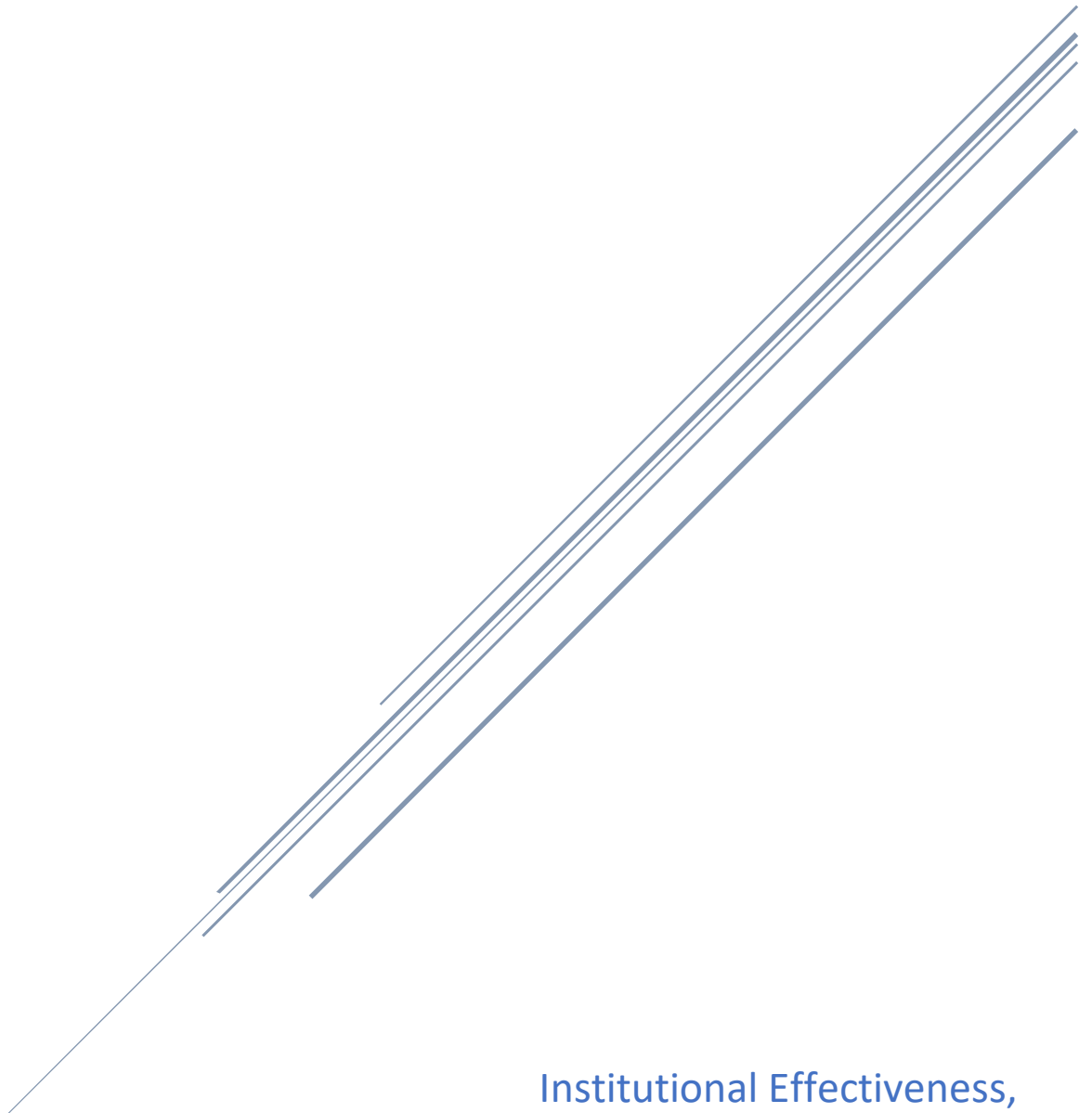


POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Institutional Effectiveness,
Office of Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness

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Overview

The mission of Institutional Effectiveness in the Office of Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness is to design, promote, and facilitate a culture of continuous improvement. Institutional Effectiveness achieves this goal by collaborating with partners across the university through progressive assessment and evaluation practices that document, support, and encourage innovation in student learning and institutional effectiveness.

These collaborative efforts include: Academic and Certificate Program Assessment, Administrative Unit Assessment, Academic Program Review, Pathways to General Education Assessment, the Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT), and Survey Research. All of these efforts are joint initiatives between our unit and the campus community.

