

9. Student Achievement

Student Achievement Standard 1: The system of assessment is consistent with admission requirements and allows valid and reliable placement of students into levels.

Section A Description of current operations to show how the standard is met.

Admissions Requirements and Student Expectations

The requirement for admission to the Intensive English Program, as stated in the AUK catalog, is as follows:

Applicants who score below 520 on the Paper-Based (PBT) Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), 190 on the Computer-Based (CBT) version, or 68 on the Internet-Based (iBT) version and who otherwise qualify for admission to AUK are eligible for admission into the Intensive English Program (SA-1-1).

The Placement Process: New IEP Students

As instruction at the American University of Kuwait is in English, evidence of English competency is required of all IEP and undergraduate applicants. Students who do not meet the required 520 on the Paper-Based (PBT) Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), 190 on the Computer-Based (CBT) version, or 68 on the Internet-Based (iBT) version and before students have been accepted for study in the IEP (typically 200-300 students each semester), and after the applicant submits an application, take the IEP ACCUPLACER OnLine™ Language Placement Test (LPT) (SA-1-2), which is the initial step in determining their skills level and placing them into courses.

The Language Placement Test is usually given twice daily on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before each semester for new incoming students as well as daily during orientation and registration week, and consists of two main components:

1. An objective, discrete-point test of language usage, reading comprehension, sentence meaning, and listening comprehension.
2. A one hour composition.

Appointments for testing are set by Admissions once a student has presented his/her application for admissions and paid the application fee.

AUK uses the online Language Placement Test (LPT) by ACCUPLACER Online™ which consists of five subtests. These subtests are Language Usage, Reading Comprehension, Sentence Meaning, Listening Comprehension and Essay Writing. The entire English Language Placement Test is designed to be completed within 3 hours excluding break

The three-hour test period is scheduled as follows:

Language Usage	30 minutes	20 multiple choice questions
Reading Comprehension	30 minutes	20 multiple choice questions
Sentence Meaning	30 minutes	20 multiple choice questions
Break	15 minutes	
Listening Comprehension	30 minutes	20 multiple choice questions
WritePlacer Essay Writing	1 hour	A single writing prompt

IEP proctors are given detailed guidelines on how to administer the test (see proctor training manual on site), including a materials checklist (SA-1-3), logistics information, and directions to students. The proctors are also given explicit security instructions to assure that the identification of the student is verified and the test passwords remain secure.

Beginning in Fall 2004, the IEP replaced the Michigan Placement Exam used during the initial start-up student recruitment and assessment phase as a means of determining IEP placement (see Annual report of 2004/2005) with the ACCUPLACER OnLine™ based on its utilization of sophisticated technology that provide accurate and efficient measurement of students' knowledge and skills. The computerized nature of the assessment also allows for instantaneous score reporting.

Upon the completion of the student's test, the student's scores are available and can be immediately exported into Banner, the campus's computerized student management system. An extremely convenient feature of ACCUPLACER OnLine™ is its on-line application. Consequently, the testing proctors can access the testing program whenever it is convenient for students.

In summary, the ACCUPLACER OnLine™ test is used to:

1. Determine appropriate student course placements.
2. Monitor student course progress.
3. Suggest whether remediation is still required or if a change in course assignment is recommended.

Due to the adaptive nature of the tests, the questions presented on successive tests will vary, thereby greatly reducing the effects of repeated practice on the tests and thus maintaining the academic integrity of testing procedures.

Writing samples for WritePlacer ESL are scored using a modified holistic scoring, a procedure used to evaluate the overall quality of writing based on the features of writing identified below. Holistic scoring is used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the writing sample as evidenced by how well a piece of writing communicates a whole message. Each writing sample is evaluated based on its overall impression, not on the basis of the individual writing characteristics in isolation (SA-1-4).

Each response is evaluated based on the following features of writing:

1. Focus.
2. Organization.
3. Development and Support.
4. Sentence Structure and Usage.
5. Mechanical Conventions.

Scores are reported on a scale from 0 to 6, reflecting the sum of two readers' scores (readers are from ACCUPLACER OnLine™) or the IntelliMetric model powered by Vantage Technologies of the two readers' scores. If the two readers disagree by more than one point, a third reader evaluates the writing. A score of zero indicates that the essay was off topic, written in a language other than English, or too short to be evaluated.

