

Administrative Assessment Handbook



TARLETON
STATE UNIVERSITY

Member of The Texas A&M University System

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Introduction

The Institutional Analytics, Effectiveness, and Accreditation (IAEA) office supports administrative units in the ongoing process of identifying, collecting, analyzing, and implementing data-informed decisions as related to the goals and outcomes of the TSU Strategic Plan. The IAEA office, along with the University Effectiveness and Evaluation Committee (UEEC), ensures that administrative units are compliant with Section 7.3 and 8.2c of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation.

“Effective institutions demonstrate a commitment to principles of continuous improvements, based on a systematic and documented process of assessing institutional performance with respect to mission in all aspects of the institution” (SACSCOC, 2018, p. 56). In short, it’s about quality. Continuous improvement should be at the heart of both academic and administrative functions, and this handbook is intended to guide your efforts in the yearly and ongoing administrative assessment process.

This handbook will cover why assessment is important, the SACSCOC, the UEEC, Weave, elements of assessment plans, assessment timelines, assessment rubric, and other resources to help with compliance efforts. Additionally, the [IAEA website](#) will be updated throughout the year with information to help you succeed in your administrative assessment efforts. The main goal of the IAEA office and the UEEC is to assist units in demonstrating and documenting continuous improvement as it relates to the university mission and strategic plan.

SACSCOC

Tarleton is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ([SACSCOC](#)) which is the recognized regional accrediting body for the eleven U.S. Southern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia) and in Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees. SACSCOC is one of seven regional accreditors charged with documenting that institutions of higher education meet, and maintain, certain standards. Peer evaluators judge the compliance of institutions with regards to the Principles of Accreditation on a fifth-year and decennial basis.

Tarleton has been accredited since 1926 and undergoes review every five and 10 years. Our last reaffirmation visit occurred in spring 2021. While the University is responsible for demonstrating compliance in all 14 Principles of Accreditation, the main focus of this handbook addresses administrative assessment, in particular 7.3 and 8.2c. Standard 7.3 states, “The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved. (Administrative effectiveness)” (SACSCOC, 2018, p. 61). Standard 8.2c states, “The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for academic and student services that support student success. (Student outcomes: academic and student services)” (SACSCOC, 2018, p.79). Please see the following documents for rationale and notes related to Section 7.3 and 8.2c:

https://www.tarleton.edu/iaea/effectiveness/resources/documents/section7_3.pdf

https://www.tarleton.edu/iaea/effectiveness/resources/documents/section8_2c.pdf

Strategic Planning

As stated in the introduction, administrative assessment is part of the university strategic planning process. Section 7.1 of the Principles of Accreditation states, “The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission. (Institutional planning)” (SACSCOC, 2018, p. 56). The continuous cycle of planning, budgeting, and assessing requires budget units to identify annual activities that move the University towards the strategic plan goals and assess the extent to which those efforts help the institution achieve those goals.

Tarleton is also guided by the broader strategic plans of the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s (THECB) 60x30TX plan. The TAMUS stresses the importance of strategic planning at a system level by stating, “This strategic plan is the product of a yearlong process that builds on the individual strategic plans of the member institutions and incorporates input from all member institutions. It builds on our strengths but also presents a bold vision for the future. It is designed to be a living plan that we are committed to monitoring as we execute” (The Texas A&M University System, 2016, p.3). The THECB’s plan has 4 broad goals with the overarching goal of being a more educated population (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2015).

