

Glossary of NMSU assessment terminology organized to align with WEAVE reporting categories

Note: Assessment terminology is not standardized. These definitions are meant to provide guidance for how to input data into WEAVE.

Mission: A concise summary of the purposes that guide the practices of the program, entity or unit.

Goal: A general description of an intended purpose (“to develop students’ written communication skills”) or expected result (“students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking) of a program or entity’s activities. *Please include a complete set of goal statements in WEAVE even if only one or two goals are associated with the current year’s assessment outcome or outcomes.*

Objective: There is little consensus on the definition of objectives. Some consider them to be similar to goals except more specific or of a shorter range/duration. For others, objectives more closely resemble outcomes. WEAVE users should strive to clearly communicate Goals and Outcomes as described in this glossary. *Distinguishing separate Objectives in the Goals and Objectives section is welcomed if deemed beneficial but is not required.*

Outcome: A specific statement of intended results or consequences of the program’s or entity’s activities that are the subject of the current year’s or ongoing assessment. For a student learning outcome, this should reflect what a student knows, is able to do, or values. *A valid outcome must be measurable.* Example: “By the conclusion of (course), undergraduate majors will be proficient in written communication of scientific information in an appropriate journal style.”

Associations: Each individual outcome should be associated with at least one Goal/Objective and with relevant portions of General Education, Baccalaureate Experience, and NMSU Strategic Plan outcomes and objectives. *Associations are set while editing Outcomes.*

Measure: A specific and detailed description of how a particular outcome will be assessed. How will it be determined whether an outcome was achieved or not? Details of the methodology used in collecting and analyzing data should go in this section. Example: “Written laboratory reports will be collected from... and scored according to the following rubric...”

Target: Desired level of achievement. A target is “met” if the findings indicate a level of achievement greater than or equal to the target level. Example target: “90% of students will achieve a composite score of 8 or higher out of a possible 12 on the assessment.” *Setting ambitious targets is encouraged as a means of stimulating productive conversations related to analysis of assessment findings and development of action plans. There are NO negative consequences associated with failure to meet a target!*

Findings: A description of data collected from the assessment including the measured level of achievement for each target.

Action Plan: Detailed description of the planned response to the assessment findings such as interventions or changes related to the assessed outcome. It may also include plans to assess the effectiveness of an intervention or, when targets are met, identification of outcomes for future assessments. *Action Plans provide an ideal mechanism for tracking year-to-year progress on assessment projects.*

Annual/Special Reporting: (Optional) Use this section if you desire to communicate information that does not fit in other reporting categories.

Document Management: (Optional) Supporting documents of any type (e.g., graphical analysis of assessment data) may be uploaded using the Document Management feature in WEAVE.

Reminder: Do not upload any information onto WEAVE in which students are personally identified or identifiable.