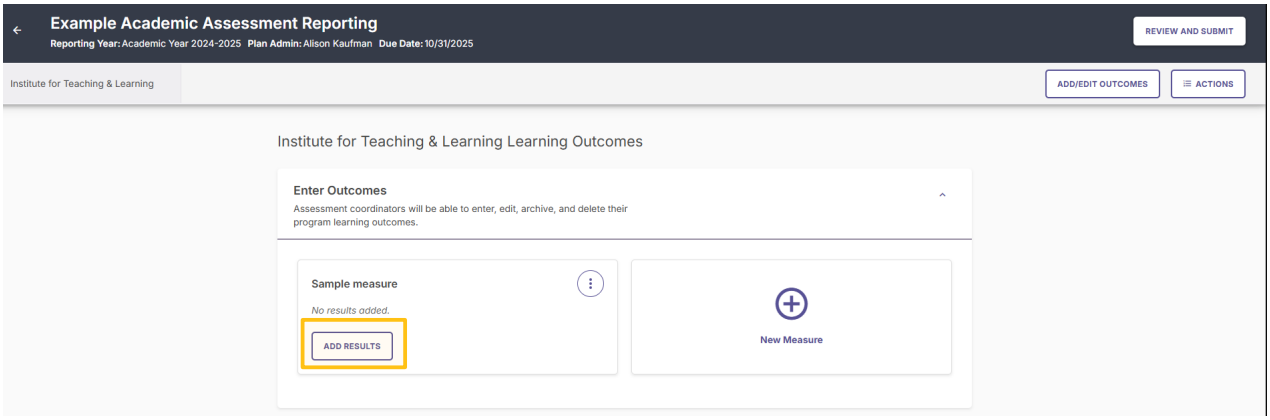


Figure 26

Two additional features on the screen:

- If you need to change the outcomes you selected for reporting, click the **ADD/EDIT OUTCOMES** button.
- If you click the **ACTIONS** button, you will see a pop-up on the right side of the screen with any previous Action Steps that have been associated with this learning outcome. This is a great way to monitor progress!

Click, **ADD RESULTS** after you are finished working on the measures screen to add findings for a specific measure.

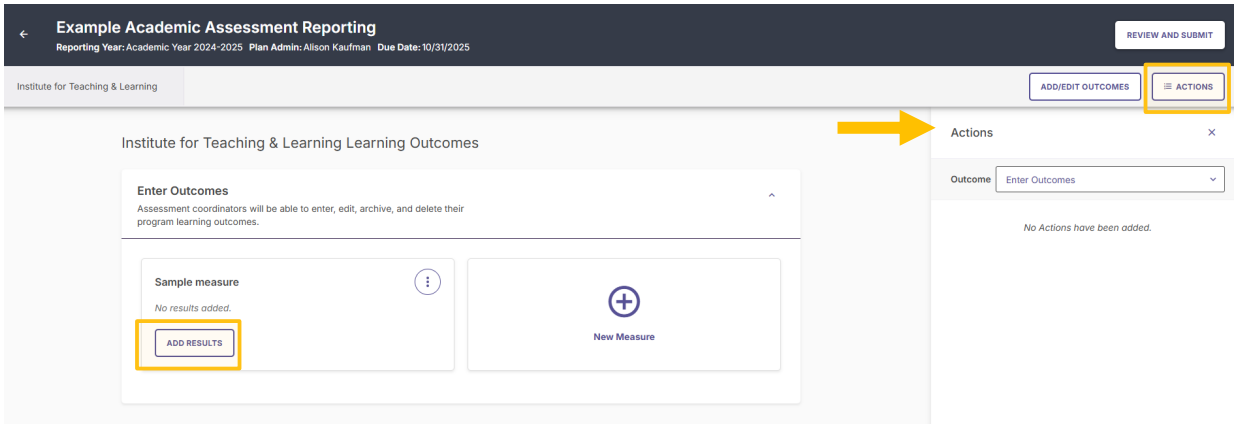


Figure 27

Adding Results, Data, Findings, and Action Items

There are three different ways to add student learning data to a measure. We are currently going to focus on two different ways to add your results. A third way, “Collecting Results from Another System” will launch as an option in future reporting as we complete integration between this system and the Blackboard Learning Management System.

After you click the ADD RESULTS button on your measure screen, your measure will pop-up in a new window and allow you first to make any edits. You can first make slight edits to your outcome if needed, **then scroll down your screen to the Results header.**

The first option for adding results is the most like YSU's former assessment reporting system. Click "**Upload results and write a summary**."

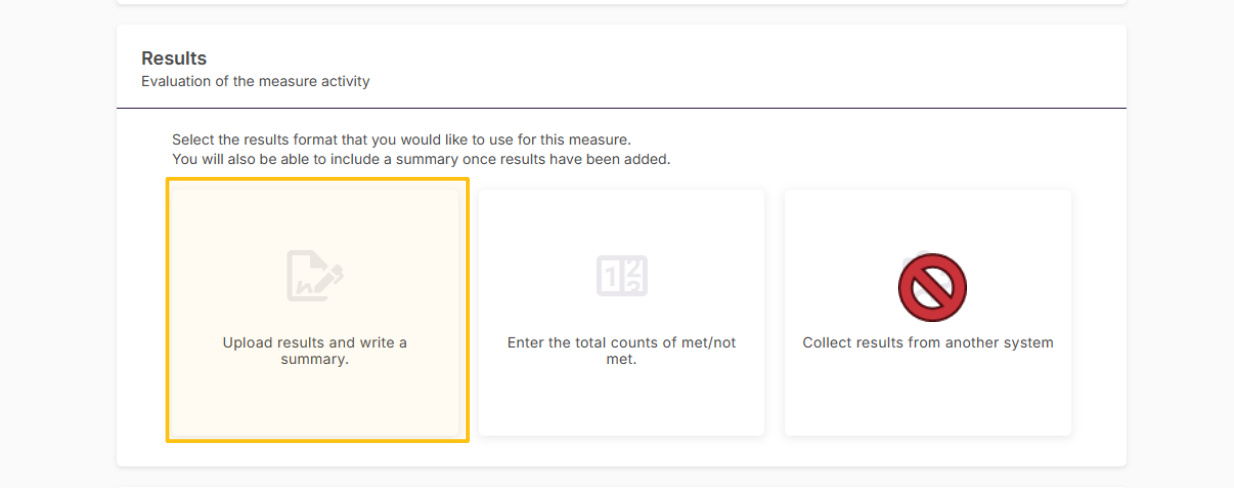


Figure 28

A Results screen will pop-up. You can attach any relevant files (e.g., a spreadsheet of rubric results or mean scores from an exit survey) from your desktop by clicking **ATTACH FILES**. In the **Summary of Results** textbox, please provide a summary of your attachment(s) and explain your findings related to the measure. Be sure to provide clear explanation to your attachments, as the reviewer looking at your submission may not be familiar with your discipline.

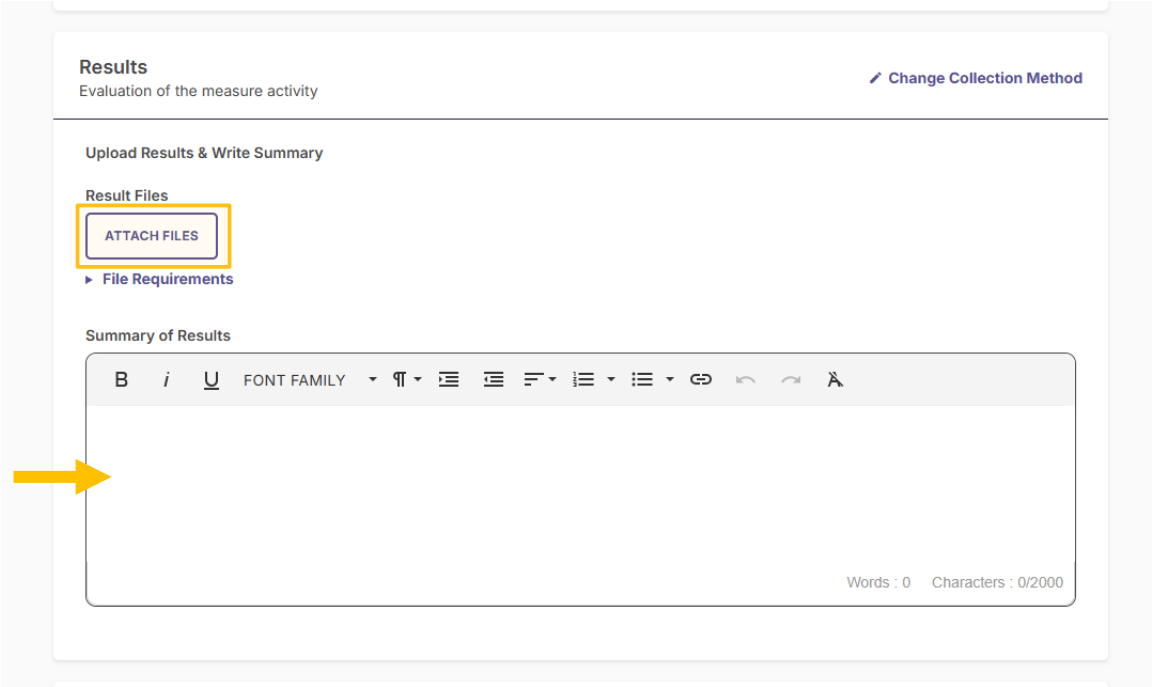


Figure 29

In the upper right corner of the screen, is a pencil icon and link that says, "**Change Collection Method**." Click that link if you'd prefer to toggle to a different option for inputting your results.

