



# Assessment Overview for Co-Curricular Programs/Units

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# Syracuse University's Assessment Framework

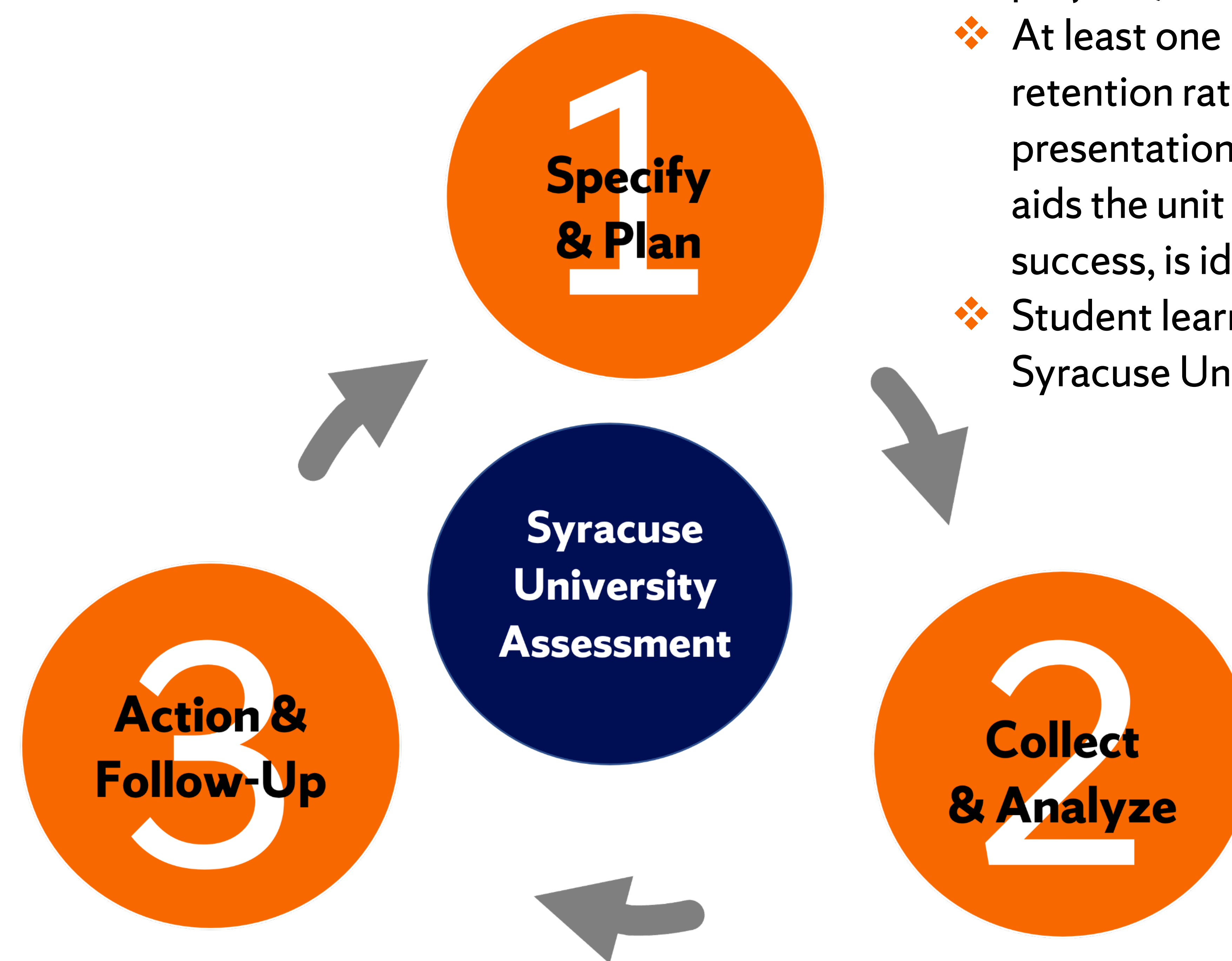
The process for conducting student learning and success outcome assessment is organized into three phases:

