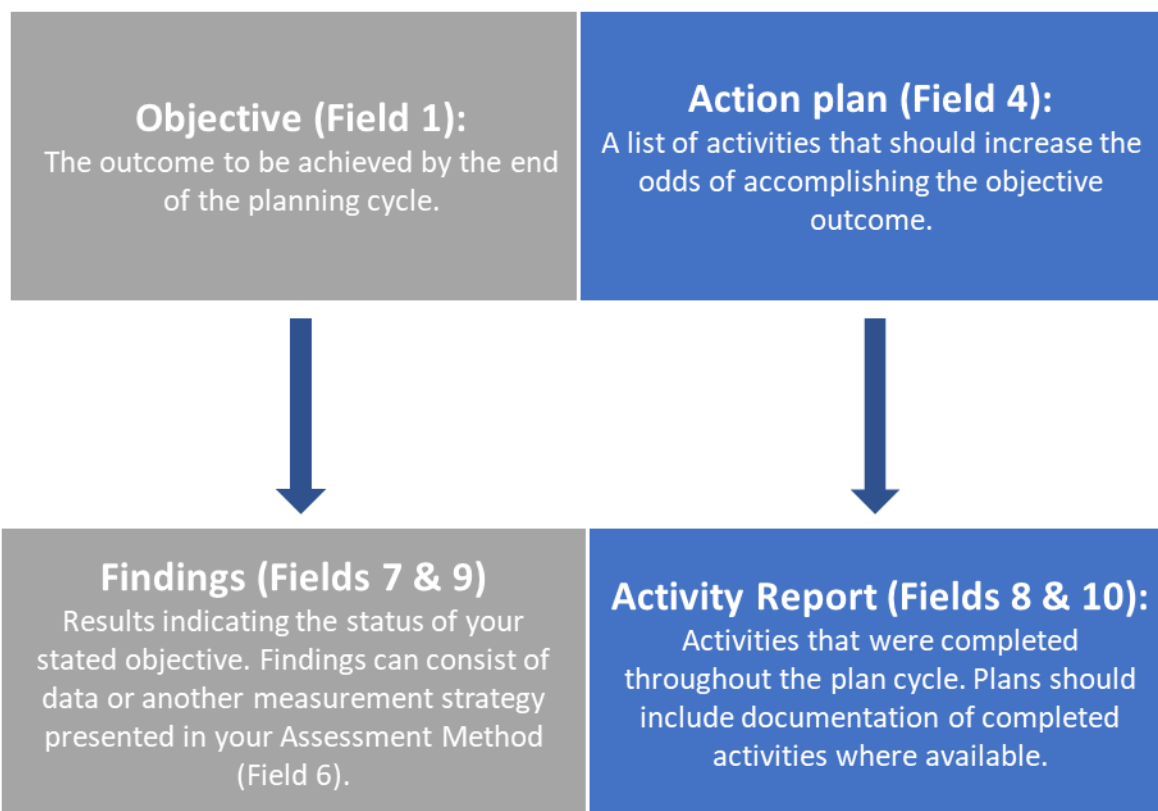


Reporting on Objectives and Action Plans

Some of the most effective college departments are those which take deliberate measures to plan, implement, and facilitate change; change aimed at improving various facets of a program, service, or process. To accomplish these changes, planners like yourself should formulate clear and measurable objectives based on your department's needs, and couple these with an effective and feasible plan of action to accomplish each objective.

For reporting purposes, it is important to understand the difference between an objective and an action plan, as well as where to report progress of each during the biennium. An objective is the ultimate outcome to be achieved by the department at the end of the IE planning cycle. An action plan, on the other hand, reflects the action(s) a department will take to accomplish the objective. As the IE planning cycle progresses, planners are asked to report on the status of their objective and action plans, which should be reported in distinct fields. The figure below indicates which sections should be used to report on the status of the objective vs. the action plan. In the sections that follow, examples of objectives, action plans, and status updates on both are provided (see Examples 1 and 2).