Rather than attaching a file of student data related to a measure, you can also choose to manually enter the counts of students who met, almost met, and did not meet the criteria for a specific measure. To do so, click the box that says, "**Enter the total counts of met/not met**."

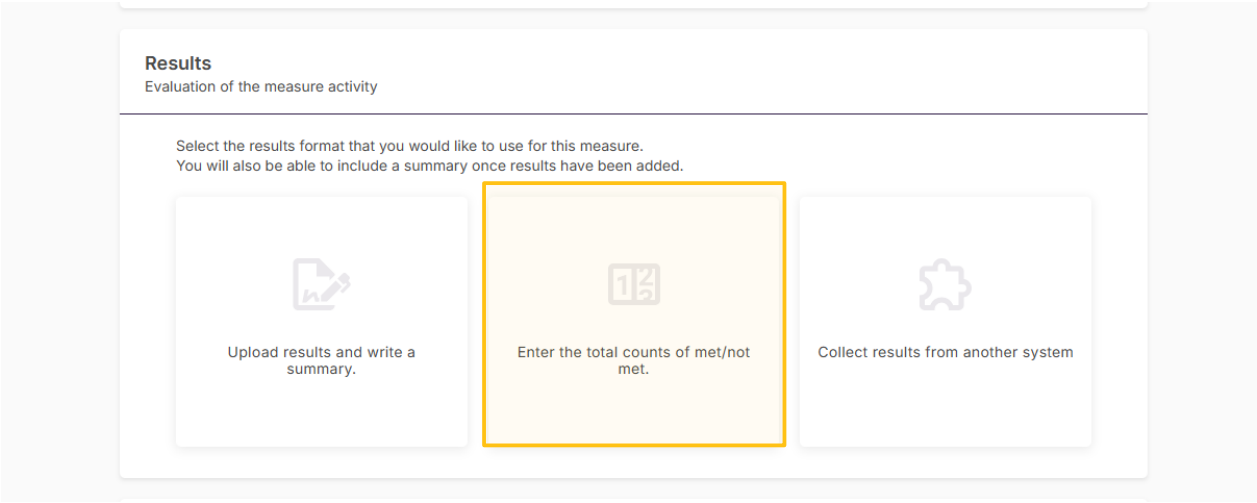


Figure 30

Manually enter the number of students who met, approached, and did not meet the measure. Then click, **VIEW RESULTS**.

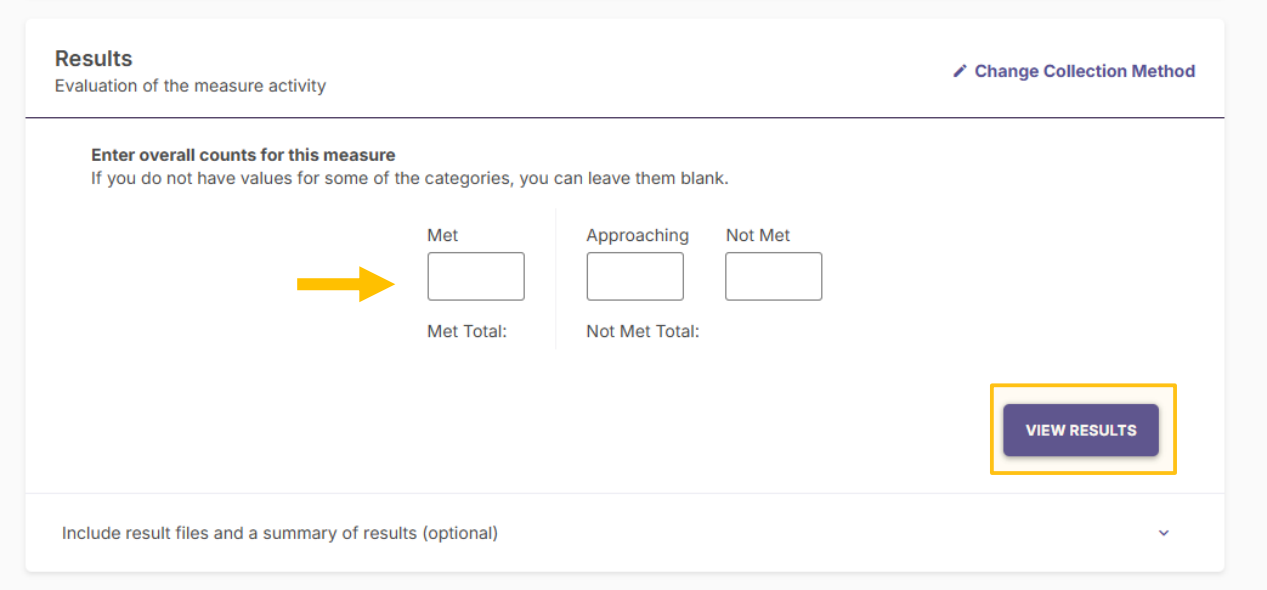


Figure 31

After clicking **VIEW RESULTS**, and chart will generate to show your results as related to a specific measure.

You can also optionally include any additional files and a summary of results to this section as well using the dropdown arrow at the bottom of the pop-up.

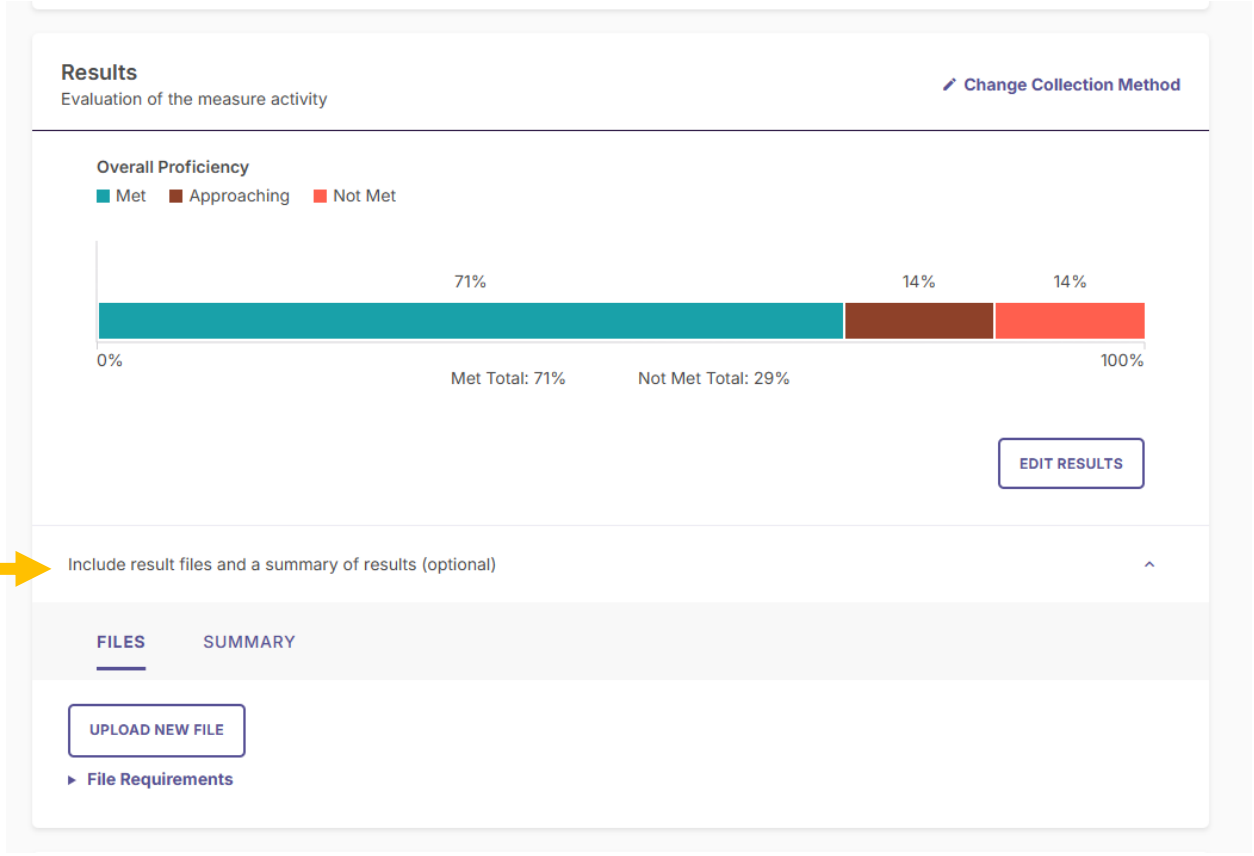


Figure 32

Regardless of how you enter your results, when you have finished adding student learning data/results, scroll down to the **Findings** section. You can click **PAST FINDINGS** to see information that has been entered in the past.

