Mission / Purpose
The Department of Behavioral Sciences advances the University of West Alabama's mission to improve key student qualities of independent thinking, respect, and integrity by educating individuals to better understand themselves, others, and their community.

I.  Goals and Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

A.  Goal:  Address the major educational issues of the area
Address the major educational, social, cultural, and economic issues of the region and in doing so promote a positive image of the institution and the area.

1.  Outcome:  Theory and Content
Demonstrate familiarity with major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends.

a.  Measure:  Theory and Content
Development of a psychological or sociological research idea, collection, and integration of theory to address a research idea.

1.  Achievement Target:
   PY 480 Psychology Seminar (70% on the theoretical portion of the grading rubric); PY 490 Psychology Research Project (70% on the theoretical portion of the grading rubric); SY 450 Modern Sociological Theory (70% on final exam); SY 460 Methods of Social Research (70% on the theoretical portion of the grading rubric).

2.  Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met
   PY 480: 67% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper; PY 490: 100% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper; SY 450: 50% of the students received a 70% or better on the final exam; SY 460: 40% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper.

3.  Action Plans:
   a.  Hire full-time Ph.D. in Sociology
      Hire full-time Ph.D. in Sociology to increase the course offerings and reduce the advising load of one of the largest majors on campus.
      Established in Cycle:  2010-2011
      Implementation Status:  Finished
      Priority:  High
      Implementation Description:  Submit faculty staffing plan
      Responsible Person/Group:  Department Head
      Additional Resources Requested:  Salary = $59,579 Equipment =
$2,000

**Budget Amount Requested:** $61,579.00 (recurring)

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**b. Improve summative scores in SY capstone course, SY 450**

The Department of Behavioral Sciences will seek ways to improve SY major program summative scores in the SY capstone course SY 450 (Modern Sociological Theory) by exploring ways to increase key skills of reading, writing, and retention of material throughout the program.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

**Implementation Status:** In-Progress

**Priority:** High

**Implementation Description:** Meeting with the SY faculty, the department will explore ways to increase key skills of reading, writing, and retention of material throughout the SY major program. In addition, SY 312 (Minority Relations)(requires in all three SY tracks), will serve as the training course to reinforce the skills and knowledge gained in the introduction classes (SY 100 and SY 110) to better prepare majors for the the capstone course.

**Projected Completion Date:** 05/31/2013

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chair and SY faculty

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**c. Improve summative scores in PY 480**

The Psychology faculty need to create a plan to better prepare students' theoretical knowledge base prior to enrolling in PY 480.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Implementation Description:** Chairperson and Psychology faculty will create a plan to improve theoretical knowledge in the 300-level courses.

**Projected Completion Date:** 05/31/2013

**Responsible Person/Group:** Psychology faculty and chairperson

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**2. Outcome: Research Methods**

Understand and apply basic research methods, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.

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**a. Measure: Research Methods**

Application of psychological or sociological research methods to address a research question. PY 480 Psychology Seminar (70% on the research portion of the PY 480 grading rubric); PY 490 Psychology Research Project (70% on the research methods section of the PY 490 grading rubric); SY 460 Methods of Social Research (70% on the research portion of the SY 460 grading rubric).

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**1. Achievement Target:**

PY 480 Psychology Seminar (70% on the research portion of the PY 480 grading rubric); PY 490 Psychology Research Project (70% on the research methods section of the PY 490 grading rubric); SY 460 Methods of Social Research (70% on the research portion of the SY 460 grading rubric).
2. **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met**
   PY 480: 67% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper; PY 490: 100% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper; SY 460: 40% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper.

3. **Action Plans:**
   **Improve research methods knowledge and skills**
   The Department of Behavioral Sciences will address ways to improve the unsatisfactory research methods knowledge and skills.
   **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011
   **Implementation Status:** In-Progress
   **Priority:** High
   **Implementation Description:** The Psychology and Sociology faculty will develop strategies to improve research methods skills, increase research methods knowledge, and increase retention of both skills and knowledge. The Sociology faculty will develop a new 200 or 300 level course that specifically reinforces methods learned from SY 100 and improves necessary research methods skills. The Psychology faculty will investigate ways to include and reinforce research methods skills in all 300 and 400 courses beyond PY 300.
   **Responsible Person/Group:** Chair and department faculty.

