Academic Assessment

Handbook for Program Coordinators

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Last revised: July 2026

More info at: https://srinfo.sulross.edu/ie/academic-assessment/

SR | SUL ROSS INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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Academic Assessment Program Coordinator Responsibilities

Your role, as academic program coordinator, is to be a change agent working with faculty to continue to offer improved educational experiences for all students. Your work involves collaborating with faculty in degree programs to identify quality outcomes, measure student performance, and analyze assessment data to positively impact student learning.

1. Review, analyze, and evaluate the student learning outcomes (SLOs) and assessment plan for the academic program in which you are coordinating.
   - The current assessment year for academic assessments is June 1 to May 31 (Summer to Spring semesters).
   - Throughout the year, the academic assessment program coordinator should consider the SLOs and work with the faculty in the program to implement these SLOs and collect assessment data.
     - Consider meeting at the start of the school year (or semester) with faculty to discuss measures and targets required within your SLOs.
     - Consider creating a SharePoint site (or other method) to gather data to report more easily.

2. Use collected assessment data from program faculty to complete an annual assessment report due May 31 each year. The reports are submitted through the software, Watermark, and should be a group consensus, establishing goals for the next year.

3. Attend the annual Peer Review and other professional development and assessment training or meetings throughout the year.

4. Keep in communication with faculty teaching in your program, your department chair, and your dean regarding academic assessment in your program.

Responsibilities Faculty Handbook 4.01, Curriculum Development:

"Department chairs shall assign faculty members to serve as program coordinators for each academic-degree program. These coordinators are responsible for leading the degree program, and they must be competent and qualified academics (as specified by SACSCOC 6.2.c.). They maintain the program annual reports, including student learning outcomes and assessments, on the software platform. They collaborate with faculty who teach the program courses to collect assessment data for each academic term. They complete annual reports that include assessment results and plans for the use of results in the ensuing academic year. They also participate in the annual peer review. Program coordinators report directly to the department chair, and they are supported by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness."

Importance of Academic Assessment

What is Assessment?

Assessment is the ongoing and systematic process of identifying objectives and means to measure them, gathering measurements of the objectives, using the information to make decisions about improvement, and implementing improvements based on the data gathered. Academic assessment program coordinators understand the usefulness of such information and inspire others to engage in this continuous cycle of improvement.

Purpose of Assessment

1. **To improve** – The assessment process should provide feedback to determine how the academic program can enhance current practices to improve student learning.

2. **To inform** – The assessment process should inform department heads and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the academic program to the development and growth of students.

3. **To prove** – The assessment process should encapsulate and demonstrate what the academic program has done throughout the year in progressing student learning toward successful completion of degree requirements.

4. **To support** – The assessment process should provide support for academic planning and decision-making activities such as academic program reviews, new program creation, strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.

Supporting Accreditation Requirements

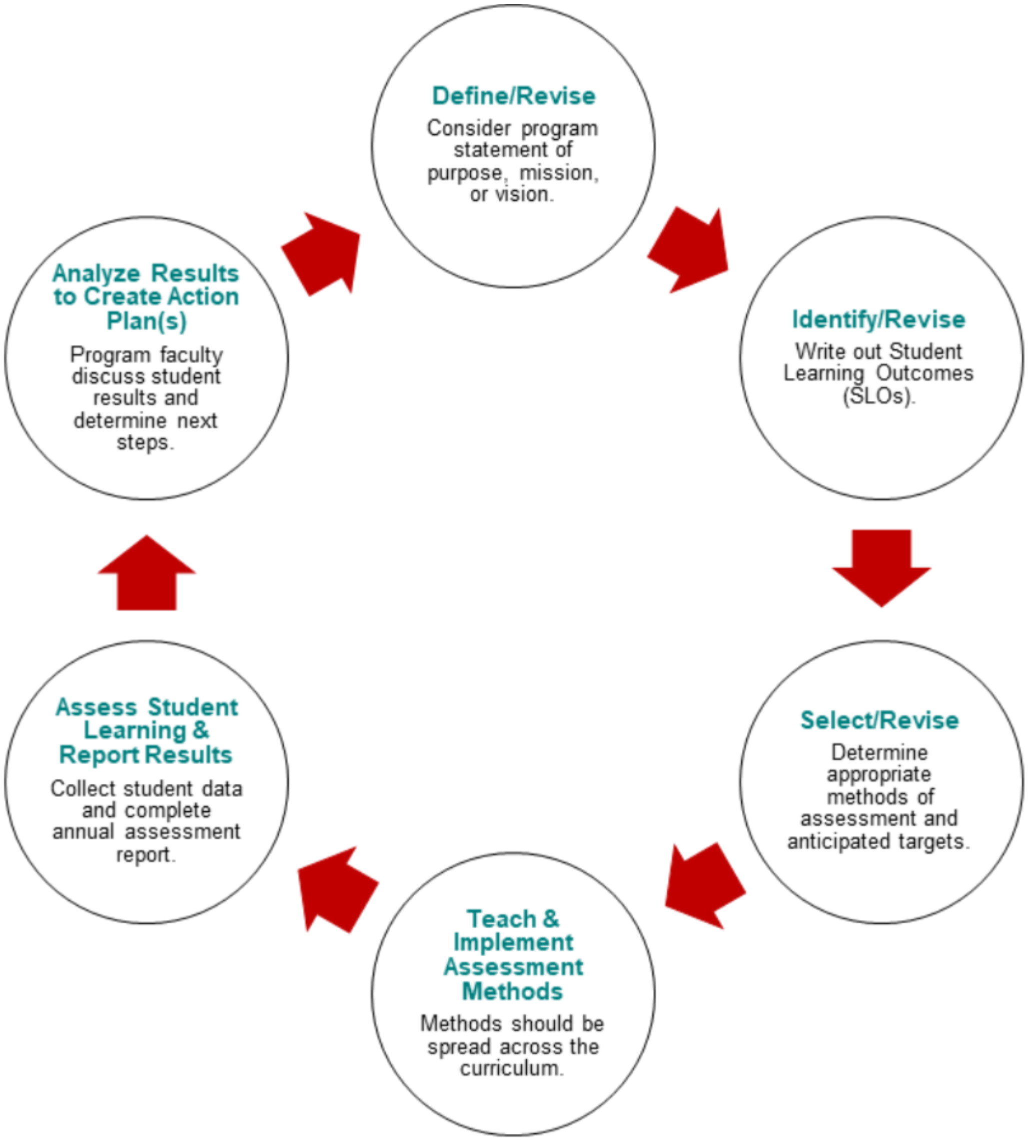
SACSCOC 8.2.a

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for student learning outcomes for each of its education programs. The expectation is that each program at SRSU reports the following:

1. Data that indicates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.

2. Evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the outcomes.

The SRSU Academic Assessment Process



This six-step cycle promotes continuous improvement.

Assessment Plans at SRSU

Every academic program that leads to a degree credential at SRSU has an assessment plan to gauge student learning and success in the program. Every academic program has an academic program assessment coordinator.

Annual Academic Program Assessment Reports are due on May 31 each year. Institutional Effectiveness will review plans each year and discuss any findings with coordinators.

An annual assessment report is primarily composed of two components:

1. Clear, detailed, and understandable results for each measure (from specific courses) and how these results compare to the anticipated target.

2. An evaluation of what worked or didn't work that semester concerning the method. This analysis is crucial to understanding areas of improvement.

Existing Assessment Plans

Existing programs at SRSU have established academic assessment plans in place. Improvements are always welcome to the plan and are recommended to be in place by August 1 each year in preparation for the long semesters. Improvements or modifications are especially encouraged if the program curriculum or program mission has changed.

New Assessment Plans

There are several steps in creating a new academic program at SRSU. A new program is developed organically within a department or college, and then follows the steps in Faculty Handbook 4.01, Curriculum Development, to be approved.

