Quick Guides

Non-Instructional Units: Goals and Operational Outcomes

Goals (optional)

Definition: Goals are broad, general statements of what the non-instructional unit intends to accomplish over the long-term. They state in broad terms what the unit wants to accomplish or to become over the next several years. Goals should provide a framework for determining the more specific objectives of a unit, and should be consistent with the mission of the division and the mission of the institution. A single goal may have many specific outcomes or key performance indicators (KPIs). Goals are not measurable.

Note: Defining goals is optional for UA's assessment plans. However, some non-instructional units use them to help form a bridge between the broad mission statement and the more specific outcomes or KPIs.

Elements of Goal statements: The general structure of a goal statement is as follows:

"(Action verb) (object) (modifiers)"

Examples: The Department of Facilities and Grounds' goal is to maintain clean, functional and efficient facilities.

The Office of Information Technology's goal is to ensure the quality of information technology services through expanded resources and infrastructure.

Goals should focus on the key functions of the unit and should explain the expectations of the unit (e.g., application process, orientation service, facility maintenance, educational support, etc.). When writing goals, think about what the unit is trying to accomplish. The goals should be clearly derived from the Institution's Mission and Goals and reflect current unit priorities.

The following checklist will help determine whether the goals for a particular unit are effectively and clearly written.

Criteria	Yes	No
Are your goals consistent with the university's mission?		
Are your goals consistent with your division's goals and mission?		
Do your goals describe the *expectations* of your unit?		

Outcomes

Definition: Outcomes are statements describing accomplishments or improvements a department or administrative unit expects to achieve. Non-instructional units generally focus on measuring operational outcomes, or outcomes related to work processes and customer satisfaction. Outcomes or KPIs are the critical results desired by employees of the unit.

An outcome is a result for (or impact on) a customer or the institution that is a consequence of the work that is done. The outcome itself does not describe the activities that are performed nor the service or product that is provided to get the customer to that result. Outcomes are stated in such a way that the *expected results* of processes, services, and functions of a unit, department or activity can be easily measured.

Operational outcomes should

- be distinctive to the functioning unit and stated in clear and definite terms describing expected performance.
- be one for which it is feasible to collect accurate and reliable data.
- be attainable within the realistic constraints of the unit.
- aid in identifying where improvements in efficiency, performance, services, etc. are needed.
- indicate the time frame for assessment (e.g., every spring term), and provide a realistic time/frame to achieve the changes.
  > *Note: Assessment of the outcomes can be done on yearly cycles, or every two to three years, depending on the needs of the unit. Outcomes are often measured for several years, or longer, to reveal trends.*
- be directly related to the mission (purpose) and key functional responsibilities of the department.
- be actionable-- there should be some degree of controllable influence on the outcomes, so that improvements can be made.
- be singular and not bundled; be meaningful and not trivial.

Possible outcomes to measure:
- *efficiency*
- *accuracy*
- *effectiveness*
- *client satisfaction (improve, increase)*
- *quality*
- *comprehensiveness (understand)*
- *compliance with standards*

Examples:

Goal Statement:
Provide safe, clean, maintained and visually attractive buildings and grounds to be enjoyed by students, faculty and staff.

Example of Outcome Statements that relate to the above Goal Statement:

Faculty and staff will report they feel safe while on campus.
Faculty and staff will report they are satisfied with the cleanliness of campus grounds.
Faculty and staff will report they are satisfied with the maintenance in campus buildings.
Faculty and staff will report they are satisfied with the visual attractiveness of the campus grounds.
The University will be ranked among the top 10 "most beautiful" campuses.

Checklist: Evaluating Outcome Statements	Yes	No
Each outcome focuses on issues pertinent and important to the unit, as defined in the mission statement		
Each outcome concentrates on key areas where outcomes assessment will enable the unit to improve, with a focus on the end result and not the means		
Achievement of each outcome must be measurable		
Each outcome clearly articulates *intended* result or action		
Each outcome is simply stated-- multiple outcomes are not bundled into one statement		