

APAR Portal Glossary

Academic Program Assessment Report (APAR)-The UH annual assessment report that includes student and program outcomes, analysis of results, and noted areas of program improvement

Academic Year (AY)- Defined as the fall, spring, and summer sequence of semesters and identified by the second calendar year in the sequence. For example, the sequence fall 2023, and spring and summer 2024 is classified as AY 2024. Note: An academic year is essentially aligned to a fiscal year in Texas.

Artifact (instrument)-A piece of student work or performance produced to indicate mastery of a skill or component of knowledge. It is also an administrative instrument used to evaluate services or processes. Examples include capstone projects, examinations, portfolio entries, student performances, surveys, and audit results

Assessment- The systematic process of continuous improvement which includes defining goals, outcomes, objectives with the mission or purpose statement, and then gathering and analyzing information to make informed decisions about programs, processes, and functions

Assessment Results- A reporting of assessment results including the percentage of students achieving the performance standard and the total number of students included in the assessment. Analysis of the results should include a comparison of these results to the stated performance standard and a discussion of what these results mean to the student, program faculty, and administration. Historical data can be used to identify trends in student achievement.

Census Date -Also referred to as the official reporting date, ORD or 12th class day. It is the 12th class day for the fall and spring semesters and the 4th class day for each of the summer sessions. It represents a snapshot at that point in time.

Continuous Improvement- An ongoing, coordinated effort to ensure delivery of quality education to students including program learning outcomes, assessing the extent to which students achieve those learning outcomes, and informed reflection to close the assessment, planning, and resource allocation loop

Curriculum Mapping- The process of diagramming curriculum (courses aligned to outcomes), to identify and address instructional gaps; redundancies, and misalignments for the purposes of improving the overall coherence of a course of study and, by extension, its effectiveness.

Direct Measure - Students work products or performances providing demonstrated evidence of student learning related to one or more student learning outcome. Examples of direct measures include objective exams and performance measures such as evaluations of demonstrations, internships, and portfolios (see indirect measure)

First-Time-In-College (FTIC) Student- Students who attend the university for the first time after (1) earning a high school degree, or (2) passing a high school equivalence examination. This includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer and students who entered with advanced standing from their high school experience, e.g., AP or IB credits and dual enrollment college credits. FTIC students can be broken down into subgroups based on reporting needs:

Degree-Seeking FTIC: FTIC students who are pursuing a degree.

Full-time, Degree-Seeking FTIC (FTIC Cohort): FTIC students enrolled full-time in their first fall semester and are pursuing a degree. This is the cohort that's followed for the traditional retention and graduation rates used in survey reporting.

FTIC 6-Year Graduation Rate- Graduation rates are based on a starting FTIC cohort who are tracked until graduating from the university. They are tracked based on the program where they began their academic career, even if they change their major while at the University of Houston.

FTIC 1-Year Retention Rate- Retention rates are based on a starting FTIC cohort who are tracked from fall semester to fall semester. They are tracked based on the program where they began their academic career, even if they change their major while at the University of Houston.

Formative Assessment- Any form of assessment used by an educator to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of particular content to improve teaching and learning along the way, and thereby also improving the quality of the end outcome (see summative assessments).

Indirect Measure-Assessment of opinions or thoughts about student knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences, and perceptions. Focus groups, interviews and surveys are examples of indirect measures (see direct measure)

Mission Statement- this is the mission statement most recently adopted by your college, department or program

Performance Standard/ Benchmark- A statement of how well students must perform as a group to demonstrate achievement of the outcome. It includes the percentage of students, the level of expected achievement, and the artifact that was used for the assessment

Prior Program Improvement(s)- This is a review of any improvements previously made to the program's assessment activities and is crucial to closing the loop- documenting the impact of these changes. This information is important to the narrative of your program's assessment practices and contributes arguments for continued quality improvement.

Program- Here, we mean the degree program. In order to meet the needs of accreditation, an APAR is required of each degree program, which includes separate plans for a BA and BS in the same subject, for example.

Program Improvement Plans- Based on the results, a discussion of the specific improvements or changes that will be implemented to address needs. If the performance standard was met, this discussion should include how the program will ensure continued quality improvements

Program Outcomes (POs)- While still frequently focused on what students can do, these tend to be more indirectly measured goals that we know contribute to our program's success, like getting more students to participate in program internships or tracking enrollments. Undergraduate programs must report both FTIC 6-Year graduation and 1-Year retention rates. Graduate programs must report the number of degrees awarded in that program. If any program has licensing / board exams, this must also be reported for the current year.

Program Director Email- This is the email address for the person who is taking charge of the APAR for this program. This could include a number of different titles like, director of undergraduate studies or head of area, etc.

Program URL- This is the website address of the specific program being addressed in the report. Where would a student interested in this program go to find out introductory information

Qualitative Assessment- Provides accurate and credible data prioritizing understanding people's lived experience with a focus on "why" and "how". Data in which the values of a variable differ in type (quality) rather than in amount. Examples include interviews, focus groups, and antidotal evidence

Quantitative Assessment- Provides accurate and representative data prioritizing quantities with a focus on "what" and "how many". Data in which the values of a variable

differ in type (amount) rather than in quality. Examples include scores from assessment tools and numerical representations

Reliability- An assessment tool's consistency of results over time and with different samples of students. Put simply, will this assessment perform the same way every time it is used?

Rubric- A set of criteria specifying the characteristics of a learning outcome and the levels of achievement in each characteristic. Rubrics are typically score-based and involve pre-defined categories of performance.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO)/ Goal- An observable / measurable discipline-specific knowledge or skill that should result from academic program instruction. The purpose is to identify key student knowledge or skills that stakeholders (e.g. faculty and administrators) would find useful to monitor for supporting and enhancing program quality. APARs require 3-5 Student Learning Outcomes.

Student Learning Outcome Assessment/ Assessment Method- The assessment activity that is being used to collect data for the learning outcome. Measures should not focus on course grades, pass rates, or GPAs since these are not necessarily reflective of specific skills or knowledge. Please include a statement of who is reviewing or using the results generated by the assessment

Summative Assessment- Measures of performance at given "finish points" such as at the end of a course or the end of program. Examples of summative assessment would be a dissertation, capstone project, or program portfolio (see formative assessment)

Triangulation- The evaluation of a collection of data from multiple methods in order to determine if the results show a consistent outcome

Validity- The degree to which an assessment measures what is intended, as opposed to what is not intended, or what is unsystematic or unsustainable