Students are placed in courses on the basis of the results of the ACCUPLACER OnLine™ Placement Test. However, prior to placement, the initial placement scores are reviewed by the director and coordinators for possible adjustment of placement or to decide if retesting is appropriate before final placement.

Some of the heuristics used in hand placement to adjust a problematic initial placement are as follows:

- Students can be in different levels in different skill areas, but the spread should involve no more than two levels.
- Examine the student's writing sample to determine if the score reflects student's ability.

- Place students conservatively, since the diagnostic tests (given in core classes in Week 1) give students a chance to advance one level.
- Students who are "too low" (lower than Level 1 in a skill area) are advised to take courses through the Center for Continuing Education and retest at a later date.

Student placement procedures upon completion of the Language Placement Test are:

1. An individual Student Score Report is generated for each student. The Student Score Report displays a time record, test results and placement information, as well as background information on the student (SA-1-5).
2. Incoming students are given an appointment to register for classes, typically a week before the semester begins. The IEP offers latecomers opportunities for late Language Placement Testing during the first week of the semester (see an example Programs Calendar for a typical schedule (SA-1-6).
3. Student Handbook, catalog, and placement letter are distributed to incoming students during the IEP New Student Orientation and prior to their registration.
4. Upon their arrival for their registration appointment, students receive a registration package containing pertinent information of the skill-level placements in language usage, reading comprehension, sentence meaning, listening comprehension and writing highlighted and with specific course sections already designated (Appendix D).

The registration process has two main parts—advising and computer registration:

1. Advising: An IEP instructor-advisor orients prospective students individually or in groups regarding student placements and the courses in the IEP for which students may register in according with their personal preferences. Any student questions regarding placement and selection of classes will be broached at this time. (The catalog also contains descriptions of all IEP classes.) Each student, with the registration advisor's input, then chooses the courses he/she will take that semester.
2. Computer registration: An IEP student worker accompanies the prospective student to the computer registrar, checks the student's personal database (addresses, emergency info, etc.) and assists the student in entering the student's course choices into the database from which an invoice and course schedule are printed.

Continuing Students

Most continuing students are placed in classes after the successful completion of prerequisite lower-level classes. (The process for assessing whether a student has met the objectives of a given level is discussed in Student Achievement 2.) Although continuing students tend to have slightly lower proficiency than newly-placed students, in general they are capable of meeting a course's objectives by the end of the semester.

All students who plan to return to the program the following semester must pre-register for their classes (see advance registration announcement SA-1-7).

As to the use of the placement test with students who are not new to the IEP, they "*must* retake [it] if they are returning after an absence of two or more semesters or their instructor(s) recommends a retake." To ensure the validity of the results, the policy stipulates that retakes are not to exceed two times per year.

Adjustment of Placements Using Diagnostic Tests

For many courses in the IEP, diagnostic tests are administered to all students in attendance, both new and continuing, in the first week of classes (SA-1-8). The diagnostic tests are tied to a course's curriculum objectives and thus have similarities to the final assessment (see sample diagnostic test Operations Manual, Appendix M, p. 627-638). The purpose of the diagnostic tests is as a final means of assessing the initial placement of students and the optimization of student learning. In other words, it serves as a checks and balance. All instructors teaching a course that utilize a diagnostic test receive a master copy of the test along with instructions on how to administer and score the test, and proceed with the results. The instructions also include an explanation of the relationship between the Placement Test and the diagnostic tests, and outline the process and importance of maintaining test security and reminders about keeping the tests secure.

Instructors are directed to use diagnostic tests scores to look for "outliers:" students who scored distinctly higher than the majority of the students in the class. The diagnostic tests have fixed benchmarks. When students score above the determined benchmark, they are placed into the next level since the goal of the diagnostic tests is to measure students' knowledge against the level of the course material, not against each other. Students are informed of the diagnostic tests results in class within the drop/add week. Those who have scores that qualify them for a higher level are given permission to advance one level. However, students who score high enough to advance can choose to stay where they are if they wish, although they usually choose to advance.

Notification of the students' scores and the final decisions made for advancement is communicated in writing to the Director no later than 5:00 p.m. of day 3/4 of each semester. Those who decide to advance, continue to attend their original class until they receive official notification of a change, which usually takes one day. Students with unusually low scores are alerted to the fact that the course work may be too challenging. They are given the option of registering in a lower level but are not pressured to do so.