Figure 33

Any past findings will pop up in a side bar. You'll note that this is the first time I am adding information to this measure, so no past findings are listed. Click the **X** to close Past Findings.

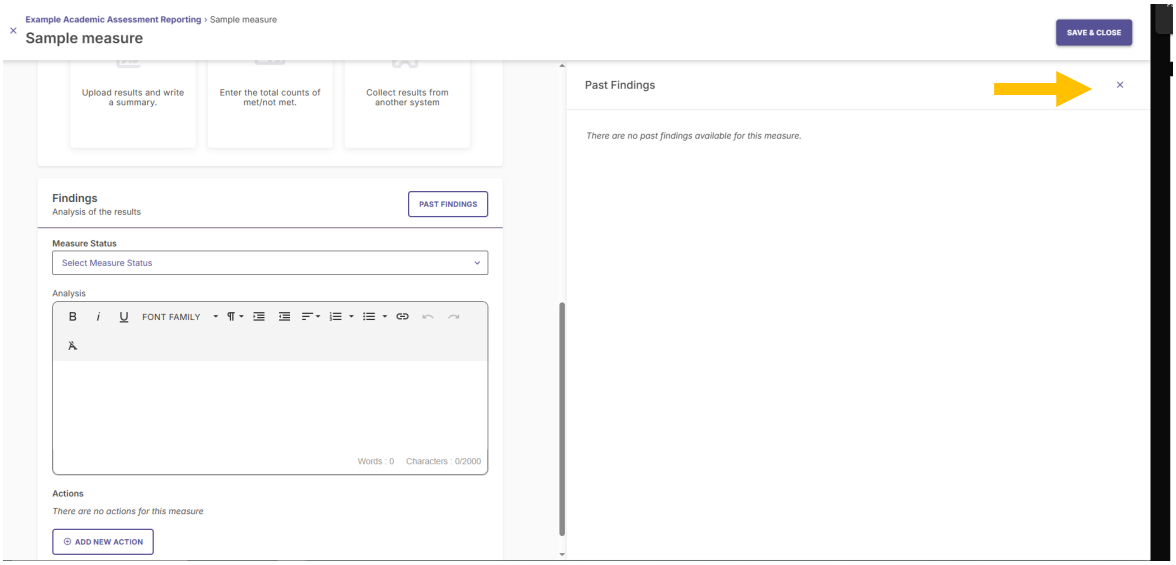


Figure 34

Click the **Measure Status** dropdown to select your status for the measure. Note, this is a status for the specific measure, not the outcome overall. You'll have a chance to do that in a later step. Write in any additional analysis you need to explain your measure status. This does not need to be long but should provide any additional details or information needed to help understand your results and status selection.

Click **ADD NEW ACTION** to add an action step based on your measure findings.

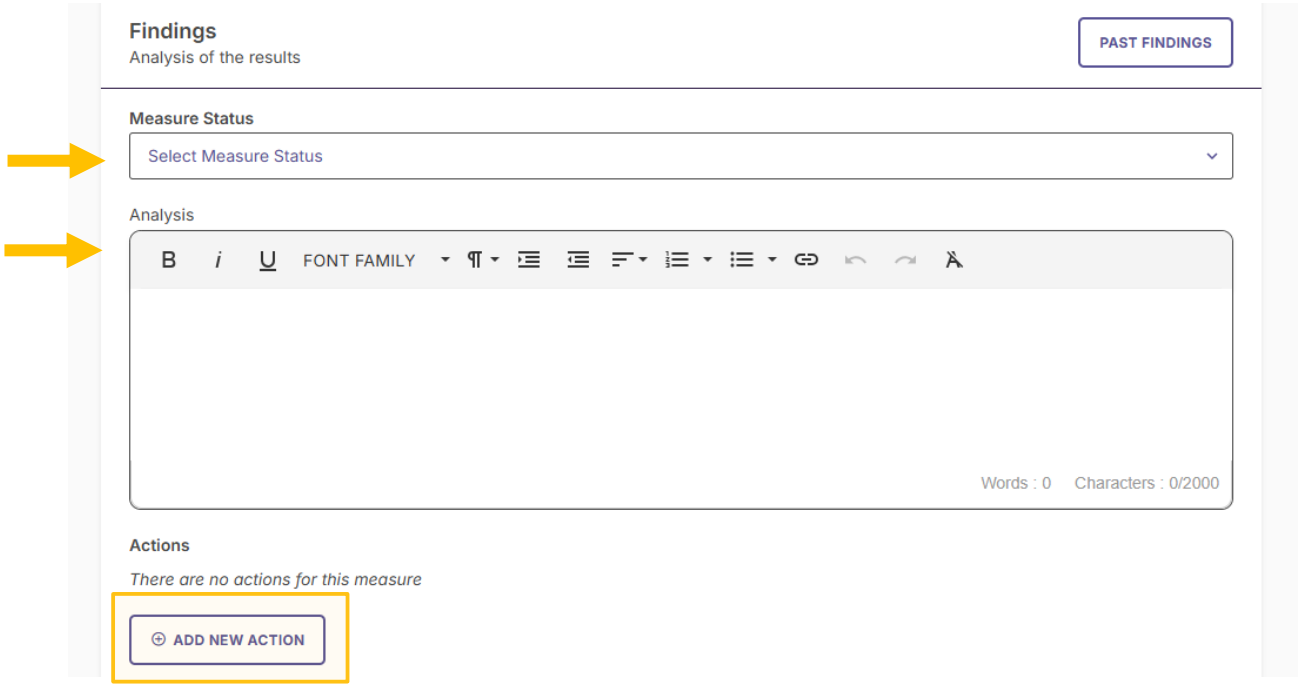


Figure 35

An Add New Action pop up will appear on the side of the screen with a list of action types. Selection the action type that most aligns with what you plan to do based on your data. Click **CREATE ACTION**.

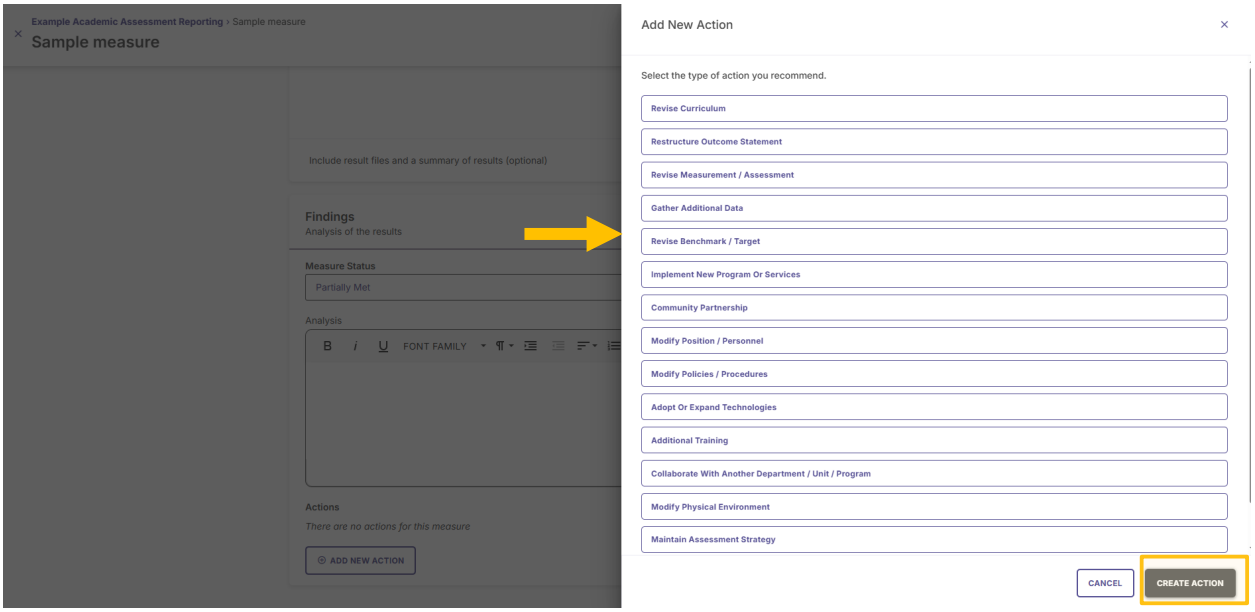


Figure 36

Use the Status dropdown to select the status of the action. In addition to updating action items in this area, you will be able to view all action steps and track any updates to the action item status through the Program Information area of Planning & Self-Study. Use the textbox to describe your action. If you have a recommended due date, you can also add that. Click **CREATE ACTION**.