Institutional Effectiveness is here to support evidence-based decision-making and to foster continuous improvement within the Virginia Tech community. The general aim of this policy document is to help the university community understand what it can expect from our unit as we work together to reach our goals.

Accreditation Standards Related to Institutional Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the regional accrediting body for Virginia Tech. There are over 800 institutions of higher education represented in the SACSCOC region. To maintain accreditation, Virginia Tech must demonstrate compliance on standards outlined in the [Principles of Accreditation](#),¹ the most recent revision of standards passed in December 2017.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is the coordinating body for higher education in the state of Virginia. [SCHEV's Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education](#)² identifies four main competency areas to be assessed by all public institutions in the Commonwealth: Critical Thinking, Written Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, and Civic Engagement. In addition, each institution chooses two additional competencies to assess that are reflective of its institutional priorities. SCHEV requires institutions to submit plans outlining the assessment schedule for each competency, specific outcomes for each, and appropriate measures. Institutions are required to report findings for each of the competencies and make those findings publicly available.

Responsibilities of Institutional Effectiveness, Office of Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness

Academic and Certificate Program Assessment

Academic and certificate program assessment is the cornerstone of the university's continuous improvement process and should be conducted for a multitude of reasons (e.g., identify program strengths, encourage collaboration, and encourage curriculum review). The academic and certificate program assessment process assists the university in documenting its compliance with [SACSCOC's Principle of Accreditation Standard 8.1 and 8.2](#). Institutional Effectiveness is here to facilitate this process for undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs as well as post-baccalaureate certificates. Assessment professionals are available to support efforts regarding the development of a program's outcomes, measures, and targets. In addition, we are also available to assist in the interpretation of findings and in the development of potential action plans.

¹ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (December 2017). The principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement. Retrieved from: <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

² State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (July 2017). Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.schev.edu/docs/default-source/institution-section/GuidancePolicy/assessment/policy-on-student-learning-assessment-and-quality-in-undergraduate-education.pdf>.

Institutional Effectiveness's first points of contact for the academic and certificate program assessment process are college deans and department chairs. Reminders regarding the June 30th reporting deadline will be sent to these individuals periodically throughout the year.

Any academic program or certificate program that has not completed its assessment report by the deadline will be contacted by our unit periodically starting on July 15th until reports are received. Academic and certificate programs that submitted reports on time will receive formative feedback from Institutional Effectiveness by September 15th. Assessment professionals from our unit are available to meet with academic degree and certificate programs to help facilitate successful completion of the assessment report.

Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for:

- Developing and distributing the reporting templates for both degree and certificate programs. [Reporting templates](#) can also be found on the Institutional Effectiveness website.
- Providing administrative support as needed for academic programs and certificates as well as sending reminders and other resources.
- Tracking program compliance with the annual academic and certificate program assessment process.

Institutional Effectiveness is not responsible for completing the academic or certificate program assessment report for academic or certificate programs. You can view a visual timeline of the academic and certificate program assessment process [here](#).

Administrative Unit Assessment

Virginia Tech's administrative unit assessment is the process by which administrative offices engage in and document cycles of continuous improvement. Administrative unit assessment assists the university in documenting compliance with [SACSCOC's Principle of Accreditation Standard 7.3](#). Institutional Effectiveness is here to help facilitate the assessment process for administrative units by assisting units in determining their outcomes, measures, targets, and, subsequently, interpreting their findings and developing action plans.

The Office of the President, as well as all deans, vice presidents, and vice provosts are expected to submit an annual administrative unit assessment report by September 1st to Institutional Effectiveness. In addition, all units that are comprised of more than one employee AND report directly to a vice president or vice provost are expected to submit an annual administrative unit assessment report.

Any administrative unit that has not completed its assessment report(s) will be contacted by our unit periodically starting September 9th until reports are received. Administrative units that submitted reports on time will receive formative feedback from Institutional Effectiveness by November 15th. Assessment professionals from our unit are available to meet with administrative units to help facilitate the successful completion of the assessment report.

Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for:

- Developing and distributing the administrative unit reporting template. [Reporting templates](#) can also be found on the Institutional Effectiveness website.
- Providing administrative support as needed for administrative units as well as sending reminders and other resources.
- Tracking program compliance with the annual administrative unit assessment process.

Institutional Effectiveness is not responsible for completing the assessment report for administrative units. You can view a visual timeline of the administrative unit assessment process [here](#).