After initial placement and registration, students may change (drop/add) classes with the director's permission only.

Monitoring of Placement Effectiveness

During the semester, the number of students moving from their initial placements in response to diagnostic tests results is evaluated by the Coordinator and reviewed by the director to determine if movements seem excessive and/or unnecessarily disruptive for instructors, students, and administrators. To improve the system's placement consistency and efficiency over time, the following actions have been taken:

1. Instructions to those responsible for hand placements have been adjusted appropriately.
2. Further adjustments have been made in the diagnostic tests to more accurately and fairly respond to course objectives.
3. Feedback has been given to individual teachers whose scoring of diagnostic tests seems skewed or inaccurate.

Appropriate Placement

The student, a representative for that student, or any of the student's instructors who have any questions or concerns about the appropriateness of the student's placement in the IEP bring their questions to the director or the coordinators. They will review the student's situation and determine whether or not procedural errors have led to a possible misplacement. Revisions of testing and/or placement results will solely take place on procedural grounds.

Security of Placement Instruments

Maintaining security of placement and diagnostic tests (as well as standardized Midterms and Finals) is of the highest priority in the IEP. Placement materials are under the direct

guardianship of the Assistant to the Director; the diagnostic tests (as well as standardized Midterms and Finals) are under the direct guardianship of the Coordinators. To this day, the security of placement and diagnostic tests has not been compromised. Moreover, instructors who use such materials are oriented in meetings and reminded repeatedly about test protocol verbally and in writing by coordinators through emails and beginning- and end-of-semester memos.

Section B 1) documents in the report

Admissions requirement (Operation Manual II Placement and Assessment p. 35)	SA-1-1
Language Placement Test (LPT) (Operation Manual II Placement and Assessment pp. 35-36)	SA-1-2
Handicap and disabled students checklist	SA-1-3
ACCUPLACER OnLine™ Rubric for Essays pp. 7-11 (M:Drive/Accuplacer Testing/Coordinator’s Manual)	SA-1-4
Sample individual student score report	SA-1-5
Program calendar	SA-1-6
Advance registration announcement	SA-1-7

2) documents on site

Student placement file (ACCUPLACER OnLine™)	M:Drive/Accuplacer Testing/(by semester)
Placement instrument	www.accuplaceronline.com
Proctor Manual	M:Drive/Accuplacer Testing/Proctor Manual

Section C Performance self-appraisal.

The effectiveness, validity, and reliability of the Language Placement Testing, heuristics placement, and diagnostic testing for each core course are “very good” based on the extensive research that was conducted by the IEP Director and faculty with comparable programs in the United States.

At the onset of the program, the IEP used the Michigan Placement as a way of determining placement into the IEP. The Michigan Placement exam was a paper based test, requiring hand grading and assessment which, although reliable, was ineffective. The IEP, therefore, researched the placement programs used in the states of Texas, California and Washington. The reason for targeting these states was based on their high ESL population, specifically Hispanic and Asian populations.

Most institutions that were using on-line placement systems were using ASSET, Compass or ACCUPLACER OnLine™. The key distinction between ACCUPLACER OnLine™ and other on-line systems was that ACCUPLACER OnLine™ tested 5 language proficiency skills whereas others tested 4 skills. The IEP decided that the 5th skill: the sentence building skill, requiring student to recognize sentence structure, would assure further accuracy in placement and thus decided on implementing the ACCUPLACER OnLine™ language placement system.

As a way of determining the effectiveness of the IEP’s assessment tools and procedures prior to the adoption of the Accuplacer, the IEP piloted the composition component with a group of IEP students that came from all three IEP levels. Students’ completed ACCUPLACER OnLine™ essays were distributed to a select group of IEP and undergraduate English faculty for grading scoring and placement according to the ACCUPLACER OnLine™ benchmarks. The results of the pilot indicated that 96% of the time, faculty scored within the established grading outcomes of Accuplacer. Based on this pilot, the IEP determined that the system was placing students accurately and effectively.

The effectiveness of the assessment procedures can also be measured in terms of the mid-and end- of semester performance of students in each respective level. The graduation and matriculation of students from one level to the next is at 92%. Students are required to score 70% or more to advance into a higher level. 20 % of the final grade is determined by the ACCUPLACER OnLine™ exit exam.