## 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 types of evidence are identified for each student learning outcome (two primary evidence or one primary and one supporting evidence). Primary evidence are based on student work (e.g., exams, papers, projects). Secondary evidence may include grades, surveys, or feedback.
- ❖ At least one primary evidence is identified for each success outcome. (e.g., retention rates, process completion timelines, money raised, number of presentations, etc.). Supporting evidence are additional pieces of data that aids the unit in data-driven decision making. A specific target, or criterion for success, is identified for each type of evidence.
- ❖ 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 primary evidence, 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

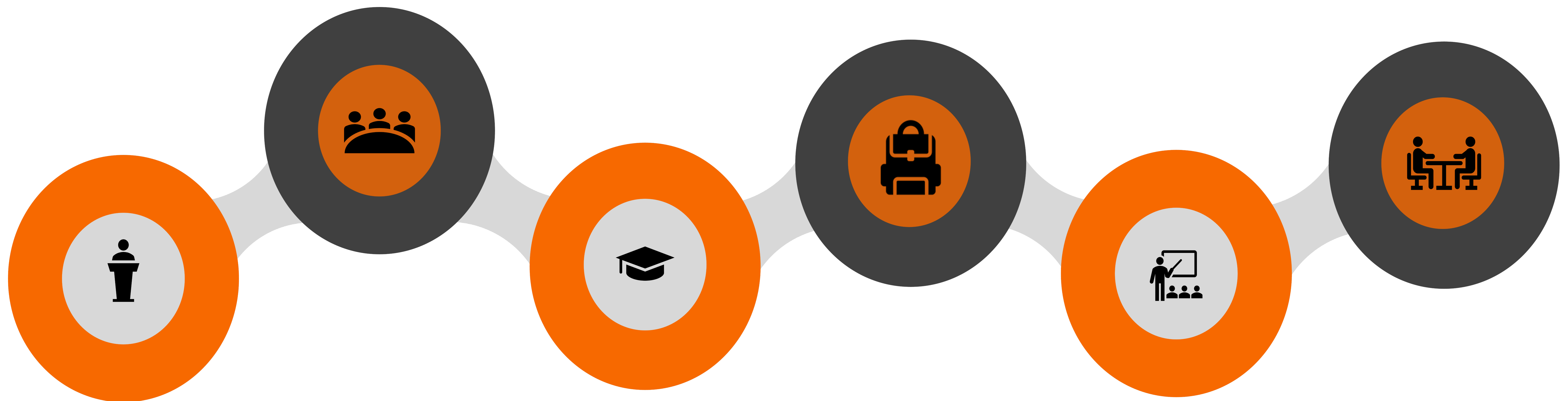
- ❖ Communicate the value of evidence-based decision-making to enhance student learning and operations.
- ❖ Establish resources to sustain the division's commitment to ongoing improvement.
- ❖ Establish and maintain a division-wide committee responsible for outcome assessment.
- ❖ Act on assessment results.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

- ❖ 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.



# Transparent Assessment




Using transparent assessment strategies fosters a collaborative and participatory assessment culture to enhance the student learning experience.