Department chairs should assign academic program assessment coordination early in the process to create a new academic program. The academic program coordinator will draft an assessment plan that will accompany the new program submission to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and/or SACSCOC.

Assessment Plan Formula

3	**Outcomes**	A minimum of three student learning outcomes is required, but a program may wish to increase this.
2	**Measures**	Each outcome should have a minimum of one (two is preferred) measures assigned.
1	**Target**	Each measure should have one corresponding target.
1	**Action Plan**	Each measure should have one corresponding action plan for the future.

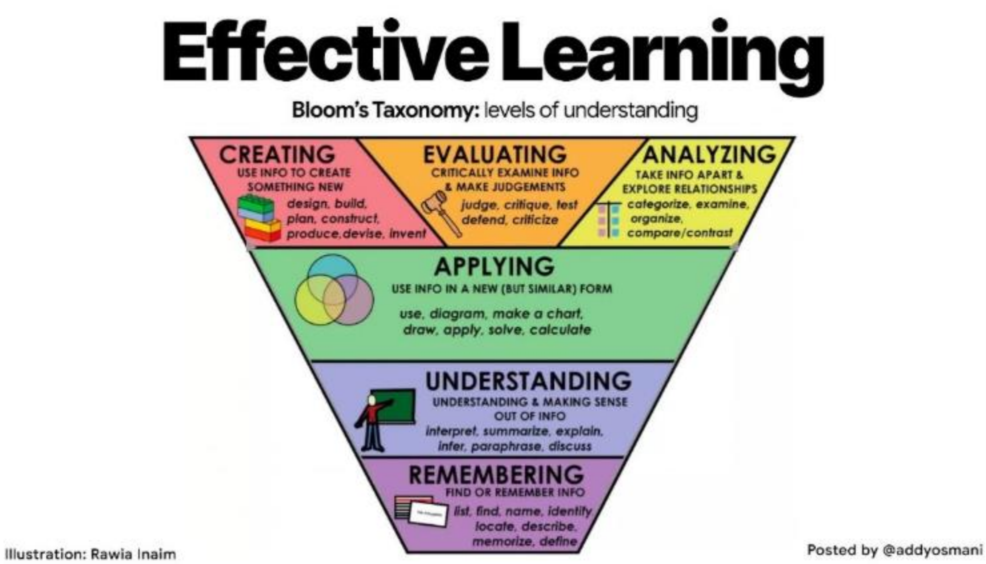
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

A student learning outcome (SLO) is a clear, measurable statements detailing exactly what a student will know, think, or be able to do by the end of a course or program. SLOs are student-centered, focusing on observable behaviors rather than teaching intentions.

Crafting an Effective SLO:

- Clearly describe and define expected abilities, knowledge, values, and/or attitudes of the graduates of the program.
- Structure so that two or more measures can be used to assess each SLO.
- Reflect key and crucial learning components of the program.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Action Verbs is extremely helpful in crafting successful SLOs:



SLO Formula

Try out the ABCC formula to create SLOs: **Actor + Behavior + Condition + Criterion**.

Examples of SLOs

- Students will explain how the science of exercise affects stress.
- Students will design a grounded research study using the scientific method.
- Students will demonstrate the use of corect grammar and various literary devices in creating an essay.

Assessment Measures

An assessment measure is a specific tool, method, or procedure used to evaluate and collect data on a students' knowledge. Measures help identify where improvement is needed and where gaps in student learning, understanding, or application apply.

Measure activities include:

• Exams	• Portfolios
• Assignments	• Surveys
• Case Studies	• Presentations
• Papers	• Capstones
• Internship reports/projects	• And more!

Assessment Measure Formula

At (time), the students in (course) will (describe activity).

Examples of Assessment Formulas

- At the end of the semester, students in SRSU 1101 will select a research topic and write a literature review.
- At the beginning and end of the semester, students in SRSU 1202 will take a short quiz over subjects to be or taught in the course to analyze growth over the course of the semester.

Assessment Targets

Assessment targets define the achievement expectations for each measure of an SLO.

- Targets must be clear and are often determined by percentages rather than letter grades.
- Target percentages of achievement should be set based on realistic expectations (e.g., 85% passing rate).
- Targets can be (and are ideally) multi-faceted (e.g., 80% of students will achieve an 85% passing rate).
- Strong targets will always be tied to a rubric that may be consistently applied from one assessment cycle to the next.

Assessment Target Formula

Using *(rubric),* faculty will set a target of *(percentage, points, etc.).*

Examples of Assessment Formulas

- Using the “Research Papers” rubric, 80% of students will score a 90% or higher.
- Using the “Oral Presentations” rubric, 90% of students will score a 3 on the rubric for acceptable presentation skills.

NOTE: *Rubrics used should be shared across the academic program and are encouraged to be uploaded into the Watermark system for transparency in data collection and reporting.*

Action Plans

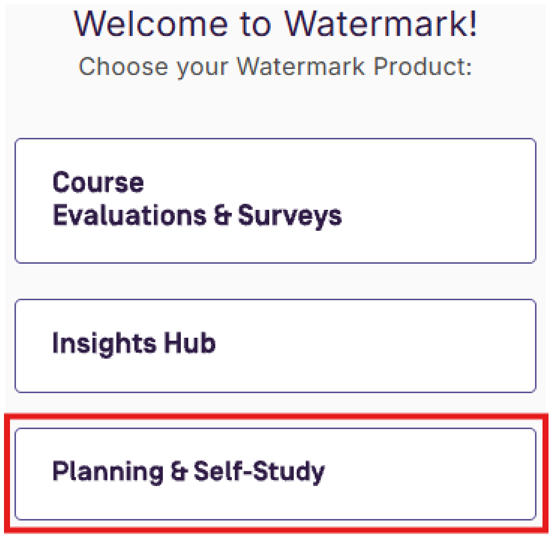
For each measure, you will find that the results proved successful in meeting the target or unsuccessful in meeting the target. Thus, an analysis is required for each measure to determine where the program faculty may improve on a component of the measure to ensure or sustain student success. It is also beneficial for these results to be compared one year to the next. How did students improve in meeting the target since the previous year? How will instructors change methods to ensure greater student success?

Examples of Action Plans

- Implement class meetings prior to scheduled observations to do a run-through of observations.
- Prepare samples of previous successful presentations to share with students.
- Clearly state on the course syllabus that the final exam will be a comprehensive review. The instructor for this course will mention this to the students verbally (in-person course) during the first week of classes.
- We will maintain the target and method for another semester to see if these strategies to alert students in advance that the final exam will be comprehensive, improve student scores to meet the target in the next year.

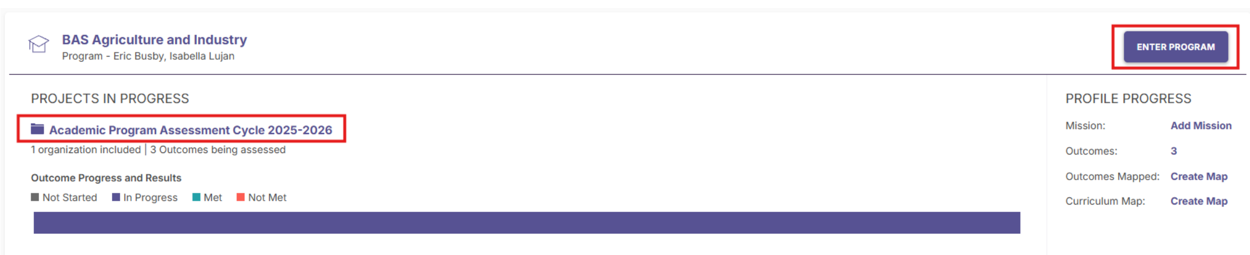
Using the Watermark Platform for Assessment Reports

Log in with Single Sign-On (SSO) at https://srinfo.sulross.edu/ie/academic-assessment/. Select the **Planning & Self-Study** option.