3. **Outcome: Critical Thinking Skills**
   Students in Psychology and Sociology will be able to think critically about complex major related concepts knowledge.

   a. **Measure: Critical Thinking Skills**
   Generation of psychological or sociological research idea and interpretation of research results. PY 480 Psychology Seminar (70% on the research idea generation portion and interpretation portion of the grading rubric); PY 490 Psychology Research Project (70% on the research idea generation portion and interpretation/discussion portion of the grading rubric); SY 450 Modern Sociological Theory (70% on the research idea generation portion and interpretation portion of the grading rubric); SY 460 Methods of Social Research (70% on the research idea generation portion and interpretation portion of the grading rubric).

1. **Achievement Target:**
   PY 480 Psychology Seminar (70% on the research idea generation portion and interpretation portion of the grading rubric); PY 490 Psychology Research Project (70% on the research idea generation portion and interpretation/discussion portion of the grading rubric); SY 450 Modern Sociological Theory (70% on the research idea generation portion and interpretation portion of the grading rubric); SY 460 Methods of Social Research (70% on the research idea generation portion and interpretation portion of the grading rubric).

2. **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met**
   PY 480: 67% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project
paper; PY 490: 100% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper; SY 450: 50% of the students received a 70% or better on the final exam; SY 460: 40% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper.

3. **Action Plan:**
   **Improve critical thinking skills**
The Department of Behavioral Sciences will improve critical thinking, idea development, and interpretation skills.
   **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011
   **Implementation Status:** In-Progress
   **Priority:** High
   **Implementation Description:** The faculty will develop critical thinking tasks (interpretation, abstraction, application...) in all department classes to improve critical thinking skills in Psychology and Sociology students.
   **Responsible Person/Group:** Chair and faculty.

4. **Outcome: Communication Skills**
   Students in Psychology and Sociology will be able to communicate, express, and discuss complex major related concepts sufficiently.

   a. **Measure: Communication Skills**
      Completion of a final research manuscript and oral/poster presentations of their research projects. PY 480 Psychology Seminar (70% on the overall score of the manuscript and presentation portion of the grading rubric); PY 490 Psychology Research Project (70% on the overall score of the manuscript and presentation portion of the grading rubric); SY 460 Methods of Social Research (70% on the overall score of the manuscript and presentation portion of the grading rubric).

   1. **Achievement Target:**
      PY 480 Psychology Seminar (70% on the overall score of the manuscript and presentation portion of the grading rubric); PY 490 Psychology Research Project (70% on the overall score of the manuscript and presentation portion of the grading rubric); SY 460 Methods of Social Research (70% on the overall score of the manuscript and presentation portion of the grading rubric).

   2. **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met**
      PY 480: 75% of the students received a 70% or better on the presentation of the project paper; PY 490: 100% of the students received a 70% or better on the presentation of the project paper; SY 460: 40% of the students received a 70% or better on the major project paper.

   3. **Action Plan:**
      **Improve written and verbal communication skills**
The Department of Behavioral Sciences will improve written and verbal communication skills in Psychology and Sociology students.
   **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011
   **Implementation Status:** In-Progress
   **Priority:** High
Implementation Description: The faculty in Psychology and Sociology will develop a department writing standard/expectations description.

5. Outcome: Sociocultural and International Awareness
Students will show sufficient understanding of responsible citizenship, political issues, and ethnic relations.

a. Measure: Sociocultural and International Awareness
Generation of written assignments and projects addressing issues of responsible citizenship, political issues, and ethnic relations. PY 330 Social Psychology (70% on the social psychological theory application term paper grading rubric); SY 312 Minority Relations (70% on the Minority Relations term paper grading rubric).

1. Achievement Target:
PY 330 Social Psychology (70% on the social psychological theory application term paper grading rubric); SY 312 Minority Relations (70% on the Minority Relations term paper grading rubric).

2. Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
PY 330: 95% of the students received a 70% or better on the major term paper. SY 312: 74% of the students received a 70% or better on the major term paper.

3. Action Plan:
Improve sociocultural awareness
The instructors of PY 330 Social Psychology and SY 312 Minority Relations will develop strategies to increase sociocultural awareness. Established in Cycle: 2010-2011 Implementation Status: Planned Priority: High Implementation Description: The instructors of PY 330 Social Psychology and SY 312 Minority Relations will develop strategies to improve sociocultural awareness through additional projects, service learning, and research. Responsible Person/Group: Chair and the instructors of PY 330 Social Psychology/SY 312 Minority Relations.

