Service Area Outcomes and Assessment Guide

According to the ACCJC (Association of Community Colleges and Junior Colleges), the primary purpose of an ACCJC-accredited institution is to foster learning in its students. It:

- ensures that its resources and processes support student learning
- continuously assesses that learning
- pursues institutional excellence and improvement.

It takes a village to accomplish the above, and there are many processes involved! One such process is known as outcome assessment. Outcomes are statements that are written in support of student learning to show direct support (instruction) or indirect support (services) provided on campus. Assessment is the way we measure how well we are achieving our outcomes. The process itself is logical and cyclical in nature.

"Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning [and college services in support of student learning]. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for . . . program quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve . . . the college's performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education." (Tom Angelo)

As you can see from the illustration above, there are five steps to the outcome assessment cycle. Let's take a look at each step.
STEP 1: Intended Outcome

For non-instructional areas, outcomes are called Service Area Outcomes (SAO). So what is an SAO?

A Service Area Outcome (SAO) is a statement about what a client will experience, receive, or know as a result of a given service.

A client can be anyone receiving a service, including:

- students
- faculty
- staff
- community members

Service Areas at Hartnell College include but are not limited to:

Instructional Technology Services, Student Affairs, and Administrative Services. Each of these Service areas have components within them as well. For example, within Administrative Services is Business Services, the Office of Academic Affairs, the President’s Office, Facilities, Human Resources, Campus Safety, and Food Services.

Each service area and (eventually their subsets) should have outcomes defined that focus on either:

- a process, which focuses on services being provided efficiently, accurately, and equitably.
- client satisfaction, which focuses on support being provided by the program/unit in a satisfactory manner.

For example, an SAO that focuses on a process might be written as:

- Campus employees will receive mail in a timely and accurate manner.

An SAO that focuses on client satisfaction might be written as:

- Library: Patrons will be satisfied with the library facilities.

So How Do I Begin?

Define your Service Area Outcomes (SAO)!

If you have not written SAOs for your area, you need to do so immediately. While writing your SAOs, keep in mind that although the name might sound as if an SAO describes a goal or outcome of the area, it is actually a user-centered statement, a statement of what others will be able to do with the service or how they will benefit from the service provided.
For example:

Take a look at the SAOs below for an Information Technology department. The statement on the left describes the services they provide to others. That is a goal. The statement on the right is what the end-user will be able to do. It describes how the users will use their services.

### Information Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>SAO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The IT department will provide the necessary services and technology to support a successful college</td>
<td>Faculty and staff will readily have access to the technology and services provided by the Information Technology department to support a successful college environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Let’s take a look at some examples of Service Area Goals and Outcomes:

#### Campus Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>SAO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Safety will promote peace, order, and safety on campus by deterring and preventing criminal activity.</td>
<td>Students, staff, and community members will indicate that they feel safe while on campus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>SAO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and Maintenance will provide safe, clean, maintained, and visually attractive buildings and grounds to be enjoyed by students, faculty, and staff.</td>
<td>Faculty, staff, and students will report they are satisfied with the safety, cleanliness, maintenance and visual attractiveness of the campus buildings and grounds they visit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here are more examples of both Process SAOs and Satisfaction SAOs:

**Process SAOs** (Services are processed efficiently, accurately, and equitably in direct or indirect support of student learning)

- **Faculty and staff will experience** a decrease in the amount of time that submitted work orders to the IT area are addressed and issues resolved.
- **District faculty and staff will receive** accurate and regular operational updates on Facilities projects.
- **Financial aid students will receive** financial aid checks within X number of weeks after the semester begins.

**Satisfaction SAOs** (People supported by the program/unit report a positive reaction to the interaction)

- **Faculty and students will report** satisfaction in the services provided by the evening/weekend dean.
- **Students will report** that the supplemental learning activities they experience in the Tutorial Center contribute to their learning.
- **Veteran students** who use the Veterans’ Center counseling services will report satisfaction with the level of information they receive concerning their educational benefits.

**So let’s write some Service Area Outcomes!**

You may find it easier to write your area outcomes if you follow this simple pattern:

**Users of the services** will (do something) to (do something else)

**Students, college employees and community members** will have adequate access to the College’s PE facilities in order to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Keep in mind, though, following this pattern is only a suggestion. You may find that you write your outcomes in a way that is different than the example suggested above and that is OK! The important thing to remember is that the focus is on the end user and how they will benefit from the service being provided.
Writing SAOs Worksheet

Service Area:

Use this chart to help you draft an SAO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Users of the services</th>
<th>will (do something)</th>
<th>to (do something else)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe the users of your department’s services</td>
<td>Describe what they will do with your services</td>
<td>Describe how that will improve student learning and success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now take the information you have written above and put it in to one sentence, trimming it to keep it simple. **Once you have written your outcome, enter it on the Service Area Outcome Form in Column 1.** (See Appendix 3 for this form and the next page for guidelines to complete this form.)