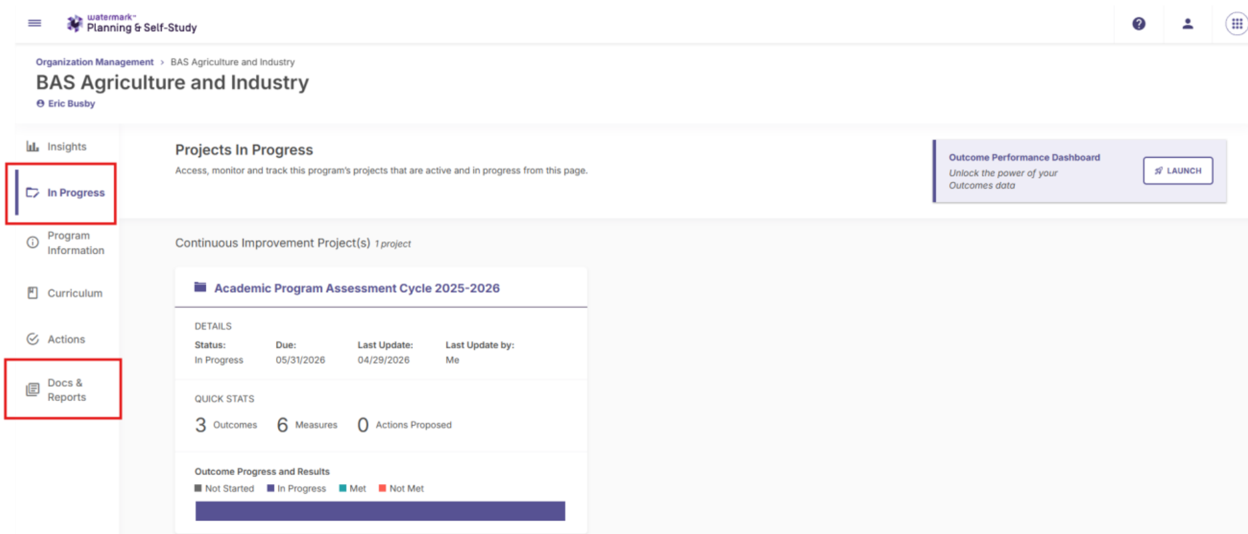
Assessing a Plan

For every Program that a Coordinator is assigned to as a Lead, there will be a Program card listed on the user's home page.



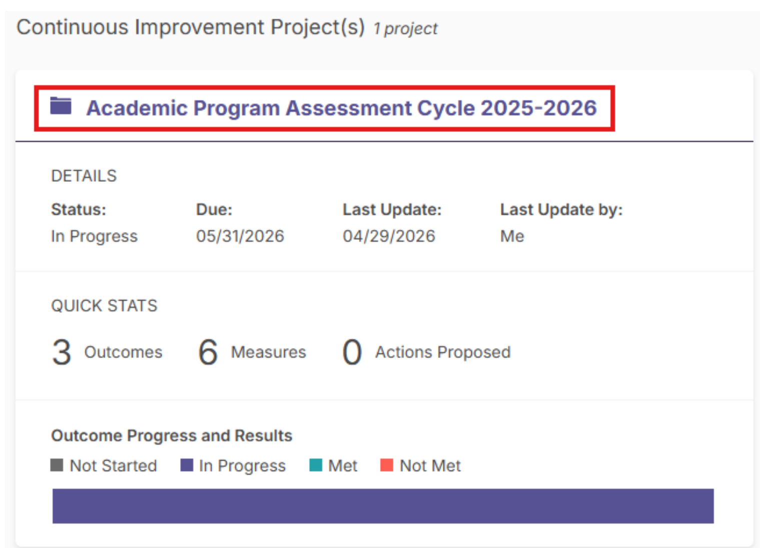
The Program card presents two options for accessing the Plan.

1. On the Program card, there is a section titled "Projects in Progress". If the Plan is still open, it will be listed here, and the user can click on its name to enter it. (skip to the next page, section "Selecting Outcomes" in this handbook)
2. Alternatively, the user can click **Enter Program** to be brought into the Programs area. From here, there will also be an **In Progress** tab on the left, under which any open Plan can be selected.



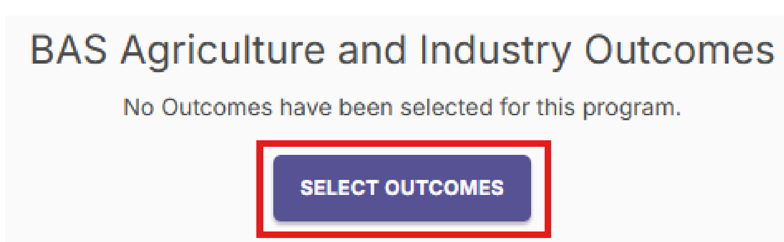
Note - if the Plan has been closed, a report containing its data can be located in this area, under the **Docs & Reports tab.*

To begin, select the most current **Academic Assessment Cycle**

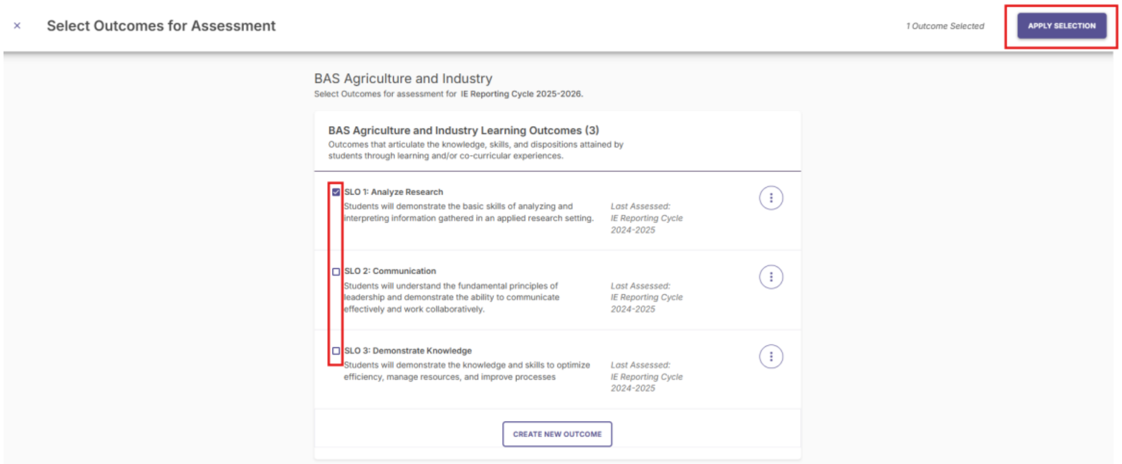


Selecting Outcomes

For a new assessment cycle you will need to **Select Outcomes** (SLOs) that you are assessing (All should be selected unless otherwise discussed with Institutional Effectiveness).



Select the Outcomes and select **Apply Selection**; you should select at least three student learning outcomes.