There exists a difference between newly placed students into the IEP and continuing students in the same level. The newly placed students remain within the benchmark whereas continuing students are usually two (2) to four (4) points lower. The point distinctions contribute to what we believe is an appropriate mesh between the placement of different students into the IEP.

The practice of placement testing and its mechanisms are fluid. There exists a strong coordinated effort between the curriculum and the student's needs that is evolving, and the system is monitored by the Director and the coordinators of the IEP relative to the learning outcomes of the students to ensure placement benchmarks meet the needs of the students and program.

During the self-study, we discovered that despite our formal guidelines and/or policies and procedures for test proctors and test security, these guidelines and /or procedures are not sufficiently cohesive and/or comprehensive. Therefore, in the Fall of 2008, an ad-hoc committee was formed to address the need for a policy and procedure as well as logistical guidelines for proctors. In addition, the committee addressed the development of formal guidelines for testing security within the classroom and the lab. The chair of the committee was responsible for developing a guideline and/or policy and procedure for both the testing proctors and for all stakeholders involved in test security to be implemented by Spring 2009.

Section D Recommendations, plan of action, timeline, persons responsible

No major changes in placement policies and procedures are recommended.

Student Achievement Standard 2: The program or institution documents in writing whether students have attained the learning objectives for courses taken within the curriculum, using instruments or procedures that appropriately assess whether students are ready to progress to the next level or exit the program of study.

Section A Description of current operations to show how the standard is met.

Curriculum Objectives and Student Assessment

The IEP curriculum provides a detailed description of the various courses offered to students. As explained in Curriculum Standard 1 (p 2) each course description comprises a general description, general curriculum objectives and more detailed student learning outcomes specifying what students are expected to achieve by the end of the course to demonstrate their degree of control and/or working ability of the skills taught, and the assessment methods and criteria for passing the course, along with the grading criteria (SA-2-1). The student learning outcomes for each course are built on past levels of established student achievement criteria and the program's final mission. The program's learning outcomes are for students to obtain:

1. A working ability to read university-level materials
2. Write academic papers
3. Speak more fluently in both formal and informal settings
4. Take good, clear notes at lectures
5. Take timed, objective tests and exams

Concrete evidence that course objectives have been met is determined by the final grades that students receive in courses at each level, which in turn ascertains the matriculation criteria into the next level and/or the University's undergraduate program (SA-2-2). Furthermore, student evaluation of teaching and faculty evaluation of courses, as well as qualitative assessment of individual students, contribute to the overall course assessment and the student learning outcomes. Quantitative and qualitative student and faculty data are compiled and interpreted by the Director of the IEP each semester and presented in the IEP semester and annual report.

Student grades and student evaluations of teaching are placed in Banner, and are collected and downloaded by the Assistant to the Director of the IEP at the completion of each semester. Upon the development of the Semester Report and the review of the data, the Director of the IEP accurately assesses the student learning outcomes for all cohorts in all IEP courses and in aggregate terms in the following categories (SA-2-3):

1. Students who failed to complete the course
2. Students who discontinued the course for unknown reason
3. Students who repeated the course
4. Students who advanced to the next level
5. Student who advanced into the undergraduate program

An integral part of the collection and interpretation of the evidence is determining the causes that have lead to non-accomplishment of student learning outcomes through faculty input of individual students, as well as student performance and attendance records.

The established level of attainment that the IEP uses is based on the initial student learning outcomes for each level and course within the levels during curriculum reviews and revisions. Based on the determination of the student learning outcomes the IEP faculty, under the supervision of the coordinators, ascertained the benchmarks for the Language Placement Exam based on the skill level of students entering the program. Student language proficiency skills are measured according to the proficiency descriptor scale for level placement, which in

turn provides the means by which minimum language skills are set in each level (C-1-2). The balance between minimum language proficiency of students and maximum student learning outcomes in each respective level is determined through standardized and non-standardized course assessment and the course exit exams.

The IEP procedures and instruments for assessment provide the evidence that course objectives are met and are framed by two concrete initiatives:

1. The initial placement and course exit exams
2. The course assessment methods

The IEP's placement and exit exams are a means for determining course placement and are used as instruments to measure the effectiveness of the standardized and non-standardized assessment methods in each course. Furthermore, the exit exam provides additional information on the level of student improvement in reading, writing and oral communication in each respective course. Thus the IEP's teaching methodologies and assessment instruments are not geared toward the exit exam, but are more fundamentally grounded in the student learning outcomes for each course and geared toward the IEP's mission.