UEEC

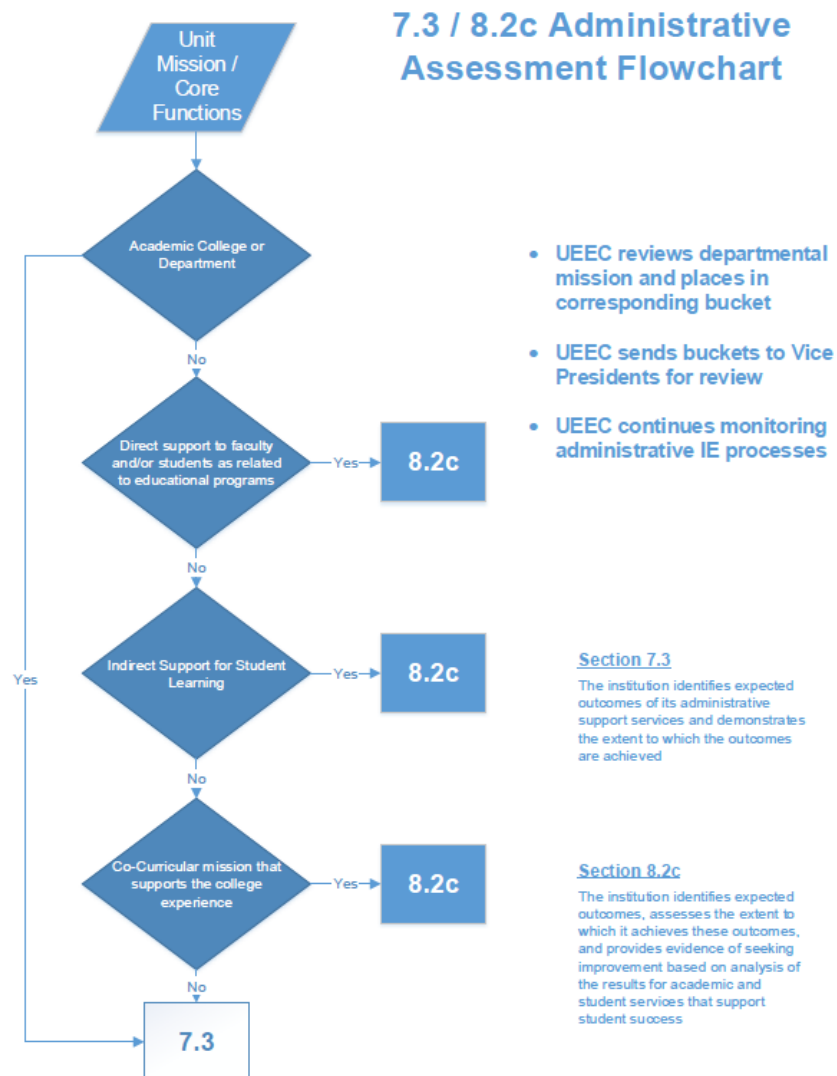
The University Evaluation and Effectiveness Committee (UEEC) was appointed by the Executive Vice President and Provost in 2017 to assist with oversight of the administrative assessment process. The committee is co-chaired by the Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and the Director of Institutional Analytics, Effectiveness, and Accreditation with representation across all university divisions. The committee meets no less than three times a year and has the following responsibilities:

- Conduct an annual audit of assessment reports for compliance and quality and provide feedback to those preparing reports
- Identify and develop assessment tools and make those available for use
- Evaluate external requirements in the area of institutional effectiveness and make recommendations for campus compliance
- Perform other activities pertaining to institutional effectiveness as requested

Generally, the committee meets in the summer to assess the upcoming year's assessment data and to review the completion of the previous year's efforts, which include findings, analysis, and where applicable, the use of results for seeking improvement. The committee will use the administrative assessment rubric to evaluate the quality of and level of compliance. Additional information about the UEEC can be found on their [website](#).

Administrative Assessment Assignments

One of the functions of the UEEC is to assign units into a “bucket” based on their mission and core functions. New and existing units are reviewed each year to determine their appropriate bucket based on the 7.3 / 8.2c Administrative Assessment Flowchart. Since academic colleges and departments are assessing student achievement and success in relation to other Standards of the Principles of Accreditation, their focus will be on the 7.3 Standard. A larger flowchart can be accessed [here](#). A listing of university buckets can be found on the [IE Resources](#) webpage.



Weave

Weave is the software Tarleton utilizes to demonstrate and document continuous improvement for both academic and administrative assessment efforts. The University has been using Weave since 2008, and the software can both lead and record assessment practices in academic, administrative, community engagement, and educational support areas. This system is also helpful for tracking assessment information for accrediting groups (AACSB, CACREP, etc).

It is important to keep in mind that Weave is a documentation and reporting tool and the fundamentals of administrative assessment are the same, regardless of the software used for compliance. All assessment efforts should follow the guidelines for effective assessment plans found in the next section, in addition to the Principles of Accreditation. The UEEC will utilize the administrative rubric (p.11) to evaluate the quality of Weave data. A specific timeline and calendar are also found in this handbook and will help guide ongoing continuous improvement efforts. Weave training is available any time by reaching out to the Director of Institutional Analytics, Effectiveness, and Accreditation. The [Weave Administrative Instruction Manual](#) will help you get started. To access Weave, please visit the following:

<https://www.tarleton.edu/iaea/effectiveness/weave.html>.

Elements of Effective Assessment Plans

This information has been borrowed/adapted from the Tarleton Academic Assessment Committee and serves as a guide to effective administrative assessment planning. These elements are all part of the administrative rubric and will be evaluated for meeting and maintaining compliance.

Mission Statement

A department's mission statement should concisely articulate a clear vision of the desired future. It serves as an anchor to keep a department or division from drifting or losing its purpose within the institutional mission and serves as a guide for determining which SACSCOC standard to align (7.3 / 8.2c).

Compliant: Mission statement clearly states who the unit serves and its primary functions

Goals

Goals are long term in nature and directly support the University mission, vision, and strategic plan through yearly outcomes. The broad strategic plan goals have been pre-populated in Weave for easier alignment, and you are not required to create additional departmental level goals.

Compliant: Goals align to the university strategic plan and can be measured through yearly outcomes

Outcomes

Yearly outcomes are needed to achieve the University's strategic plan goals. Each division has created strategies for achieving those goals, and it will be up to the department to choose 2-3 yearly outcomes that support the University's strategic plan goals. The divisional strategies and initiatives are listed in Weave for easier linkage.