Example 1: Academic Objective

Objective (Field 1)

The _____ program will increase student persistence by 5% per year by implementing orientation for new majors, annual advising for all majors, and faculty professional development on appropriate subject-matter, instructional, and/or student support topics.

Action Plan (Field 4)

Action items for each academic year:

- Each faculty member will attend at least two professional development activities per year. Some will participate in conferences and professional development off-campus or out-of-state, pending funding.
- Academic advising
 - Conduct regular outreach to all program majors.
 - Track program majors who have not yet received advising on a semesterly basis and perform additional outreach.
 - Document advising activities to determine potential impact on persistence

Year 1 action items (2021-2022):

- Faculty develop/review the program's orientation materials and focus
- Pilot the orientation in late Fall 2021 with a mixture of students (FTIC, Continuing, Returning, Transfer) and get feedback for improving the experience.
- Improve the content and context of the orientation and pilot it in Spring 2022 using a larger pilot group, requesting feedback.
- In Fall 2021 collaboratively develop a manageable case load of faculty advising with very simple documentation. Pilot the documentation system in Spring 2022, seeking feedback from students.
- Feedback methods for these activities (surveys or focus groups) will be developed with support from the Research and Analytical Services (RAS) department.

Year 2 action items (2022-2023):

- In Fall 2022 provide the updated orientation to all program majors who have not participated in the orientation to date.
- In Spring and forward, implement the orientation for FTIC, returning, and transfer students in their first semester at STC.
- In Fall 2022, the program will request data from RAS that may help to identify students most at risk so that they will be targeted for intensive outreach and intervention.
- Based on surveys or focus groups (developed with assistance from the RAS department), adjust advising outreach and the frequency of advising according to what works best for students (depending on their needs), focusing on those whose performance or challenges indicate need for more guidance.

Assessment Method (Field 6)

The objective will be considered met if overall program persistence rate increases by 5% each year during the 2021-2023 IE Plan cycle. To demonstrate this, we will compare persistence rates at baseline (Fall 2021) to each subsequent year of the IE planning cycle, including Fall 2022 and Fall 2023.

Findings (Field 7 for the Mid-Biennium and Field 9 for the End-of Biennium)

Our baseline student persistence rate in Fall 2021 was 67%. In Fall 2022, that number declined slightly to 65%.

NOTE: Planners should report the status of their objective during the first year of the biennium in the mid-biennium findings section (field 7) (in this example, that would include Fall 2021 and Fall 2022 persistence rates). In the end-of-biennium findings section (field 9), planners should report the status of their objective throughout the first and second year of the biennium (in this example, that would include Fall 2021, Fall 2022, & Fall 2023).

Activity Report (Field 8 for the Mid-Biennium and Field 10 for the End-of Biennium)

1) The program was able to successfully develop and pilot the program orientation in Fall 2021 with 20 students. Feedback gathered from an orientation evaluation (developed with support from RAS), indicated that students wanted more information on course sequencing and not as much information on transfer options. These suggestions were put into place and piloted with a larger group (55 majors) in Spring 2022, leading to a better review, but with questions about academic support and financial aid. These topics will be incorporated in future sessions. 2) During the 2021-2022 academic year (AY), 45% of program majors received documented academic advising. Since there were not accurate records to document a baseline, this will serve as a starting point upon which to build. Faculty members have suggested several new approaches to engaging students in academic advising which the department will expand upon ensure a higher percentage of majors receiving academic advising. For the 2021-2022 AY, the program has requested data on program majors that will help to identify at-risk students as well as the overall progress of the group as a whole. 3) All faculty participated in at least 2 professional development activities a year. Faculty shared a summary of their learning outcomes at monthly faculty meetings. An anonymized document containing these summaries is included here.

