



## Assessment Overview for Co-Curricular Programs/Units

 **Syracuse University**  
Institutional Effectiveness (IE)  
[effectiveness.syr.edu](http://effectiveness.syr.edu) | [assessment@syr.edu](mailto:assessment@syr.edu)

# Syracuse University's Assessment Framework

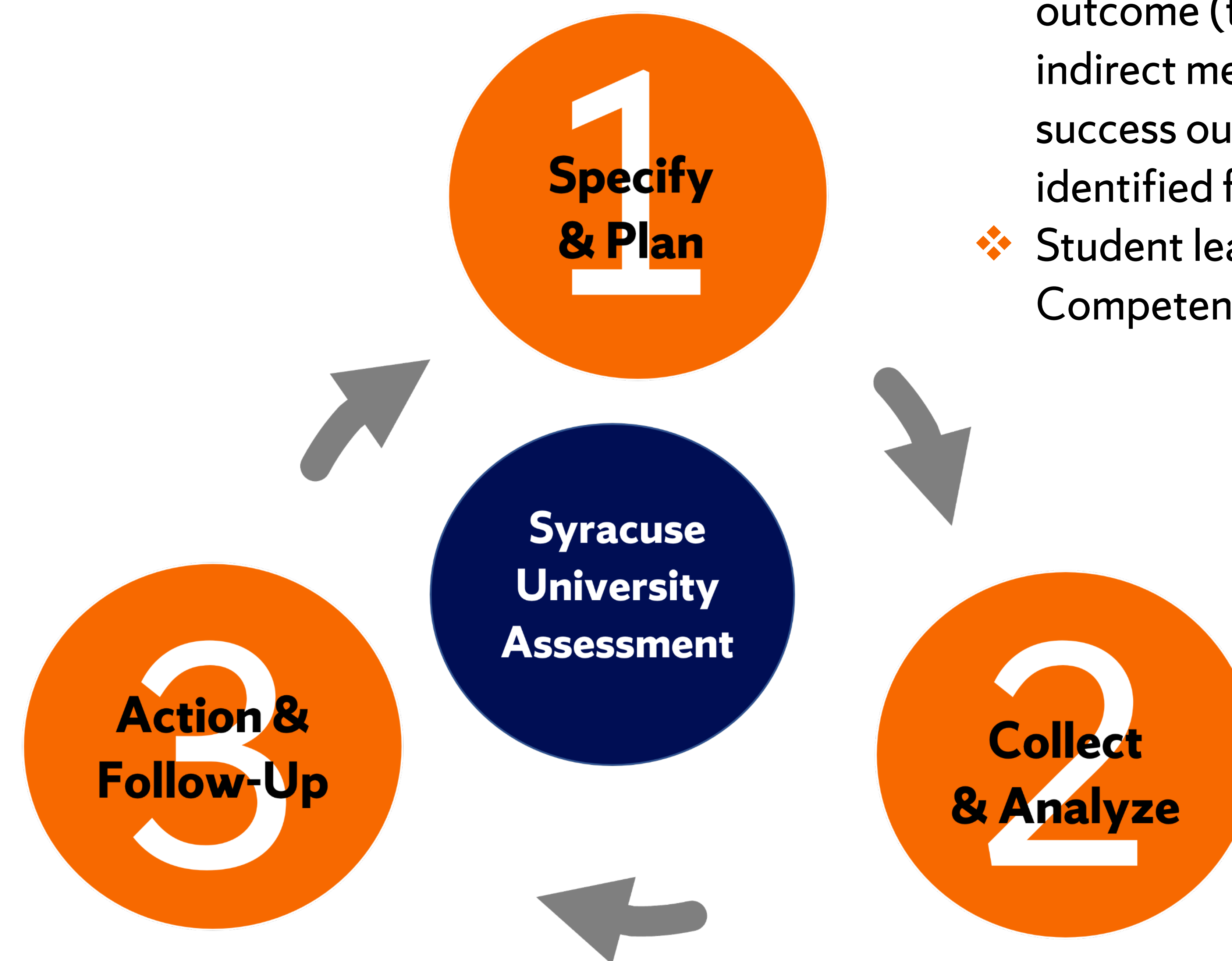
The process for conducting student learning and success outcome assessment is organized into three phases:

## Sustaining Assessment

- ❖ Program/unit members lead and sustain a well-designed and manageable assessment and action plan to inform decision-making.
- ❖ The entire set of student learning and success outcomes are assessed at least once in the University's four-year cycle with updates provided annually.