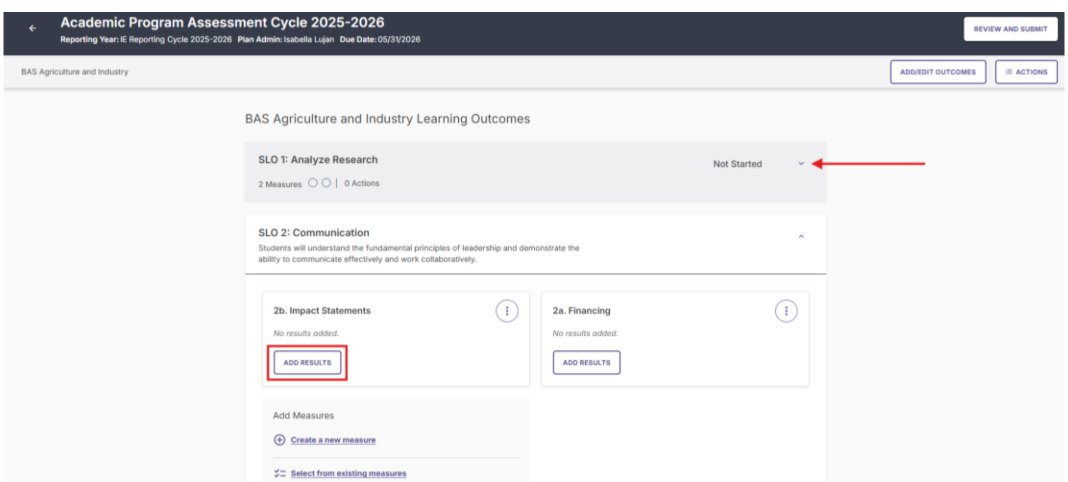


Reporting Measure Results

For each measure assigned to an outcome, assessment coordinators must add detailed results and an analysis of results. When writing results, consider the following:

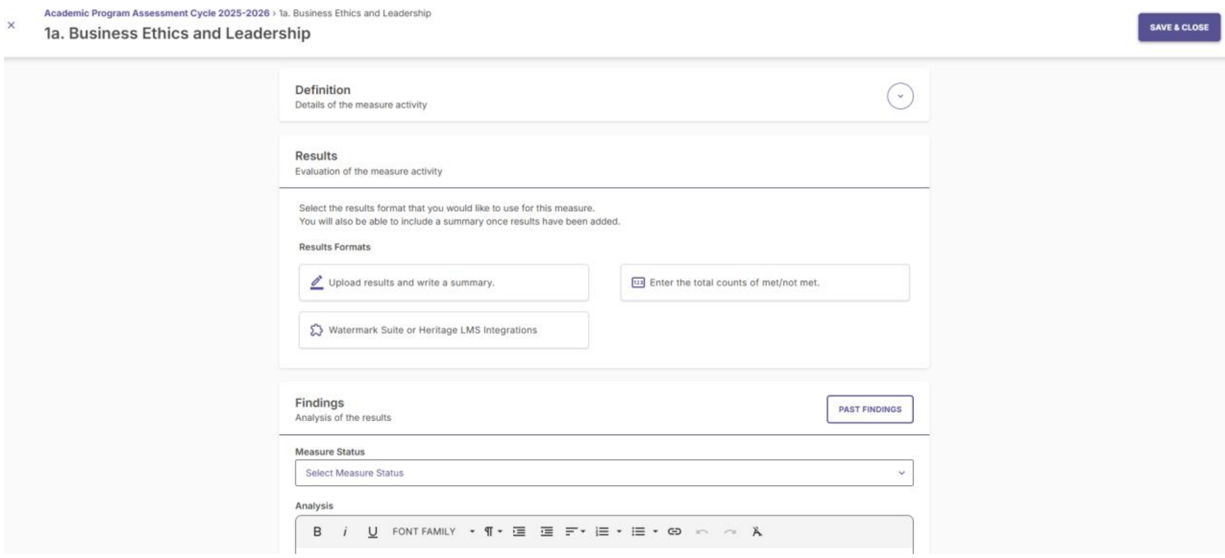
- Results should address the measures and be directly related to the method being reported on.
- The extent to which the target was met or not met.
- How might faculty collaborate further to enhance the method/course and overall measure?
- How many students were assessed in the course? Was the same course and method taught in multiple sections or terms throughout the assessment year?

Drop down the Outcome you wish to add results to and click the **Add Results** button for the Measure.

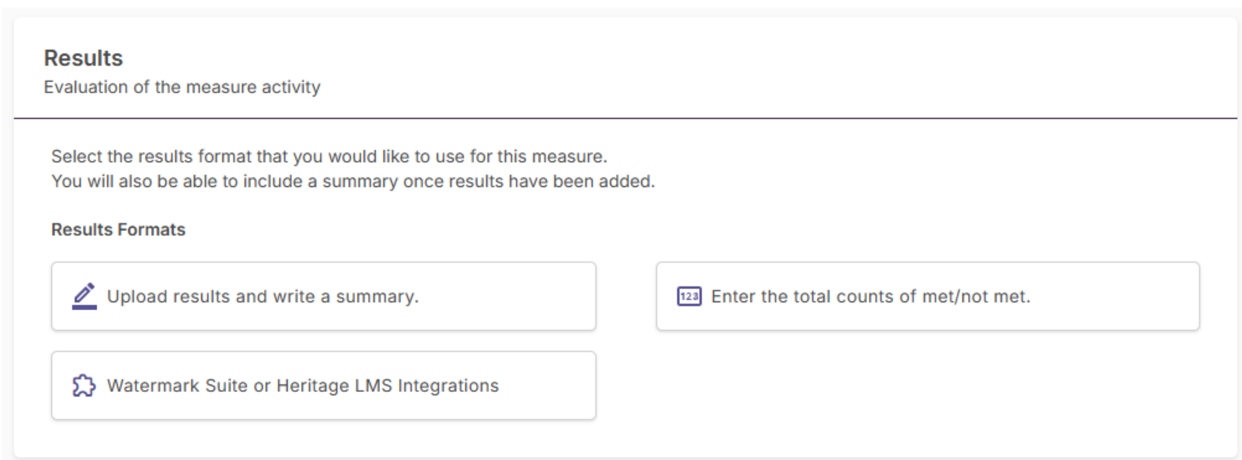


*If no measures appear, you will need to choose **Select from existing measure**. If you have no existing measures, contact the IE Office before creating a new measure.*

This will present a page from which the Results format can be selected.



Please note that you may not see all of the following options, based on the type of Outcome assessed and details associated with the Measure.

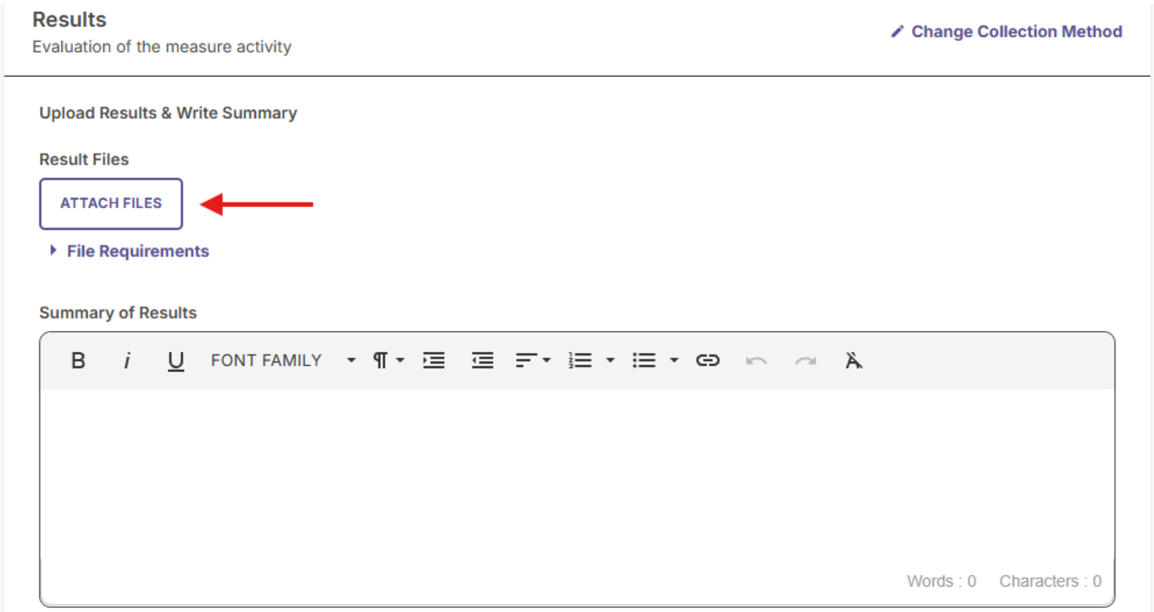


Please note that, while you cannot change the Results method without deleting the data that has already been collected, the Results that were entered for the chosen method can be edited at a later point. In other words, if the option to enter Counts is selected, the actual Counts themselves can be edited later.

