Faculty Accreditation Report – Due 30 January 2009

Outline

Dear FAO,

This document outlines in more detail the narrative summary of the assessment plan *due January 30, 2009*. As you will see in Section II below, it also highlights connections between the assessment plan and the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (an excel file), a required WASC exhibit also due January 30th.

For detailed information regarding FAO responsibilities including a timeline, please see the *FAO Activities and Schedule* handout. Copies of this document as well as the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators can be found at http://crte.ucmerced.edu/program-learning-outcomes-resources under Resources for Faculty Accreditation Organizers. If you have any questions, please contact Laura Martin at lmartin@ucmerced.edu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (page 1 double spaced)

SECTION I: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION - MAJOR AND/OR MINOR (1-3 pages double spaced)

Description of Program

How does your program reflect current or emerging trends in your respective field? What is distinctive about your program? Do students collaborate on research projects or engage in other distinctive learning experiences? How does your program prepare your graduates for further educational and/or professional development?[1]

SECTION II: ASSESSMENT PLAN – MAJOR AND/OR MINOR (3-9 pages double spaced)

Part A: Timeline & Goals

In general, what is your timeline and what are your goals for your assessment plan?

Part B: Outline of PLOs

Please outline your Program Learning Outcomes. Where will they be published or otherwise communicated to students and other stakeholders and by when? (See Question 2 of the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators.)

Part C: Evidence

For each PLO, what kind of direct (student work) and indirect evidence (ex. surveys, focus groups) will be gathered and examined? How will data be analyzed? How will findings be used to improve student learning? (See Questions 3 & 5 of the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators.)

Part D: Process

How and when will assessment for student achievement of each PLO occur? Please outline a brief plan for each year.

[1]If the program offers a minor that is a reduced version of your major, please briefly describe the relationship between the minor and major. If your program offers a minor with no relationship to a major, please simply complete all elements of this report with respect to that minor degree.

Part E: Participants

Who will participate in implementing your assessment plan including evidence collection, data analysis, dissemination of results, and implementation of findings to improve student learning? (See Question 4 of the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators.)

Part F: Minor

If your program involves a minor that is a reduced version of the major, please describe the learning achievements expected of the minor and how the program will assess this learning.

Part G: Self-Evaluation using the WASC *Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes*.

For each of the rubric's five criteria, please indicate the level of development of your program (Initial, Emerging, etc.), and briefly explain this rating. Programs should be working toward "Developed." The rubric is appended to this packet.

SECTION III: ALIGNMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAM GOALS/OUTCOMES – MAJOR AND/OR MINOR (~ 3 pages double spaced)

Part A: Program and Institutional Goals/Outcomes

In what ways does your program reflect institutional goals? For context, please see UC Merced's Eight Guiding Principles of General Education, and / or UC Merced's Mission Statement (appended) that identifies our campus as a "student-centered research university." Please include a curriculum map describing relationship between the program learning outcomes and the Eight Guiding Principles of General Education. A template is appended.

Part B: Program & School Goals (as applicable)

How does your program complement your School's identity and learning goals?

Part C: Program & Course (Student) Learning Outcomes

How does your curriculum support your Program Learning Outcomes? Please provide a curriculum map illustrating how the program's courses support its learning outcomes (i.e. the alignment between course and program level outcomes). See http://crte.ucmerced.edu/program-learning-outcomes-resources for examples.

APPENDIX: Eight Guiding Principles of General Education

Scientific Literacy: To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools;

Decision Making: To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem solving;

Communication: To convey information to and communicate and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other modes of communication;

Self and Society: To understand and value diverse perspective in both the global community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethnically and culturally rich setting;

Ethics and Responsibility: To follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable living and environmental and societal responsibility;

Leadership and Teamwork: To work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others;

Aesthetic Understanding Creativity: to appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression, including literature and the arts; and

Development of Personal Potential: To be responsible for achieving the full promise of their abilities, including psychological and physical well-being.

APPENDIX: UC Merced Mission

UC Merced Mission Statement—November 2005

The University of California, Merced's mission is embodied in its proud claim of being the first American research university of the twenty-first century. As the tenth campus of the University of California, UC Merced will achieve excellence in carrying out the University's mission of teaching, research and service, benefiting society through discovering and transmitting new knowledge and functioning as an active repository of organized knowledge. As a key tenet in carrying out this mission, UC Merced promotes and celebrates the diversity of all members of its community.

A research university is a community bound by learning, discovery and engagement. As the first American student-centered research university of the twenty-first century, UC Merced's strong graduate and research programs will mesh with high quality undergraduate programs. New knowledge increasingly depends on links among the disciplines, working together on questions that transcend the traditional disciplines. UC Merced fosters and encourages cross-disciplinary inquiry and discovery.

Interdisciplinary practice in research will nourish undergraduate learning, building a foundation in connecting the ways that academic disciplines understand and grapple with society's problems. Undergraduates will experience education inside and outside the classroom, applying what they learn through undergraduate research, service learning and leadership development. As apprentice scholars, graduate students will build their understanding of and ability to do independent research in their chosen field, as the groundwork for entering professional life. Lifelong learners will continue to hone their knowledge and workplace skills.

The twenty-first century has opened with the promise of new ways of connecting people to new knowledge and to one another. UC Merced opens as a network, not simply a single place, linking its students, faculty and staff to the educational resources of the state, nation and world. The idea of network extends to UC Merced's relationships with neighboring institutions: educational, cultural and social. Born as a member of the distinguished network known as the University of California, UC Merced seeks strong and mutually supportive relationships with a variety of collaborators in its region: public and private colleges and universities; federal and state organizations that share UC Merced's educational and research goals; and cultural and social institutions.

