



Assessment Overview for Functional Units



Syracuse University

Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE)

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Syracuse University's Assessment Framework

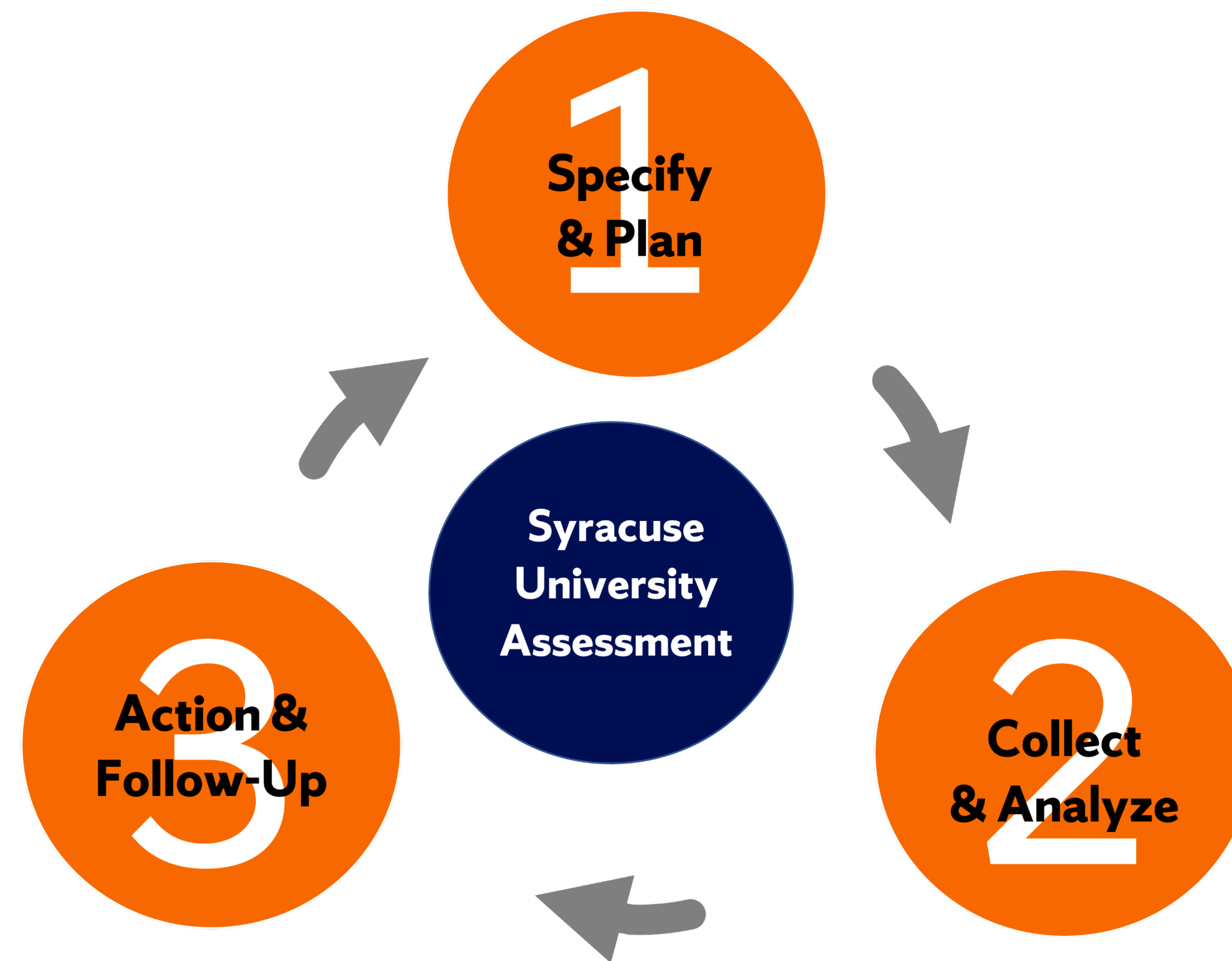
The process for conducting outcomes assessment at the functional unit level is organized into three phases:

Sustaining Assessment

- ❖ Staff members lead and sustain a well-designed and manageable assessment and action plan to inform decision-making.
- ❖ Staff maintain an up-to-date Four-Year Assessment and Action Plan (AAP) Roadmap.
- ❖ The entire set of outcomes is assessed by year three of the University's four-year cycle; year four closes the loop by providing updates on all actions previously identified.

Phase 1 | Specify and Plan

- ❖ The unit has 5-7 success outcomes that assess operational success to inform decision-making and enhance the student experience.
- ❖ At least one primary evidence is identified for each success outcome (e.g., participation rates, process completion timelines, money raised, or usage data). Supporting evidence are additional pieces of data that aids the unit in data-driven decision making.
- ❖ A specific criterion for success is identified for each type of evidence.



Phase 3 | Action and Follow-Up

- ❖ Assessment results inform decisions about the unit. Based on the findings, staff identify and implement actions to improve student support and unit operations.
- ❖ Staff conduct follow-up assessment to examine the impact of actions taken.

