**July 2024**

*Please share with your faculty:*

***Setting benchmarks and performance targets*:**

Establishing benchmarks and performance targets are important for determining a program’s success in meeting student learning objectives. A benchmark is a desired level of competency for a student’s performance on an assessment. For example, a benchmark could be the passing score on a test, or the description of a satisfactory or competent score on a grading rubric. Performance targets describe the desired percentage of students that the program wants to meet or exceed a benchmark on a given assessment. Establishing benchmarks and performance targets can be based on external standards (i.e., established by relevant professional organizations), or based on faculty experiences of successful student performance from previous years.

For example, if the objective is that students will be able to analyze numerical data pertaining to a problem, the benchmark could be that a student will achieve at least 70% on a final exam designed to measure this objective. The target performance could be that at least 80% of students achieve scores of 70% or above on the exam. As another example, if the objective is that students can clearly organize their ideas on a paper assignment, the benchmark could be that a student needs to achieve at least a satisfactory level on a scoring rubric designed to measure this objective. The target performance could be that at least 80% of students achieve satisfactory on this criterion on the rubric.

Setting benchmarks and performance targets are not only important for measuring the extent to which program objectives are achieved, but also provide useful data points for comparing performance across time on program objectives. In other words, benchmarks and performance targets enable programs to numerically compare last year’s performance on a student-learning objective to this year’s performance on the same objective. Analyzing performance across time is important for evaluating the educational effectiveness of any changes that have been made to the program’s instruction, goals or objectives, curriculum, or assessment practices.

**References:**

Tips for setting benchmarks and performance targets. *New Jersey City University*. Retrieved July 8, 2024 from <https://www.njcu.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/tips_setting_benchmarks_performancetargets.pdf>

**Please share your program uses benchmarks and performance targets to measure program’s effectiveness in meeting student learning objectives.** If you would please email to me examples of how your program creates and uses benchmarks and performance targets to analyze students’ attainment of program-level student-learning objectives,  I will feature those examples on [YU’s Learning Assessment Website](https://owa.yu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=qfPSe4wRYkKrpT3C8vPq8A7wjn94UtMIlXPnm4uIb63uPB_8kYqY2U_p2t2TYINMonFFOW1vbo0.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fyu.edu%2fprovost%2fassessment%2f).

**Assessment planning:** Summer is a great time to review, revise and plan your program’s assessment activities. Please contact me if you would like to schedule a time to meet over the summer to discuss your program’s assessment plans.