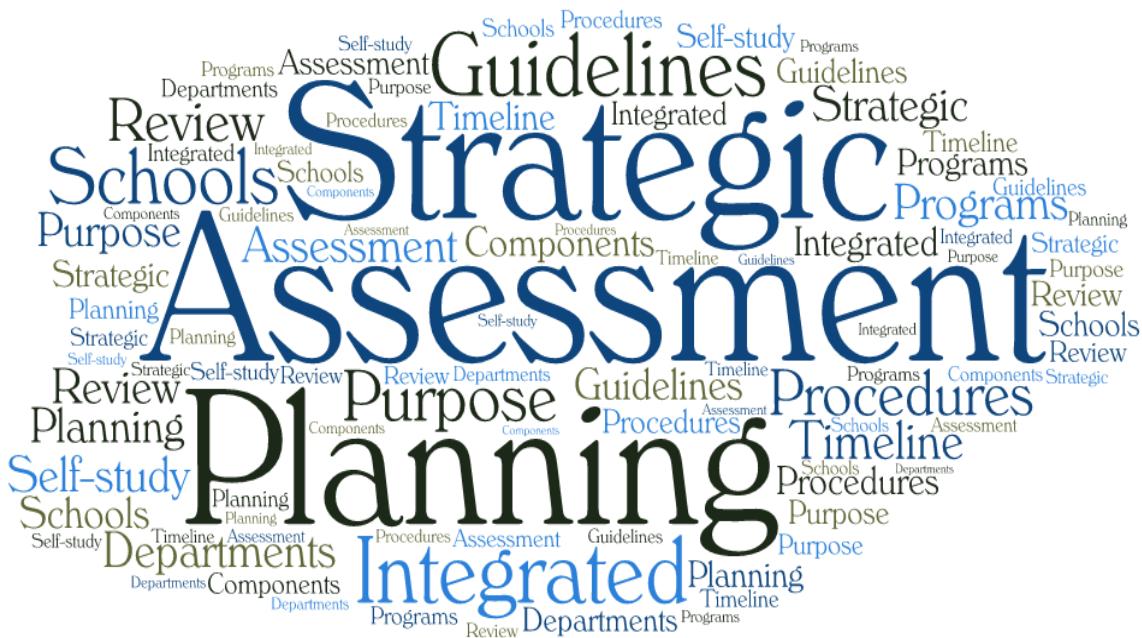




# THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO



# Integrated Planning & Assessment Guidelines

The Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness (SMIE)  
2019

## LEVELS OF PLANNING & ASSESSMENT

### School/Area

- Strategic Planning
- Self-Study
- Review

### Department

- Strategic Planning
- Self-Study
- Review

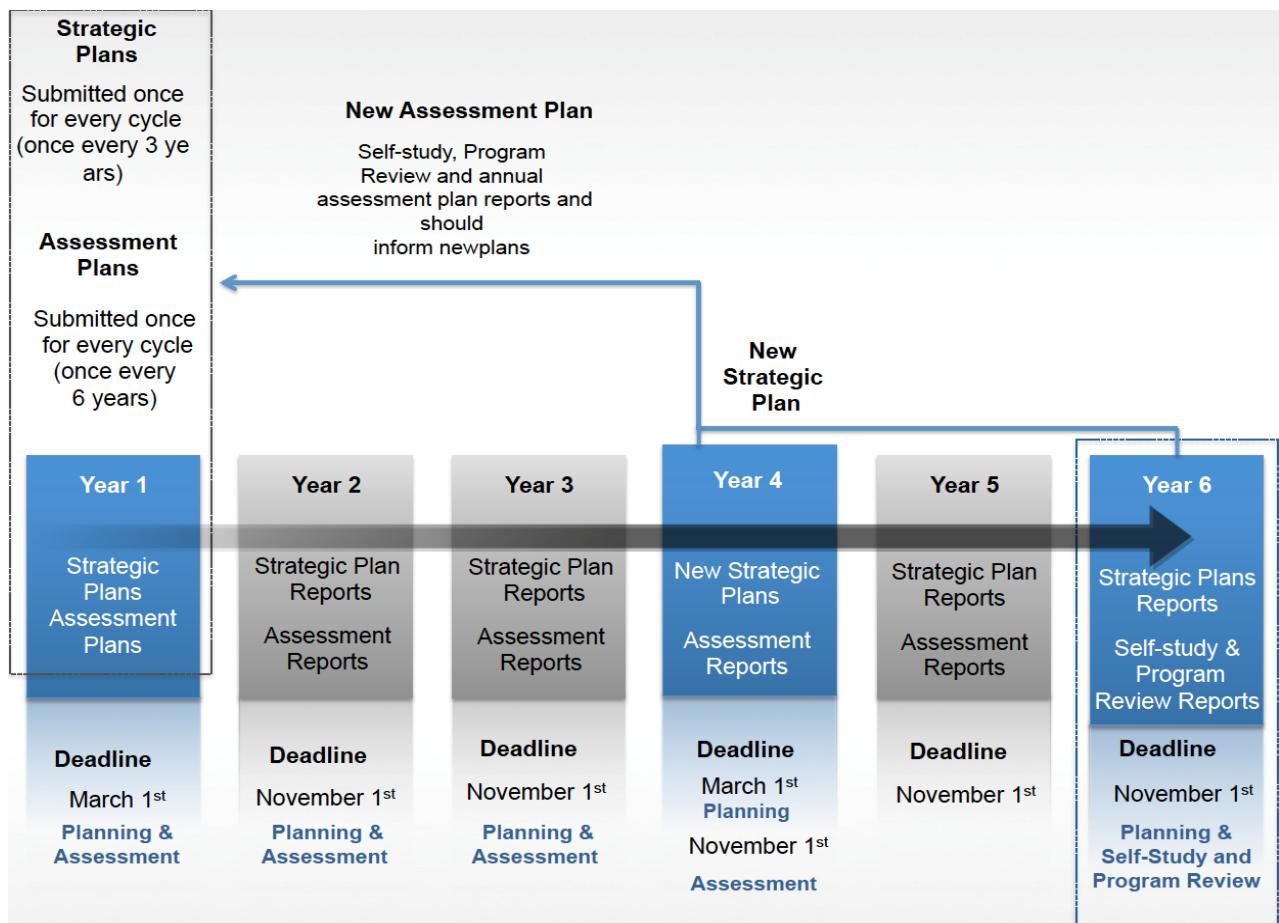
### Program

- Program Assessment Plans/ Reports

## SUMMARY OF PLANNING & ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

	PROGRAM	DEPARTMENT	SCHOOL/AREA
<i>Integrated (Strategic) Planning</i>	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Directed by Department</li> <li>2. Oversight by School/Area</li> <li>3. Submitted to School/Area and SMIE</li> <li>4. Submitted at the beginning of every 3 year strategic planning cycle (updates –if any- every year)</li> <li>5. Reports – every year</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Directed by School</li> <li>2. Oversight by Office of the Provost</li> <li>3. Submitted to Office of the Provost and SMIE</li> <li>4. Submitted at the beginning of every 3 year strategic planning cycle (updates –if any- every year)</li> <li>5. Reports – every year</li> </ol>
<i>Program Assessment Plans/ Reports</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Required for every academic program</li> <li>2. Directed by Department</li> <li>3. Oversight by School</li> <li>4. Submitted to School, Office of the Provost &amp; SMIE</li> <li>5. Plans – at the beginning of every 6 year assessment cycle (updates –if any- every year)</li> <li>6. Reports – every year</li> </ol>	N/A	N/A

## PLANNING & ASSESSMENT TIMELINE



## ASSESSMENT

YEAR 1	Mar.	Deadline for submission of six-year assessment plan
YEAR 2 - 5	SU, FA, WI, SP	Conduct ongoing assessment.
	Nov.	Deadline for submission of annual assessment report (on last year's results).
YEAR 6: PROGRAM REVIEW	Mar.	Review, analyze, and reflect on previous five years of assessment information, how that information has been used to inform decision-making and improve student learning, changes that have been made based on assessment information, and programmatic needs to improve student learning.