Phase 2 | Collect and Analyze

- ❖ Evidence is collected and results are documented consistent with all evidence and criteria for each success outcome being assessed.
- ❖ Staff's interpretation of the results is comprehensively documented and summarizes the strengths and weaknesses found in unit operations.
- ❖ To study the nuances operational excellence, results are broken down by meaningful subgroups (e.g., department, user roles, or fiscal years).

Annual Assessment Activities across the University's Four-Year Cycle

Sustaining a manageable and meaningful assessment and action plan is important for continuous improvement. The University maintains a four-year assessment cycle beginning July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2030, described below. **Staff provide an annual update on or before November 1.**

PLAN AHEAD & ASSESS OUTCOMES



Year 1

Assessing AY 2026-27/FY 2027

Annual Assessment Activities

- Complete, share, and discuss the Four-Year Assessment and Action (AAP) Roadmap with staff (see template on the next page).
- Assess 1/3 of the unit's success outcomes.

Due: November 1, 2027

ASSESS OUTCOMES



Year 2

Assessing AY 2027-28/FY 2028

Annual Assessment Activities

- Assess 1/3 of the unit's success outcomes.

Due: November 1, 2028

ASSESS OUTCOMES



Year 3

Assessing AY 2028-29/FY 2029

Annual Assessment Activities

- Assess the remaining success outcomes.

Due: November 1, 2029

UPDATE ACTIONS & PLAN AHEAD



Year 4

Assessing AY 2029-30/FY 2030

Annual Assessment Activities

- Provide an update on all actions identified throughout the past three years for every success outcome.
- Submit Four-Year AAP Roadmap for 2030-34 assessment cycle.

Due: November 1, 2030

Four-Year Assessment and Action Plan Roadmap

Four-Year Assessment and Action Plan (AAP) Roadmap

This roadmap helps units organize and sustain assessment activities across the University’s four-year cycle. Use it to plan which success outcomes will be assessed each year, identify the staff who will engage in the process, determine evidence to collect, and plan how results will inform learning and/or operational excellence.

Annual assessment activities are due November 1.

Assessment Year	Annual Assessment Activities	Outcomes	Faculty Engagement	Evidence	Share & Use Results
		Identify the success outcomes the unit will assess in each assessment year. All outcomes must be assessed within the first three years of the four-year cycle	Identify the staff who will engage in assessment activities for each assessment year.	Identify the primary evidence and supporting evidence that will be used to assess each outcome. ¹	Describe how results will be shared and used to inform operational excellence.
Year 1 Assessing AY 2026-27 FY 2027	- Complete, share, and discuss the Four-Year Assessment and Action (AAP) Roadmap with faculty. - Assess 1/3 of the unit’s student success outcomes.				
Year 2 Assessing AY 2027-28 FY 2028	Assess 1/3 of the unit’s student success outcomes.				
Year 3 Assessing AY 2028-29 FY 2029	Assess 1/3 of the unit’s student success outcomes.				
Year 4: Actions — to be completed in 2029-30 based on the prior three years of assessment²					
Assessment Year	Annual Assessment Activities	Actions	Faculty Engagement	Impact of Actions	Share Action Updates
Year 4 Assessing AY 2029-30 FY 2030	- Provide an update on all actions identified throughout the past three years for every outcome. - Submit Four-Year AAP Roadmap for 2030-34 assessment cycle.	Review all action items identified across Years 1–3 of the assessment cycle.	Engage the staff responsible in providing updates for actions previously identified.	Describe the impact of each action implemented.	Describe how the impact of the actions has been shared with staff and other stakeholders to inform operations.

¹**A Note About Evidence:** A success outcome is assessed by at least one type of primary evidence that directly shows the impact of the outcome (example: retention rates, process completion timelines, money raised, number of presentations, etc.) Supporting evidence is additional data that aid the unit in data informed decision-making.

² **A Note About Year 4:** Year 4 information is provided for your reference — staff do not need to complete it when submitting your AAP Roadmap. In Year 4, staff will complete a separate action form to document the impact of each action identified in prior years.

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

	❖ Develop outcomes using clear language appropriate for all learners. ❖ Explore both cognitive and non-cognitive taxonomies, such as <u>Bloom’s (revised)</u> and <u>Finks Taxonomy</u> when crafting outcomes. ❖ Provide students with multiple ways (primary evidence) to demonstrate their knowledge or skills. ❖ Ask students enrolled in the program/initiative to identify meaningful learning experiences (supporting evidence) and how they align with the student learning outcomes. ❖ Consider adopting a culminating project such as a portfolio, presentation, or exhibition that allows students to demonstrate holistic learning in relation to the outcomes. ❖ Identify achievement criteria based on the industry, field, and/or staff expertise. Criteria should set all students up for post-graduate success.
	❖ Collect multiple types of evidence (primary and supporting) to assess each outcome. ❖ Disaggregate data by student subgroups that are meaningful to the program/unit. ❖ 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. ❖ Compare results of one or more samples of primary evidence over a few years to determine consistency of findings. (This can be a very helpful approach for programs/units with small enrollments.) ❖ 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). ❖ Share results with students to seek feedback on ways to enhance learning.
	❖ As the needs of your students and the program/unit evolve, so will outcomes, evidence, and overall assessment practices. Establish a manageable timeline to implement and assess actions based on results. ❖ Include students and alumni in discussions about actions. They are experts in their own experience with the program and can provide keen insights.