The idea of network will also be realized through the physical and intellectual integration between UC Merced and its surrounding community. The campus is planned as a model of physical sustainability for the twenty-first century, inviting all members of the campus and surrounding community to think and act as good stewards of the environment that they will convey to future generations.

UC Merced celebrates its location in the San Joaquin Valley, reflecting the poetry of its landscape, history, resources and diverse cultures, while capitalizing on and expanding the Valley's connections to the emerging global society. UC Merced recognizes that research that begins with the natural laboratory at home can extend what is known in the state, nation and world.

APPENDIX: Link to Center for Research on Teaching Excellence resources on Program Learning Outcomes

http://crte.ucmerced.edu/program-learning-outcomes-resources

WASC

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Comprehensive List	The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly detailed, inappropriate, disorganized. It may include only discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to real-world problems).	The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored. Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs may be unclear.	The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs. graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered.	The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.
Assessable Outcomes	Outcome statements do not identify what students can do to demonstrate learning. Statements such as "Students understand scientific method" do not specify how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.	Most of the outcomes indicate how students can demonstrate their learning.	Each outcome describes how students can demonstrate learning, e.g., "Graduates can write reports in APA style" or "Graduates can make original contributions to biological knowledge."	Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria statements, such as rubrics, and have identified examples of student performance at varying levels for each outcome.
Alignment	There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the curriculum that students experience.	Students appear to be given reasonable opportunities to develop the outcomes in the required curriculum.	The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design may be summarized in a curriculum map.	Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services, and co-curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum map indicates increasing levels of proficiency.
Assessment Planning	There is no formal plan for assessing each outcome.	The program relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year.	The program has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. The plan may explicitly include analysis and implementation of improvements.	The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the overall outcomes of the program. Communication of outcomes to students, e.g. in syllabi or catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.	Students have some knowledge of program outcomes. Communication is occasional and informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of program outcomes. They may use them to guide their own learning. Outcomes are included in most syllabi and are readily available in the catalog, on the web page, and elsewhere.	Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcomes and levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents.

How Visiting Team Members Can Use the Learning Outcomes Rubric

Conclusions should be based on a review of learning outcomes and assessment plans. Although you can make some preliminary judgments about alignment based on examining the curriculum or a curriculum map, you will have to interview key departmental representatives, such as department chairs, faculty, and students, to fully evaluate the alignment of the learning environment with the outcomes.

The rubric has five major dimensions:

1. **Comprehensive List**. The set of program learning outcomes should be a short but comprehensive list of the most important knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program, including relevant institution-wide outcomes such as those dealing with communication skills, critical thinking, or information literacy. Faculty generally should expect higher levels of sophistication for graduate programs than for undergraduate programs, and they should consider national disciplinary standards when developing and refining their outcomes, if available. There is no strict rule concerning the optimum number of outcomes, but quality is more important than quantity. Faculty should not confuse learning processes (e.g., completing an internship) with learning outcomes (what is learned in the internship, such as application of theory to real-world practice). Questions. Is the list reasonable, appropriate and well-organized? Are relevant institution-wide outcomes, such as information literacy, included? Are distinctions between undergraduate and graduate outcomes clear? Have national disciplinary standards been considered when developing and refining the outcomes? Are explicit criteria – as defined in a rubric, for example – available for each outcome?
2. **Assessable Outcomes**. Outcome statements should specify what students can do to demonstrate their learning. For example, an outcome might state that "Graduates of our program can collaborate effectively to reach a common goal" or that "Graduates of our program can design research studies to test theories and examine issues relevant to our discipline." These outcomes are assessable because faculty can observe the quality of collaboration in teams, and they can review the quality of student-created research designs. Criteria for assessing student products or behaviors usually are specified in rubrics, and the department should develop examples of varying levels of student performance (i.e., work that does not meet expectations, meets expectations, and exceeds expectations) to illustrate levels. Questions. Do the outcomes clarify how students can demonstrate learning? Have the faculty agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing each outcome? Do they have examples of work representing different levels of mastery for each outcome?
3. **Alignment**. Students cannot be held responsible for mastering learning outcomes unless they have participated in a program that systematically supports their development. The curriculum should be explicitly designed to provide opportunities for students to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design often is summarized in a curriculum map—a matrix that shows the relationship between courses in the required curriculum and the program's learning outcomes. Pedagogy and grading should be aligned with outcomes to foster and encourage student growth and to provide students helpful feedback on their development. Since learning occurs within and outside the classroom, relevant student services (e.g., advising and tutoring centers) and co-curriculum (e.g., student clubs and campus events) should be designed to support the outcomes. Questions. Is the curriculum explicitly aligned with the program outcomes? Do faculty select effective pedagogy and use grading to promote learning? Are student support services and the co-curriculum explicitly aligned to promote student development of the learning outcomes?
4. **Assessment Planning**. Faculty should develop explicit plans for assessing each outcome. Programs need not assess every outcome every year, but faculty should have a plan to cycle through the outcomes over a reasonable period of time, such as the period for program review cycles. Questions. Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time? Is the plan sustainable, in terms of human, fiscal, and other resources? Are assessment plans revised, as needed?
5. **The Student Experience**. At a minimum, students should be aware of the learning outcomes of the program(s) in which they are enrolled; ideally, they should be included as partners in defining and applying the outcomes and the criteria for levels of sophistication. Thus it is essential to communicate learning outcomes to students consistently and meaningfully. Questions: Are the outcomes communicated to students? Do students understand what the outcomes mean and how they can further their own learning? Do students use the outcomes and criteria to self-assess? Do they participate in reviews of outcomes, criteria, curriculum design, or related activities?