## Phase 1 | Specify and Plan

- ❖ The program/unit has student learning outcomes that describe what students will be able to do, know, or produce over time as a result of participation in program/unit initiatives.
- ❖ The program/unit has success outcomes that assess operational success to inform decision-making and enhance the student experience.
- ❖ At least two measures are identified for each student learning outcome (two direct measures or one direct measure and one indirect measure). At least one direct measure is identified for each success outcome. A specific target, or criterion for success, is identified for each measure.
- ❖ Student learning outcomes are aligned with the Shared Competencies, Syracuse University's institutional learning goals.



## Phase 3 | Action and Follow-Up

- ❖ Assessment results inform decision-making.
- ❖ Based on the findings, program/unit members suggest and implement actions to improve student learning and operations.
- ❖ Program/unit members conduct follow-up assessment to examine the impact of actions taken.

## Phase 2 | Collect and Analyze

- ❖ Evidence of student learning and operational success is gathered through direct measures, which are often embedded experiences (e.g., student projects, performances, staff observations). They are supported by indirect measures, such as those that ask students to share perceptions of their learning and experiences in the program.
- ❖ Results are documented and consistent with all measures and criteria for each outcome being assessed.
- ❖ Interpretation of the results is comprehensively documented and summarizes the strengths and weaknesses found in student learning and operations.

# Roles in a Collaborative Assessment Process

## Division Leaders

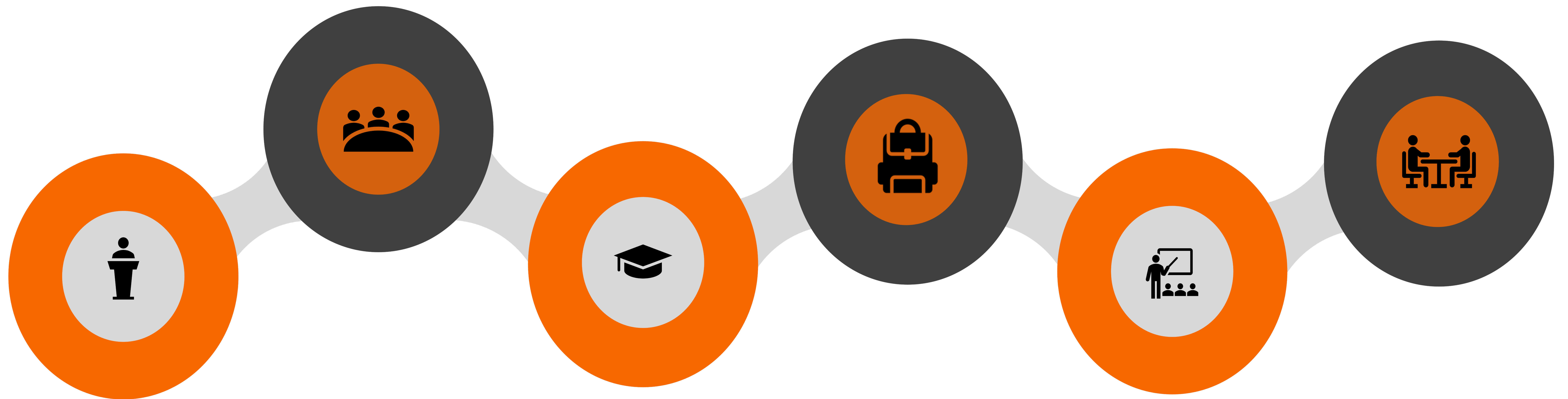
- ❖ Communicate the value of evidence-based decision-making to enhance student learning and operations.
- ❖ Establish resources to sustain the division's commitment to ongoing improvement.
- ❖ Establish and maintain a division-wide committee responsible for outcome assessment.
- ❖ Act on assessment results.
- ❖ Align selected assessment and action plan outcomes to the division's strategic plan.

## Staff

- ❖ Participate in assessment activities such as developing student learning and success outcomes, developing and norming rubrics, collecting evidence, and discussing results.
- ❖ Some staff may serve as the lead on assessment activities.
- ❖ Communicate outcomes to students.
- ❖ Engage students in the assessment process to enhance student agency, study equity in the student experience, and use student perspectives to drive decision-making.
- ❖ Act on assessment results.

## Educational Effectiveness Committee and Institutional Effectiveness Committee

- ❖ Representatives communicate information shared at the committee with program/unit/division leaders to guide actions that support and enhance the student experience and campus operations.
- ❖ Monitor assessment and accreditation activities in the program/unit/division and point leaders to appropriate University resources as needed.
- ❖ Identify strengths and limitations of current assessment practices in the program/unit/division and share insights with the committees.



