

Unit Planning Guide

# Overview

The Units are required to create and implement an Annual Unit Plan which documents activities that are directed toward helping the College achieve its Strategic Priorities and Objectives.

Key Elements for Effective Unit Planning

* A team of employees from the unit who can provide input on the unit’s functions
* UA-PTC’s Strategic Plan
* Unit plan and report from the previous year
* Relevant institutional or unit-level reports, including program reviews and analysis of assessment data
* Unit Planning Template

# Step 1:

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| Effective planning starts with thorough review and analysis of key information. It may be helpful to use a whiteboard or easel and to choose a note-taker to record the team’s ideas.   * **Review the College’s Strategic Priorities and Objectives.** Ensure that the team has a common understanding of the annual strategic objectives and overall strategic priorities for the College. Unit plans should be directed toward helping the College achieve its overall mission and strategic objectives. *How does the unit relate to the College’s overarching strategic priorities and objectives? Which College objective(s) could be impacted by the unit’s work?* * **Analyze the data.** Look at recent institutional or unit level reports, especially any reports containing items that were used as measures in the previous year. Review and discuss the data as a team. *What does the data tell us? What are areas of concern? What good news is there to celebrate? What are your questions, ideas, or curiosities? What strategies or activities could be implemented to ‘move the needle’?* * **Assess the unit’s current state.** Review the unit’s plan and report from the previous year. Discuss what worked or didn’t work last year. *Did the unit achieve its goals? What worked well? What would we do differently? Where can the unit improve?* * **Determine priorities.** Based on the analysis, determine what the unit will focus on in the next year. *Where should the unit focus in order to have a positive impact on the College? What activities or initiatives will the unit undertake in the next year?* |

# Step 2:

Use the priorities identified and data examined in the previous step to develop the activities and measures for the upcoming year. The unit plan should: align with the College’s Strategic Priorities and Objectives, evidence how the unit is working to achieve its goals, build on the unit’s previous work, and have an impact on institutional or unit-level key performance indicators (KPI).

Plans are documented in the Annual Planning Template, which serves as the Annual Unit Plan. This section provides an overview of each section of the Annual Planning Template.

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| Section | Description | Tips |
| Purpose Statement | Describes the overall purpose of the unit, including how it relates to UA-PTC’s mission and contributes to the College’s overall work. | Review the unit purpose statement each year. If a unit is restructured or reorganized to perform different functions or if a unit takes on new services or functions, the purpose statement may need to be updated. |
| Unit Goals | Explain how the unit will fulfill its purpose and use action verbs to describe the services and functions of the unit. | Unit goals rarely change from year to year. There may be time when additional goals need to be created for short-term situations, such as one-time funds or offering an interim service.   * The goal clearly relates to the unit purpose statement. * The goal is about the unit’s functions or services. * The goal represents the core of what the unit does. * The goal will be applicable to the unit five years from now. |
| Activities | Concrete steps that will be taken to accomplish the unit goals and/or contribute to the achievement of the College’s stated objectives or to meet a target set for a KPI. | * Activities should be specific and may include multiple steps. * A clear timeline for when specific activities will be completed. * Remember, activities will be completed over the course of an entire fiscal year—don’t rush your planned activities—focus on quality. |
| Expected Outcomes | State what the unit expects to accomplish by completing the planned activities. | Effectively written expected outcome statements have **SMART** qualities: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and realistic, and Time-bound. |
| Measure of Success | A tool(s) used to determine if a unit has achieved its expected outcome. | * To determine a measure, ask the questions: “How will we know if the outcome has been achieved? What information or data will we look at to determine if we were successful?” * Try to avoid using the completion of a project as a measure—simply completing the project doesn’t provide any information on how to improve. * Measures should indicate performance targets, such as specific percentages and numbers. |
| Person Responsible | Specifies the person or people who are responsible for implementing and monitoring the planned activities throughout the year. | You may need to list individuals or areas outside of the unit that are affected by or need to be involved in the planned activities. |

# Step 3:

Annual Unit Plans must be completed and submitted according to the schedule in the Institutional Effectiveness Calendar. The completed Annual Unit Plan should be submitted to the next level supervisor for review and approval. All plans must ultimately be reviewed by the appropriate Executive Leader, who submits the plan to Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness by the published deadline. All plans will be reviewed and assessed using a Plan Evaluation rubric.

***Not sure what to write in your plan or include as a measure? Contact IRPE!***