

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 77)

20 October 2020

Annual Assessment Reports and Assessment Plans Policy

1. **Purpose:** This order defines procedures for preparing and filing annual assessment reports and annual assessment plans.
2. **Applicability:** The order applies to:
 - a. Department heads or directors of academic and administrative service units, and other budget centers at this level that are integral to the Institute's operations;
 - b. Department heads or directors of the Institute's major operational programs: Academic Program; Co-Curricular Program; Finance, Administration, and Support; Headquarters; Information Technology; Superintendent's Office and Inter-Collegiate Athletics;
 - c. Department heads or directors of cross-functional programs central to the Institute's educational mission, such as the Institute's Honor Program, Center for Leadership and Ethics, the Superintendent's Representative to the Honor Court, and the Title IX Coordinator.
3. **Unit-Level Assessment Plans and Assessment Reports**
 - a. In accordance with directives and guidance mandated or suggested by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, the Institute's senior executives (i.e., the Policy Group of the Institute Planning Committee) are responsible for defining applicable assessment units, and then ensuring their compliance with this assessment policy. Annually, applicable units are expected to submit reports to senior executives that describe assessment planning and, as pertinent to that planning, data collection, analysis, and the use of results for improvement in operations and/or, as applicable, student learning.
 - b. An assessment *plan* should describe:
 1. Degree Program or Unit;
 2. Department Chair or Unit Leader;
 3. Assessment point of contact;
 4. VMI Mission;
 5. Unit or Program Mission;
 6. Department mission;
 7. Operational outcomes, and as applicable, student learning outcomes-- i.e., operational objectives or learning objectives-- that will be assessed in the forthcoming year;
 8. The methods (qualitative, quantitative or a combination) that will be used to collect data for demonstrating achievement of a desired result and a timeframe of when the data are collected;
 9. The specific findings that will constitute achievement (e.g., targets for success); and

10. The procedures that will be followed for communicating assessment findings to appropriate stakeholders and for incorporating a review of assessment findings into annual operational planning.

- c. Assessment *reports* present data on relevant outcomes and should highlight strengths and weaknesses revealed through assessment activities. A discussion of assessment findings and how the findings will be used to implement changes in curriculum or operations is important. If changes are needed in assessment procedures, they should be explained in this report. The key components of the report include the *results* and how the results *will be used* to improve operations or student learning. Report components include:
- Operational or student learning outcomes (OOs or SLOs);
 - Assessment methodology (methods that were used to collect data for demonstrating achievement);
 - Targets for success;
 - Findings and analysis of results;
 - Action plan if target was not met or the program desires further improvement;
 - Comments regarding previous action plans implemented and improvements made to operations in response to assessment findings.

4. **Program-Level Assessment Reports**

A program-level assessment report will present a summary and discussion of assessment activities and findings (including occurrences of assessment-driven continuous improvement) that pertain to the outcomes set forth in the program's operations plan for the just-ending year. Because the outcomes of reporting units have been established to support the outcomes of the program, a summary of relevant unit-level assessment findings would be used to evaluate the achievement of program-level outcomes. Pertinent assessment information may also be obtained from program-level assessment activities and Institute-level assessment activities (such as annual surveys of students and employees).

The presentation of assessment findings for a particular goal or objective should include a statement or discussion of the implications of these findings for future planning and budgeting and a description of any actions that have been completed in response to the findings.

If actions originating from an analysis of assessment findings led to continuous improvement in operations or outcomes, the report should highlight these occurrences and identify the source(s) of the information.

5. **Distance Education**

Degree programs offering virtual instruction must ensure comparability of learning between in-person and online courses. Primarily, learning outcome scores must be disaggregated by mode of instruction and compared. Additionally, three additional assessments must be conducted on an annual basis for programs offering virtual instruction: (a) a grade distribution analysis that analyzes pass, fail, and withdrawal rates, (b) a retention analysis that examines persistence rates, and (c) survey the program's

seniors in order to determine their satisfaction with the program. For each assessment, data will be disaggregated by in-person and online participation in the program.

Academic support units, including the Preston Library, that serve cadets through virtual means must also conduct assessments that allow the unit directors to disaggregate and compare data between cadets receiving services in-person vs. online.

6. Program-Level Assessment Plan

The program-level assessment plan will identify the program-level goals and objectives to be assessed during the forthcoming year and provide a brief statement of the assessment activities that will be used.

Assessment v. Operations Reports and Plans

The assessment reports and plans may be presented as stand-alone documents or embedded within other annual reports (i.e., operation reports) and annual plans (i.e., operation plans).

7. Assessment Cycles

All unit-level outcomes and program-level outcomes should be assessed at least once within a five-year period. Student learning outcomes should be assessed at least once every three years.

8. Filing of Assessment Reports and Plans

Program-level reports and plans will be submitted to the Strategic Planning Committee and the Superintendent. An electronic copy of each unit-level report and plan and each program-level report and plan will be submitted to the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research. The OAIR staff will maintain a central repository for Institute assessment activities needed to support various reporting requirements of the Commonwealth (SCHEV) and SACSCOC.

9. Due Dates for Reports and Plans:

Program-level assessment reports and plans are used in the annual updating of the Institute's strategic plan and in the Institute's budgeting process. Program-level reports and plans will be submitted in accordance with the attached Schedule. The purpose of this schedule is to facilitate a timely use of assessment and evaluation evidence in setting operational priorities and to further encourage the ongoing documentation of evidence-based planning and budgeting. Because the findings of unit-level reports and plans are used in the preparation of program-level reports and plans, program heads should ensure that unit-level reports are submitted in a timely manner.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

James P. Inman
Colonel, US Army (Ret.)
Chief of Staff

OPR: OAIR

Schedule for Annual Reports and Annual Plans Issued by Institute-Level Programs

	Action	Due
Interim Operations Report	Describes status of goal achievement using assessment data; specifies further actions needed to achieve goals	O/A Jan
Preliminary Operations Plan	Standard format but explains when proposed actions have arisen from assessment data.	Feb
Budget Request Form	Each item on the budget request is to be linked to an element of the Preliminary Ops. Plan	Feb
IPC Budget Committee Meetings	Discussion includes presentation of assessment-based requests	Mar
Proposed Budget Published		April
BOV approves VMI Budget		May
Final Operations Report (Annual Report)	Adjusted to include Jan through Jun assessment data.	July
Budget Adjustment Requests	Essential or critical assessment-based adjustments submitted to FAS	July
Final Operations Plan	Coordinated with budget	Aug
Update of Strategic Plan		Sep
Updated Strategic Plan to BOV		Sep

Figure 1. Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