## Framework & Guiding Principles

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

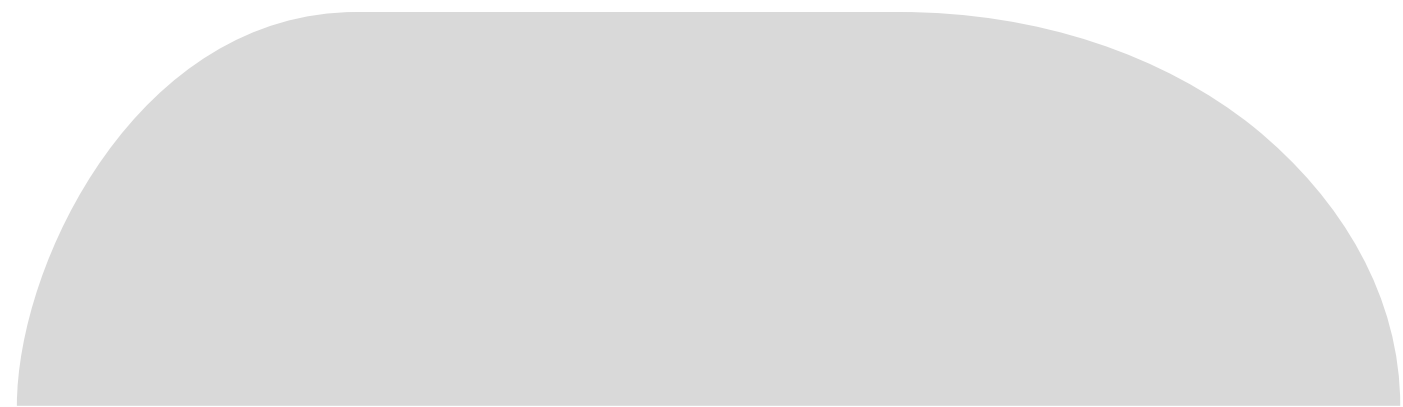
- ❖ Meaningful student engagement
- ❖ Data disaggregation, exploration, and action
- ❖ Use context specific approaches and responses
- ❖ Embed transparency in all assessment processes

## Transparent Assessment Strategies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Develop program learning outcomes using clear language appropriate for all learners.</li><li>❖ Explore both cognitive and non-cognitive taxonomies, such as <u>Bloom’s (revised)</u> and <u>Finks Taxonomy</u> when crafting outcomes.</li><li>❖ Provide students with multiple ways (measures) to demonstrate their knowledge or skills.</li><li>❖ Ask students enrolled in the program to identify meaningful learning experiences (measures) they had in courses aligned to the program learning outcomes.</li><li>❖ Consider adopting a culminating signature assignment such as a portfolio, presentation, or exhibition that allows students to demonstrate holistic learning in relation to the outcomes.</li><li>❖ Identify achievement criteria based on the industry, field, and/or faculty expertise. Criteria should set all students up for post-graduate success.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Collect multiple different assignment types (measures) to assess each outcome across the curriculum.</li><li>❖ Disaggregate data by student subgroups that are meaningful to the program.</li><li>❖ When looking at results of different student subgroups, be sure to look at the evidence with the established criteria in mind and not compare performance of one group to another, in particular to the majority group.</li><li>❖ Compare results of one or more assignments over a few years to determine consistency of findings. (This can be a very helpful approach for programs with small enrollments.)</li><li>❖ Compare cohorts of students (e.g., class of 2024 and class of 2025 following a change to look at learning improvement) or for the same students at different times (e.g., class of 2025 in their first year and again during senior year).</li><li>❖ Share results with students to seek feedback on ways to enhance learning.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ As the needs of your students and the program evolve, so will student learning outcomes, the curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment practices. Establish a manageable timeline to implement and assess actions based on results.</li><li>❖ Include students and alumni in discussions about actions. They are experts in their own experience with the program and can provide keen insights.</li></ul>



# Assessment and Action Plan Update



## Overview

- ❖ The program/unit’s assessment and action plan is updated annually. Staff document assessment activities, including evidence used, criteria for success, results, analyses, and any actions that will be taken to enhance student learning and/or operational success.

## Process & Requirements

- ❖ Staff examine one or more learning and/or success outcomes annually, summarizing evidence, criteria, results, analyses, and actions to enhance learning and/or experience.
- ❖ Use at least two evidence for each outcome, with one being a primary evidence (e.g., exams, papers, projects). Other secondary evidence may include grades, surveys, or feedback.
- ❖ Analyze subgroup results and identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities to enhance learning and/or experience.