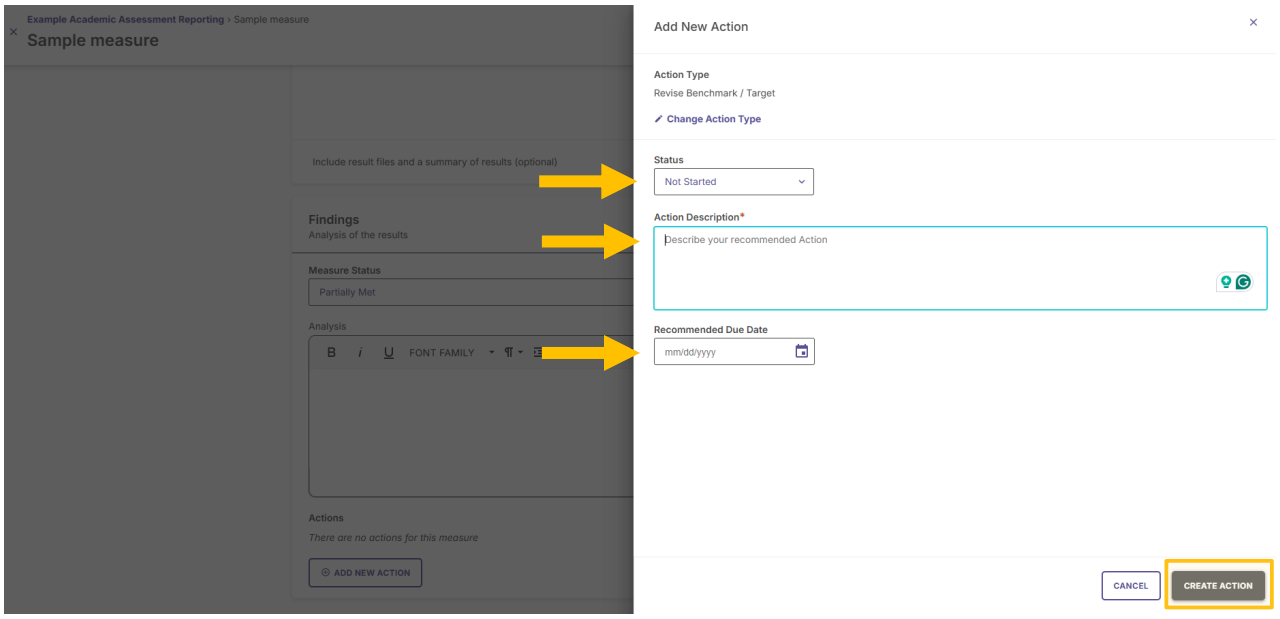


Figure 37

Your action item is now added and associated with the findings from this specific measure. You can add additional action steps by clicking **ADD NEW ACTION**.

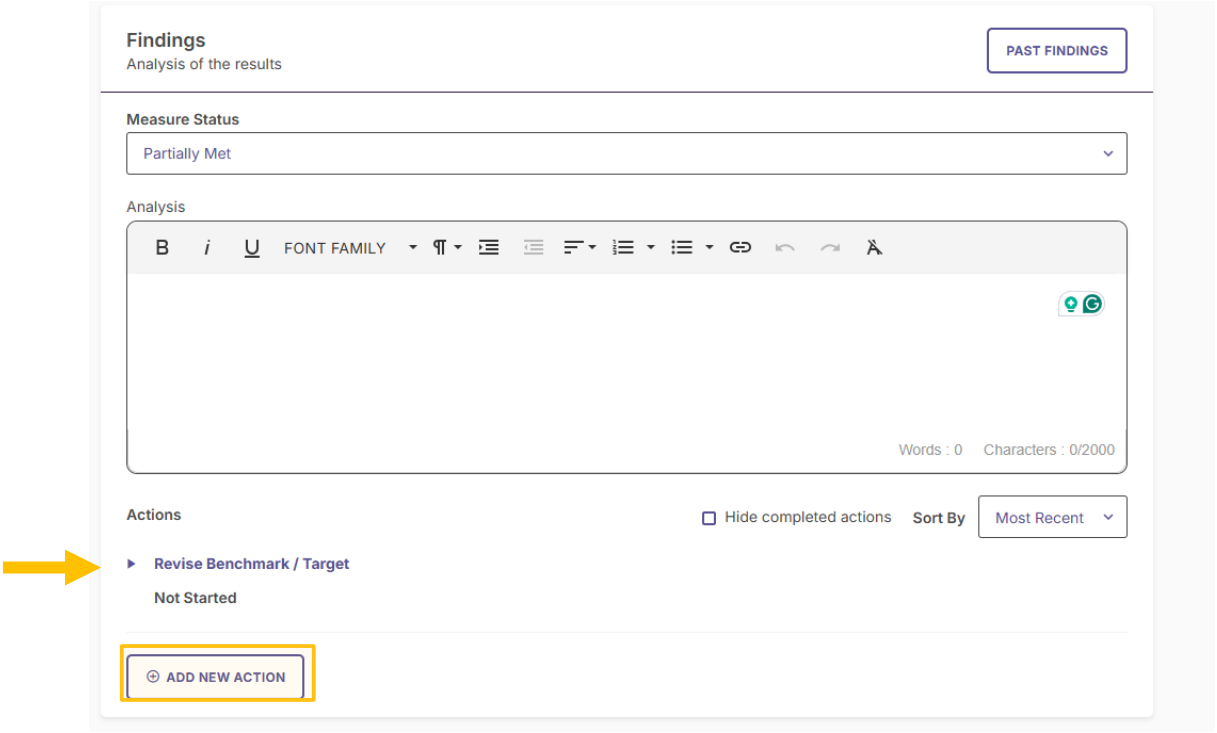


Figure 38

When you are finished adding results, findings, and action items, click **SAVE & CLOSE.**

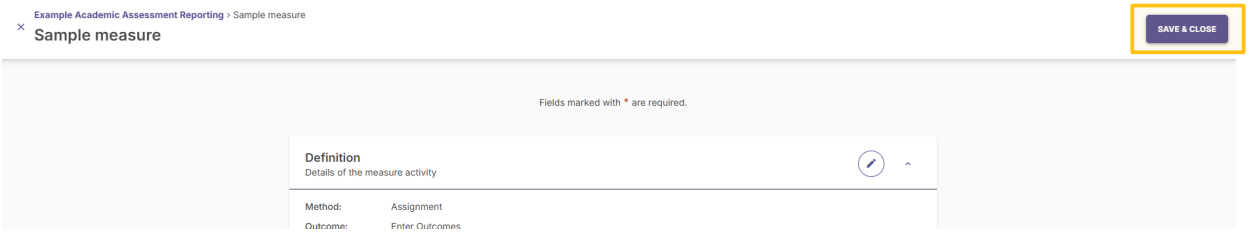


Figure 39

You will be directed back to the outcome screen. For your additional outcome measures, follow the same steps to add additional data, findings, and action steps. After you've entered all your measure data, click **ANALYZE OUTCOME**.

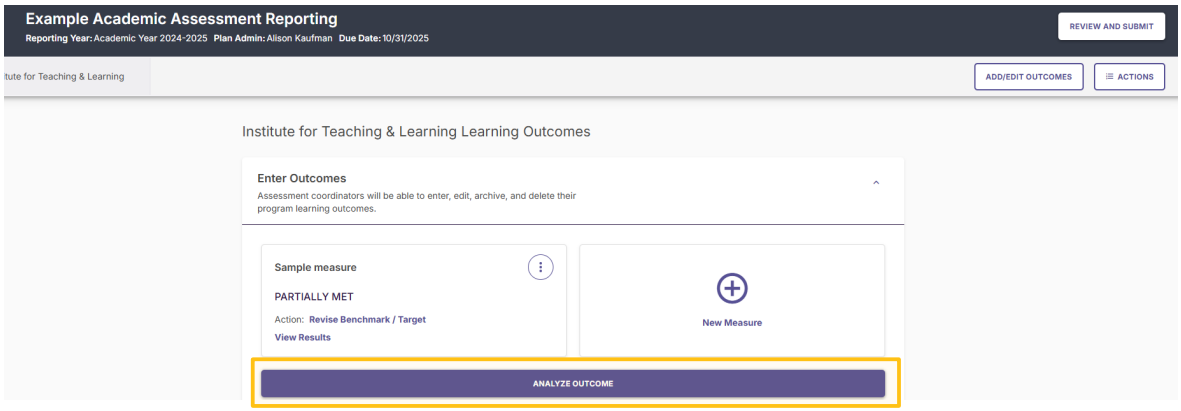


Figure 40

Based on the data across ALL your measures for the outcome, write a short **Outcome Analysis**. Next, select an **Outcome Status** from the dropdown. Finally, if you have any action steps at the outcome level rather than the measure level, add them here by clicking **ADD NEW ACTION**. Save and close this screen.

