

# 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. These PRAC Annual Assessment 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.

The purpose of the PRAC Annual Assessment Report is thus 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 reflect ongoing efforts to:

- Ensure that each academic program, certificates through graduate degrees, 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.

## 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 websites.

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. 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. In either case, your introduction should provide an overview of your assessment practices and assessment cycle, if applicable, so that readers understand the larger context for the current report.

Reports should 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 to address areas of concern revealed by previous or current assessment results to improve student learning, e.g., development of cohort programs, advising/mentoring initiatives, or RISE experiences. Please specify what assessment findings any changes are intended to address, whether from the current or prior years. 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 the roles of 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. Consult the document Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning on the PRAC website for helpful definitions and examples.

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.

Finally, be sure to avoid conflating program outcomes with learning outcomes. While PRAC reports often include both, the main focus should be on the latter. Program outcomes address the goals the entire program uses to determine success and effectiveness. Graduation rates, licensure or qualifying exam pass rates, job placement, student satisfaction, publication and grant acceptances, and similar measures are program outcomes. Learning outcomes express what each student should know and be able to do as a result of their learning experiences. They are demonstrated as knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, or values that students have or should have acquired as a result of their participation in the program.

To be certain that you're addressing all key topics, consult the Rubric for Improving PRAC Reports at the end of this document (and also on the PRAC website)

### **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>.
- Assume an educated non-specialist audience. Readers may be unfamiliar with your particular unit or discipline, so please avoid using acronyms and abbreviations specific to your context.

## **Rubric for Improving PRAC Reports**

Reviewed Unit:    Reviewer:  
Date of Review:

### **I.    Learning Outcomes**

- A. Succinctly state what students should know and be able to do
- B. Begin with or include an action verb
- C. Incorporate PULs/PGPLs in disciplinary outcomes
- D. Seem to cover the subject sufficiently
- E. Include all undergraduate and graduate programs

Comments:

### **II.   Assessment Measures**

- A. Linked explicitly to Learning Outcome(s)
- B. Seem appropriate for Learning Outcomes
- C. Include direct measures of Outcome(s), to the extent possible, supplemented by indirect measures, as appropriate
- D. If applicable, assessments of effectiveness of academic support programs (such as advising, career development, student organizations, mentoring, learning resource centers, etc.) are well thought out and appropriate to programs and desired outcomes.

Comments:

### **III. Assessment Findings**

- A. Linked explicitly to Learning Outcome(s)
- B. Include evidence obtained from direct measures
- C. Include evidence obtained from indirect measures
- D. Include evidence of ongoing improvement

Comments:

**IV. Action(s) Taken in Response to Findings**

- A. Linked explicitly to Learning Outcome(s) and the assessment of the Outcome(s)
- B. Demonstrate systematic attention to ongoing improvement

Comments:

**V. General**

- A. Organization and format
- B. Succinctness and clarity

Comments:

**VI. Items of Interest to Other Programs**

What is contained in this report that other programs might benefit from seeing?

3= Fully/Good    2=Partially/Fair    1=Minimally/Poor    0=Not Noted    N/A=Not Appl