

Common IR&E Terms

Assessment Cycle—The assessment cycle in higher education is generally annual and fits within the academic year. *Outcomes, Standards, Assessment Instruments* and *Measurement* (or data) are established in the fall semester; data is collected by the end of the spring semester; results are analyzed in the summer or early fall. Assessment is often associated with evaluating academic progress but may also refer to the evaluation of a unit's implementation of operational *goals* and/or *objectives*.

Curriculum Map—Matrix indicating which *SLO's* are covered in each course offered by a program. May also be used to identify courses used to reinforce specific Gen Ed (CORE) Outcomes. In our case, ditto for **rt13**.

Formative Assessment—Measurement of a student's performance in terms of knowledge or skill at intervals (often early- and mid-) as a student progresses with a focus on constructive feedback.

Summative Assessment—Measurement of a student's performance in terms of knowledge or skill at the end of a course or program.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)—This is where the action begins. An *SLO* is an educational goal. It should always be stated to reflect what an individual student should know or be able to do.

[Performance] Standards—Levels defining what is acceptable and/or desired performance of a specific task. In terms of an academic program, this should identify expectations for student knowledge or skill acquisition. Should include a quantitative description/expectation. Should identify a specific *instrument* used for evaluation.

Instrument—The tool (test, assignment, competency performance, task, etc.) by which an individual student demonstrates knowledge or skill acquisition.

Indicators—Expectations set to validate either individual student or programmatic accomplishment toward *Performance Standards* established to show achievement of *Student Learning Outcomes* over time. In operational terms, *indicators* support *SLO's* as *objectives* support *goals*.

Measurement—Quantitative description of student learning and/or the qualitative description of student attitude. In operational terms, findings serving as evidence of progress toward *goals* and/or *objectives* in numerical terms. (*Data to support you are doing what you said you would do.*)

Rubric—Evaluation tool identifying—for both instructor and student—the *criteria* associated with specific performances of a task ranging from acceptable to unacceptable.

Criteria—Traits and characteristics of student performance of a task at varying levels of execution. Often found on a rubric and connected to a numeric scale.

Goal—Broad, department or division wide expectations set to drive the unit's performance. Should support a continuous improvement intent. Unit/Program/Department/School *goals* should support *goals* established in the college-wide Strategic Plan.

Objective—Desired results regarding achievement within a certain program. Stated in broader terms and not defined by an individual student's performance. In operational terms, *objectives* are progress points that support the *goals*.

Action Items—A given program's plans to implement specific changes with intended improvement results. Generally to be accomplished with the next 1 to 3 years. *Action Items* should support progress toward *objectives* and or *goals*. They may or may not require a specific Budget Request.