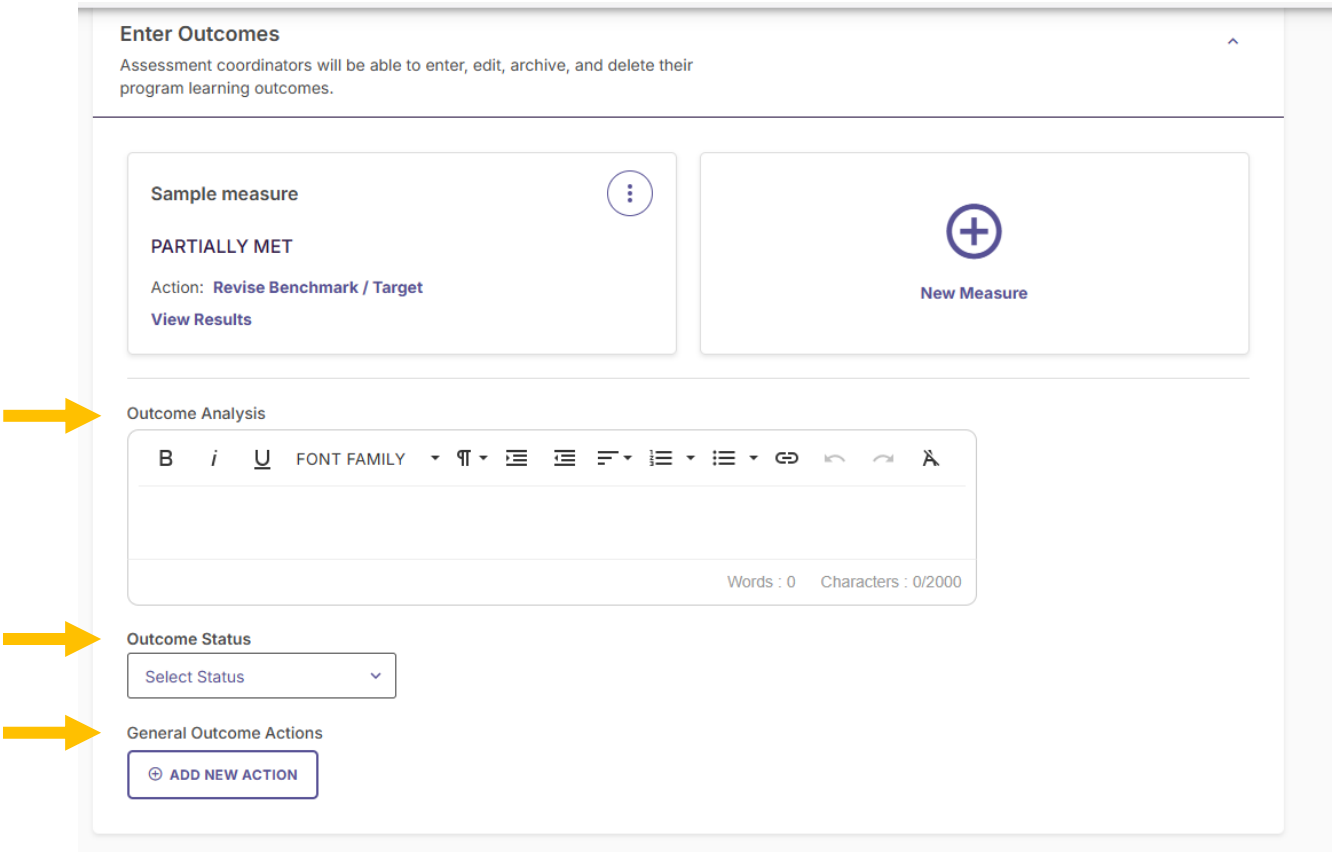


Figure 41

Submitting and Sharing a Report

After you've entered all the measure and outcome data, click **REVIEW AND SUBMIT**.

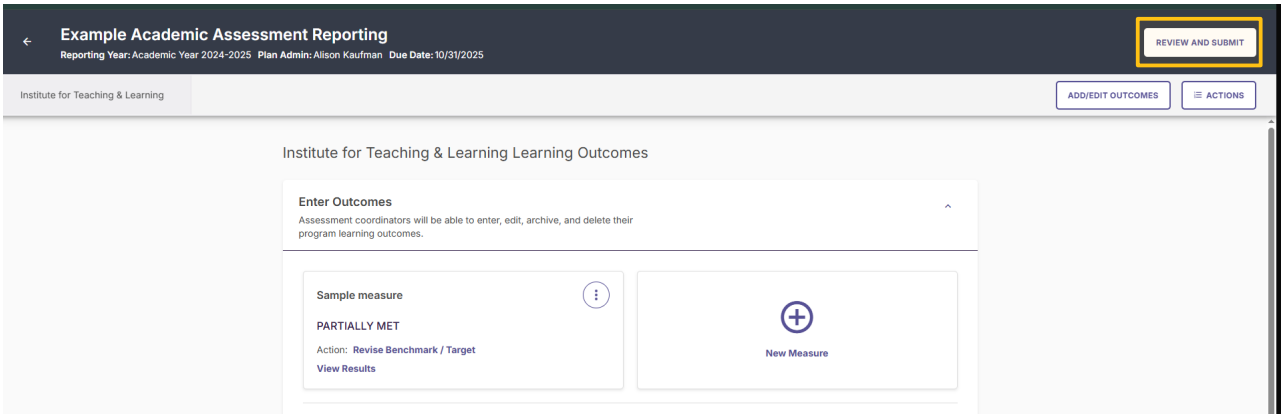


Figure 42

You will be directed to a screen where you can review your assessment report. You can also download the report as a PDF for access outside of the Planning & Self-Study system.

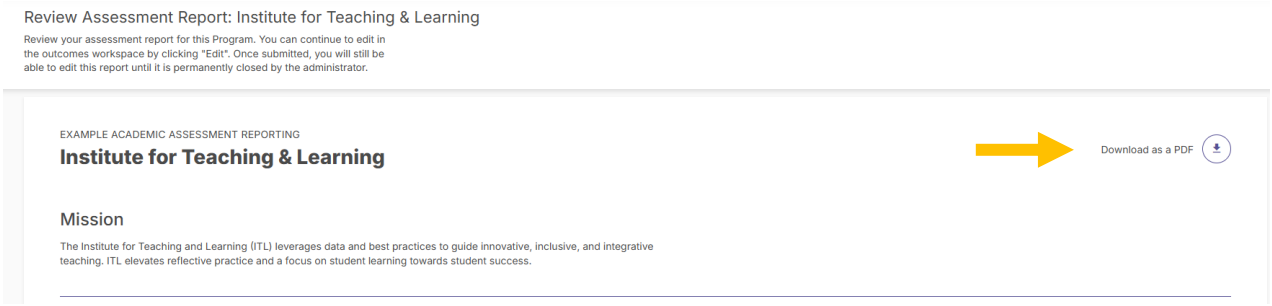


Figure 43

Your report is organized around outcomes that align your measures with results and action items.

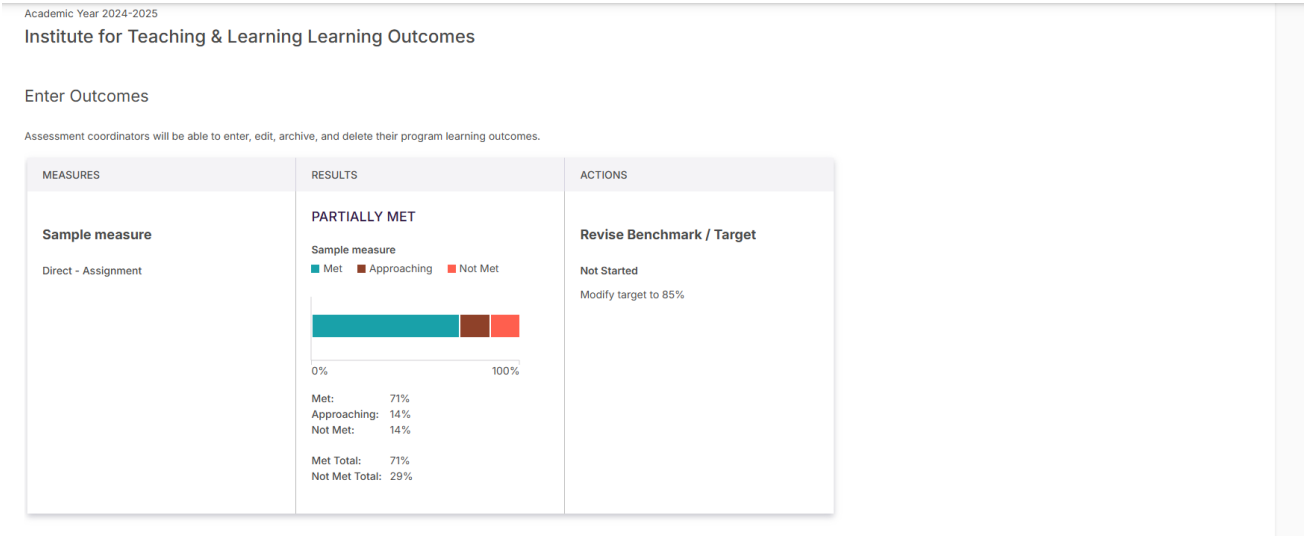


Figure 44

After reviewing your report, if you have any changes click EDIT. If you are satisfied with the information included, click **SUBMIT**.