Dear FAO's,

Please find on the following page a template for a curriculum map to visually represent the alignment of Program's Learning Outcomes (PLOs) with the Eight Guiding Principles of General Education. A review of these relationships is requested in Section III, Part A of the Faculty Accreditation Report Outline.

Often, such maps facilitate insight into curriculum in ways that are more efficient than narrative alone. For example, by visually illustrating how educational efforts are distributed with respect to intended student learning outcomes, they can help identify useful points for engaging with the curriculum.

Please note that this table is meant to summarize, rather than completely replace, your program's reflections on the contributions it makes to student engagement with the Eight Guiding Principles.

Please number your PLOs. Enter these numbers in the far left column under PLO. Then use an X, or symbol of your choice, to indicate that a given PLO supports student achievement of a given Guiding Principle.

Finally, replace the red X's in the table's heading with the relevant information (table number and name of your program).

Eight Guiding Principles of General Education

Scientific Literacy: To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools;

Decision Making: To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem solving;

Communication: To convey information to and communicate and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other modes of communication;

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Leadership and Teamwork: To work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others;

Aesthetic Understanding Creativity: to appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression, including literature and the arts; and

Development of Personal Potential: To be responsible for achieving the full promise of their abilities, including psychological and physical well-being.

Table X: A curriculum map representing the alignment between XXXXX Program Learning Outcomes and the Eight Guiding Principles of General Education.

PLOs	Scientific Literacy	Decision Making	Communication	Self & Society	Ethics & Responsibility	Leadership & Teamwork	Aesthetic Understanding Creativity	Development of Personal Potential

University of California-Merced
Division of Student Affairs
2010-11 Assessment Plan

Department/Unit: _____

Mission Statement

Departmental missions must be directly aligned with those of the Division of Student Affairs. A mission statement should include approximately 3-5 sentences that identify the ***name*** *of the department, its* ***primary functions****,* ***modes of delivery*** *and* ***target audience****.* Mission statement should be approximately 100 words or less.

Annual Planning Goals

Annual Planning Goals are broad statements that describe priorities and intentions of a department or unit. Goals should be linked to the imperatives outlined in the 2007-12 Student Affairs Strategic Plan or the department's strategic plan.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Objectives address what a student learns or how a student changes by participating in a program or utilizing the service. Student learning outcomes are measurable statements that provide evidence as to what students know or do, or how they have changed as a result of your department's intervention. Clearly articulate, in a sentence or two, your student learning outcomes and provide a brief context as to why it is important to measure.

Program Objectives

Program Objectives are related to program improvement around issues like timeliness, efficiency and participant satisfaction. Program objectives are measurable statements that provide evidence as to how well your programs are fulfilling their purpose. Each program objective shall include brief context as to why this is an important objective to measure.

Measures

Measures describe the methodology and timeframe for data collection. Measures also should identify the population being surveyed and/or tested.

Results (to be submitted along with Annual Report in June, 2011)

Results include a brief narrative of findings, and/or essential tables or graphs. The results should indicate the extent to which the program objective was met. Typically a results summary should be between 100-300 words.

Conclusions (to be submitted along with Annual Report in June, 2011)

The conclusion should summarize briefly the collection and analyses of data. It also should "close the loop" by identifying what decisions and/or program modifications were made on the basis of these analyses. The conclusion should be brief, please explain how you are going to "close the loop" in 300 words or less.

DEPARTMENT MISSION:

ANNUAL PLANNING GOALS (please formulate 3-4 departmental annual goals and indicate which Imperative of the 2007-12 Student Affairs Strategic Plan each is linked to)

GOAL 1:

GOAL 2:

GOAL 3:

GOAL 4:

2010-2011 Departmental Assessment Plan

GOAL #1:
Rationale for goal #1:

Student Learning Outcome #1:

SLO Measurement:

Program Objective #1:

PO Measurement:

GOAL #2:
Rationale for goal #2:

Student Learning Outcome #2:

SLO Measurement:

Program Objective #2:

PO Measurement:

GOAL #3:
Rationale for goal #3:

Student Learning Outcome #3:

SLO Measurement:

Program Objective #3:

PO Measurement:

GOAL #4:
Rationale for goal #4:

Student Learning Outcome #4:

SLO Measurement:

Program Objective #4:

PO Measurement:

UC MERCED

POLICY FOR ANNUAL ASSESSMENT AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

Overview

To promote continuous, evidence-based improvement in support of the University's mission of teaching, research and service, the UC Merced Administrative Unit Assessment Policy (AUAP) outlines the minimum requirements for a coupled Annual Assessment and Periodic Review process. As an umbrella policy, the AUAP recognizes differences in the professional cultures of administrative units across the campus.

Introduction & Purpose

Every administrative unit uniquely contributes to the realization of UC Merced's mission[1], with the quality of this work influencing the degree to which UC Merced achieves excellence. For the purposes of this policy a "unit" is a functional group tasked with specific responsibilities that is located within a School or administrative entity (ex. a Division) led by a Dean, Vice Chancellor or equivalent. The term Division refers to a non-academic, administrative domain composed of one or more units reporting to a Vice Chancellor.

To maintain focus on contribution, quality, and improvement, and in support of transparency and accountability, the Administrative Unit Assessment Policy (AUAP) outlines the minimum requirements of a coupled Annual Assessment and Periodic Review process that is grounded in the mission, goals and outcomes of an administrative unit.