II. Goals and Other Outcomes/Objectives, with Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

A. Goal: Address the major educational issues of the area
Address the major educational, social, cultural, and economic issues of the region and in doing so promote a positive image of the institution and the area.

1. Objective: Improve technology in existing classrooms
Improve technology in existing classrooms to enhance student learning.

a. Measure: Review existing teaching/research technology
The Chair and faculty will assess/review the existing teaching and research technology covered by the department (software, experiment equipment...) to determine if an upgrade is necessary.

1. **Achievement Target:**
The need for an upgrade in departmental technology will be determined by a departmental vote of needs and priorities. Based on the budgeted funds, the top technology priorities determined by the departmental vote will be upgraded.

2. **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**
After reviewing the existing teach/research technology resources, there were no requests for technology upgrades for Behavioral Sciences.

2. **Objective: Clarify the writing standard and expectations of majors and minors**
The Department of Behavioral Sciences will clarify the writing expectations by developing a departmental writing standard based on the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association that all majors and minors will need to follow.

   a. **Measure: Develop a writing standard for the department**
   Develop a Department of Behavioral Sciences writing standard based on the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Assess the effectiveness of the writing standard by examining the major papers within the writing samples from each class in the department.

   1. **Achievement Target:**
The majority (70%) of papers submitted for grades in courses in the Department of Behavioral Sciences will successfully incorporate the requirements set forth in the Departmental Writing Standard.

   2. **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**
The Department of Behavioral Sciences developed a writing standard for all students enrolled in departmental courses (PY, SY, CJ, & SW) that was implemented in the 2011-2012 school year. That standard is reflected in the structural writing scores for written project rubrics (e.g., APA style requirements). More than 70% of the submitted papers incorporated the writing standard.

3. **Objective: Enhance the opportunity for faculty led research**
The Department of Behavioral Sciences will enhance the opportunity for instructor led research by creating an application for a one class release time for research.

   a. **Measure: Create a research internship course in PY and SY**
   Create a research internship course in PY and SY.

   1. **Achievement Target:**
The Department of Behavioral Sciences will submit a proposal to the
College of Liberal Arts Academic Council and the University Academic Council for a Psychology and a Sociology research practicum/internship course to be added to the academic catalogue for the 2012-2013 school year.

2. Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
The PY and SY Research practicum courses were created in the 2011-2012 school year. PY 498 Psychology Research Practicum and SY 498 Sociology Research Practicum were approved during the school year and PY 498 was first offered in the Summer 2012 term.

b. Measure: Create a procedure for a one-class release for research.
Create a procedure and application for a one-class release for research.

1. Achievement Target:
Create a procedure that involves a list of requirements, an application, and a timeline of requirements.

2. Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met
The proposal for a one-class release time for research was dropped. The successful incorporation of the PY and SY research practicum courses provides an alternative for research release time.

3. Action Plan:
One-course release time for research
The proposal for the one-class release time was dropped due to the creation of an alternative arrangement. The PY and SY research practicum courses provide a suitable alternative to the one-class release time for research. Psychology and Sociology professors interested in research will rotate the PY and SY research practicum courses as an alternative procedure to the release time.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: Medium
Implementation Description: No further action is needed
Responsible Person/Group: Chair

4. Objective: Clarify the Internship/Practicum courses in PY
The Department of Behavioral Science needs to clarify and simplify the PY practicum and internship courses by developing and publishing list of guidelines for all practicum and internship courses, and have a single director in charge of all the PY practicum/internship courses.

a. Measure: Create a detailed guideline for the PY practicum and internship courses
Create a detailed guideline for the PY practicum and internship courses. Place a single individual in charge of all the PY practicum and internship courses, and/or move all the PY practicum and internship courses online.
1. **Achievement Target:**
   Publish the guidelines and place a single individual to oversee all PY practicums and internships.

2. **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met**
   The Chair and the instructors for the Psychology Practicum and Internship did not create a single guideline. The instructors argued that the courses incorporate different requirements. The instructors stated the courses have similar requirements and the instructors and Chair will work together to offer support to the students.