## PLANNING

YEAR 1	Mar.	Deadline for submission of three-year strategic plan
YEAR 2 & 3	Nov.	Deadline for submission of annual strategic plan report (on last year's results).

# INTEGRATED (STRATEGIC) PLANNING GUIDELINES

## Purpose

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A Strategic plan is a management tool that serves the purpose of helping an organization do a better job, because a plan focuses the energy, resources, and time of everyone in the organization in the same direction.

Developing a strategic plan helps build competitive advantage; communicates the school or department's strategy to faculty, students and staff; prioritizes financial needs; and provides focus and direction to move from plan to action.

## Timing

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Schools, departments and units should revise their plans every 3 years after the development of the university strategic plan. Each unit should align their plans to the university strategic plan.

## Components of a Strategic Plan

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### 1. MISSION

This is a brief statement, not more than 1-3 sentences, that outlines the purpose of the unit and how the unit helps the university achieve its mission.

**Example:** The Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness (SMIE) advances the mission and values of The American University in Cairo by facilitating evidence-based decisions and a culture of assessment and integrated planning. SMIE is the University's official source of information about itself, its peers and its educational environment. (SMIE)

**Vision:** A vision statement answers the question, "Where do we want to go from here?" It articulates your unit's dreams and hope for the future and sets the direction for planning.

**Example:** Our vision is to be a world-class university internationally recognized for its leadership and excellence in teaching, research, creative expression, and service. (AUC)

**Values:** The ethical ideals of your unit. These ideals should be internalized by your unit's faculty and staff and should be the framework upon which all decisions are made. You should draft a definition of each value, so faculty and staff understand what is meant by the term. Here is a list of commonly-used values: <http://www.ethics.org/resource/definitions-values>

**Example:** Diversity: We seek to treat all individuals with dignity and fairness and to promote understanding and respect for diversity of perspectives, traditions and experiences. (AUC)

### 2. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

#### *Internal Analysis*

**Strengths:** Characteristics which contribute to your unit's ability to achieve its mission. *What advantages does your unit have? What do you do better than anyone else? What unique aspects can you draw upon that others can't? What do people in your field/location see as your strengths?*

**Example:**

- Growing enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs, continuing education and professional education programs
- Increasing enrollment selectivity, with less than 40% of all applicants currently being admitted
- A significant network of loyal and committed alumni in locations throughout the world and a legacy of multi-generational enrollment (AUC)

**Weaknesses:** Characteristics which limit your unit's ability to achieve its mission *What could you improve? What should you avoid? What are people in your field/location likely to see as weaknesses? What factors lose you students/faculty?*

**Example:**

- The JRMC journalism program is not ACEJMC accredited.
- Location of new campus from downtown Cairo and its impact on ability of faculty and students to engage in the media industry as well as have access to guest speakers.
- Quality of students in English needs considerable improvement.

**External Analysis**

**Opportunities:** Political, technological, socioeconomic, educational changes that could create opportunities to advance. *What opportunities might your strengths create? If you overcame a weakness, would that create an opportunity? What interesting trends are occurring? Changes in your market/field? Local changes? What is the likelihood of it occurring and what is the potential impact if it does?*

**Example:**

- Multiple factors and forces are increasing the visibility and importance of SMIE and its core functions, primarily: planning, assessment, research/information, and resource allocation. Among these are:
  - Middle States process for reaffirmation of accreditation
  - change of leadership in the academic area (SMIE)

**Threats:** Political, technological, socioeconomic, educational changes that could threaten your ability to achieve your mission. *What obstacles does your unit face? What are competitors doing? Is the technology changing? Changes in your market/field? Local changes? What is the likelihood of it occurring and what is the potential impact if it does?*

