



SAINTS ASSESSMENT INSIGHTS

OUR LADY OF THE LAKE UNIVERSITY (OLLU)

INAUGURAL EDITION

The Saints Assessment Insights is a quarterly look at how assessment integrates into the Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) culture, to create a holistic approach to supporting student learning at all levels. The Saints Assessment Insights focuses on the process and language of assessment, key concepts in assessing student and programmatic outcomes, and ideas for sharing with faculty and staff to improve the overall student experience. Future Saints Assessment Insights will focus on specific assessment components to provide knowledge and understanding of assessment within the OLLU community, while breaking down its many facets into smaller, but significant digestible parts.

FIRST EDITION FOCUS

In the February 2025 edition, the focus is on what assessment is and why it is important, who participates in assessment, and an overview of the academic program and administrative unit assessment cycles at OLLU. The assessment of General Education courses will be featured in a future edition.

IN THIS EDITION

2 - WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?

2 WHY IS ASSESSMENT
IMPORTANT?

3 WHO PARTICIPATES IN
ASSESSMENT?

3 THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE
OVERVIEW

3 - ANNUAL TIMELINE

4 COMPLETE ASSESSMENT
CYCLES

4 - ASSESSMENT CONTACT





What is Assessment?

One of the most challenging aspects of trying to help people understand and conduct meaningful and manageable assessment is the fact that the word assessment can mean many different things, depending on the context. For example, it can be used to connote a valuation, a judgement, an opinion, or an evaluation. In higher education, assessment is defined as a systematic process for understanding and improving student learning. This is a short definition.

Why is Assessment Important?

The essential purpose of every institution of higher education is to educate students and help them succeed in their academic journey. You will certainly find it described in the institution's mission statement. But how do we ensure students are learning and receiving a quality education? We do assessment to understand and improve student learning outcomes and improve student learning.

"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."

— Peter Drucker



Who Participates in Assessment?

When it comes to assessment, some may wonder why it is necessary to have assessment processes in place and involve more faculty and staff. The bottom line, assessment is everyone's job, and everyone is a part of assessment in their areas in some way. Take a moment to pause, and think about how your specific role is involved in assessment. You might be surprised how the role you have at OLLU is connected to assessment. At OLLU, we complete annual assessment of Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO's), and assessment of Administrative Units.

Assessment of Academic Program

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning goals are drawn from the mission statement to indicate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values expected in graduates of specific programs. Learning goals must be measurable and evaluated each year. The process includes setting goals or learning outcomes, determining practices to achieve outcomes, gathering evidence, reviewing and interpreting results, and using results to make improvements.

Assessment of Administrative Units

Administrative units are department offices or other student service centers and units that support student learning and student success, indirectly, by providing supportive services and resources to students. To ensure these essential areas are fulfilling their goals and outcomes, they must be assessed in a similar manner as academic programs. As good stewards of institutional funds and resources, we must assess that these units that oversee programs and provide student services are also meeting their goals and working to improve their services.

THE WHY

WHY DO WE DO ASSESSMENT AT OLLU? AND WHY DO WE NEED ESTABLISHED ASSESSMENT PROCESSES?

The Assessment Cycle

The assessment cycle is a process that uses continuous improvement for both curricular and co-curricular activities in an effort to review initiatives, gain support for new learning and/or curricular strategies, address programmatic changes to better meet disciplinary or industry needs, and then to share this data with everyone in the college community.