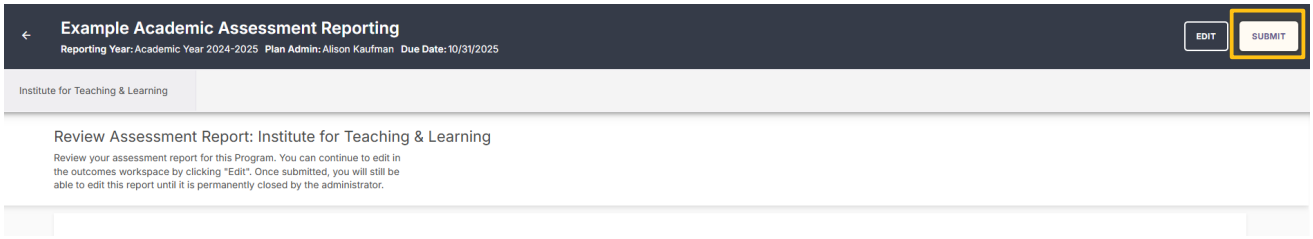


Figure 45

There is an additional feature that may be of use to some users/programs in this area. After you submit your report, you can leave comments related to the report. Click the comment icon and then enter a comment in the textbox. If you utilize the **@** symbol, you can notify another user of the comment. For example, "@NAME, this report if ready for your review." After you type your comment, click **SAVE COMMENT**.

Until your submission is formally reviewed, you can go back in and edit anything. After editing, the last date updates. You can use the comments to note your updates. Assessment is a continuous improvement process; it is okay to go in and update information.

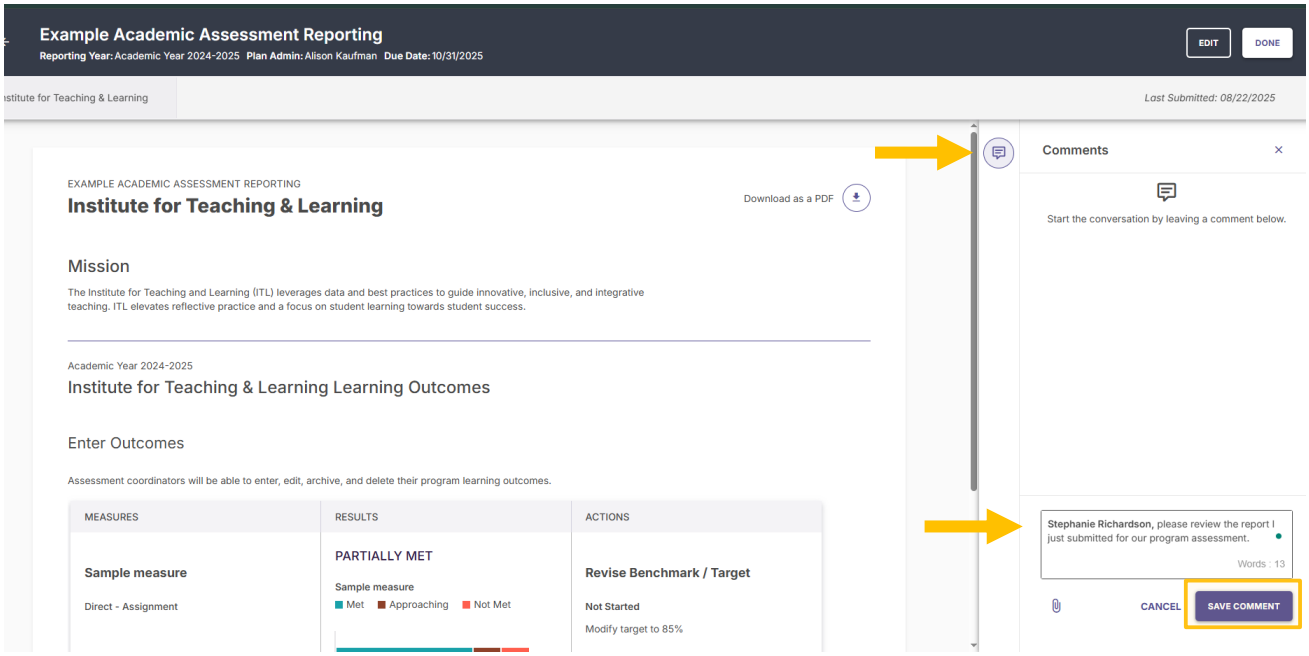


Figure 46

Updating Progress and Completion of Action Steps

When you are ready to add notes about progress or completion of actions steps, click **ENTER PROGRAM** from your home screen.

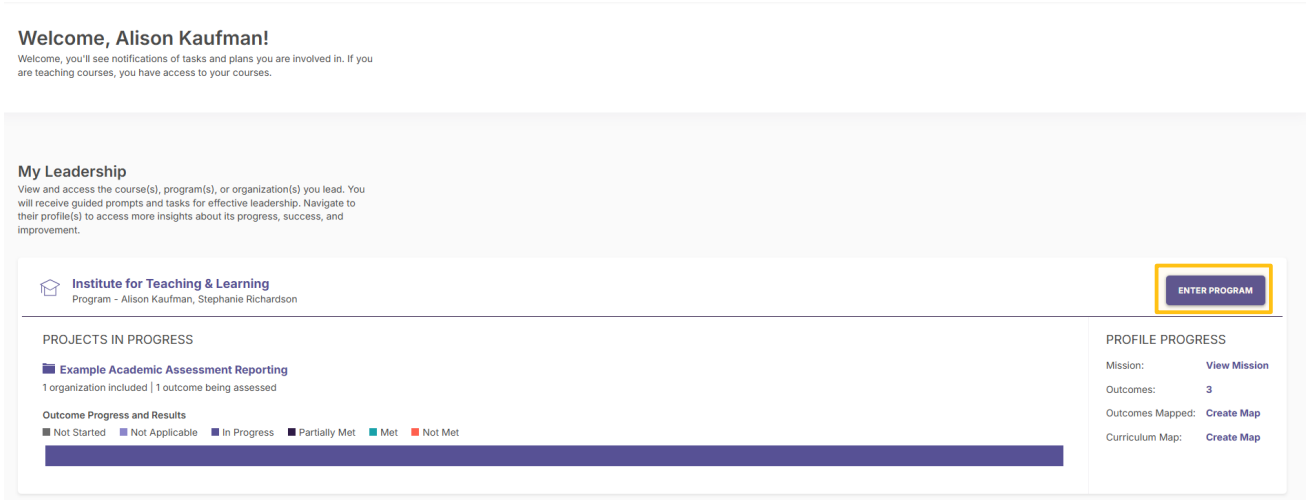


Figure 47

Click **Actions** from the toolbar on the left side of your screen. You'll then see a list of all the action items you've added through the assessment reporting process.

To open an action step and add notes or a status update, click the action item. In this example, click Review Benchmark/Target.

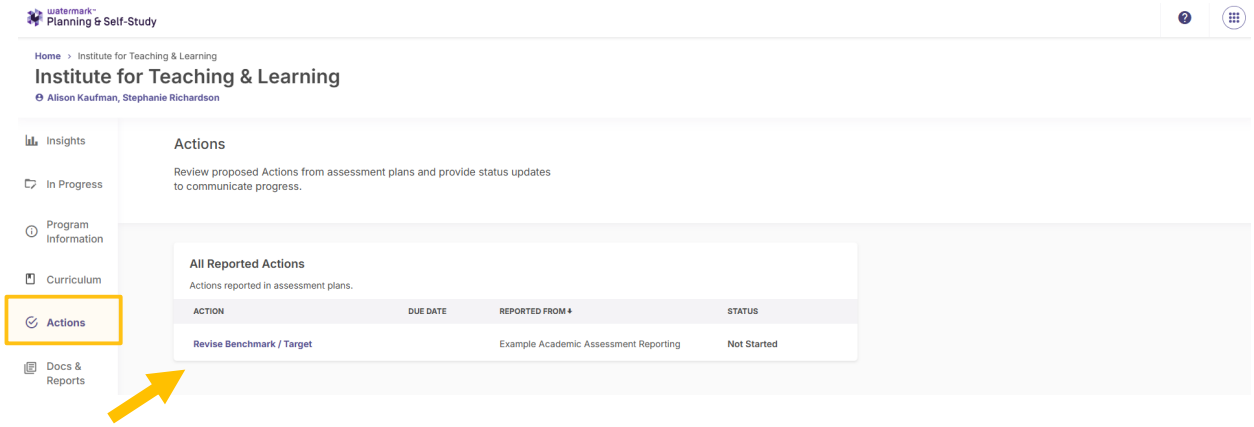


Figure 48

Using the dropdown menu, you can update the status of the action step. Click **ADD UPDATE** to enter comments.

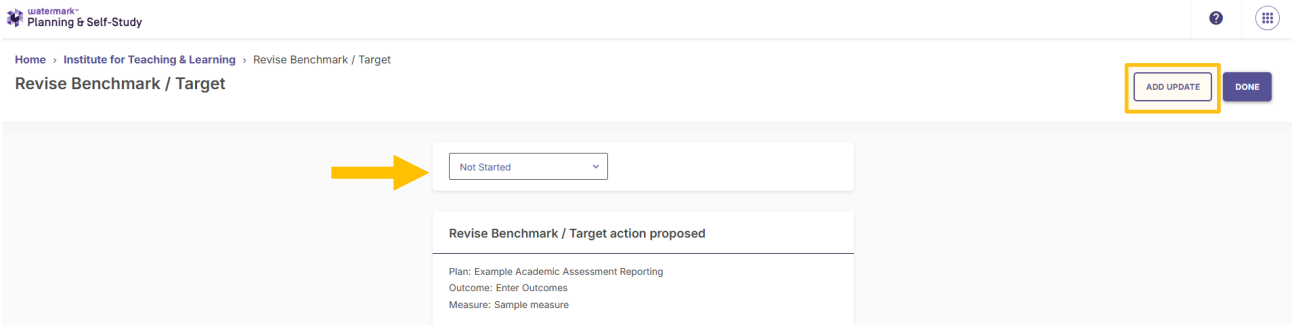


Figure 49

Enter your comments, then click the checkmark when you are finished.

