

## Evaluation Rubric for Department Award for Outstanding Assessment

**Introduction:** The Department Award for Outstanding Assessment (DAOA) is intended to recognize departments committed to best practices in assessment to improve student learning. The general evaluation descriptions below reflect the assumption that the awards are intended to serve as models of how to achieve innovative reform, enhanced learning, strong leadership and departmental commitment to on-going, evidence-based improvement. Preference will be given to programs that are fully developed and implemented, revealing the complete assessment cycle.

Departments will be chosen for the DAOA by the Assessment Advisory Board based upon their application of the following rubric.

### Criterion #1: Supporting and Defining Learning

**Excellent Model:** The application:

- clearly describes why the goal addressed in the application is important to stakeholders and aligns with the program's, department's, and/or institution's mission.
- clearly shows the processes used to engage all key players to operationally define the goals in terms of learning outcome(s).
- provides specific, practical, innovative methods used to communicate the outcome(s) and the importance of the outcome(s) to students, faculty, administrators and other stakeholders.
- offers an insightful method for developing collaborative commitment to the outcome(s) and agreement amongst the faculty.

**Acceptable Model:** The application:

- presents a mission-related context for the goal and describes a process involving all key players in developing an operational definition.
- offers some insight into effective development of an operational definition of the outcome(s) but might lack either effective processes for identifying the significance of the goal or the outcome(s).
- suggests its significance to all relevant/essential parties.
- indicates collaboration, but gives limited description about the level of collaborations or is not clear about how that collaboration was achieved.

**Developing Model:** The application:

- fails to connect the goal and outcomes to the program/departmental/institutional mission or it suggests a poor effort to communicate that importance.
- identifies outcome(s) but the explanation of the processes used to operationally define outcome(s) lacks detail or the creativity essential for a good model.
- expresses the outcome(s)' importance poorly or the methods used to communicate the outcome(s)' importance to others seems ineffective.
- indicates limited collaboration or the process used to gain collaboration appears weak.

### Criterion #2: Completing the Assessment Process

**Excellent Model:** The application:

- clearly describes the assessment method and how it is accomplished, identifying such things as whether the measures are direct or indirect, whether the assessments are embedded or stand-alone activities.
- clearly describes what program(s) and levels of learning (i.e., introduced, reinforced, mastery) are assessed and when the assessments are completed.

- gives a helpful model for getting a significant number of decision makers involved in the development of the assessment process and gaining support for the assessment tools.
- describes methods that appear to be manageable and give useful data.

**Acceptable Model:** The application:

- describes how the assessment methods and tools were developed and how the process is completed, but may leave questions about the effectiveness or usefulness of some of the methods, tools or data.
- raises questions about the development, implementation, levels of participation in or institutional support for the process; how many people participated or shared in the development.
- describes a process used to develop the assessment methods and the process for winning broad support for the methods that can offer some insight to others, though its full effectiveness is unclear.
- includes methods that appear able to produce data but might be hard to replicate.

**Developing Model:** The application:

- fails to clearly describe the assessment methods or how the assessment is done.
- leaves questions about the usefulness of the assessment or the data.
- involves key players in developing the processes but the explanations lack the detail needed for the model to be helpful.
- is unlikely to inspire others to find creative assessment solutions.

**Criterion #3: Analyzing Assessment Results**

**Excellent Model:**

- The process used to evaluate assessment data is clearly detailed and can serve as a helpful model for others.
- Makes clear all those who were involved in the discussion of the data and implications and shows how broad consensus was gained concerning the meaning and implications of the results.
- Specific data are presented in the application, including various levels of success and the implications for learning.
- The conclusions about student learning and implications for improvements clearly follow from the data presented.
- Assessment findings for level of proficiency or knowledge are benchmarked, either internally (i.e. in relation to other programs on campus) or externally to contextualize findings and support a need for improvement.
- The discussion includes evaluation of the tools and methods, relating to the data produced, considering their strengths and weaknesses in light of the data produced.
- The process reveals a clear, well-developed, broad communication of the data, its analysis and analysis of the methods and tools.

**Acceptable Model:**

- The process used to collect and evaluate assessment data is described. Some steps might be unclear or have limited applicability for others.
- The application describes the efforts to engage all the stakeholders but might not clarify the levels of involvement or the process used to share the data and gain support for the interpretation of the data.
- The data presented is limited or is narrated, but the perceived implications do not clearly follow from the data given, or the application fails to clarify the ranges of student success and their implications.
- The application fails to discuss the implications of the results for the tools and methods or overlooks their possible limitations.
- Results are communicated, but it is not clear how broadly or how well.

**Developing Model:**

- The process used to collect data and evaluate results is either poorly described or suggests a limited model.
- The application might not make clear the level of broad-based support or might not clarify how the data were analyzed.
- No specific data is presented or the data presented is too limited to explain the analysis and conclusions drawn from it.
- No apparent or little discussion of the tools and methods is given in the application.
- Communication of the results with faculty, students or administration is limited.

**Criterion #4: Making Improvements Based on Assessment Results****Excellent Model:** The application:

- presents a useful model of how to select data-driven improvement projects especially focusing on high impact, active learning strategies, that include faculty development activities aimed to prepare faculty for the improved learning strategies.
- makes clear who collaborated on the projects and reveals high levels of activity and strong program/departmental/institutional support for the improvements.
- indicates that planned improvements in assessment methods or outcomes are considered, described and fully explained, as needed. The improvement plans detail how and when success will be identified in follow-up assessments, and results might be described.
- summarizes lessons learned in ways that can benefit other programs, departments or institutions.
- represents an example of a full assessment loop.

**Acceptable Model:** The application:

- clearly indicates that the department is moving forward to identify data-driven improvement of learning and faculty development projects.
- describes projects that might have limited scope or might not employ high-impact, active learning strategies.
- describes collaboration that includes some members of a department, but does not appear to have broad support or might have limited support.
- identifies the need for improved assessment methods or changes in outcomes, but does not make clear what changes will be made or why the changes are needed.
- plans to check on the results, but the quality of the check is unclear or how it will be accomplished is undeveloped.
- makes sense of lessons learned as far as they go. Overall, the model completes the loop, but leaves questions about how well it can benefit others.

**Developing Model:** The application:

- describes improvement projects, but they have questionable merit.
- does not detail how projects will be accomplished or make clear the level of support.
- should have raised questions about methods and/or outcomes, but did not.
- was not clear about the impact of follow-up checks on the improvements.
- indicated lessons learned that are of limited value to others.
- leaves too many unanswered questions throughout the full process.