Academic Program Review

Virginia Tech's Academic Program Review (APR) process provides an opportunity for academic departments and programs to rigorously and comprehensively evaluate their accomplishments, develop a vision for the future, and

create specific plans to accomplish this vision. The APR process assists the university in documenting its compliance with [SACSCOC's Principle of Accreditation Standard 7.1 and 8.2](#). Departments and programs participate in APR once every 5 or 6 years. The review schedule is set in collaboration with the college deans and may vary slightly to avoid conflicts with discipline-related requirements.

Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for:

- Providing support and information about the APR process to department chairs/heads, school directors, and program directors.
- Coordinating with Strategic Analysis in the Office of Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness to compile necessary data for department, school, and program leaders.
- Inviting and training peer reviewers, finalizing peer review teams, scheduling meetings, and sharing self-study reports with review teams.
- Facilitating peer review team meetings, assisting teams in completing necessary reports, sending final reports to the respective college dean, and archiving all APR-related materials.

You can view a visual representation of the Academic Program Review process [here](#).

Pathways to General Education Assessment

In April 2015, the University Council approved the Pathways to General Education curriculum with the implementation semester of Fall 2018. The revised program includes new concepts and student learning outcomes for all students at Virginia Tech. Robust assessment of the Pathways curriculum is necessary to determine program effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement. The assessment process is course-embedded, faculty-led, and improvement-focused. Pathways assessment reporting assists the university in documenting its compliance with [SACSCOC's Principle of Accreditation Standard 8.2.b](#) and [SCHEV's Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education](#).

Assessment professionals are available to meet and work with instructors to identify appropriate direct measures of student learning and offer guidance on sampling techniques. Professionals can also assist instructors and departments when completing and submitting the Pathways Assessment Reporting Form.

Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for:

- Developing resources to assist instructors with Pathways assessment.
- Receiving, tracking, de-identifying, analyzing, and aggregating Pathways assessment data.
- Creating a summary of aggregated assessment data for all Pathways student learning outcomes and concepts to be disseminated to the campus community.
- Sharing aggregated results with external stakeholders (e.g., SACSCOC and SCHEV).
- Facilitating PDN workshops on Pathways assessment as needed.

You can view a visual timeline of the Pathways to General Education assessment process [here](#).

Student Perceptions of Teaching

Institutional Effectiveness helps facilitate the administration of the Student Perceptions of Teaching Survey (SPOT). A third-party software system, [EvaluationKIT](#), has been the administration tool for SPOT surveys since Fall 2016. In collaboration with Technology-enhanced Learning and Online Strategies (TLOS), our unit develops the SPOT timeline each semester. Professionals from our unit collaborate with departments' SPOT administrators to ensure there are minimal errors during each SPOT administration.

Areas of responsibility for Institutional Effectiveness regarding SPOT include:

- Troubleshooting issues with the administration of the SPOT survey for students and faculty.
- Assisting faculty with accessing their historical SPOT data if it is available.
- Adding new department/college SPOT administrators when requested.

- Removing all F* sanctioned students from the SPOT administration.
- Communicating instructions, updates, and important dates regarding the SPOT to the campus community.

More detailed information regarding this process and the roles of the unit is contained in the Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT): Policies and Procedures document, available on the [SPOT webpage](#). You can view a visual timeline of the SPOT process [here](#).

Survey Research

Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for the development and administration of the Virginia Tech Freshmen Survey, Virginia Tech Senior Survey, and the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). All three surveys are administered to respondents via email. If necessary, Institutional Effectiveness obtains approval from Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board prior to conducting the administration of any survey.

Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for:

- Creating university-, college-, and department-wide summary reports for the Virginia Tech Senior Survey. College reports will include comparisons with university-level data. Department reports will include comparisons with college-level and university-level data.
- Creating and posting the university-level narrative summary of Virginia Tech Senior Survey results to the Academic Decision Support (ADS) website and distributing reports to each college/department.
- Creating and posting university-level narrative summaries and infographics for the Virginia Tech Freshmen Survey and NSSE survey to the ADS website.
- Distributing NSSE college-level reports.

You can view a visual timeline of the survey research process [here](#).

Responsibilities of Faculty and Departments

Academic and Certificate Program Assessment

Academic and certificate program assessment reporting is the responsibility of academic deans and department chairs. Each academic degree and certificate program should report assessment findings by June 30th of each year. Reports are submitted electronically. Both degree and certificate programs should make sure they have the correct reporting year template as it may undergo slight changes from year to year. The newest version of the reporting template is available on the Institutional Effectiveness [website](#).