As described by this policy, Annual Assessment[2] involves an evidence-based appraisal of the extent to which a unit is meeting its desired outcomes for the purpose of taking action to improve effectiveness. Also with the goal of improvement, Periodic Review builds on Annual Assessment asking a unit to comprehensively examine the efficacy of its Annual Assessment activities for improving the quality of its services, and to review its goals and outcomes in light of the collective results of Annual Assessment and the evolving institutional and unit context.

Both Annual Assessment and Periodic Review are intended to support meaningful and effective assessment processes for the purpose of appraising the quality of a unit's work relative to an intended level of performance that is determined by the unit.

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[1] "The University of California, Merced's mission is embodied in its proud claim of being the first American research university of the twenty-first century. As the tenth campus of the University of California, UC Merced will achieve excellence in carrying out the University's mission of teaching, research and service, benefiting society through discovering and transmitting new knowledge and functioning as an active repository of organized knowledge. As a key tenet in carrying out this mission, UC Merced promotes and celebrates the diversity of all members of its community."

[2] Assessment is a process by which information is obtained relative to a desired outcome or goal. Assessment refers to the collection of data to describe or better understand an issue in order to improve unit effectiveness or student learning. Evaluation, in contrast, is the process of drawing a conclusion about worth or quality relative to a standard.

This policy also expects that the results of Annual Assessment and Periodic Review will inform the planning, decision-making, and budgeting processes of the unit and/or division in a manner that reinforces evidence-based improvement by supporting, as feasible, actions to implement improvements in function and service.

As outlined by this policy, Figures 1 and 2 represent the relationship between unit planning and assessment processes for a generic unit and the Division of Administration respectively. The latter illustrates how the policy can be implemented within the context of unit-specific planning and assessment infrastructure.

Scope and Oversight

The AUAP is an umbrella policy that outlines the minimum requirements for Annual Assessment and Periodic Review, recognizing that specific planning and assessment strategies and infrastructure may differ among the professional cultures of administrative Divisions, Schools or their equivalent. As such, these entities may develop their own policies and procedures, providing they meet the expectations outlined by this policy.

The AUAP applies to all administrative units reporting to the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, and Vice Chancellors for Administration and University Relations. The leadership of a Division, School or equivalent administrative entity determines the granularity at which the policy is implemented, being sure to address distinct and essential functional units.

The Chancellor or designate oversees the AUAP, including Periodic Review. The Senate-Administrative Council on Assessment (SACA) evaluates implementation of the AUAP with respect to how well assessment is conducted, including the completeness of the assessment process.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Purpose & Process

In support of evidence-based improvement, Annual Assessment involves

(1) Developing an assessment plan anchored in the unit's mission and supporting goals, and outcomes.[3]
(2) Implementing the plan to collect data/evidence[4].
(3) Analyzing and interpreting data/evidence relative to desired levels of performance.
(4) Using these results to identify and implement actions to improve the degree to which the unit is meeting its outcomes. Actions should address both the unit's service activities and its assessment practices, the latter affecting a unit's ability to meaningfully appraise its efficacy.
(5) Reporting assessment methods, results and actions to be taken, at the unit and Division/School levels.
(6) Considering assessment conclusions in formulating the unit's budget.

[3] See Section A of Appendix A for definitions of these terms.
[4] In its broadest sense, evidence includes everything that is used to determine the truth of an assertion, including assertions in the form of outcome statements, and can be quantitative (data) or qualitative in nature.

Annual Assessment Plan:

An example template for developing an Annual Assessment plan is provided in Appendix A.

Schools, Divisions, or equivalent administrative entities may develop their own Annual Assessment planning infrastructure provided it meets the six expectations outlined above, including evidence-based mechanisms for assessing the degree to which the unit meets its outcomes, goals, and ultimately mission. To support excellence in teaching, research, and service, the unit's mission, goals and outcomes must be aligned, in hierarchical fashion, with the relevant overarching missions, including ultimately UC Merced's mission[1]. As appropriate, unit missions, goals, and outcomes should also be informed by expectations established by relevant professional societies and organizations. Section A of Appendix A provides guidance for developing mission, goals and outcomes.

All assessment plans should also attend to good assessment practices, including the generation of reliable and valid results that are appraised in relation to a desired level of performance (i.e. a standard). Appendix B explains these terms. For many administrative units, a customer satisfaction survey may be one of several useful lines of evidence for assessing achievement of unit goals.

Units also may elect to elaborate a multi-year assessment plan, developing an integrated set of annual plans based on a comprehensive set of outcomes for the unit. In this way, units can plan for assessments that may require multiple years of data or maximize the information gained from assessment tools like surveys. A multi-year assessment plan is a useful product of Periodic Review.

Unit Annual Assessment Report

An example template for an Annual Assessment Report for individual units is provided as part of Appendix A.

Schools, Divisions, or equivalent administrative entities may develop their own Annual Assessment reporting structure, provided it addresses (1) the unit's progress in meeting its outcomes, (2) associated actions for improvement addressing unit services and/or programs and, as necessary, the assessment process, (3) progress on WASC-related action items[5] and (4) contributions to Institutional Assessment Initiatives. Items 3 and 4 need only be addressed as relevant.

Annual Assessment Report for Divisions, Schools, or Equivalent Entities

On behalf of the Division, School or equivalent entity, the Vice Chancellor, Dean or equivalent shares with the Chancellor or designate and SACA an Annual Assessment Report that includes (1) a brief summary and evaluation of each unit's progress as provided in the unit's Annual Assessment Report, (2) a summary of resource needs identified through the assessment process, including an explanation of

[5] These include action items from the most recent UC Merced Self-Study, WASC Visiting Team Report and WASC Commission Action Letter. These reports are available at accreditation.ucmerced.edu.

their priority in the budgeting process, (3) as relevant, responses to Institutional Assessment Initiatives, and (4) each unit's Annual Assessment Report.