Results Options Explained:

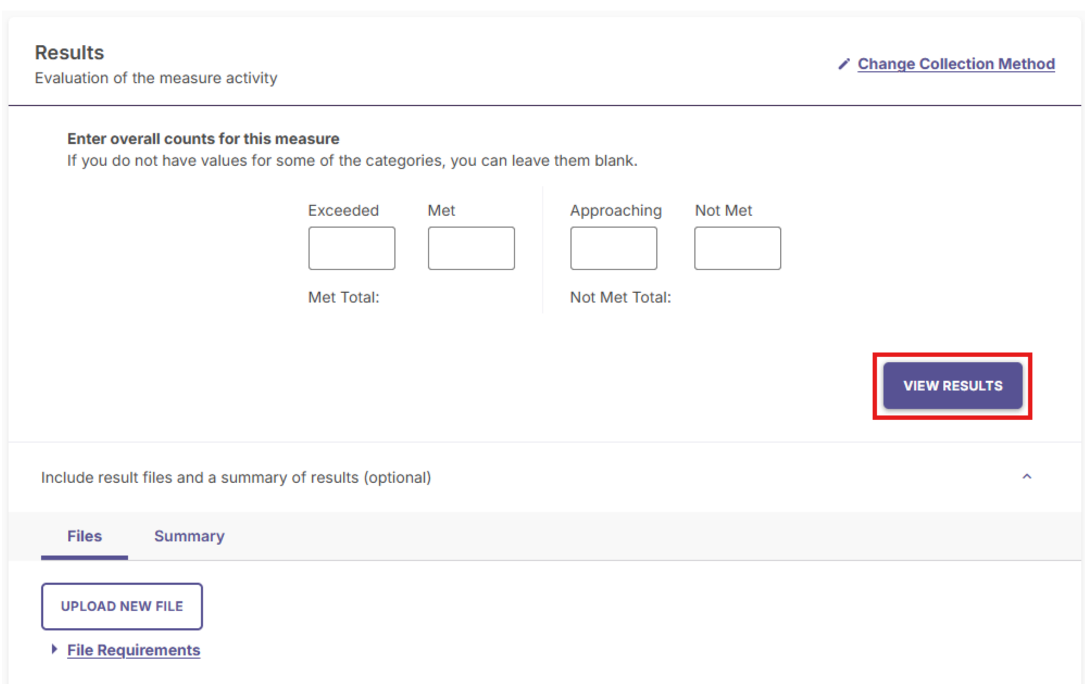
- **Upload results and write a summary**: This will allow the user to upload data files as evidence (*Optional*) and add information relevant to the Results. *(Required)*.

If uploading files, click the **Attach Files** button. This will produce the computer's file directory, from which a single or multiple files can be selected for upload.



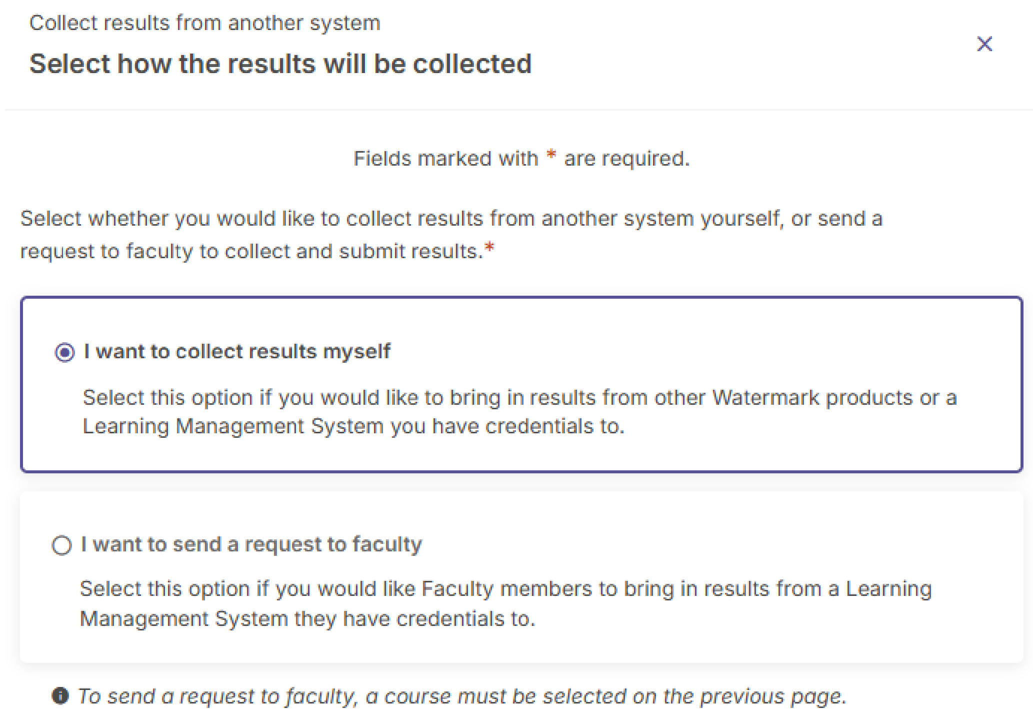
After the file(s) is uploaded, it will appear with options to download or delete it.

- **Enter the total counts of met/not met.**: This option allows users to enter the number of students who met or did not meet criteria for measure achievement, and those results will display as a data graphic. A single record of Counts can be added, or an individual Count can be documented per Course Section. Click **View Results**, as shown below.

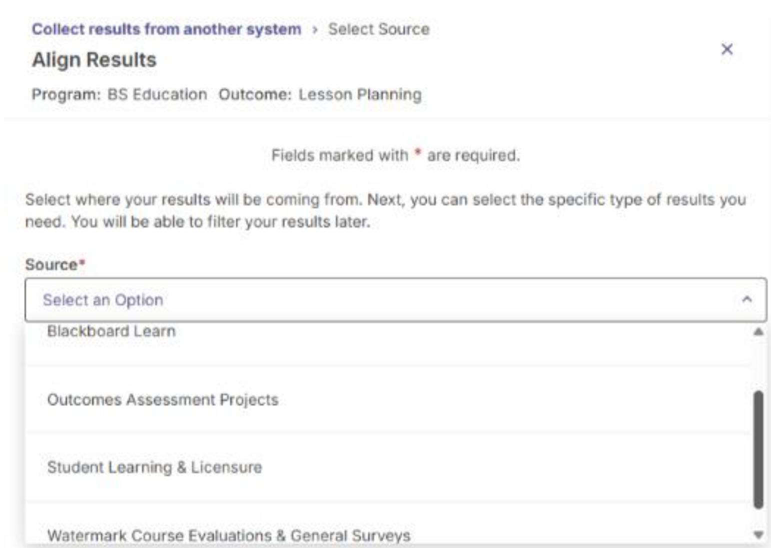


There is an option to include result files and a summary of results for count as well.