Both degree programs and certificate programs need to include measures and targets for each of its student learning outcomes (SLOs) and program outcomes (POs). Both degree and certificate programs need to ensure that they are measuring all of their program's outcomes at least twice in 5 years. For newly approved certificate programs, the first assessment report is due the academic year following program inception.

Completing the Academic and Certificate Program Assessment Report

Degree programs should:

- Include 5 to 8 SLOs and 2 to 3 POs on every assessment report. The program must also include the measures and targets for every identified outcome. Those programs covered by a disciplinary-specific accrediting body might have more SLOs or POs based on the specific standards of that agency.
- Measure 2 to 3 SLOs and 1 to 2 POs each year. For any unmet target, the degree program should develop an action plan. In years when all targets are met, the report should include an action plan for at least 1 SLO.
- Include comments on previously implemented action plans. Programs should also respond to at least 1 of the general questions at the end of the reporting form.

Certificate programs should:

- Include 2 to 4 SLOs on the assessment report. Assessment reports should also include 1 to 2 POs.
- Measure at least 1 SLO and 1 PO each year. For any unmet target, the certificate program should develop an action plan.

- Include comments on previously implemented action plans. Programs should also respond to at least 1 of the general questions at the end of the reporting form.

Administrative Unit Assessment

All senior leadership is responsible for promoting a culture of continuous improvement at the university and within their respective divisions. This includes the president, provost, vice presidents, vice provosts, and academic deans. Administrative unit assessment reports are due September 1st of each year and are submitted to Institutional Effectiveness electronically. Administrative units access the outcome reporting template online by visiting the Institutional Effectiveness [website](#).

Completing the Administrative Unit Assessment Report

Administrative units should:

- Include 3 to 5 administrative unit outcomes (AUOs) on the assessment report. The unit should list all of its AUOs and corresponding measures and targets, even if a particular AUO was not measured during a given year.
- Measure at least 3 AUOs each year and provide findings and comments for each.
- Provide an action plan for at least one AUO, even if all AUO targets were met. This could be the AUO the unit feels it needs to focus on most during the upcoming year.
- List any and all SLOs, their corresponding measures and targets, and provide findings and comments on any SLOs measured. Most administrative units *will not* have student learning outcomes.

Academic Program Review

The information below is provided to help you understand the expectations for departments/programs participating in Academic Program Review (APR). Department chairs/program leaders are responsible for conducting and completing a comprehensive self-study. The completed self-study report should be submitted to Institutional Effectiveness by the communicated deadline. The department will decide to use either internal peer reviewers from Virginia Tech or a mix of internal and external peer reviewers at the department or college's discretion and expense. Responsibilities of peer reviewers are outlined in detail in their initial offer letter.

Departments and programs may submit a written response to the review team's documents if desired. These responses are submitted to Institutional Effectiveness if created. After all APR-related documents are sent to the dean of the department/program's academic college, department/program leaders will meet with the dean(s) to discuss the review process and plans for the future. After this meeting, the dean will compose a memo that documents his/her conversation with the department/program, its plans for moving forward, and the dean's expectations regarding the action items to be implemented by the next APR cycle. This memo is sent to Institutional Effectiveness and archived with the other APR documents for the department/program.

Pathways to General Education Assessment

The assessment process for Pathways is course-embedded and faculty-led. It is the responsibility of Pathways instructors and corresponding departments to participate in the assessment process. Instructors/departments are responsible for identifying the concepts and outcomes that pertain to their course, selecting appropriate student work, assessing the selected student work by student learning outcome, and reporting the findings to Institutional Effectiveness.

Data must be submitted each time a Pathways course is taught. Individual course instructors can use their own Pathways assessment data to make improvements to their course(s). Instructors are responsible for reporting the number and percentage of students who performed at each competency level (i.e., Below Competent, Competent, and Above Competent) for each Pathways SLO addressed in the course. Instructors will use the Pathways Assessment Reporting Form to identify which SLOs were measured for each core and integrative concept, the student work that was used to measure each outcome, the specific criteria used to assess student performance, and how many students performed at each competency level.

The Pathways Assessment Reporting Form is available [online](#) in either an Excel or Word format. Fall semester reports must be submitted by [January 31st](#), Spring semester reports by [May 31st](#), Summer I reports by [July 31st](#), and Summer II reports by [August 31st](#). Instructors are not currently required to submit Pathways assessment data for Winter semester courses. Completed reports are submitted electronically using the Pathways Assessment Data Collection Google [Form](#). All Pathways instructors are invited to submit samples of student work along with their assessment data; however, submitting student work is not required at this time.