Budgeting

As appropriate, each unit's Annual Assessment Report will inform each its budget request.

Timeline

The timeline for submitting annual reports is to be determined by the Vice Chancellor or Dean or equivalent in accordance with the unit's annual budgeting and timeline process.

PERIODIC REVIEW

Purpose

Building upon Annual Assessment, Periodic Review involves a comprehensive and retrospective review of assessment results and practices to inform unit planning. Specifically, units will

(1) Compile and review Annual Assessment results, comprehensively considering what has been learned about the unit's performance relative to its responsibilities and intended performance;
(2) Evaluate the efficacy of Annual Assessment activities for improving the quality of a unit's services; and
(3) In light of the bullets 1 and 2, as well as evolving unit and institutional context and priorities, review the unit's goals and outcomes, identifying plans for improving performance, including the quality of assessment as a means of evidence-based improvement.

Schedule

Periodic Reviews of all administrative units normally must be conducted at least once every seven years. The exact time interval should be responsive to the unit's development or management needs balanced with the practical need to manage the number of reviews conducted annually.

In order to optimize the effective use of resources required for these Periodic Reviews, senior administrators may request a waiver of the scheduled formal review of a unit. The reason for the waiver should be based on a review of the unit's annual reports and the supporting evidence of consistent, strong, and effective performance. It may also be requested because of recent changes in the management of a unit that may suggest the need for additional time to implement and/or assess the unit's function. The Chancellor or designate approves requests to postpone a review.

Process

The Periodic Review process involves the following components.

(1) A self-study that includes sections addressing the three purposes of Periodic Review outlined above (see *Purposes*) and results in a report that is submitted to the appropriate Vice Chancellor or Dean. An example template is provided in Appendix C.
(2) A review phase in which a review team examines the unit's self-study documents and submits a written assessment and recommendations to the unit and Vice Chancellor or Dean. The review team should be external to the unit and include at least one member external to the campus. See Appendix D for details.
(3) A planning phase in which the unit develops an implementation plan for addressing recommendations raised in the self-study and the review team assessment. Plans should be submitted to the appropriate Vice Chancellor or Dean and be explicit, realistic, and include a timeline for implementation.
(4) A dissemination phase in which the Chancellor or designate distributes a summary of the unit's review, including recommendations and action items, to the unit head and SACA. This summary will also be available online at as evidence of the institution's commitment to institution-wide assessment.

A School, Division or equivalent entity may develop its own Periodic Review process and template provided it meets the three purposes outlined in the *Purposes* section above and includes steps equivalent to the four components outcomes in this section.

Budgeting

The results of Periodic Review should be considered in formulating the unit's budget.

Timeline for Conducting Periodic Review

By June 1 each year, after consultation with SACA, Vice Chancellors and Deans, the Chancellor or designate will notify the Vice Chancellors and/or Deans as to which administrative units have been scheduled for the formal Periodic Review. Vice Chancellors or Deans may determine the timeline for completing Periodic Review in keeping with their unit's periodic review policy, internal timelines, planning processes. An example timeline is provided in Appendix E.

Appendix A: Example Template for an Annual Assessment Plan & Report

The following template is a modification of that developed by UC Merced's Division of Student Affairs to guide annual assessment planning within the Division. It is provided as an example and, therefore, may not precisely match the assessment planning needs of all administrative units. Divisions or Schools may adapt it as necessary to meet the needs of their units in relation to this policy.

University of California-Merced
Annual Assessment Plan Template

A) Elements of an Assessment Plan:

Mission Statement

Departmental/unit missions should be directly aligned with those of the University and School/Division. A mission statement should include approximately 3-5 sentences that identify the **name** of the department, its **primary functions**, **modes of delivery** and **target audience**. Mission statement should be approximately 100 words or less.

Goals

Goals are broad statements that describe priorities and intentions of an administrative unit; what the unit intends to do. Goals are used primarily for planning, and if available linked to the School/Division/unit strategic plan. Goals may be identified on an annual basis or for a larger time interval.

Outcomes[6]

An outcome is a precise statement that describes the desired accomplishment of an administrative unit with respect to a key service, function, or program. An outcome statement should be derived from a goal and, thus, describe how a unit is fulfilling a purpose outlined by that goal in a *measurable* way. Put another way, outcome statements animate goals, specifying the manner in which the goal is to be met and measured.

Clear and precise outcomes statements define specific performance expectations for a unit. In doing so, they indicate the kind of data or evidence the unit will collect to ascertain the degree to which the desired outcome has been met. Outcomes should focus on the unit's critical processes and functions and should be written with the unit's "customers" in mind.

Two different types of outcomes can be recognized. A process-related outcome describes a desired quality like timeliness, accuracy, responsiveness, etc. in relation to key functions and services. These types of outcomes support improvement around issues related to efficiency and customer satisfaction.[7]

A learning outcome describes how a customer (or student) will demonstrate what they know or are able to do, or how they have changed, as a result of the unit's program or service. Learning outcomes often begin

[6] Some of the text below was adapted from Nichols, James O. 2008. *Measuring Student Support Services and Administrative Outcomes* from the UCF Administrative Assessment Handbook. University of Central Florida.
[7] The Division of Student Affairs refers to these types of outcomes as Program Objectives.

with the phrase "Participants will be able to…" Units that provide professional development or required training for faculty or staff will likely develop learning outcomes to assess the efficacy of their programming in meeting unit goals. Similarly, units or departments that work directly with students, like those in Student Affairs, will have student learning outcomes.