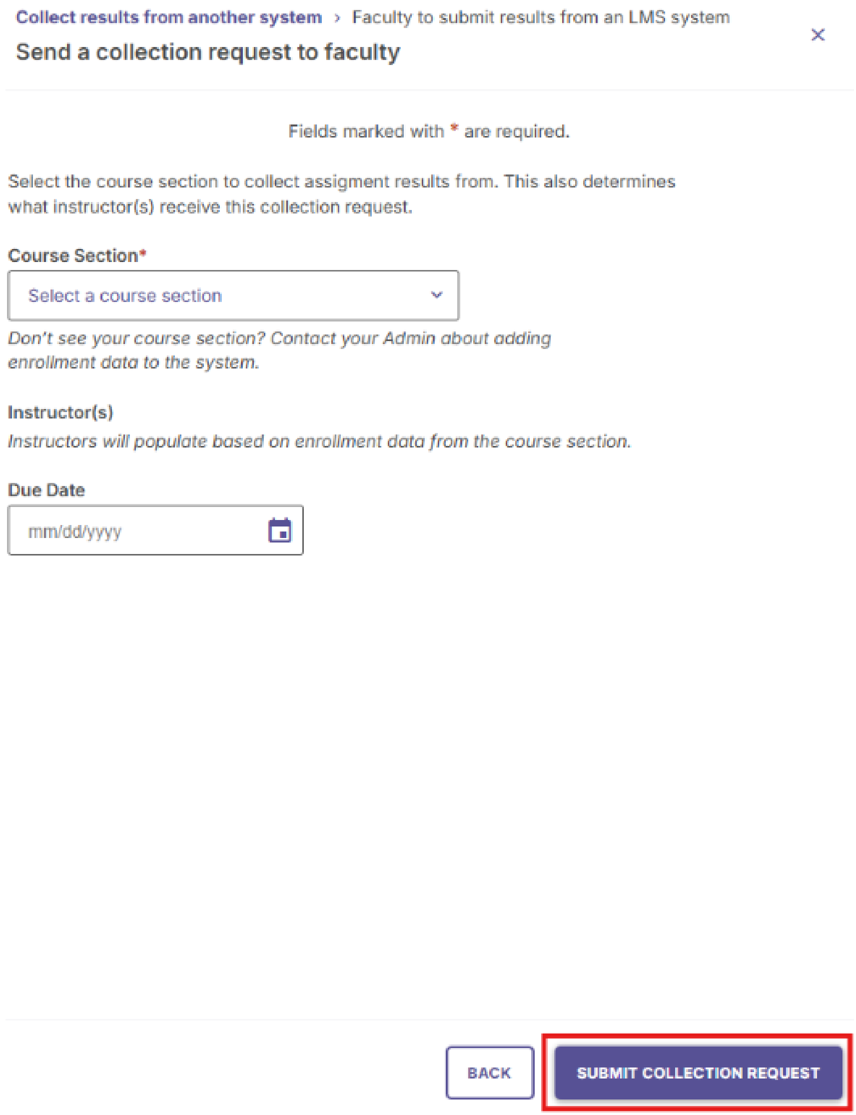
- **Watermark Suite or Heritage LMS Integrations:** This option allows adding Results that were collected in Blackboard Ultra OR from additional Watermark products.
    - For information on adding Results from LMS, please click HERE.
    - For information on adding Results from Course Evaluations & Surveys, please click HERE.



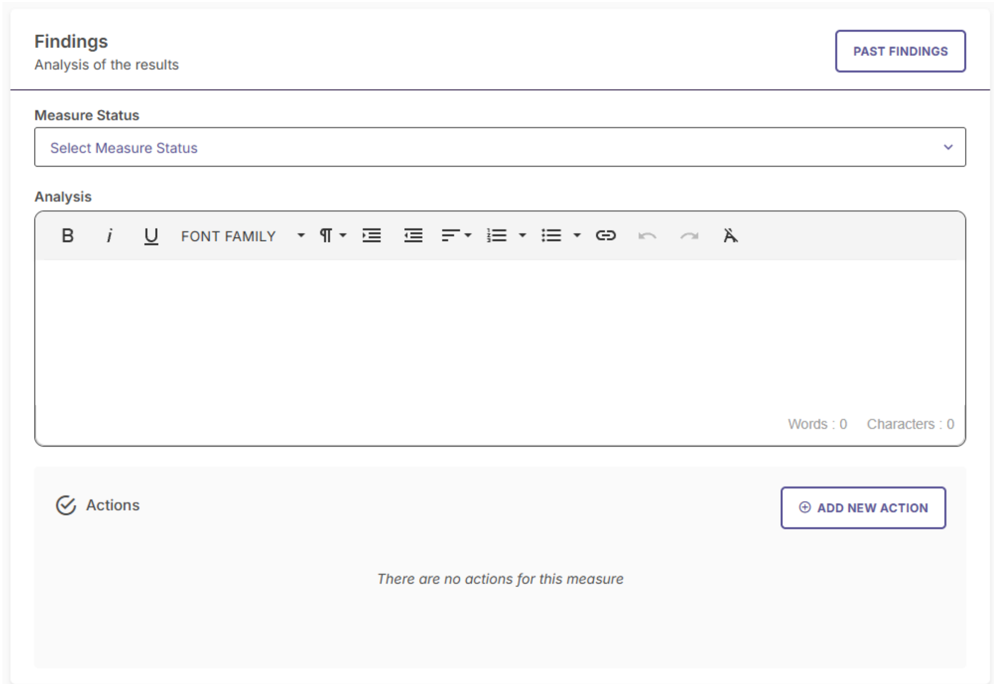
If selecting, **Watermark Suite or Heritage LMS Integrations**, two options will present on the right-hand side. If selecting **I want to collect results myself** click **Next**. Selecting this option will allow you to bring in results from other Watermark products or Blackboard you have credentials to.



Alternatively, if selecting **I want to send a request to faculty** from “Watermark Suite or Heritage LMS Integrations”, click **Next**. Selecting this option will allow other Faculty members to bring in results from Blackboard they have credentials to. Once a course section is selected and a due date is entered click **Submit Collection Request**.



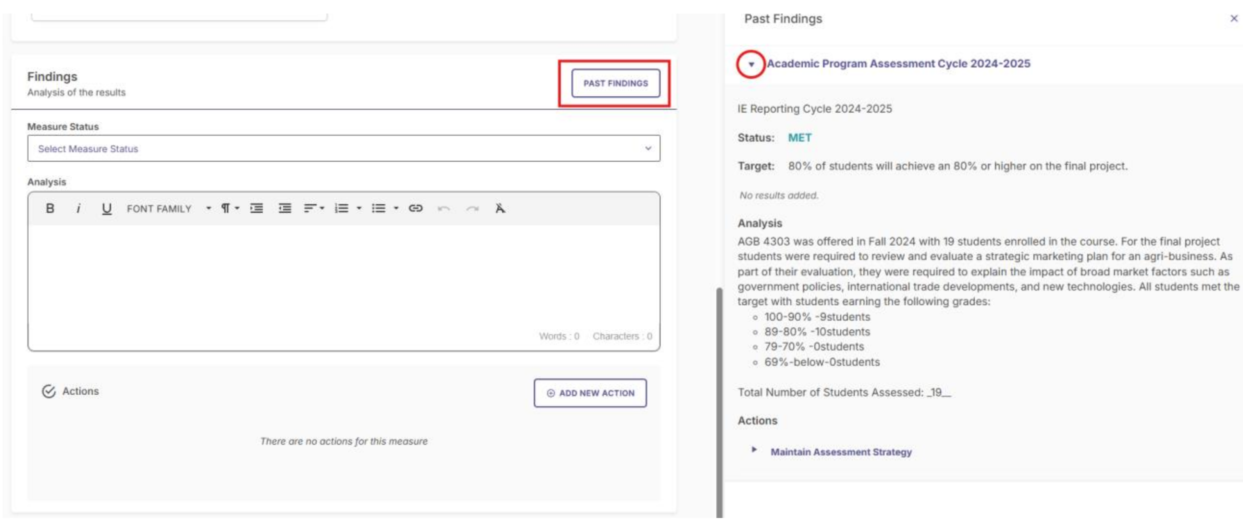
Once the Results have been documented, the next step is to enter the Findings (the analysis of results) and to determine the **Measure Status**.



From the dropdown menu, select whether the **Measure Status** criteria for this Measure was Met or Not Met, based on the Results.