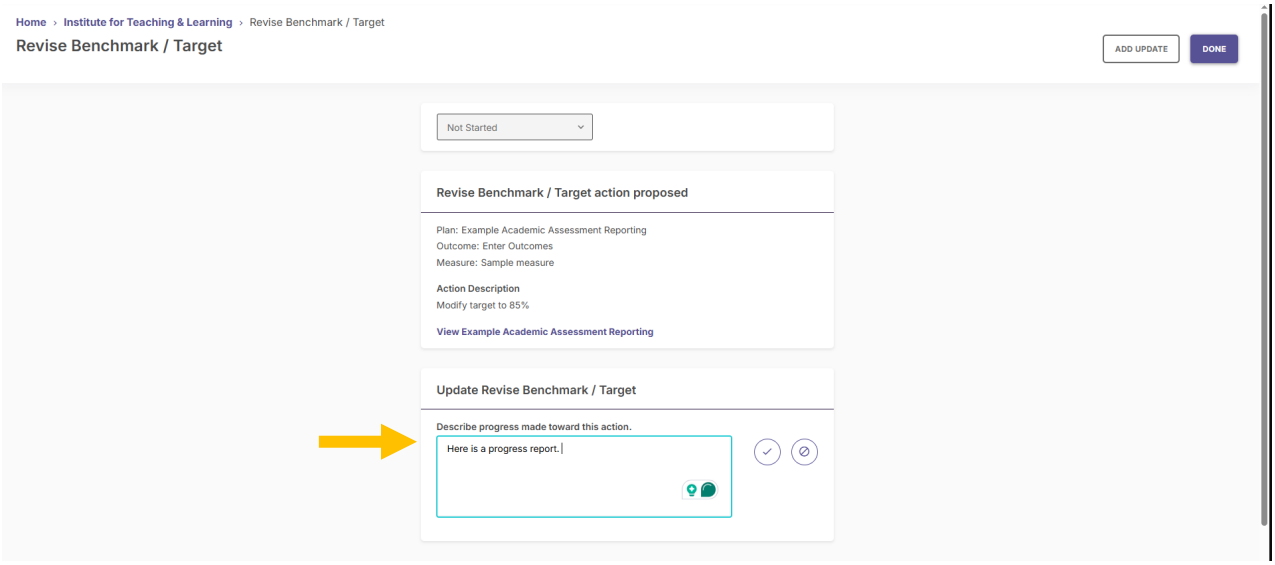


Figure 50

Youo can continue to add updates using the **ADD UPDATE** button. Each update will include a created by date and author. Be sure to use the dropdown menu to track overall status.

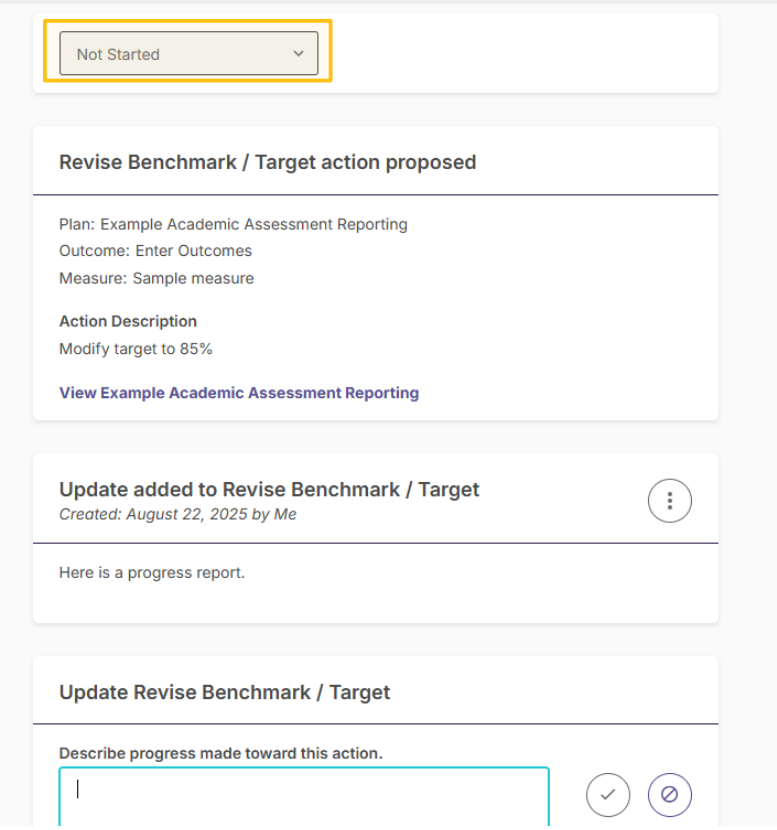


Figure 51

After selecting a status from the dropdown menu, the STATUS column on your home screen will update. If you click the action item, you can go back into the action area to review any notes.

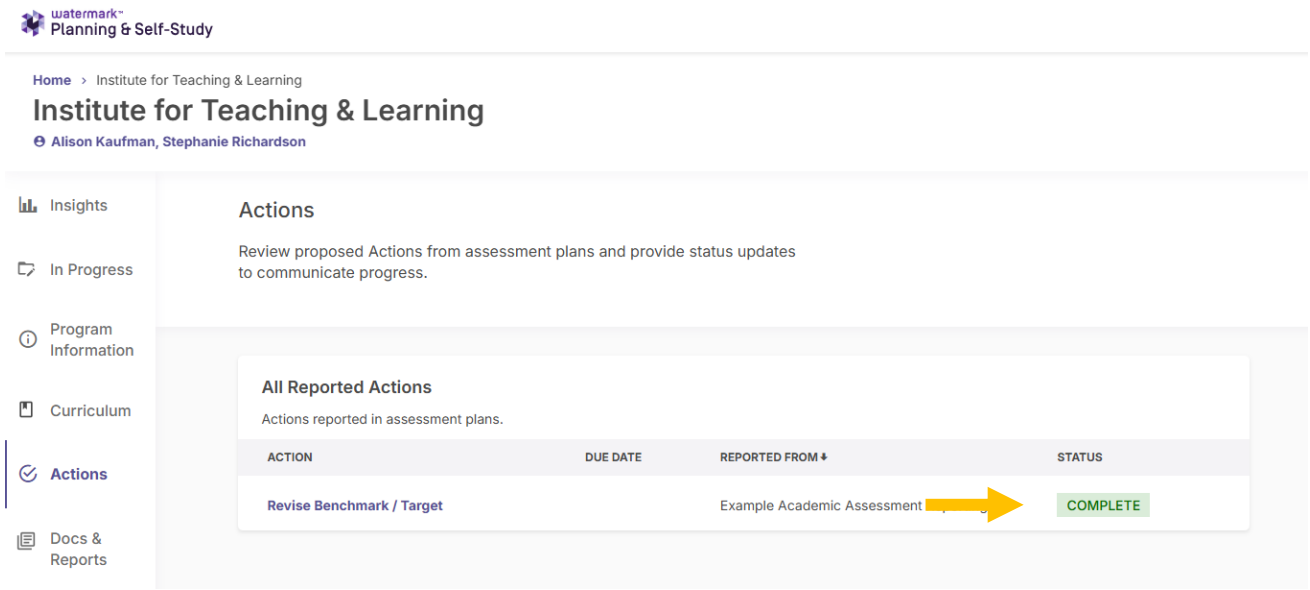


Figure 52

Accessing Archived Assessment Reports

The Institute for Teaching and Learning maintains past annual assessment submissions in a shared OneDrive folder, accessible to anyone with YSU login credentials. To access your program's folder, visit the Academic Assessment page.

Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the Assessment Archive link.

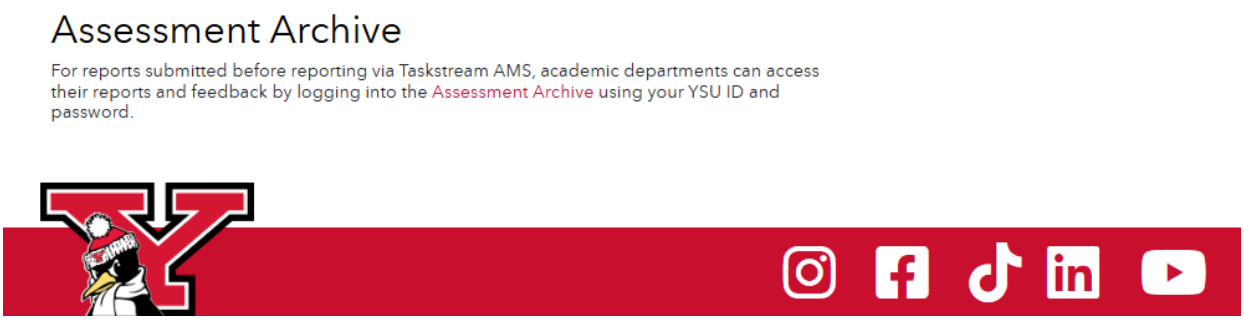


Figure 53

Navigate to your college, department, and then program folder. If you have any trouble accessing this information, reach out to atkaufman@ysu.edu.