Student Perceptions of Teaching

SPOT administrators are responsible for serving as the main point of contact for any issues related to the administration of the SPOT survey in their department or college. The main responsibility of department SPOT administrators is ensuring the integrity of their department or college SPOT surveys prior to the evaluation period. These individuals are required to verify that the courses, students, and instructors in EvaluationKIT are correct prior to the release of the instrument during each administration period. These users are also responsible for adding any additional program or department items to the main institutional instrument. Department SPOT administrators are also often asked to run SPOT data reports for university department heads or college deans through either EvaluationKIT or MicroStrategy.

Department SPOT administrators are established at the sole request of deans and/or department heads. Deans or department heads must send an email to Institutional Effectiveness confirming the addition or removal of a SPOT administrator. It is the responsibility of the department or college to notify Institutional Effectiveness when SPOT administrator access should be changed.

If there are issues with the SPOT, tickets should be submitted to 4Help. Department or college SPOT administrator are responsible for reading and agreeing to the SPOT administrator [Terms of Compliance](#) annually. By adhering to these guidelines, SPOT administrators help us maintain data integrity and avoid breaches of data confidentiality. More detailed information regarding this process and the roles of the unit is contained in the Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT): Policies and Procedures document, available on the [SPOT webpage](#).

Data Guidelines and Policies

Academic and Certificate Program Assessment

Institutional Effectiveness only releases the academic and certificate program assessment reports in specific instances as needed to document compliance to our regional accrediting agency or to college deans or other senior leadership upon their request. Institutional Effectiveness will seek the approval of the associated department chair for any other requests pertaining to these documents.

Administrative Unit Assessment

Institutional Effectiveness only releases the administrative unit assessment report in specific instances as needed to document compliance to our regional accrediting agency or upon the request of university senior leadership. For all other requests regarding administrative unit assessment reports, Institutional Effectiveness will first seek approval from the division's vice president or vice provost.

Academic Program Review

Institutional Effectiveness keeps an archive of each department/program's Academic Program Review (APR) documents. Information in this archive is shared with the associated college dean as part of the regular APR process. Reports might also be presented to our regional accrediting agency as examples of demonstrating compliance on certain standards. We will not release data and reports kept in the archive to other individuals without first seeking approval of the associated department chair.

Pathways to General Education Assessment

Pathways assessment data will be used to inform and improve the Pathways curriculum and to further enhance student learning at Virginia Tech. This data will be used for program improvement and to fulfill regional, disciplinary, state, and other mandatory compliance requirements. Pathways assessment data will NOT be used for the evaluation of individual instructors or courses.

Institutional Effectiveness will aggregate all data received at the student learning outcome level, ensuring that data is not identifiable by student, instructor, section, course, or department. Summary data will be used to determine overall student achievement, the extent to which Virginia Tech is achieving its mission for general education, and if improvements need to be made to the outcomes, the program, or both.

Student Perceptions of Teaching

Institutional Effectiveness follows strict guidelines to ensure that individually-identifiable information including students' identities, students' responses, and results associated with instructors, will remain confidential and will not be released to any unauthorized individual. For more information on your responsibilities as a department or college SPOT administrator, please consult the SPOT administrator [Terms of Compliance](#). Failure to comply with the Terms of Compliance can lead to SPOT data privileges being revoked. For further information on the policies governing the SPOT system, please refer to information contained in the Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT): Policies and Procedures document, available on the [SPOT webpage](#).

Survey Research

In general, we attempt to share survey results as broadly as possible. Our findings are never reported in such a way that might compromise student confidentiality.

- The Virginia Tech Senior Survey collects data related to courses, faculty, advising, and technology. In order to protect student confidentiality, Institutional Effectiveness will only generate reports for programs with more than 10 respondents. In addition, personally identifiable information will be removed from the qualitative data to protect confidentiality. Raw data will NOT be included in university, college, or department reports or shared with the university community.
- The Virginia Tech Freshmen Survey collects data related to demographics, high school experiences, reasons for attending Virginia Tech, and anticipated university involvement. Raw data will NOT be shared with individuals working outside of the Office of Academic Decision Support.
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is designed to obtain information from colleges and universities about student participation. The NSSE collects data on a variety of topics, including participation in activities shown to relate to academic and personal development as well as students' perceptions of the college experience. The NSSE is distributed to freshmen and senior students. Raw data will NOT be shared with individuals working outside of the Office of Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness. Institutional Effectiveness will post the survey instrument, frequencies and statistical comparisons report, and snapshot to the Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness (AIE) website. Department reports will be generated upon request.

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