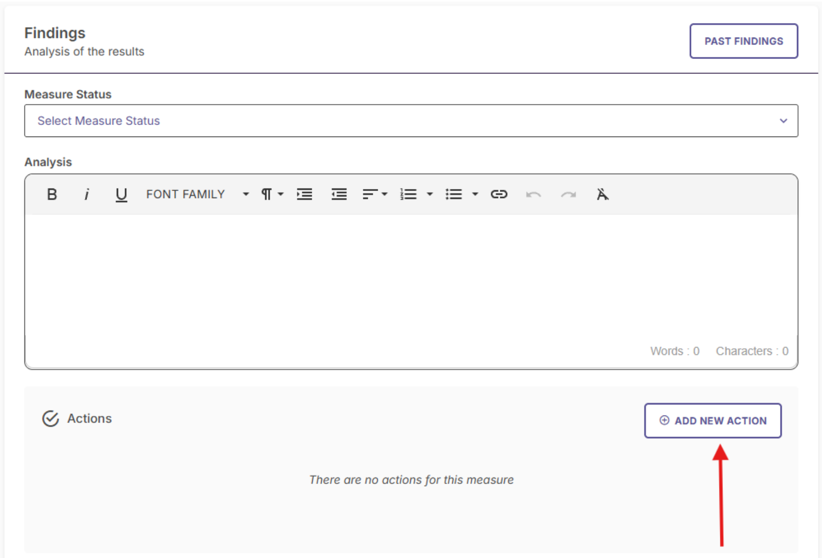
After selecting the Measure Status, enter a narrative Analysis explaining how or why the results were Met or Not Met, as shown in the screenshot above.

To display previous Plans that the Measure was assessed in, select **Past Findings.** Relevant Findings data will appear on a panel on the right-hand side of the screen.

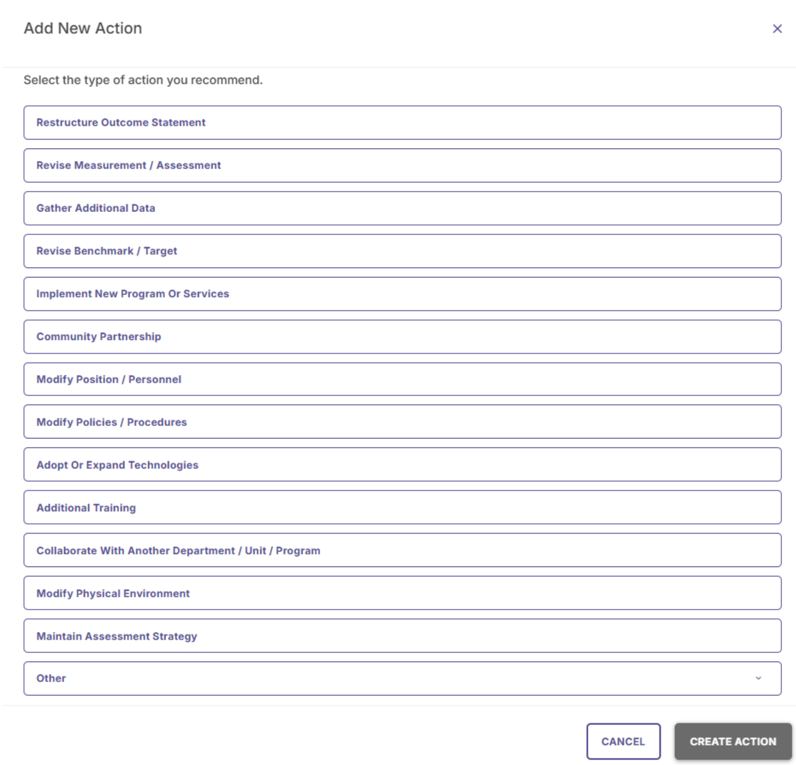


Adding Actions

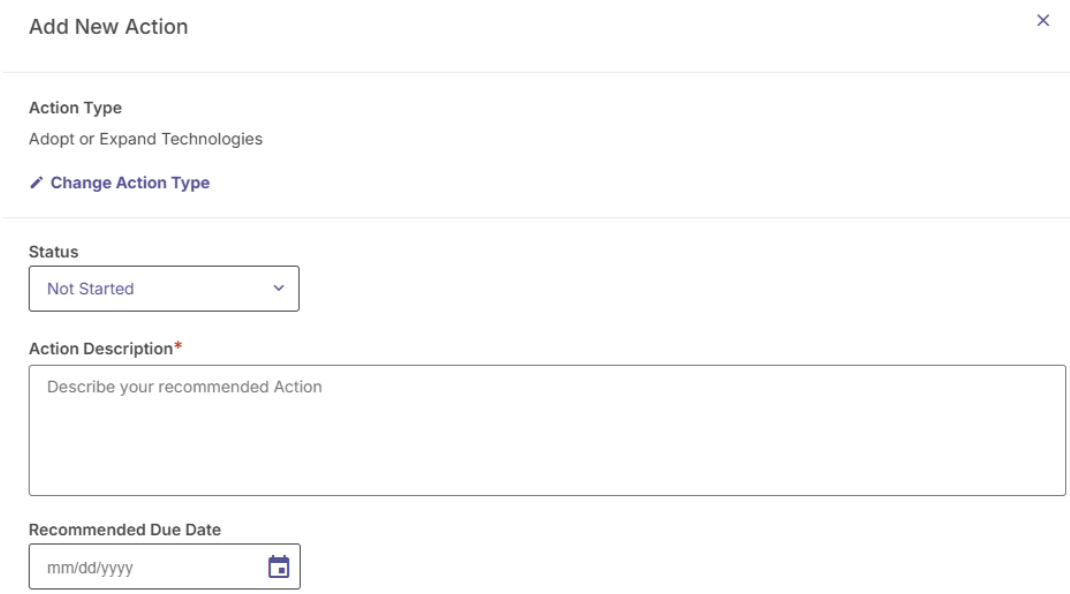
Once Results and Findings have been documented, you have the opportunity to create Actions, thereby closing the loop on assessment planning. Selecting **Add New Action** under the Measure title will begin the process.



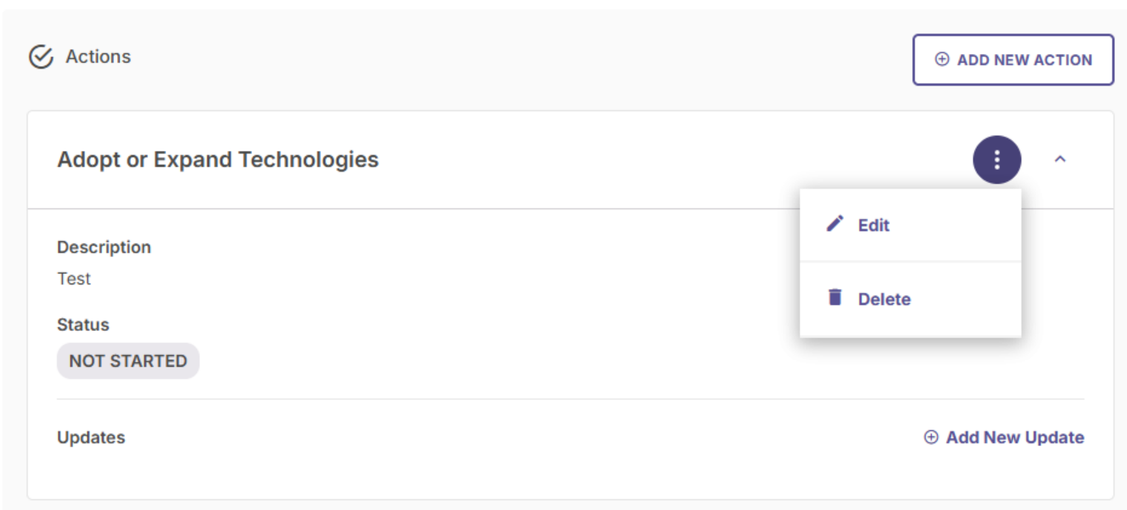
This will open the Actions panel on the right-hand side of the page, in which the user would select the type of Action they would like to document. Choose an Action and click **Create Action** to enter information.