Appendix 2A: Drafting Templates & Tools

Connecting Departmental Goals with Student Learning Outcomes

This document is an optional tool for programs new to assessment to begin translating their department or program goals into learning outcomes. This document does not need to be formally submitted, but you can book a consultation with ITL to review for feedback.

Mission/Goals of Department (especially as related to YSU Mission)	What do you hope students learn or value as a result these goals?	What skills do you hope students take with them because of these goals?	Reframe these goals/hopes as student learning outcomes (Students will be able to…)

Learning Opportunity Map Drafting Template

This document is meant as a place where you can draft your program Learning Opportunity Map outside of the PSS system. Use the map to map your program activities to student learning outcomes. **You DO NOT need to complete this form or submit it to ITL.**

	Activity 1	Activity 2	Etc...																
Learning Outcome 1																			
Learning Outcome 2																			
Etc...																			

While it is acceptable (and sufficient) to just place "**X**"s in the boxes on the template to show where a learning outcome is covered, we encourage you to consider using use a key that indicates the level of learning being asked of the student. The key used in Planning and Self-Study focuses on three levels of learning:

- Level 1: Introduce or Know
- Level 2: Reinforce or Apply
- Level 3: Master or Evaluate

YSU Student Learning Assessment Plan Drafting Template

Planning and Self-Study is the easiest place to complete your Assessment Plan. However, we recognize that some people prefer to work outside of the system for drafting. This document is meant as a place where you can draft your program Assessment Plan outside of the **PSS** system. You DO NOT need to complete this form or submit it ITL.

For the purposes of this plan, we ask that you describe how you plan to report all student learning outcomes for the entire cycle (typically 5-years). This planning will facilitate the ability for departments to focus on using data to provide evidence that students are achieving the learning outcomes expected in the program. Note that programs must assess learning in all the program learning outcomes during the cycle; programs may also choose to place an emphasis in a particular SLO area and evaluate learning in that area multiple times over the course of the plan.

Year 1: Assessment Plan

Year in Cycle	1. Student learning outcomes	2. Measures	3. Performance criteria
Year 1	Many programs have around 4-6 learning outcomes. Each SLO should be clearly written, measurable, and focused on a single skill or knowledge set. In Year 1 of your assessment cycle, you will enter your learning outcomes into PSS. Notes: You may focus on priority SLO's across multiple years.	Each learning outcome should have two methods. Explain where the measures will be taken. The same two measurement tools could theoretically cover all your learning outcomes. In Year 1 of your assessment cycle, you will enter your methods into PSS.	How will learning in the program be evaluated? In Year 1 of your assessment cycle, you will enter your performance criteria into PSS. You may also add supporting attachments.
Year 2			

Year 3			
Year 3			
Year 4			
Year 5			

It is of critical importance to the Higher Learning Commission that programs make strong connections between the data they are collecting on Student Learning Outcomes and using that data to reflect upon the current state of student learning; make changes to programming (when necessary); share that data with stakeholders (both internal and external). The use of data will primarily be reported on the yearly Assessment Updates.

Consider the following questions when developing your assessment plan:

1. How will you share data in an ongoing basis will all staff in your program?
2. How will you share the results of the data discussed with your students, your division, and other stakeholders?

YSU Student Learning Assessment Update Drafting Template

Planning and Self-Study is the easiest place to complete your yearly assessment update. However, we recognize that some people prefer to work outside of the system for drafting. This document is meant as a place where you can draft your yearly assessment update. You DO NOT need to complete this form or submit it ITL.

Directions:

1. Provide a status of action steps from previous years.
2. List student learning outcome(s) focus during the past academic year.
3. Summarize methods used to assess each SLO.
4. Summarize the student learning evidence and findings—what were student learning strengths and challenges based on the data?
5. Create action steps that show how this evidence will be used to improve student learning in the program.
6. Attach copies of any surveys, rubrics, data or other assessment tools as appropriate.

Update Component	Program Information
Prior Action Steps	
Prior Year Student Learning Outcomes	
Assessment Methods for each reported SLO	
Evidence & Findings Regarding Student Learning	
Use of Results/ Action Steps	

YSU End of Cycle Reflection Drafting Template

Planning and Self-Study is the easiest place to complete your end of cycle reflection. However, we recognize that some people prefer to work outside of the system for drafting. This document is meant as a place where you can draft your end of cycle reflection. You DO NOT need to complete this form or submit it ITL.

Please address the following questions: you may attach evidence as needed.

1. Thinking about the program's cycle as a whole, what were major strengths and/or challenges in student learning?

2. What key changes were made to address student learning challenges?

3. What is the impact of those changes on student learning in the program?

4. If there is no *evidence of impact*, what adjustments to your next plan will allow you to collect *evidence of impact*?

5. How does your assessment process adequately evaluate student learning in the program?

6. What are current concerns regarding student achievement of student learning outcomes in your program?

7. Programs may choose to place a priority focus on a particular program student learning outcome (e.g., leadership, developing professional comptencies, etc.) as long as the other SLOs are measured once in the next cycle[1]. Is there a SLO the program is interested in focusing on in the next cycle?

[1] For example, if a program with six SLOs wishes to place a priority focus on one area of learning concern—for example, leadership—the program could focus its data collection, analysis, and action steps in that area each year with the intent of making changes and looking for learning improvements. Programs could use one method to measure the others over the next five years. The result would be: Y1, leadership/SLO2; Y2, leadership/SLO3; Y3, leadership/SLO4; Y4, leadership/SLO5; and Y5, leadership/SLO6.

Appendix 2B: Guiding Rubrics

Assessment Plan: Guiding Rubric

Question	Proficient	Developing	Revisions Needed
Student Learning Outcomes	• All the programs' student learning outcomes are listed. • Learning outcomes are measurable. • Majority of learning outcomes are focused on a single skill/knowledge set.	• Attempt at learning outcomes included but may not be measurable or not focused on student learning. • May focus on program effectiveness goals only.	• Little or no reference to learning outcomes.
Assessment Methods	• Two methods for measuring learning outcomes are provided for each SLO. • Includes reference to where measures will be used. • Includes performance criteria or development of criteria.	• Includes only one effective method for each SLO. • And/or methods may not be aligned with SLO or may not measure student learning. • And/or incomplete information about where measures will be assessed or performance criteria lacking	• No measures identified. • And/or no information about those being assessed. • And/or no performance criteria evident.
Staff Engagement	• Responsibility for assessment is not only in the hands of the assessment coordinator, e.g., other staff assist in collection, review, and/or analysis. • Department staff meet at least once a year to review data and develop action steps.	• There is some evidence that assessment is or is becoming a shared program activity, but significant portions are the responsibility of the assessment coordinator alone. • Staff may occasionally meet as a department, but on less than yearly basis.	• Vast majority of assessment-related activities are done only by the assessment coordinator. • Other staff in the program do not assist in or discuss assessment.
Stakeholders	• Stakeholders identified (e.g. students, advisory groups). • Modes of communication of assessment data explained. • Students should be included as a stakeholder group.	• Stakeholders identified but may exclude significant stakeholders or major groups (e.g., students). • May incompletely explain ways of communicating with stakeholders.	• No relevant stakeholders identified. • And/or no description of how or when the unit communicates with stakeholders.

Assessment Update: Guiding Rubric

Component	Proficient	Developing	Revision Needed
Prior Action Steps Status	• Action step(s) status explained • Action steps may be listed as completed • If not complete, some next steps included	• Action step(s) status may not be fully explained	• No action steps or status provided
Assessment Methods	• 1 or 2 measures for each student learning outcome (SLO) (overlap in methods is acceptable) • Methods are appropriate and measure the target SLO • Reference to where and when measure taken	• Some/all methods may not be aligned with SLO or may not measure student learning • Outcome measured does not show progress through cycle (e.g. same SLO is measured each year, while others are left off) • May have incomplete information about students being assessed	• No measures identified • And/or no information about students being assessed
Evidence and Findings of Student Learning	• Strengths and/or challenges in student learning identified • Findings based on data collected, though other sources/professional judgment also may be used to support conclusions	• Identifies strengths and/or challenges but may not be related to the SLO or may not be based on data. • Findings focus on program effectiveness, rather than student learning strengths and challenges	• No strengths and/or challenges identified • Not related to students learning
Use of Results	• Action step(s) (no action, if supported by data) linked to student learning findings • Action step(s) are appropriate to the learning outcomes and can reasonably be carried out • In some cases, further study or confirmation of results by re-assessment is appropriate	• Action step(s) are mentioned, but not linked to analysis of SLO data (i.e., strengths and challenges analysis) • Action step(s) may not impact learning outcome • Action step (s) may be unattainable	• Action step(s) are not provided • Action step(s) are not related to student learning