## Program/Unit Directors

- ❖ Establish student learning and success outcomes.
- ❖ Support the program/unit's assessment efforts.
- ❖ Align program/unit outcomes with institutional/divisional strategic goals.
- ❖ Ensure that staff participate in collaborative assessment discussions and share responsibility for systematically collecting and reflecting on assessment results.
- ❖ Use the assessment process to examine equity in the student experience as it pertains to the program/unit's initiatives.
- ❖ Act on assessment results.

## Students

- ❖ Engage in assessment-related activities that allow them to share their perspectives and experiences (e.g., surveys, course feedback, focus groups).
- ❖ Provide constructive feedback and input on assessment activities (e.g., co-creating/revising learning outcomes, assisting with rubric development, analyzing and interpreting data).
- ❖ Serve committees when requested.
- ❖ Discuss learning, experiences in the program/unit in relation to the learning and success outcomes.

# Equity-Minded Practices in Assessment

“Assessment, if not done with equity in mind, privileges and validates certain types of learning and evidence of learning over others, can binder the validation of multiple means of demonstration, and can reinforce within students the false notion that they do not belong in higher education” (Jankowski & Montenegro, 2017, p.5).

## What does a focus on equity entail?

Check	Use	Include	Increase	Ensure	Make
Check biases and ask reflective questions throughout the data analysis process to address assumptions and positions of privilege	Use multiple sources of evidence appropriate for the students being supported and related learning experience or support offering	Include student perspective and take actions based on those shared perspectives	Increase transparency in results and actions taken Invite alternative interpretations	Ensure collected data are meaningfully disaggregated and interrogated	Make evidence-based changes that address issues of equity that are context specific

Adapted from Montenegro, E., & Jankowski, N. A. (2020).

## Key Practices to Implement

- ❖ Student learning and success outcomes are written using clear language appropriate for all learners.
- ❖ Include authors, scholars, and artists from diverse backgrounds in course content.
- ❖ Learning prompts or directions include the purpose, task, and criteria for success.
- ❖ Consider adopting a culminating project such as a portfolio, presentation, or exhibition that allows students to demonstrate holistic learning in relation to the learning outcomes.

## Engage Students in the Process

Capturing student voices and providing opportunities for students to actively participate in the assessment process is mutually beneficial to both staff and students.

- ❖ Students can co-create student learning and success outcomes.
- ❖ Students can participate in data analysis, visualization, and storytelling.
- ❖ Students can co-create rubrics and aid in defining what success of an outcome looks like.
- ❖ Students can offer a unique perspective about their lived experiences, knowledge development, and learning experiences that were/were not meaningful.

## Key Terms to Keep in Mind

- ❖ **Agency** - ability to exercise will and power to act purposefully toward goals.
- ❖ **Bias** - un/conscious favor or influence for or against someone or something.
- ❖ **Culturally responsive assessment** - focusing on the student populations the institution serves and using data to enhance learning for all, not just majority, students.
- ❖ **Disaggregated data** - data that have been broken down into sub-categories.
- ❖ **Equity** - justice according to need and fairness; moving beyond “same treatment for all.”
- ❖ **Inclusion** - the practice of designing opportunities and resources for people that might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.
- ❖ **Methodological Diversity** - using multiple forms of measurement to capture diverse ways of knowing.
- ❖ **Positionality** - how identity (including role/status/social identity) constructs perspective.

# Assessment and Action Plan Update

## Overview

The program/unit's assessment and action plan is updated annually in Planning & Self-Study (P&SS). Staff document assessment activities, including measures used, criteria for success, results, analyses, and any actions that will be taken to enhance student learning and/or operational success.

## Planning & Self-Study

Planning & Self-Study is accessed at [planning.syr.edu](http://planning.syr.edu).

## Timeline

Assessment periods run annually from July 1 to June 30.  
The assessment and action plan is updated in P&SS by November 1 of that year.

## Assessment Cycle

Syracuse University's four-year assessment cycle runs through June 30, 2025. Between now and then, each outcome is examined at least once.

## Professional Development

Institutional Effectiveness has resources to guide your assessment efforts on our website and in our office. Visit <https://effectiveness.syr.edu/assessment/assessment-resources/> for more information.

## Always Remember

The Assessment Working Team is here to help! Email us at [assessment@syr.edu](mailto:assessment@syr.edu)