Assessing more than one outcome per goal can provide insights for improving performance that cannot be generated from consideration of a single outcome alone. For example, a unit may pair an outcome related to customer satisfaction with one considering key service-related performance metrics to generate insight into the quality of service from both customer and provider perspectives. A process-related outcome and learning outcome can be paired to similar effect. When completing an assessment plan, briefly explain why each outcome is important to measure.

Measures

Measures describe the methodology and timeframe for data collection and, as possible, the criteria/standard for evaluating sufficiency or success (ex. X% of respondents will rate X service as satisfactory or better). Measures also should identify the population from which data are collected.

B) Elements to be addressed in Annual Assessment Report:

Results

Provided for each outcome, results include a brief narrative of findings, and/or essential tables or graphs that summarize and communicate the results. The results should indicate the extent to which the outcome was met relative to the criteria or standard outlined in the measures section of the Assessment Plan.

Conclusions

Provided for each outcome, the conclusion should summarize briefly the collection and analyses of data and the meaningfulness of the results, including any lessons learned for improving the assessment process. ***Critically, the conclusion also must "close the loop" by identifying what decisions and/or program modifications, including to the assessment process, were made on the basis of these analyses.*** When drawing conclusions, please be sure to integrate results from complementary outcomes, as relevant.

C) Developing the Annual Assessment Plan:

Based on the elements described in part A of this Appendix, the Annual Assessment Plan should describe:

(1) The unit's mission;
(2) The goals to be addressed in a given year, including the rationale for each goal;
(3) For each goal, the supporting outcome(s) and rationales for each outcome; and
(4) For each outcome, the measure.

Results and conclusions will be addressed in the Annual Assessment Report, which describes the results of the work planned here.

D) Developing the Annual Assessment Report

To complete the Annual Assessment Report, add to the unit's Assessment Plan (part C of this Appendix) the results and conclusions sections described in part B of this Appendix. In other words, add the following

(5) For each outcome, describe the results.
(6) For each outcome, describe the conclusions.

Appending the final steps of the assessment process to the planning description provides the unit with a complete record of the assessment activities undertaken that year. These records will help to simplify preparation for Periodic Review. WASC will also expect this material to be available in future accreditation reviews.

Finally, as relevant, please be sure to summarize:

(7) Progress on WASC–Related Action Items. Describe, with supporting evidence, the unit's progress in addressing relevant action items that were identified in the most recent WASC report(s).[8] Append the supporting evidence to the Annual Assessment Report.
(8) Contributions to Institutional Assessment Initiatives. Provide requested materials or analyses related to Institutional Assessment Initiatives.

[8] These include action items from the most recent UC Merced Self-Study, WASC Visiting Team Report and WASC Commission Action Letter. These reports are available at accreditation.ucmerced.edu.

Appendix B: Explanation of Additional Assessment Terms.

Reliability: Reliability addresses the degree to which a procedure is expected to generate the same observation repeatedly under the same conditions. It is the consistency of the measurement or result.

Validity: Validity describes the degree to which an assessment procedure generates useful information (evidence or data) that bears directly on the expectation(s) described by the text of the unit's outcome. For learning outcomes, valid evidence must also be aligned with the criteria[9] used to evaluate learning.

Validity also depends upon sample size[10] or sampling approach, with the goal of generating data that characterize the norm for, or are representative of, the population being studied. That is, the sampling approach should produce information that is not biased. Validity is questioned, for example, when the sample size is small relative to the total size of the population of interest or if the demographics of the sample differ from those of the population from which the sample was drawn.

Together valid and reliable assessment practices are the foundation for confidence in conclusions about the degree to which the unit's outcome was met. Confidence in assessment results, and actions taken on their behalf, can also be enhanced by employing multiple and complementary lines of evidence. For example, assessment of a service-related outcome might benefit from surveying aspects of user satisfaction while also gathering information on how users actually engage with the service.

Standard: The expectation or point of comparison for determining the degree to which a unit's outcome was met (ex. X% of respondents will rate X service as satisfactory or better). The terms standard, benchmark and criterion are often used interchangeably. Standards or benchmarks may be locally determined, externally determined against peers or professional standards, or referenced against previous measurements to gauge improvement. When identifying a standard consider the purpose(s) for engaging in assessment; what is the rationale for identifying this level of performance as a goal? If locally set, be realistic but also unafraid to stretch the unit to improve. To take maximum advantage of the information collected through assessment, consider the distribution of observations (ex. the percentages of respondents reporting different degrees of satisfaction), not just a single metric like a mean or median, when assessing a unit's performance relative to a standard.

[9] Criteria are the specific skills or abilities to be measured.

[10] As an example, the number of survey respondents relative to the total number of individuals to which the survey was sent.

Appendix C: Example Periodic Review Self-Study Template

A. Introduction, Mission, Goals, Outcomes[11] and the Unit's Role within the University.

Drawing on the unit's Annual Assessment Reports,

1) Define the unit's mission; what services are provided and to whom? How does the mission support the campus' mission?

2) List the unit's goals and outcomes with reference to the unit's "customers". The outcomes should describe the essential functions of the unit in a measurable way. Do they reflect the standards of a professional association?

3) Where are the mission and outcomes publicly available? Are they well aligned with the unit's mission?

4) Describe how the unit is organized and resourced. Is the unit organized and resourced to foster its outcomes?

5) Beyond the unit's mission and outcomes, in what ways does the unit contribute to the success of the campus and other units?