## Reporting & Documentation

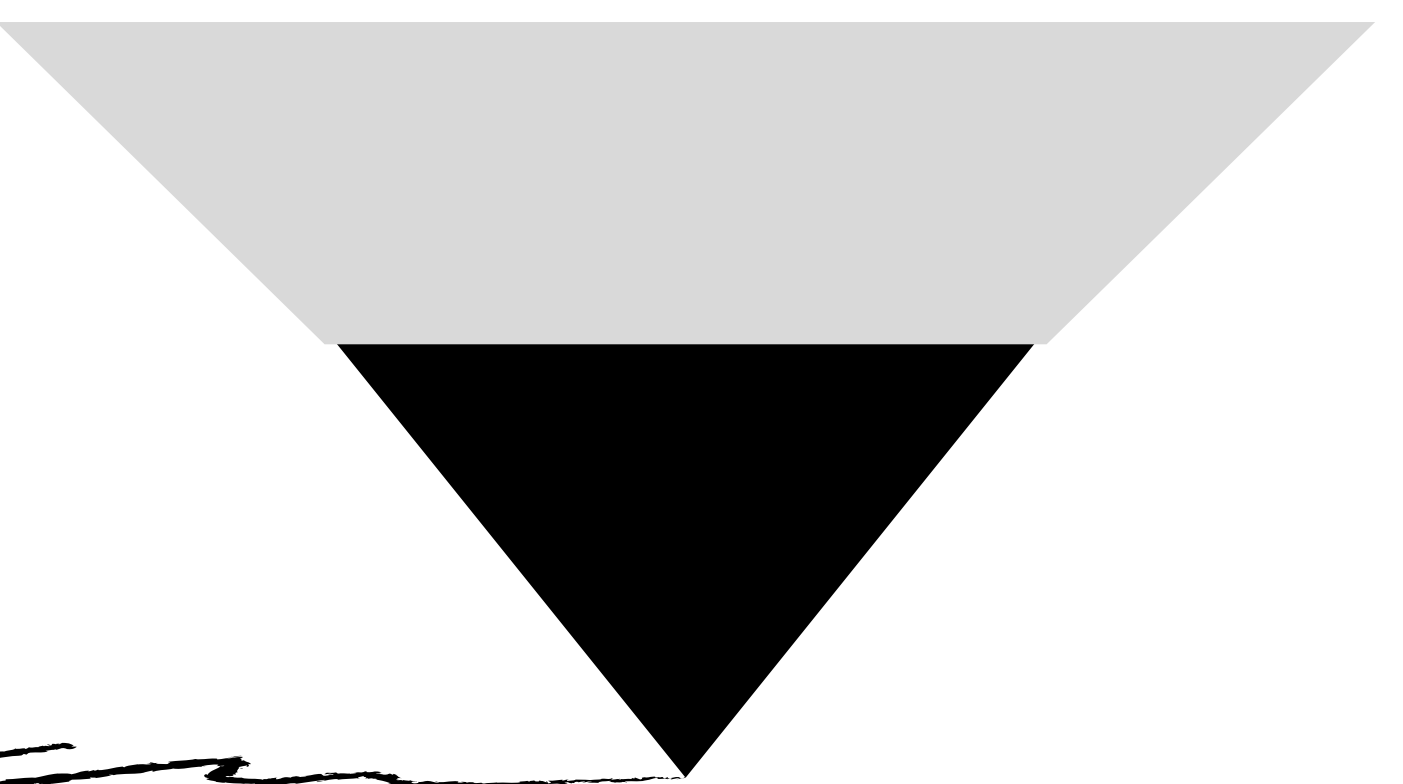
- ❖ Co-curricular programs/units complete the annual update using a [learning outcome worksheet](#) or a [success outcome worksheet](#) for each assessed outcome and submit completed worksheets to [assessment@syr.edu](mailto:assessment@syr.edu).
- ❖ Co-curricular programs/units should maintain any evidence collected and meeting minutes within their programs/units for at least one year.

## Timeline & Cycle

- ❖ Assessment periods run annually from July 1 to June 30. Annual Update Due: **November 1**. For programs/units within the Division of the Student Experience the deadline is **August 1**.
- ❖ Syracuse University’s four-year assessment cycle runs through **June 30, 2026**. Through June 30, 2026, each learning and success outcome is examined at least once.

## Always Remember

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



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