Once the Action Type is selected, the Action Status, Description, and optional Due Date can be entered.



Once the Action is created, it will appear below the Findings entry area. Actions can be edited or deleted at any time by selecting either the Edit or Delete options to the right of the Action Name.



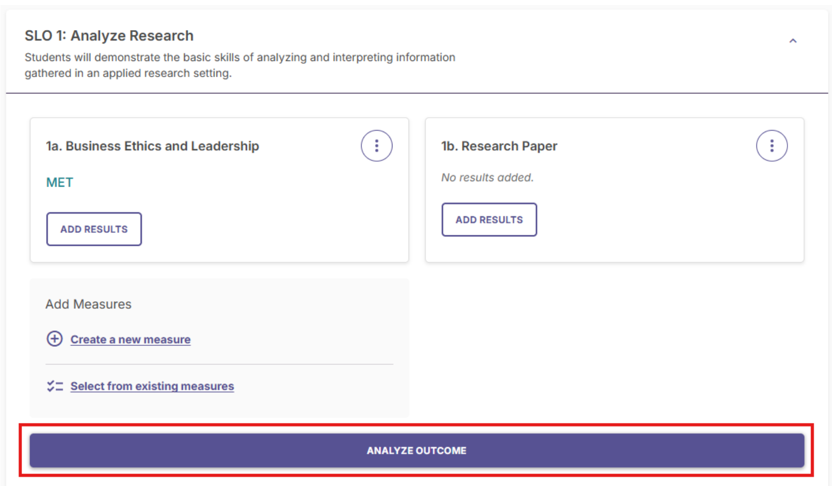
Once the Results, Findings, and Actions are added, select **Save & Close** in the top-right.

Outcome Analysis

Academic Assessment Program Coordinators, along with program faculty, are asked to assess the overall effectiveness of the outcomes themselves. Do the current student learning outcomes meet market demands, student needs, or trends in the field of study?

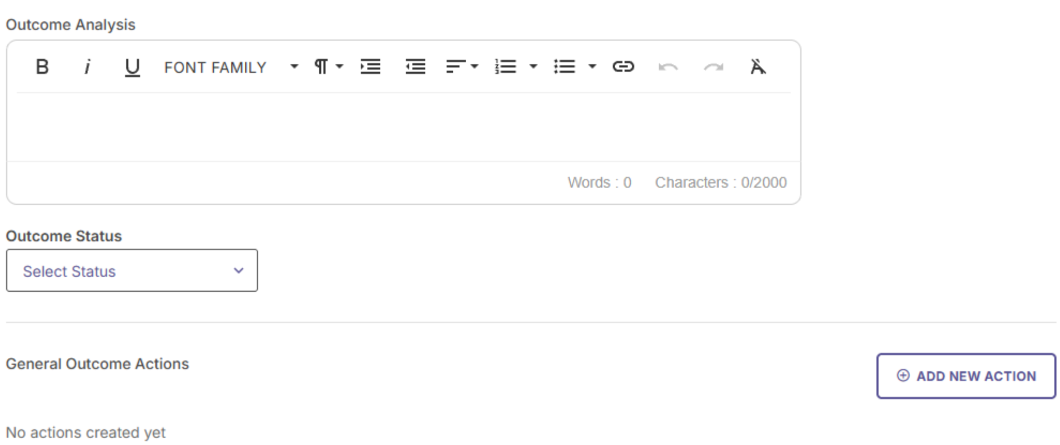
When reporting results and analysis of outcomes (SLOs), it may be evident whether or not the outcomes themselves are being met or not met, based on whether the measures are met or not.

After all measures have Results, Findings, and Actions, an **Analyze Outcome** will populate for coordinators to provide an overall outcome analysis



Selecting **Analyze Outcome** will present an Outcome Analysis text entry area, as well as an Outcome Status drop-down. The Outcome Analysis area allows for relevant Narrative to be added, while the Outcome Status drop-down is where users would select whether the Program met or did not meet the criteria called for by the Outcome.

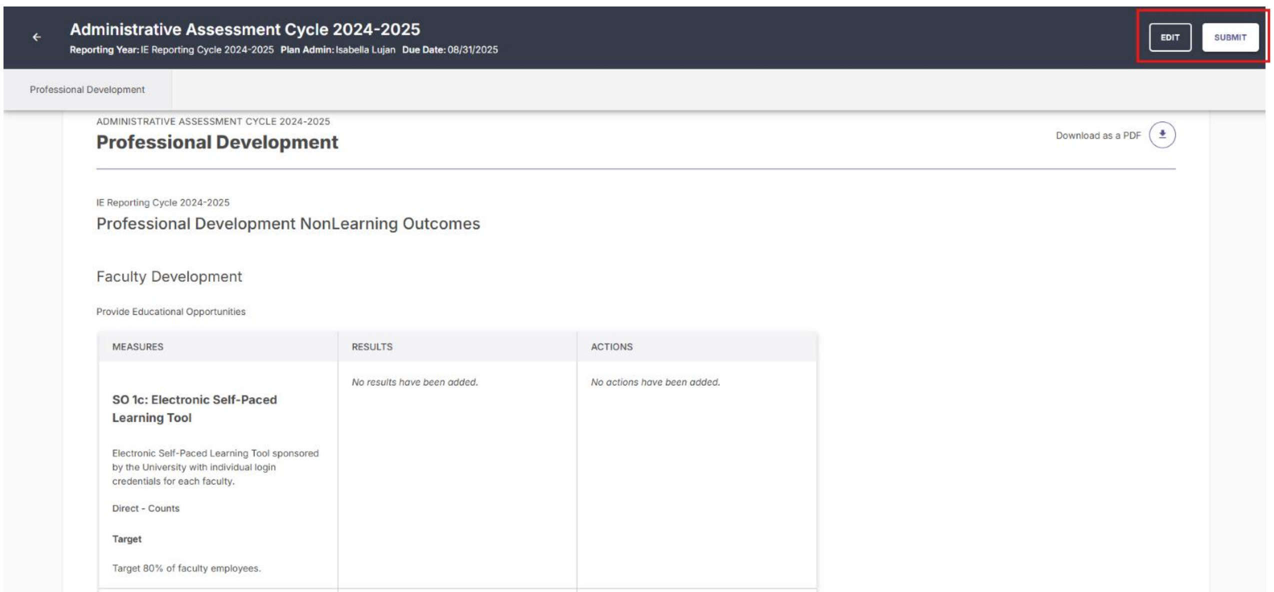
Lastly, there will also be the opportunity to document any Actions that are not specifically tied to a Measure.



Reviewing and Submitting

After all Outcomes are updated click **Review and Submit** in the top-right.

Review your assessment report for this Program. You can continue to edit in the outcomes workspace by clicking **Edit**. Once satisfied with all reported, click **Submit.** Once submitted, you will still be able to edit this report until it is permanently closed by Institutional Effectiveness. Submitting will allow you to comment to reviewers and tag administrators.



For any questions you may have, please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at ie@sulross.edu or 432-837-8224.

For more Watermark Resources, visit:

Accessing the Assessment Plan as a Contributor

Selecting Outcomes to Include in a Plan

Adding Measures to an Outcome

Measures - Editing, Revising, Removing, Deleting

How to Enter Results, Findings, and Actions in an Assessment Plan

Tracking Actions and Adding Updates

Support

Don’t hesitate to reach out for help with use and navigation of the Watermark platform, assessment strategies, report writing, or more:

Institutional Effectiveness

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