



## Frequently Asked Questions

### UA Rubrics for Providing Feedback on Assessment Reports

*Updated 8/31/2016*

**Q:** What's the purpose of the feedback rubrics?

**A:** The [rubrics](#) are tools that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) employs to provide UA units with formative feedback on their assessment processes. What we mean by *formative feedback* is constructive advice to guide improvement. Our aim is to foster processes that are **meaningful, measurable, and manageable**—the **m<sup>3</sup>** in the logo above. The feedback (or “meta-assessment”) rubrics were designed to serve as road maps to best practice as well as avenues for us to continue helpful consultative dialogues with individual programs, departments, and offices across campus.

**Q:** Why are there two similar rubrics?

**A:** When reviewing assessment reports from 2014-15, we used a single pilot rubric for all units—whether or not their outcomes/objectives related directly to student learning. After the pilot year, we revised the rubric and created two parallel versions: one geared toward student learning outcomes (SLOs) and one geared toward operational/administrative outcomes (OPOs). We will apply the **SLO rubric** to reports from academic degree programs (ADPs) and other units whose outcomes are predominantly related to student learning. We will apply the **OPO rubric** to reports from non-instructional units whose outcomes are mostly operational/administrative.

**Q:** Does that mean each department or unit should have only one kind of outcome?

**A:** No; your outcomes can be related to operations, student learning, or both. Your outcomes should flow logically from your unit's mission/function on campus. Academic degree programs (ADPs) are encouraged to have 3 to 5 SLOs; non-instructional units are encouraged to have 3 to 5 total outcomes (OPOs and/or SLOs). Units with specialized accreditors may be compelled to assess a larger number of outcomes.

**Q:** What are the various parts of the rubrics?

The rubrics include 14 **dimensions** that are accompanied by **descriptions of attributes** that may be present at different **levels of development** (Beginning; Developing; Mature; Exemplary). Each rubric is divided into two main sections: Dimensions 1 through 10 relate to your Assessment Plan (outcomes, curriculum/activity mapping, and methods), which should remain relatively stable within a strategic planning cycle; and dimensions 11 through 14 relate to your annual reporting of Assessment Results (results, interpretation, and action planning). Reviews will include **comment boxes** for each rubric dimension so that we can deliver individualized, constructive feedback about specific aspects of assessment processes.

For assistance, please contact OIE at [oie@ua.edu](mailto:oie@ua.edu) or 205-348-2748

**Q:** Will the rubrics continue to be revised annually?

**A:** No. In the interest of stability and to track growth over time, the feedback rubrics will be “frozen” for 5 years. OIE will review them and make adjustments in 2021. In the meantime, we welcome comments about future improvements and/or clarification points that can be added to this FAQ sheet.

**Q:** How and when should annual assessment reports be submitted?

**A:** You can submit your annual assessment report within Taskstream AMS by following the directions in the “Submit Annual Report Here” area of your AMS workspace (units using another system can make alternative format/submission arrangements with OIE). **Assessment reports are typically due** October 1 (Academic Cycle), January 30 (Fiscal Cycle), or April 1 (Calendar Cycle). If you’re not sure which cycle your unit is on, or if a different cycle would work better, please contact OIE. As always, please keep us apprised of any personnel changes (i.e., new assessment coordinators/technicians). We offer frequent [training sessions](#) on assessment practice and Taskstream AMS, and we are happy to arrange special sessions geared toward particular departments and/or particular topics.

**Q:** How will the OIE review/feedback process work?

**A:** Reviews will be conducted and feedback disseminated within the AMS system. An announcement will be made when feedback reports from each cycle are released. For units using a system other than Taskstream AMS, feedback will be provided in an alternate format (e.g., PDF).

**Q:** How and with whom will OIE feedback reports be shared?

**A:** As noted above, units will receive individualized feedback reports from OIE. Summary results—that is, **aggregated (i.e., averaged) feedback trends** and a **list of participating units**—will be shared at the college/division level.

**Q:** What advice do you have about creating a good assessment report?

**A:** In general, strive for assessment that is **meaningful, measurable, and manageable**. Focus on outcomes that your unit truly values, collect trustworthy data, share and discuss results with your colleagues, and use findings to identify areas where your unit can better serve students, the campus community, or other stakeholders. In reporting, describe measures and methods in enough detail that a new assessment coordinator could step in and continue data collection/evaluation processes. Taskstream AMS templates have been customized to foster more detailed reporting. For advice about assessment practice, please review OIE’s [Quick Guides](#) and/or [request a consultation](#). Our mission is to help you with the process of continuous improvement.

**Roll Tide!**