**Example:**

- An increased focus on quality and accountability in academic programs. AUC needs to ensure that all of the university's programs are academically rigorous and challenge students to develop the skills and abilities needed in today's knowledge-based economy.
- The transition to life on the New Cairo campus, from long commute times and lack of public transportation to increasing traffic congestion and dangerous roads (AUC)

### 3. GOALS

Where do you want to be at the end of the plan? Goals should be “big picture items,” not necessarily time-bound, and generally not more than three to five. For administrative and academic support units, unit outcomes can be substituted for goals.

**Example:** Support integrated planning: planning, resource allocation, assessment to enhance institutional effectiveness. (SMIE)

### 4. OBJECTIVES

Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART). Each goal may have several objectives.

**Example:** Lead and direct the university's planning process and the continuous assessment of our academic programs and administrative units to enhance institutional effectiveness, improve efficiency through the optimization of business processes (SMIE)

- **STRATEGIES**

- Strategies are the specific actions the unit will take to achieve its goals and objectives. Beginning and completion dates will allow a unit to track its process, as well as performance benchmarks.

- **RESOURCES**

- List here any funds over and above your annual operating budget that you will need in order to achieve this objective. These costs will be ready for you to add to a planning matrix if your unit has been targeted for investment. Please indicate in the description if these funds are likely to be offset by anticipated grants or other revenues, or if it represents a permanent increase to revenues.

- **ASSESSMENT**

- **ASSESSMENT METHODS/MEASURES**

List the direct and indirect methods you will use to measure how well you are achieving these objectives.

- **Example:**

- **Key Performance Indicators:** How will you assess whether or not you've achieved your objective?

- **TARGET LEVELS/BENCHMARKS**

Describe the desired level of performance or criteria that represents success at achieving your objective.

- **RESULTS/FINDINGS**

Report on the most important results and findings.

- **ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN**

Explain how results will be used to improve the department and how they will be communicated. Also, explain what changes were recommended to improve the department and when they will be implemented.

**Example:**

Goal/Outcome 1.

    Objective 1.1

        Strategies, Resources, KPIs

    Objective 1.2

        Strategies, Resources, KPIs

Goal/Outcome 2.

    Objective 2.1

        Strategies, Resources, KPIs

    Objective 2.2

        Strategies, Resources, KPIs

**Example:**

**Goal 1:** Lead and direct the university's planning process and the continuous assessment of our academic programs and administrative units to enhance institutional effectiveness, improve efficiency through the optimization of business processes (SMIE)

**Objective 1.1:** Develop, manage and track the university strategic plan as well as support integrated planning at all institutional levels

**Strategies:**

- \* Cascade the university plan to area, school and department to ensure alignment with the university strategic goals

- \* Track the implementation of the university strategic plan annually

**Resources:** Staff, Compliance-Assist, Computer labs for trainings Planning coordinators, and Dashboard and visualization tools

**KPIs:**

Maintaining the university strategic plan

Number of submitted plans

**Targets:**

Updated Strategic Planning Document

95% of the units submit plans

## General Guidelines

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- Schools, departments and units should revise their plans every 3 years after the development of the university strategic plan. Each unit should align their plans to the university strategic plan.
- Additional resources should be linked to unit's goals and objectives.
- Each unit will review its strategic plan and file a report every year. It is expected that units will routinely gather and analyze data and make appropriate changes.
- The department chair, or designee, is responsible for initiating planning and reporting within the department
- The executive director or director is responsible for initiating planning and reporting within the non-academic unit.
- Strategic planning is the responsibility of those who provide the services, beginning from the development of goals or objectives, establishment of criteria for success, and development of systematic ways to improve based upon the results of an assessment.
- Strategic plans and reports are to be submitted on Compliance Assist (Planning & Assessment Software) and updated periodically.
- SMIE is responsible for preparing Institutional dashboards and other performance tracking.
- SMIE is responsible for providing data and preparing research in support of the planning process.

# ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

(FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS)

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLANS/REPORTS

### Purpose

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Assessment is a continuous process of gathering, evaluating and communicating information for continuous improvement. Assessment involves defining a program or a unit's mission, developing desired outcomes, monitoring progress toward those outcomes, communicating results and using those results to make improvements. Assessment provides evidence of how well the University is meeting its objectives, helps identify areas where improvement is needed and provides useful information to help guide decision-making and resource allocation.

Developing an assessment plan facilitates documentation of assessment activities, allows for university-wide communication, and increases the effectiveness of the assessment implementation process, including the utilization of the findings. Assessment plans also serve as a source to help with self-study and program review processes, in addition to being evidence for accreditation requirements by demonstrating that the university is continuously striving to improve student learning.

AUC is committed to assessment as a tool to improve student learning, enhance institutional effectiveness, and provide demonstrable evidence that the University is achieving its mission. The AUC assessment process requires all academic programs to submit annual assessment reports, reflect on their assessment results and the extent they are achieving their intended outcomes, and finally explain how results will be used for improvement.

### Timing

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Each program must submit an assessment plan at the beginning of every assessment cycle (6 years), providing updates if necessary in the annual assessment report.

### Assessment Plan Components

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Programs are only required to submit an assessment plan every six years; however, updates (if any) should be provided within the annual assessment report. The following elements are included in the assessment plan:

#### **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

Briefly describe how the program will support the University's mission.

#### **2. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES**

State the main learning outcomes (most important) of the program. At least 3-5 student learning outcomes should be identified for each academic degree program. Learning outcomes should be specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time bound. Each student-learning outcome should be associated with at least one program goal.

#### **3. LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

State what courses or experiences provide students with the opportunities to achieve this learning outcome.

#### **4. ASSESSMENT METHODS/MEASURES**

List the direct and indirect methods you will use to measure how well students are achieving these outcomes.

#### **5. TARGET LEVELS/BENCHMARKS**

Describe the desired level of performance or criteria that represents success at achieving your outcome.

#### **6. WHEN ASSESSMENT WILL BE CONDUCTED AND REVIEWED**

Discuss when data will be collected and reviewed.

## Assessment Report Components

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Programs must submit annual assessment reports based on their approved assessment plans. When reporting on your results, the following elements are included in the report:

### **1. ASSESSMENT PLAN VERIFICATION**

Include any updates (if any) to the assessment plan. Programs should review their existing assessment plan to determine whether revisions to the plan are required based on the findings.

### **2. ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET LEVELS/BENCHMARKS**

State to what extent students have met the previously established target levels/benchmarks.

### **3. WHEN ASSESSMENT WAS CONDUCTED AND REVIEWED**

State when data was collected and reviewed.

### **4. RESULTS/FINDINGS**

Report on the most important results and findings.

### **5. ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN**

Explain how results will be used to improve the program and how they will be communicated. Also, explain what changes were recommended to improve the program and when they will be implemented.

## Timeline

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- March: Programs submit assessment plans (for upcoming assessment cycle)
- November: Programs submit assessment reports (on previous year) and any updates (if any) to assessment plans.
- September through August: Programs conduct the assessment process.

## General Guidelines

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- The department chair, or designee, is responsible for initiating assessment planning and reporting within the department/program.
- Assessment of a program is the responsibility of those who provide the program, beginning from the development of outcomes or objectives, establishment of criteria for success, and development of systematic ways to improve student learning based upon the results of an assessment.
- Assessment plans and reports are to be submitted on Compliance Assist (Planning & Assessment Software) and updated periodically, and in particular after major changes to a program's curriculum.
- SMIE conducts gap analyses and quality reviews annually to ensure the effectiveness of the assessment process.
- Assessment results will be used in planning and implementing program improvements. Program faculty are expected to document their assessment activities; i.e., how they have analyzed, reviewed, and used the assessment results to enhance their programs.