B. The Planning Processes of the Unit

How does the unit use the campus' mission or campus-wide strategic planning documents to make decisions, set priorities, plan strategically, and assess its functions and services?

C. Assessment Plan and Measurement of Outcomes.

Drawing on the unit's Annual Assessment Reports,

Describe how the unit assesses its performance in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and to improve performance. For each outcome identified in Section A above describe a) the measures/data that are used to determine how well the unit meets the outcome and, thereby, serves the needs of the customers; b) the intended level of performance with respect to these measures/data; c) how frequently data are gathered; and d) how frequently results are analyzed, conclusions drawn, and, as needed, improvements identified and enacted.

D. Progress on WASC–Related Action Items

Summarize the unit's contributions to addressing WASC-related action items identified in the most recent UC Merced Self-Study, WASC Visiting Team Report and WASC Commission Action Letter. For these materials, see accreditation.ucmerced.edu.

E. Special Issues to be Addressed

1) Has the unit been reviewed by a professional organization for accreditation, credentialing or similar purposes? If so, describe the outcomes and major conclusions of this review. 2) Address any additional assessment questions or steps specific to this unit and/or this periodic review, including those related to Institutional Assessment Initiatives, as relevant.

F. Evaluation of the Unit

1) Reflect on the methods and process used to assess the unit's outcomes detailed in Section C of this Appendix. Have they been effective? Have they or can they be improved? 2) Review the unit's

[11] For definitions, see Section A of Appendix A.

responses to Sections D through F of this Appendix and identify outstanding issues to be addressed. How will these be addressed, including the time table? 3) Describe changes the unit has made based on assessment results since the last periodic review and the impact of these changes on the delivery of services and/or the alignment of services with institutional priorities. 4) What support is needed to improve or develop the skills of the staff in the unit?

Appendix D: Periodic Review External Review Process

Team Selection

The external Review Team consists of a minimum of two individuals external to the unit undergoing review. One member must be from another institution (i.e. external to the campus). The second may be drawn from another unit on campus (internal to campus but external to the unit undergoing review). If the unit serves students, the external review team should include at least one student.

The unit head submits to the Vice Chancellor or Dean a ranked roster of nominees for approval. If the Vice Chancellor or Dean's unit is undergoing review, the roster is submitted to the Executive Vice Chancellor (EVC). For each nominee, the roster includes a) contact information, b) a brief description of relevant qualifications, and c) a description of any relationship to the unit.

Team Coordination

With roster approval, the VC, Dean or unit head coordinates the Team's review of the unit's self-study according to the timeline.

Appendix E: Example Periodic Review Timeline.

June 1: Following consultation with the Vice Chancellors (VC), Deans and SACA, the EVC sends a list of administrative units scheduled for Periodic Review (PR) to Vice Chancellors and/or Deans.

July 1: The unit head submits the roster of Review Team participants to the VC or Dean.

Oct. 15: Unit submits Self-Study to appropriate VC or Dean

Nov. 1: VC or Dean submits Self-Study to Review Team.

Feb. 1: Review Team submits assessment and recommendations to Unit and VC or Dean.

March 1: Unit submits Implementation Plan, based on results of Self-Study and Review Team Assessment to VC or Dean and EVC.

May 1: Chancellor or designate distributes a summary of the unit's review, including recommendations and action items, to unit head and SACA.

Figure 1. Generic example of Annual Assessment & Periodic Review planning and implementation.