All IEP courses contain a standardized assessment and non-standardized assessment components for Reading and Writing and Oral Communication. Standardized assessments share a common rubric in order to assure assessment integrity and encourage a common academic standard (SA-2-4). Non-standardized assessments are useful as they introduce variety and are often used as a means of piloting new assessment methods developed in the field that might replace older standardized ones. The combination of methods determines whether students pass or fail a particular course.

The learning outcomes of the program have and will continue to determine the type and range of assessment techniques used. Although the methods for assessing student achievement vary with each course, there are some shared procedures. Students must achieve a 70% average on a number of tests based on the chapters covered in class. They must also achieve the same average, 70%, on the Midterm and must pass a Final Exam. Evidently, the items on exams differ widely in terms of format, difficulty and content. For instance, in Level 2 Writing, students are expected to write paragraphs and produce short 2-3 paragraph essays (SA-2-5). However, to pass the Level 3 Reading and Writing course, students have to demonstrate the ability to recommend a relevant course of action and/or predict a logical next step relevant to the idea a multi-paragraph article, accurately identifying the author's purpose, tone, primary mode of discourse, main idea, primary supporting points, and MLA in-text conventions (SA-2-6).

The most common way is weekly tests and announced quizzes, with shared embedded questions within certain exams even though the content and format are as varied as the courses' objectives (SA-2-7). The assessment techniques which provide direct evidence of student learning are standardized tests, placement and exit tests, common exams, common questions, portfolios, presentations, and writing samples. Other methods include a wide range of assignments (writing assignments, reading circles and comprehension questions, listening tasks, homework exercises, journals, oral reports) (SA-2-8). In general, a 70% completion of the assignments is required to pass.

The assessment techniques which provide indirect/supportive evidence of student learning are retention and matriculation statistics. At the end of each semester, all statistical data are collected from Banner, the data-base management system, and analyzed to determine how the students and faculty have performed during the semester the status of students after final grades is then submitted. In addition, each course's evaluations have questions added

regarding learning. For example, Level 3, IENG 031, Critical Reading and Writing questions in the Teaching Evaluation by Students Survey in Spring 2008 were:

12	I can summarize an article accurately according to standard American English.	4.5
13	I can extend, expand, corroborate, refute, and synthesize a claim made by an author according to standard American English.	4.4
14	I can quote, paraphrase, and cite statements from a source accurately according to MLA in-text conventions according to standard American English.	4.5
15	I can analyze similarities and differences found in different adaptations of a work of literature according to standard American English.	4.3
16	I can discuss context and significance, recommend a relevant course of action, and/or predict according to standard American English.	4.4
17	Overall how would you rate the quality of this course?	4.3

The overall rate 4.3 across the IENG 031 courses on a scale of 1-5 shows that the students were engaged in the learning process.

Determining students' needs and readiness

There are different features that serve to ensure that students are adequately prepared to handle what is expected of them at a certain level. One way is the 70% minimum accomplishment of a course's objectives in order to proceed and pass to a higher level.

Another way to check students' preparedness is the program's Language Placement Test or ACCUPLACER OnLine™, a nationally normed and customized placement test that provides a fast and accurate determination of whether a student has the skills to take a freshman course, or would benefit more from developmental work. ACCUPLACER OnLine™ tests can also be used to monitor student course progress and to suggest whether remediation is still needed, or if a change in course assignment is recommended. ACCUPLACER OnLine™ test scores are virtually immediate, which means that the system will apply the institution's placement rules immediately, this allows advisors, staff and faculty to confirm course assignments on the spot. The Language Placement Test (LPT) by ACCUPLACER OnLine™ consists of five subtests. These subtests are Language Usage, Reading Comprehension, Sentence Meaning, Listening Comprehension, and Essay Writing. The entire English Language Placement Test is designed to be completed within 3 hours. This is sufficient time for most students to complete the test (SA-2-9). The LPT is administered to all students who scored below the TOEFL or IELTS benchmarks for admissions.