**We recommend that initially you write two outcomes for your service area: One that is process oriented and one that is satisfaction oriented.**

---

**We recommend that initially you write two outcomes for your service area: One that is process oriented and one that is satisfaction oriented.**

Version 6: 12.13 (co/km)
### Hartnell College Service Area Outcomes Assessment Plan and Summary Form

**Use One Form per Outcome**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Tool, Criteria for Measurement, Target Semester for Assessment, and Procedure</th>
<th>Assessment Results</th>
<th>Refinements/Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write the intended outcome in this column. Remember, a Service Area outcome (SUOs) is an identified statements for a program/area that will be assessed to measure the effectiveness of the program/unit. This outcome may address a process or client satisfaction.</td>
<td><strong>Assessment Tool:</strong> Describe what your assessment tool will be—a survey, a focus group, computerized tracking of data, etc. <strong>Criteria for Assessment:</strong> Describe the criteria by which you will measure the process or level of satisfaction. Remember this includes: 1. your minimum expectation expressed as a % or fraction, 2. the achievement standard such as a rubric score, a number or narrative level on a Likert scale, etc. 3. who will be included (e.g. successful completers, all queried, random sample). <strong>Target Semester for Assessment:</strong> Describe when the assessment will take place. <strong>Procedure:</strong> Describe how the assessment will be implemented.</td>
<td>Once the assessment data is collected, analyze the information through small group discussion and in relationship to previous assessment data (if available). Report the actual results and compare with the original expectations in this column. Highlight key findings from the data. Develop supportable conclusions from this information.</td>
<td>Determine what, if any, action will be taken to bring about improvement. Describe what the action plan is and when you will implement and then subsequently reassess.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Version 6: 12.13 (co/km)
Final Checklist for Writing Service Area Outcomes

While SAOs may be written by one person in your area, they should be shared with all others in that area to ensure that the outcomes are reasonable, achievable, and measurable. In addition, it is important that your area can show evidence of broad-based discussion regarding development, assessment, interventions and improvements relating to established outcomes.

It can also help if you ask someone outside your area who might not be as familiar with what you do as you are. In addition, you can ask a representative from the Outcomes and Assessment Committee to review them. Then look at your SAO again, using the following checklist:

- Have you used action verbs in describing your SAOs? Click on this link to show you appropriate action verbs for creating outcomes:
  
  [http://uwf.edu/cutla/SLO/ActionWords.pdf](http://uwf.edu/cutla/SLO/ActionWords.pdf)

- Is your SAO written as an outcome rather than departmental goal? Does it describe what the users can DO as a result of your services?

- Does the SAO language indicate the BIG PICTURE rather than nuts and bolts?

- Is the SAO appropriate for the department? Is it achievable and measurable?

- Does it represent a fundamental result or outcome of working with the department?
Assessing Your Service Area Outcomes

According to the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum, “Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement.” It is a way for us to gather data so that we can ask questions such as:

- How well is my department providing services to its users?
- How do those users use what my department offers to help improve student learning and success?
- What can we do to improve the services that we offer?

The last question, “What can we do to improve?” is a vital component of the assessment cycle. Improvement is the key—we should always be examining ways by which we can improve. Once we determine the changes to be made to our processes and/or services, we implement those changes and then we assess again to see if improvement has occurred. This is called closing the loop.
Step 2: The Assessment Task (the what, when, how, who, where)

When assessing Service Area Outcomes, the key is to keep the focus on the clients' needs and satisfaction and on the effects for clients. Once again, "clients" may refer to students, faculty, staff, and/or the public. Using data already collected, such as the types and frequencies of services offered, is recommended.

The What: First you must decide on your assessment tool. What method will you use to do your assessment? Methods of assessment for Administrative and Student Services Units may include but are not limited to the following:

- CCSSE and HC Student Satisfaction Surveys (well suited for satisfaction outcomes)
- Focus groups (well suited for satisfaction outcomes)
- Number and types of complaints (well suited for process outcomes)
- Growth in a specific function (well suited for process outcomes)
- Comparisons to professional organizations' best practices
- Time taken to complete a task (well suited for process outcomes)
- Student data on enrollment, retention, success, goal attainment, etc.
- Faculty data on professional development, use of emerging technologies, grant proposal development and subsequent funding, etc.

One of the simplest types of assessment tools for SAOs is surveys. Surveys allow you to simply ask your users what it is you want to know. Ask the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning for assistance in developing and administering your survey. A free online program, Survey Monkey, may be used to create your survey. Once you have determined your tool, please indicate it in column two of the SAO form in the section that addresses Assessment Tool.

The When: When will you assess? Indicate this in column two of the SAO Form in the section that addresses Target Semester.