3. **Action Plan:**
   **Practicum and Internship coordination**
   Despite not creating a single guideline, the information for the Practicum and Internship are similar. In the place of a single guideline, the new plan is to provide a resource base for students who are interested in, enrolled in, and previously enrolled in the course so that students will have access to the required information related to the practicum and internship.
   - **Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012
   - **Implementation Status:** Planned
   - **Priority:** Medium
   - **Implementation Description:** Chair will work with the instructors for the online and on campus internship and practicums to have them create an informational resource for students.
   - **Responsible Person/Group:** Chair and Practicum/Internship instructors

5. **Objective: Improve programs and services**
   Provide students with quality programs and services.

   a. **Measure: Increase Sociology course offerings by adding a tenure-track faculty member**
   The Department seeks to increase the course offerings in Sociology by adding a tenure-track faculty in Sociology.

   1. **Achievement Target:**
      The Department of Behavioral Sciences will perform a faculty search to hire a Sociology faculty member for the 2012-2013 school year.

   2. **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**
      The Department of Behavioral Sciences successfully hired a new Sociology professor in the 2011-2012 school year. This new hire will allow the Department to better prepare the Sociology students for a wider variety of upper division courses.
III. Other Plans for Improvement

A. Investigate new undergraduate and graduate programs in psychology
   Investigate a possible undergraduate Counseling/Clinical track and an MSCE Psychology.
   Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
   Implementation Status: In-Progress
   Priority: Low
   Implementation Description: Contact graduate school and set up committee to address needs and requirements.
   Projected Completion Date: 05/31/2013
   Responsible Person/Group: Chair
   Budget Amount Requested: $0.00 (no request)

B. Upgrade department technology
   Upgrade department technology
   Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
   Implementation Status: Planned
   Priority: High
   Implementation Description: Meet with faculty to assess major technology needs/upgrades.
   Responsible Person/Group: Chair and faculty.
   Additional Resources Requested: Enough funds to purchase possible needs: classroom projectors (and supplies), classroom software, research equipment...
   Budget Amount Requested: $2,500.00 (recurring)

C. Improve knowledge retention and investigate exam relevance
   Improve knowledge retention and investigate exam relevance for Psychology and all three Sociology major tracks.
   Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
   Implementation Status: In-Progress
   Priority: High
   Implementation Description: Chair will work with the Sociology faculty to find ways to increase knowledge retention through the program. Chair will work with the faculty to adjust the exit exam to better reflect the curriculum within Psychology and each Sociology major track (Traditional, Criminal Justice, and Social Work).
   Projected Completion Date: 05/31/2013
   Responsible Person/Group: Chair and faculty

IV. Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

A. What specific strengths did your assessments show? (Strengths)
   The 2011-2012 assessments showed that over 50% of the majors in the Department of Behavioral Sciences met department goals for our student learning outcomes. Presentation and communication skills appear to be strong. In addition, there was an increase in scores on socio-cultural awareness from the previous years

B. What specific weaknesses or challenges did your assessments show? (Weaknesses)
This year's assessment continues to show weaknesses in research methods, written communication, and critical thinking skills. Hopefully with the new Sociology instructor and SY preparatory course, scores in those two areas will begin to show improvement over the next few years.

C. What plans were implemented?
The department has addressed writing skills with advent of the department writing standards and expectations. In addition, the new hire in Sociology will offer a 200-level course designed to improve research methods knowledge and writing skills for Sociology majors. The department faculty continues to investigate ways to increase retention of theoretical material. One way the department addressed this issue is to get students involved in active research. The Department of Behavioral Sciences created a PY and SY Research Practicum course where students will work with faculty engaging in research. Finally, the faculty is working to find novel ways to improve critical thinking. A problem-based curriculum is being implemented in several of the courses as a trial-run to improve critical thinking skills.

D. What plans were not implemented?
The Department of Behavioral Sciences did not implement the plan for a one-course release time application for research. In the place of that, the department created a PY and SY Research Practicum course.

E. How will assessment results be used for continuous improvement?
The results are used to find new ways to address student learning outcomes, and to find ways to improve the learning environment for faculty and students. The Department of Behavioral Sciences will implement new ways to improve retention and critical application of theoretical and research knowledge. In that endeavor, students will be given more opportunities to write and present what they have learned in each of their major courses throughout their program. Some of these changes will take time to see the results, but the Department of Behavioral Sciences should begin to see the results of the changes within several years of implementation.