Course Exit Criteria in relationship to Placement and Diagnostic Tests

As explained in Student Achievement Standard 1 previously, the placement of new/continuing students or returning students after one semester is done using the IEP Language Placement Test, which provides a general assessment of writing, grammar, reading, and listening skill levels. Once placed in their respective levels, students join with other ones who have passed from a lower level (SA-2-10).

Then, during the first week, diagnostic tests are given in order to verify that all students—new, returning, or sometimes repeating—are at the appropriate level, and identify their specific weaknesses. Most of these tests are developed according to level by the coordinators and are provided to instructors at the beginning of each semester (SA-2-11). The diagnostic test also allows students who failed a course the opportunity to move on rather than repeat the course. In contrast to the Language Placement Test, diagnostic tests are explicitly and directly related to the specific learning outcomes of the course.

After the final exam, students also sit for another ACCUPLACER OnLine™ test which is intended to monitor student course progress and to suggest whether remediation is still needed or if a change in course assignment is recommended.

Assessment Methods

Throughout the semester, instructors keep track of their students' progress and performance by using various assessment techniques (some are graded; others are not). For instance, in the Reading and Writing courses, students write journals where they express their opinion about a topic that was discussed in class. These journals are read and corrected but not necessarily graded by the instructor, which helps students enjoy the writing process and not worry about grades. Similarly, students attending Oral Communications courses participate in several guided class discussions, during which they put their speaking skills to use.

The primary role underlying the exit criteria is to assess students' performance and determine to what degree they have achieved the learning outcomes. The assessment process is the tool used to define the IEP program or unit's mission, to develop desired outcomes, to continuously monitor progress towards those outcomes, to communicate results, and to use those results to make improvements (SA-2-12). Therefore, all instructors teaching the same course follow some common exit tests or assessment methods in order to determine whether students pass or fail (standardized tests, comprehensive exams, portfolios, rubrics, scales, oral presentations, pre- and post-exams, and/or evaluated performances).

For instance, instructors give the same Midterm Exam, working with the coordinator and one another to develop the exam. All instructors in a given course must abide by the same scoring system and adhere to the same criteria for pass or fail. The exam is corrected according to an answer key provided to instructors after the exam has been given to students. The key contains the answers expected from students. In the case of questions with varied answers or writing assignments, a clear rubric is provided in order to maintain consistent results.

Also, instructors teaching the same course should give the same Final Exam and adhere to the same grading system. In the case of essays or paragraphs, instructors should agree on a clear rubric as the level allows. A short, post-exam conference is usually held between level coordinators and instructors, during which instructors share their feedback on the exams and discuss whether or not some test items should be replaced or eliminated (SA-2-13).

Sometimes, when instructors examine the tests and relate them to course objectives, they agree that objectives need to be changed and, therefore, will initiate that process. In other words, course objectives are constantly reexamined and revised in accordance with student needs, thus facilitating the curriculum revision process when needed. Assessment techniques and learning outcomes are in an on-going process of revision, aiming at providing the best for the student.

Lack of Progress

Faculty send an Early Warning Form to the Retention Specialist two weeks prior to the Mid-term on students at risk. The Early Warning form used if faculty are sufficiently concerned about a student's progress and they want to make sure that the student is aware of the help and support available, and that the student is informed of the consequences of continued poor performance (SS-4-5). The Retention Specialist notifies the student in writing and counsels the student on the appropriate steps needed to improve performance. These steps may include, but are not limited to, tutoring in the Student Success Center, one-on-one-tutoring with an undergraduate junior or senior peer, and/or support from the Writing Center (SA-2-14).

In addition, faculty complete a Lack of Progress report for each course informing administration the appropriate action needed, and the possible reasons why each student has failed to progress (LS-2-6).

