

## Step 2: Program Objectives (Goals)

**What are the objectives (goals) of our program?** It is important to work together to create the objectives (goals) for your program. The terms objectives and goals are used interchangeably and mean the same thing, but at ISU we typically use the term objectives. Objectives are related to your mission statement. An objective could have one or more student learning outcomes in which faculty evaluate student evidence. Objectives are higher-level and describe where we want our students to be when they complete our program. Once you decide on the objectives, you will create student learning outcomes for each one. This is called a direct assessment because it looks at an individual student's performance on activities, projects, exams or other work. Learning objectives can also include indirect assessment, which could include focus groups, placement in internships, or participation in community-based experiential learning. Programs should have three to five objectives. Some accredited programs have more because of their accreditation, unaccredited programs can begin with three to five and then, over time, consider changes.

**What documents do you already have about assessment?** Collect any documents or plans you already created, share them with everyone who will participate in assessment, and set up a meeting to talk about assessment. What you talk about at your meeting will depend on where you are. Units with a well-developed assessment plan would start by revisiting the process they devised to see what is working or what they want to change.

**If you don't have a formal plan, how do you talk about students' learning?** If you don't have a formal assessment plan, you might have an informal one. If you talk about how students are doing on assignments and activities, but you haven't written how and when you assess, you are still off to a good start. Assessment just documents what you are already doing.

**Who should join the conversation?** Meeting and talking with everyone you think is interested in student success, and learning is a starting point. Those who need to be included are faculty who teach in the program. Inclusiveness means finding ways to involve adjunct faculty, graduate teaching assistants, dual enrollment faculty, or anyone who teaches. In non-academic units, the people to include are program directors and staff.

**How do I achieve equity and inclusion in my assessment efforts?** There are several sources of information for this topic listed below. Discussions about activities and rubrics should include the concepts of equity and inclusion. The idea is to create assessments for all cultures. After conducting an assessment, programs can evaluate any statistical difference among groups. The institution is implementing a pilot program that will provide faculty feedback about best practices and help develop methods to find information with a minimum of time. The references help explain the why and how about these efforts.

Erick Montenegro and Natasha A. Jankowski (2017) Equity and Assessment: Moving Towards Culturally Responsive Assessment. National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment.  
<https://learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/OccasionalPaper29.pdf>

Higher Ed Connects. (2019, June 15). Diversity in Higher Education: Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms<https://higheredconnects.com/diversity-in-higher-education-creating-culturally-responsive-classrooms/>