While the overall persistence rate went down, among the students who participated in both the orientation and academic advising, 70% of them persisted from Fall 2021-2022, a full five percent higher than the average of all program majors. This shows promise for the proposed initiative.

Note: Planners should report all of the activities (or action plan items) completed during the first year of the biennium in the mid-biennium activity report (field 8). In the end-of-biennium activity report (field 10), planners should include all the completed activities (or action plan items) during the second half of the biennium. Evidence should be attached and may include items such as: 1) the pilot orientation materials, survey results, improved orientation materials and feedback, and student ID of orientation participants; 2) advising records can be by student ID and faculty advisor, or other format; 3) anonymized document or OPOD professional development transcript.

Example 2: Administrative Objective

Objective (Field 1)

By Summer 2023, the _____ department will acquire and implement the technology that will permit students using their services to be able to obtain and complete required forms virtually rather than needing to fill out and sign a physical document, thereby increasing departmental efficiency and student satisfaction.

Action Plan (Field 4)

Year 1 action items (2021-2022)

- Collaborate with IT to identify software/technology that best meets the department's needs.
- Attend webinars or instructional sessions for the selected software/technology.
- Pilot the software/technology with a sample of students and, with the help of the Research and Analytic Services (RAS), conduct surveys/interviews to assess their experiences and satisfaction.

Year 2 action items (2022-2023)

- Department meetings will be held to assess outcomes of surveys/interviews and develop resolutions as needed.
- Completely resolve any issues based on surveys/interviews.
- Train staff for use of the new software/technology.
- Full implementation of the software/technology by Summer 2023, including outreach/awareness campaign.

Assessment Method (Field 6)

The objective will be considered met to the extent that the software/technology is readily available for student use by Summer 2023. There are two ways to demonstrate software implementation. 1) If the software/technology is complete and ready for use, but has not yet been used by students, images of the complete version of the software/technology will be used to demonstrate its completion. All files available to students and relevant pages will be uploaded. 2) If the software/technology is complete in time for student use, we will provide data on student usage/downloads of the software, as well as the plan to disseminate information about the availability of the new software/technology and how to use it.

Findings (Field 7 for the Mid-Biennium and Field 9 for the End-of Biennium)

The software has been purchased, installed, and piloted with a small group of students who have provided feedback for improving the instructions for students and some confusing references on one of the forms. Completion is not anticipated until the end of the biennium, but the project is on track.

NOTE: Planners should report the status of their objective during the first year of the biennium in the mid-biennium findings section (field 7). In this example, this might include indicating that a software was selected during the first year, but not yet implemented. In the end-of-biennium findings section (field 9), planners should report the status of their objective throughout the first and second year of the biennium.

Activity Report (Field 8 for the Mid-Biennium and Field 10 for the End-of Biennium)

(1) IT identified five software/technology programs that are widely used across similar departments at other institutions. After communicating with IT, we narrowed the options down to three. (2) After attending several webinars (document with titles of webinars attached) and going through the bid process, we narrowed our options down to a single primary choice. (3) To test the effectiveness of the software, we piloted it with a sample of 20 students. Immediately after engaging with the software, students completed a survey. Data (attached) indicated that 80% of students were Completely or Very Satisfied with the software and 60% of students indicated that they would use the software in the future. (4) Interviews, however, revealed that a small subset of students did find some labels on forms to be confusing. Our department updated form titles as a result.

Note: Planners should report all of the activities (or action plan items) completed during the first year of the biennium in the mid-biennium activity report (field 8). In the end-of-biennium activity report (field 10), planners should include all the completed activities (or action plan items) during the second half of the biennium. Evidence should be attached and may include items such as: a copy of a hardcopy form with instructions for signatures and submission vs. screen shots of the online version with its instructions. Also, survey results, interview/focus group reports could also form part of the evidence. End-of-biennium documentation may include the number of students using the new system compared to the number of hardcopy submissions were being processed during the same range of time in the past.