Guidelines for PRAC Annual Assessment Reports

Background and Purpose

Each IUPUI school and administrative unit directly involved in student learning reports annually to the Program Review and Assessment Committee to summarize its work on assessing and improving student learning during the previous academic year. The purpose of the PRAC Annual Assessment reports is to demonstrate that at the unit and campus levels IUPUI gives sustained attention to student learning and its improvement. Over time, each unit’s annual PRAC reports should thus reflect ongoing efforts to:

- Ensure that each academic program, associate through Ph.D., has developed clearly defined student learning outcomes.
- Identify and use appropriate assessment methods for each student learning outcome.
- Determine assessment findings.
- Use findings to make continuous improvements to instruction, curriculum, and/or student support services such as advising.

PRAC reports offer evidence of our assessment and improvement processes to accrediting organizations, colleagues engaged in program review, and other stakeholders interested in our efforts to enhance student learning. The reports also help to advance awareness of assessment activities and findings within schools and departments and across the institution, and serve as a principal resource for development of the annual IUPUI Assessment Report.

Content

Each credential-granting program (from certificates through graduate degrees) at IUPUI has defined explicit student learning outcomes. These desired outcomes are included in the online IUPUI Campus Bulletin maintained by the Office of the Registrar. Many non-degree-granting units involved in IUPUI students’ education have also articulated learning outcomes for their co-curricular programs and have posted those expectations on their web sites.

These program and unit learning outcomes serve as the foundation for the annual assessment reports. Your report should demonstrate that you are assessing your programs to determine student achievement of your stated learning outcomes, that you have deliberate and ongoing processes in place for performing these assessments, and that you are using the results to guide improvements in your programs. Your report should thus provide a brief summary of assessment activities over the last year, including efforts undertaken to (re)define, assess, and improve students’ attainment of the learning outcomes for your programs. It may be helpful to organize your thinking around the following questions:

- What outcome are you seeking? What will students be able to do if they achieve the outcome?
- How do you help students, in or out of the formal classroom, to achieve the outcome?
- How do you determine students’ level of achievement of the outcome?
• What were your major findings?
• What improvements did you make based on this year’s findings or those of prior years?
• What were the results of these improvements and/or of improvements made in prior years?

Remember that you are reporting on the past year’s activities only and that you need not describe all of your assessment practices in detail. Typically, assessment and reporting take place in cycles, with only some outcomes, courses, or programs assessed or reported on in any given year. Your introduction should provide an overview of your assessment cycle so that readers understand what part of the cycle is included in the current report. Alternatively, you may wish to focus your report on new learning outcomes, teaching and learning practices, and/or assessment processes introduced in the past year.

Reports should thus include:

• A brief introduction or overview of the material to be presented in the report. Also, please provide a short description of the reporting unit and its programs. For example, units that include only graduate programs may want to call attention to this fact up front, so that a reader does not expect to see information on assessment of IUPUI’s Principles of Undergraduate Learning.
• A list of or hyperlink to relevant learning outcomes. Please explain briefly how and by whom your outcomes were developed. For example, if outcomes are mandated by an external accrediting association, readers should be aware of that. If your discipline or programs in your unit have adopted a particular assessment philosophy or approach, a succinct explanation may be helpful.
• An overview of your assessment cycle, if applicable.
• Examples of rubrics, description of assessment instruments, description of evidence collected, and/or other information that may help readers to understand your assessment approach.
• Findings from PUL/PGPL and/or program- and discipline-specific learning outcomes assessment conducted in the last year, with an emphasis on data that show significant changes from previous years or that reveal possible areas to target for improvement. Recent or proposed course or program changes made to address areas of concern revealed by assessment results or otherwise to improve student learning, e.g., development of cohort programs, advising/mentoring initiatives, or RISE experiences. Improvement initiatives may also include professional development efforts focused on assessment or related topics, like IUPUI’s Principles of Undergraduate Learning.

Keep in mind as you present the above material that a few good examples of particularly effective or innovative tools or processes can be invaluable for helping readers outside your discipline to understand your practices or particular challenges.

Reports should include discussion of both direct and indirect measures of student learning and resulting findings, as applicable. Direct measures are tangible student products like research papers, performances, lab reports, tests, and portfolios. Indirect measures include proxies for
learning like job or graduate school placement rates, as well as perceptions and opinions about learning gleaned from instruments like surveys and focus groups.

Reports may also discuss assessment and improvement of practices that support student learning, even if they are not directly related to a learning outcome. Such practices may include recruitment and retention efforts, academic advising, and career counseling, among others.

Format

- Use a format that supports clear presentation of the information described above. Please note that narrative and outline formats are easier for readers to digest than the table format suggested in previous years.
- **Please limit length to a maximum of 20 pages.** PRAC reports are archived online; hyperlinks to details posted elsewhere can usefully point readers to further information according to their interests.
- Minimize repetition of information from previous years; prior years’ reports can be viewed at [http://www.planning.iupui.edu/evalassess/schoolaccessreport-page.php](http://www.planning.iupui.edu/evalassess/schoolaccessreport-page.php).
- Assume an educated non-specialist audience. Readers may be unfamiliar with your particular unit or discipline and may not recognize acronyms and abbreviations common to your field.