Compliant: All outcomes are clearly linked to the goals of the university and are measurable

Measures & Targets

Measures are the specific methods used to gather data proving whether outcomes were accomplished. Measures also need a specific, realistic target. Common examples of direct measures include counts and factual results. Common indirect measures include satisfaction surveys or any measure examining perceptions relative to the outcome.

Compliant: At least 1 measure and target is linked to each outcome and measure clearly describes how the data is to be collected

Findings

Report your findings and whether the target was met, not met, or partially met. The analysis section will then provide you the opportunity for a more comprehensive response to your findings.

Compliant: All findings are entered and indicate whether the target was met, not met, or partially met

Analysis

The analysis of findings should be comprehensive and how it impacts your department, division, and/or the university. This section will replace the previous annual reports.

Compliant: Analysis adequately describes the findings

Seeking Improvement (Required for 8.2c)

The analysis of findings should be used to guide your future outcomes and targets. The following or upcoming year should make reference to the previous year's results. If the current outcomes and targets are no longer supported, then please provide a brief statement indicating the reason.

Compliant: Evidence for seeking improvement is provided. Outcomes that are no longer supported need to indicate they are ending

Administrative Assessment Rubric

The administrative assessment rubric is used to gauge the level of compliance for departments required to perform assessment. The UEEC will use this rubric to assess the quality of administrative assessment yearly outcomes. A printable version can be found at https://www.tarleton.edu/iaea/docs-effectiveness/admin_ie_rubric_new.pdf

| | | Administrative Unit Assessment Rubric | | |
|--|---|---|---|-----------------|
| | | Project / Academic Year: | | Overall Status: |
| | | Date Reviewed: Reviewer: | | |
| | <u>Non-Compliant</u> | <u>Compliant</u> | <u>Exemplary</u> | <u>Notes</u> |
| Mission Statement | Missing statement or statement does not clearly describe who the unit serves | Mission statement clearly states who the unit serves and its primary functions | Mission statement clearly states who the unit serves, its primary functions, and is aligned with the university mission | |
| Goals | Goals are missing or do not align with university strategic plan | Goals align to the university strategic plan and can be measured through yearly outcomes | Goals align to university and divisional strategic plans and can be measured multiple ways through yearly outcomes | |
| Outcomes | Outcomes are missing or do not contribute to goals or are not measurable | All outcomes are clearly linked to the goals of the university and are measurable | All outcomes are clearly linked to the goals of the division and university and can be assessed using more than one measure | |
| Measures | Measures and/or targets are missing or do not describe an adequate data collection process for the stated outcome | At least 1 measure and target is linked to each outcome and measure clearly describes how the data is to be collected | More than 1 measure and target is linked to each outcome and clearly describes the rationale for multiple measures | |
| Findings | Findings are missing or do not include a brief summary | All findings are entered and status indicates the target was met, not met, or partially met | All findings are entered with a full analysis of how this data relates to trends, stakeholders, and/or strategic plan | |
| Analysis | Analysis is missing or does not adequately describe the results of the findings | Analysis adequately describes the findings | Comprehensive analysis that describes the results and how results relate to future strategic initiatives | |
| Seeking Improvement (Required for 8.2c) | Evidence for seeking improvement is not provided. | Evidence for seeking improvement is provided. Outcomes that are no longer supported need to indicate they are ending. | Evidence for seeking improvement is clearly provided and multiple strategies have been identified | |

Administrative Assessment Calendar

(to be completed each year)

Due by:

- May 31: Units input current academic year *Findings, Analysis*, and where applicable, *Evidence of Seeking Improvement*
- Units finalize and input upcoming academic year *Outcomes, Measures, and Targets* (*review and update mission if needed*)
- June 30: UEEC completes review of current and upcoming academic year Weave entries for compliance using the administrative assessment rubric and provides feedback to administrative units
- Aug 31: IE office completes administrative assessment compliance report for Divisional leaders

General Instructions

1. Units will start to gather year end results and enter into Weave by May 31 each year (we understand a few units are still assessing through the summer months and will make accommodations)
2. Generally, units will also be finalizing their upcoming year's outcomes/measures/targets based on budgetary information, and where applicable, the current year end results
3. The UEEC will review Weave data during the month of June and provide assistance as needed
4. The Director of Institutional Analytics, Effectiveness, and Accreditation will provide compliance results to divisional leaders prior to the start of the upcoming academic year

The Director of IAEA will send email reminders as due dates approach

Appendix

Definitions

Project – Entities are now called projects in the new Weave.

Goals – Pre-populated statements based on the University Strategic Plan.

Administrative Unit – all departments, schools, colleges, divisions, and other organizational units within the University that have assigned employees and/or assigned budgets.

References

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2015). *Texas higher education strategic plan: 2015-2030, 60x30TX*. Retrieved from <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/9306.PDF?CFID=57485581&CFTOKEN=60423954>.

The Texas A&M University System. (2016). *Board of regents strategic plan summary: 2016-2021*. Retrieved from http://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/strategicplan/pdf/2016-2021-TAMUS_FINAL.pdf.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. (2018). *Resource manual for the principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement* (3rd ed.). Decatur, GA.