V. Annual Report Section Responses

A. Key Achievements
The Department of Behavioral Sciences hired a our first choice candidate in our tenure-track faculty search. Dr. Nicole Farris will begin in the fall 2012 term.

B. Public/Community Service
Dr. Russell Davis:
- Assistant Professor of Sociology served as a paper reviewer for the Mid-South Sociological Association graduate student research paper competition.
- He served on the Board of Directors for the Alabama Rural Health Association.
- He also served as a consultant for the Alabama Poverty Project, he was a research associate for Auburn University Montgomery, Center for Demographic Research.
• He was a guest speaker for the Alabama Coalition for Constitutional Reform (Racism and Social Change: The Challenge of a Shifting Target).

Dr. James Gilbert:
• Served as a consultant with Psychology Associates as a Licensed Professional Counselor.
• He also worked with the Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors to establish a standard between courses at UWA and the license requirements for each state.
PY 480 GRADE FOR FINAL DRAFT

Number and appropriateness of sources:
Use and correct citation of sources...........................................15

Necessary components of paper are present and correctly formatted..............10

Content of paper (reviewing scientific evidence, substantiating claims) ...........50

General writing.............................................................................25

Notes:
PT 490 GRADING SHEET

Positive Points

Introduction:
On topic/clear and organized/correct and backed-up information (50 pts max): ___
  20 pts for addressing the required material
  10 pts for backed-up information
  10 pts for clarity and organization
  10 pts for logical research idea development

Methods:
On topic/clear and organized/correct and backed-up information (40 pts max): ___
  10 pts for addressing the required materials
  10 pts for proper design
  20 pts for proper procedure

Results:
On topic/clear and organized/correct and backed-up information (20 pts max): ___
  10 pts for addressing the required statistics
  10 pts for required phrasing

Discussion
On topic/clear and organized/correct and backed-up information (50 pts max): ___
  20 pts for addressing the required material
  10 pts for backed-up information
  10 pts for clarity and organization
  10 pts for logical interpretation of the results

General APA style (minimum requirements) (20 pts max): ___
  -1 pt per APA style violation

Clear and complete rough draft comments response (20 pts max) ___
  10 pts for addressing each rough draft comment
  10 pts for statements of change

Total points: ______

7/25/2012 9:55 AM
Rubric for Grading Letters

BA 320

EXCELLENT—A
A superior letter is an outstanding response to a case. This letter achieves excellent through all of the following traits.

- A consistently strong you attitude
- Appropriate letter plan. Organization is easy to follow and the distribution of information is psychologically pleasant.
- Each issue is handled effectively
- Appropriate closing (positive, helpful, states action request clearly
- Appropriate tone
- Word choice, sentence structure/length, paragraph length all enhance readability
- Understanding of business principles

GOOD—B
A good letter is one whose excellence is diminished by one of the following problems.

- Some lapse in you attitude
- Some lapse in appropriate plan
- One issue omitted or changed
- Weakened work choice (negative words, idiom, not tactful), sentence structure/length, or paragraph length
- One or two errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar or mechanical issues or one format mistake
### ANNUAL PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Needs editing (applicable throughout document)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcomes/Objectives</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Objectives</td>
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<td>Measures</td>
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<td>Achievement Targets</td>
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### SELF-STUDY

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Findings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Findings are indications whether an outcome/objective was met or not. Findings are put into the system under each achievement target. Findings include an interpretation of results, possible uses of results, reflection on problems encountered, indicated improvements/changes and strengths or weakness.</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action Plans</strong></td>
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<td>Action plans are detailed plans created by the unit to meet an outcome/objective that was only partially met or not met or to make improvement to those outcomes/objectives that were met but still need some strengthening. The plan includes a projected completion date, implementation description, responsible person(s)/group, resources required, and budget amount (if applicable).</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action plans created in previous cycles have been updated with implementation notes.</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Annual Report</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Annual Report section contains information on key achievements, faculty and/or staff achievements, and community/public.</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remarks</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis Report</strong></td>
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<td>The unit has reflected on and created narratives for each of the following areas: specific strengths and progress made on outcomes/objectives, specific weaknesses or challenges, plans that were and were not implemented, and how assessment results will be used for continuous improvement.</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remarks</td>
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**Approved by:** [Signature of Dean or Vice President]  
**Date:** July 30, 2012

**Received by OIE:** [Signature of Coordinator of Planning and Assessment]  
**Date:** 8-7-12