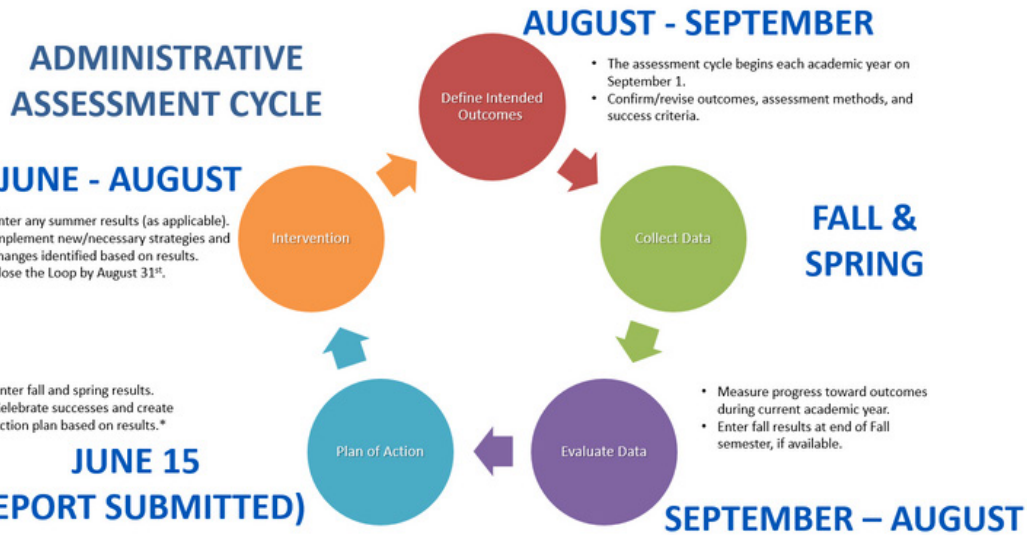
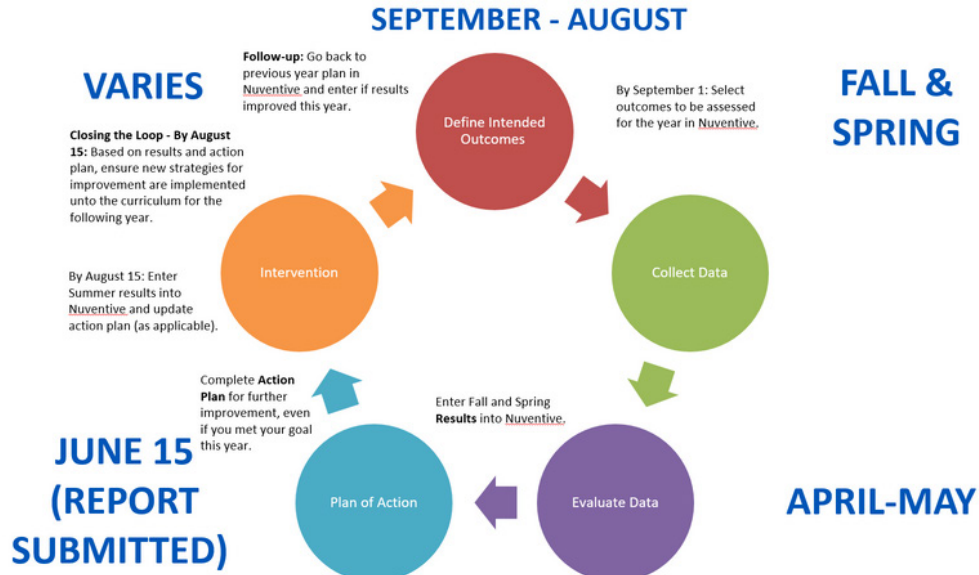
Also, the assessment cycle links easily to strategic planning, budgeting, and resource allocation. By integrating the assessment cycle with Nuventive Improve, departments and units can develop better informed decision-making for their programs and services.

Annual Timeline

Each academic year, OLLU follows an established assessment timeline. The assessment timeline for both academic program and administrative unit assessment is from September 1 through August 31. As of 2024-2025, a set assessment timeline is distributed to program heads and unit managers, in an effort to help everyone complete their annual assessment in a timely manner within the cycle.

COMPLETE ASSESSMENT CYCLES

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT CYCLE



ASSESSMENT CONTACT

Assessment outcomes are unique to every area. With that in mind, all faculty program leads and unit managers, are encouraged to meet with the Director of Assessment and Accreditation, at least once per year, to review and discuss your annual assessment plan. For questions about assessment, please contact: Dr. Liliana Gutierrez, Director of Assessment and Accreditation at lgutierrez@ollusa.edu.