The How, Who, and Where: How will you conduct the assessment? Will it be done through a mailing or through G-mail? Will it be conducted on-site immediately after a service is provided? Where will the assessment be conducted? Who will participate in the assessment? In other words, what is the procedure? Provide a brief description of this information in column two of the SAO Form in the section that addresses Procedure.
Step 3: The Criteria/Expected Level of Achievement

This step involves establishing the criteria against which you are going to measure your assessment results. What is the minimum expectation for success? The criteria that answers this question might be 75 percent of clients surveyed will indicate a Likert score of 4 or higher.

When setting your criteria keep these things in mind:

1. Minimum expectation for success. This can be expressed as a %, a fraction, or an actual number.

2. Your first assessment may be used to establish a baseline by which future assessment results will be compared.

3. What is the achievement standard (satisfactory, numeric score, a rubric score or Likert scale score, a narrative indicator)

4. Which students/clients count in data (all queried, those identified within a date range, a random sample, a certain number of academic units completed)

Enter your criteria in Column two of the SAO Form in the Criteria for Assessment section.
Step 4: The Results of the Assessment

After you have completed your assessment it is time to gather, organize, aggregate, analyze and report the data.

Once the assessment data is collected, analyze the information through small group discussion and in relationship to previous assessment data (if available). The true value of assessment comes from broad-based discussion—talking about the results with your colleagues. This discussion may involve colleagues within your area and outside of your area.

Report the actual results and compare with the original expectations (your criteria). Highlight key findings from the data. Develop supportable conclusions from this information. Enter this information in Column 3 of the SAO Assessment Form.

Then proceed to step 5 of the process—determining what action should be taken.

Step 5: Action Plan to be Implemented

As mentioned earlier, we assess and then examine the results to ultimately ask the question, “What can we do to improve?” When deciding if steps are needed to make improvement to the service you are providing, use the following questions to guide you:

- Were you satisfied with the student performance or client response?
- What changes or improvements are necessary?
- Based on the evidence and analysis, how will you modify the instruction/curriculum/assessment/service to better address the student/client needs?
• What should be added, deleted, or modified to improve student learning or client experiences?
• Should the outcome be assessed again? If so, when? (It is necessary to assess again if you’ve implemented a change to improve a process or service—if you don’t assess again, how will you know if it actually resulted in improvement?

If you decide that action is needed in order to bring about improvement, there are several modifications you can make to improve your processes and/or the service that your area offers. Some of these actions may include:

• increased staff development,
• equipment purchases,
• software modifications,
• process refinement and development.

After you have decided what your refinement or modification will be, the next steps are to:

• establish definite actions and who is responsible
• identify follow-up process and timeframe
• document this information in Column 4 of the SAO form and close the loop!

As is illustrated within this document, assessment is an on-going cycle. Be ready to cycle through the loop again to see if your implemented changes have brought about improvement! In addition, you should include your outcomes and assessment data in your annual planning process. Your outcome assessment data should be one of many indicators that you examine as your go through the Program Planning and Assessment process.

Take a look at the sample completed SAO form on the following page and use it as a guide. In addition, refer to materials in the Appendix as you work the process and feel free to contact your Outcomes and Assessment committee members for help!
## Hartnell College Service Area Outcomes Assessment Plan and Summary Form

**Use One Form per Outcome**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origination Date of Form</th>
<th>November 1, 2013</th>
<th>Completion Date of Form</th>
<th>December 25, 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Area</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Individual Completing Form</td>
<td>I. M. Employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Tool, Criteria for Measurement, Target Semester for Assessment, and Procedure</th>
<th>Assessment Results</th>
<th>Refinements/Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Hartnell College applicants and staff will experience an efficient, effective hiring process | **Assessment Tool:** Focus Groups  
**Criteria for Assessment:** 80% of the participants will agree that the hiring process was efficient and effective.  
**Target Semester for Assessment:** Fall, 2013  
**Procedure:** Four focus group sessions will be scheduled, each with 7-10 participants, a facilitator, and a note taker. Two of the groups will include staff, management, and faculty who served on selection committees along with successful candidates. One group will have only successful candidates, and one group will have only staff who participated in the selection process. | In all four groups, at least 50% thought the process needed to have more defined timelines.  
In all four groups, 55% thought that communication to both the candidates and selection committee participants could be more frequent. | A calendar will be developed to plot each phase of the selection process from start to finish.  
Communication to all participants will be sent based on the calendar that shows the timelines of events in the selection process. |

Version 6: 12.13 (co/km)
Appendixes

**Appendix 1:** Writing SAOs Worksheet

**Appendix 2:** Hartnell College Service Area Outcomes Assessment Plan and Summary Form (Explanation of Columns)

**Appendix 3:** Hartnell College Service Area Outcomes Assessment Plan and Summary Form (blank)

**Appendix 4:** Hartnell College Non-Instructional Program Planning and Assessment/Academic Affairs Service Area Annual Action Plan Example
Appendix 1