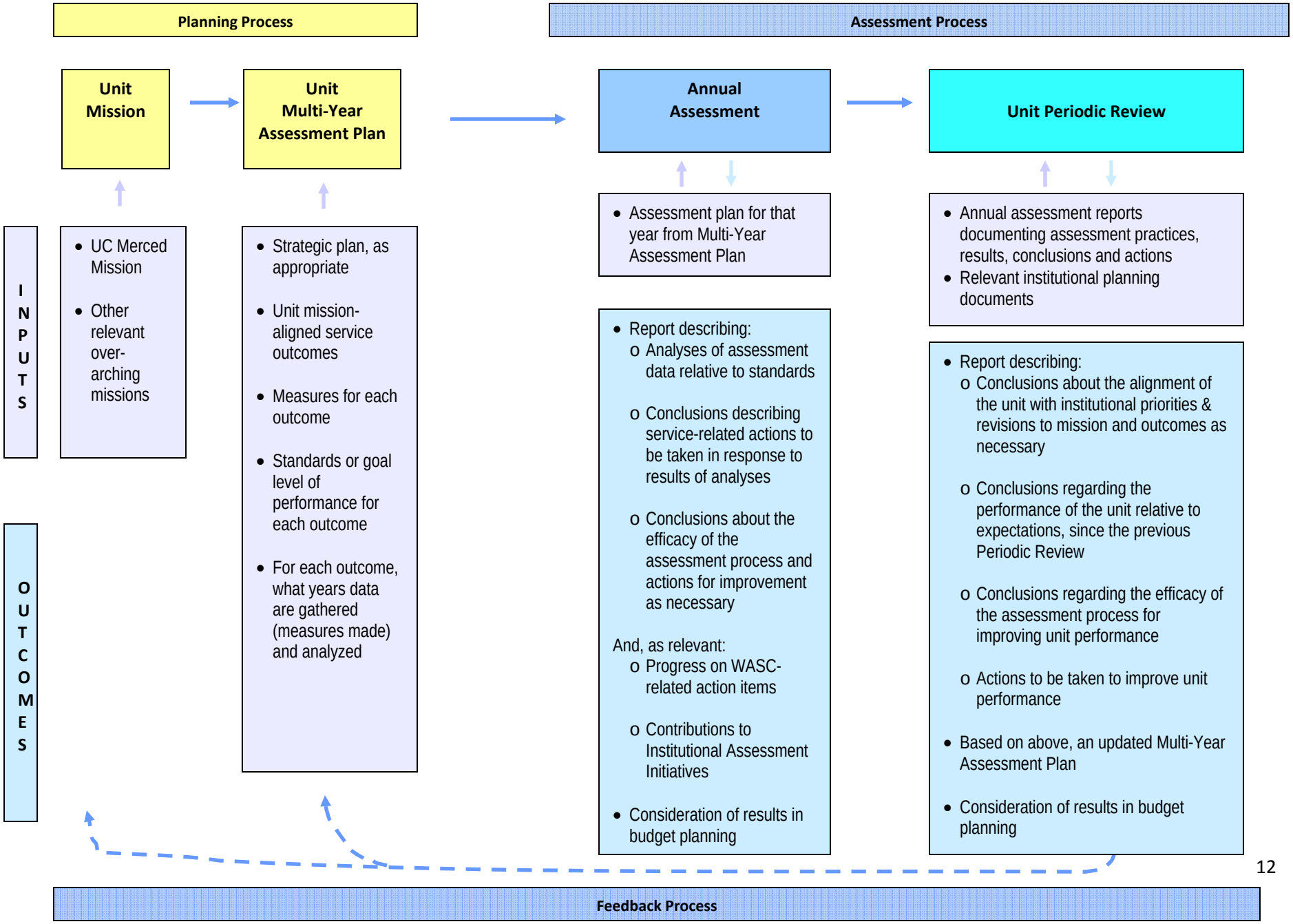
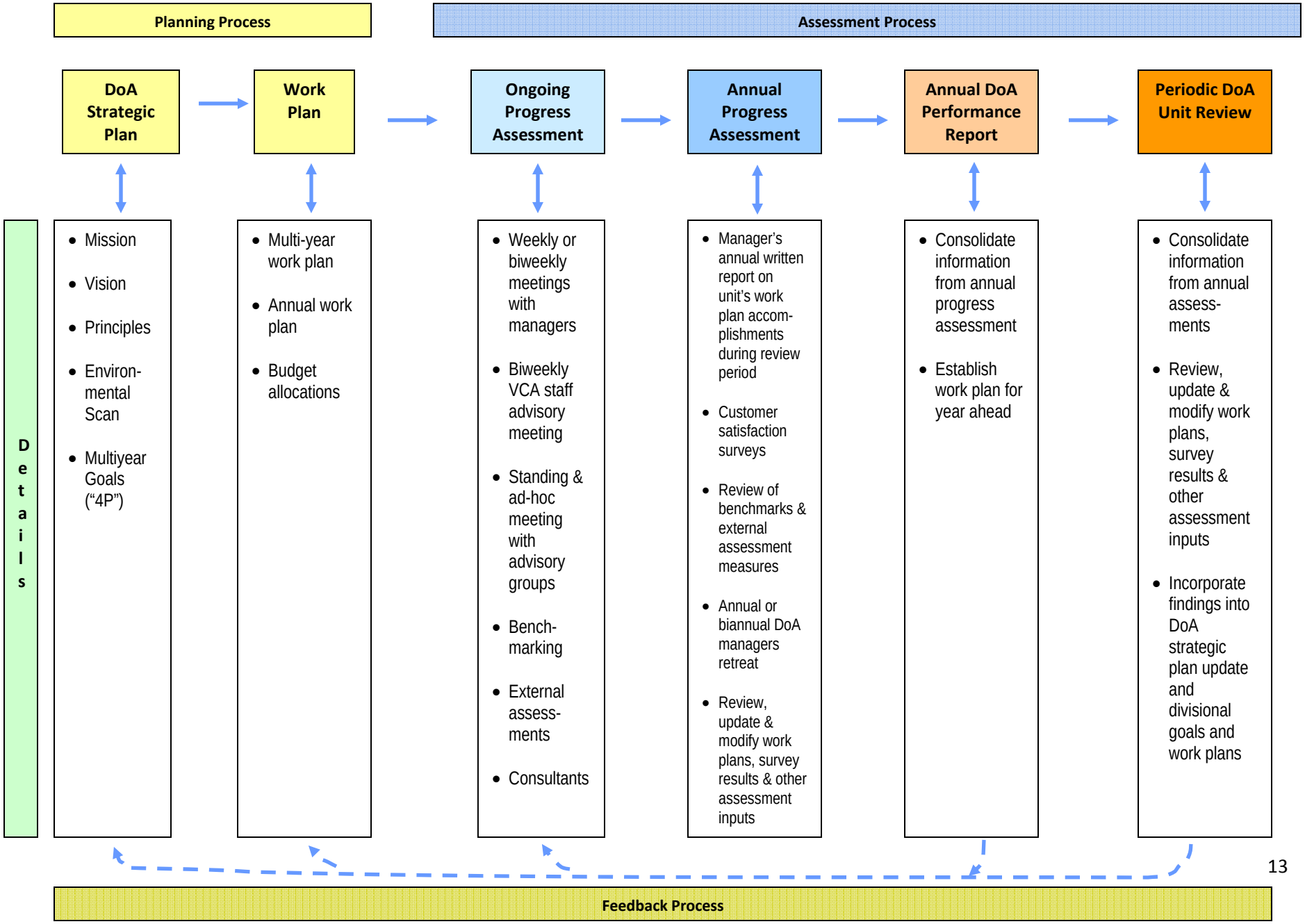
Figure 2. Division of Administration (DoA) Planning & Performance Assessment Flowchart