Writing SAOs Worksheet

Service Area:

Use this chart to help you draft an SAO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Users of the services</th>
<th>will (do something)</th>
<th>to (do something else)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe the users of your department's services</td>
<td>Describe what they will do with your services</td>
<td>Describe how that will improve student learning and success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Hartnell College Service Area Outcomes Assessment Plan and Summary Form

Use One Form per Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origination Date of Form</th>
<th>Completion Date of Form</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Individual Completing Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Tool, Criteria for Measurement, Target Semester for Assessment, and Procedure</th>
<th>Assessment Results</th>
<th>Refinements/Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write the intended outcome in this column. Remember, a Service Area outcome (SUOs) is an identified statement for a program/area that will be assessed to measure the effectiveness of the program/unit. This outcome may address a process or client satisfaction.</td>
<td><strong>Assessment Tool:</strong> Describe what your assessment tool will be—a survey, a focus group, computerized tracking of data, etc.  <strong>Criteria for Assessment:</strong> Describe the criteria by which you will measure the process or level of satisfaction. Remember this includes:  1. your minimum expectation expressed as a % or fraction,  2. the achievement standard such as a rubric score, a number or narrative level on a Likert scale, etc.  3. who will be included (e.g. successful completers, all queried, random sample).  <strong>Target Semester for Assessment:</strong> Describe when the assessment will take place.  <strong>Procedure:</strong> Describe how the assessment will be implemented.</td>
<td>Once the assessment data is collected, analyze the information through small group discussion and in relationship to previous assessment data (if available). Report the actual results and compare with the original expectations in this column. Highlight key findings from the data. Develop supportable conclusions from this information.</td>
<td>Determine what, if any, action will be taken to bring about improvement. Describe what the action plan is and when you will implement and then subsequently reassess.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Version 6: 12.13 (co/km)
## Appendix 3

### Hartnell College Service Area Outcomes Assessment Plan and Summary Form

**Use One Form per Outcome**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origination Date of Form</th>
<th>Completion Date of Form</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Individual Completing Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Tool, Criteria for Measurement, Target Semester for Assessment, and Procedure</th>
<th>Assessment Results</th>
<th>Refinements/Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Tool:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Semester for Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Version 6: 12.13 (co/km)
Appendix 4

Hartnell College Non-Instructional Program Planning and Assessment
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS SERVICE AREA ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

I. GENERAL INFORMATION
   a. Service Area: Academic Affairs
   b. Prepared by: Shannon Bliss, Debra Kaczmar, Kathy Mendelsohn
   c. Date: September 24, 2013

II. Continuous Quality Improvement Initiatives
   Each initiative must be linked to one or more of the college’s strategic priorities. Insert into the proper column the strategic priority number(s) linked to a given initiative. The following are the college’s six strategic priorities:

   1. Student Access
   2. Student Success
   3. Employee Diversity and Development
   4. Effective Utilization of Resources
   5. Innovation and Relevance for Programs & Services
   6. Partnerships with Industry, Business, Agencies & Education

Version 6: 12.13 (co/km)
### Completed/Continuing Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative Number</th>
<th>Strategic Priority Number(s)</th>
<th>Brief Description and Justification of the Initiative</th>
<th>Measureable Outcome(s) and Key Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Targeted Completion Date</th>
<th>Responsible Person(s)</th>
<th>Comments/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td>Academic Affairs offices will collaborate to develop a complete, accurate schedule meeting timelines. Students, faculty, and staff will use an accurate, complete schedule available for the published registration deadlines. KPIs: Percentage of post-production schedule changes in rooms, times/days, cancellations, staff Frequency of compliance with scheduling production deadlines.</td>
<td>November 2013 Academic Affairs Deans</td>
<td>This is a first initiative of a comprehensive goal to develop a process to build an accurate, student-need driven schedule.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### New Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative Number</th>
<th>Strategic Priority Number(s)</th>
<th>Brief Description and Justification of the Initiative</th>
<th>Measureable Outcome(s) and Key Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Targeted Completion Date</th>
<th>Responsible Person(s)</th>
<th>Comments/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td>Academic Affairs offices will collaborate to build an accurate, student-need driven schedule.</td>
<td>• Shadow classes • Wait lists • Number of days to class closure</td>
<td>March 2014 Academic Affairs Deans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td>Academic Affairs offices will collaborate to improve customer service. This process will be driven by input from and training for the Academic Affairs staff. Students, faculty, and staff will have user-friendly forms and processes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>March 2014 Academic Affairs Deans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Resource Requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative Number</th>
<th>Computer Hardware Software</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Projected Total Cost Per Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>focus group Training 1 Training 2</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PROJECTED GRAND TOTAL</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>