Section B 1) documents in the report

Sample IENG 011 Course objectives and content mapping (Operations Manual IV Curriculum pp. 124-129)	SA-2-1
Level 3 results graph (IEP Spring Semester Report pp. 13-14)	SA-2-2
IEP results for IENG courses (IEP Spring Semester Report p. 15)	SA-2-3
Sample rubric oral communication (Operations Manual Appendix J, pp. 516-524)	SA-2-4
Lack of progress sample	LS-2-6
Proficiency Chart (Operations Manual II Placement and Assessment pp. 46-47)	C-1-2
Final Exam IENG 021 Reading and Writing Spring 2008	SA-2-5
Reading progress test IENG 031 Reading and Writing	SA-2-6
Instructor created quiz IENG 031 Reading and Writing	SA-2-7
Chapter quiz college reading 3 IENG 031 Reading and Writing Standardized	SA-2-8
Placement exam timings (Operations Manual II Placement and Assessment pp. 35-36)	SA-2-9
Chart IEP matriculated students GPA in UG	SA-2-10
Assessment guidelines (Operations Manual II Placement and Assessment, pp. 52-57)	SA-2-11
Level 2 writing dialogistic test (Operations Manual Appendix M, pp. 654-658)	SA-2-12
Minutes Final Exam Meeting (M:Drive/Administration/ Meeting/ IEP Meeting)	SA-2-13
Early Warning Form (Operations Manual Appendix L Students at Risk p. 640)	SS-4-5
Lack of progress description (Operations manual II Placement and Assessment p. 51)	SA-2-14
Lab schedule	LS-1-2

2) documents on site

Copies of test given over the last 2 years	Director's Office
Student portfolios from one term in each level of the program	Director's Office

Section C Performance self-appraisal.

Generally, the tests and various assessment methods used by the IEP faculty to determine whether or not students have met the objectives have proven to be effective. Nevertheless, these methods and tests are constantly revised and altered when necessary by instructors. Overall, tests reflect the learning outcomes they are intended to assess, and most students pass without difficulty. There are very few cases where students express dissatisfaction with tests or other requirements, and this is reflected in the semester Student Evaluations.

During the self-study, the IEP determined a university-wide assessment plan needs to be developed to ensure a systematic, ongoing, and transparent process to define goals and

measure progress towards those goals, improving student learning and the overall effectiveness of the program.

Section D Recommendations, plan of action, timeline, persons responsible

In the Fall 2008, the Curriculum Review Committee (consisting of IEP faculty, IEP administrators, and UG English faculty) engaged in developing an effective Assessment Plan for the program. One faculty member was nominated as the chair on an annual basis to oversee the development of the plan.

Assessment Schedule

Assessment years 0 (initial year) --5 Year 6 program review

07 and prior	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
Intensive English Program	0	1	2	3	4	5	Program Review

Student Achievement Standard 3: The program or institution maintains written reports of attained proficiency for each student. These reports include a proficiency scale and a written interpretation of the scale in terms of stated program or institution goals such as academic readiness or practical applications.

Section A Description of current operations to show how the standard is met.

Grade Reports

The IEP student records and reports that document student performance and proficiency are housed and generated in two independent computerized information instruments:

1. Class Action: an instructor grade management software program, (see Class Action Manual M:Drive)
2. Banner Self-Service(www.auk.edu.kw), the University's student data-base management system

The Class Action files are retained for a minimum of five years students in the Grade-Keeper folder on the network M:Drive and the Banner records are kept indefinitely. The Class Action Student Report identifies the following student information on performance and proficiency:

1. Student names
2. Course enrollment
3. Attendance of the student in each course
4. Grading scale for each course
5. Grade weights for each course
6. Class ranking
7. Individual graded assignments,
8. Accumulative grades (SA-3-1)

Below is the grading system used by AUK IEP:

A	90-100	Excellent
B	80-90	Good
C	70-80	Fair
D	60-69	Passing grade, less than satisfactory work, may repeat
F	59 or less	Failure; no credit earned
I		Incomplete
W		Withdrawn

A student who earns a grade of 70% or higher in a course is considered to have adequate working ability in that course's objectives and learning outcomes and is thereby eligible for promotion to the next level or the undergraduate program.

A more specific interpretation of what a given grade means and how it is calculated in relation to the course's activities and assignments is stated on each instructor's syllabus and must apply uniformly to all students in the class (C-2-2). Passing grades are A, excellent; B, good; C, fair. These grades may be modified by a plus or minus. Although a D is a passing grade in the undergraduate non-major courses, it represents less than satisfactory work and the student may have to repeat.

Midterm and Final cumulative grades are entered into Banner, the data-base management system. Banner operates within an integrated, Web-enabled environment that provides services to students, faculty and staff; supports AUK's strategic plans; and provides the foundation for AUK's continued growth. Banners fuses administrative and academic

functions for the purposes of effective and efficient access, and enables ease of strategic management of data while giving applicants, students, and faculty secure online access to the information they need. Students can search and register for classes by term or date, and retrieve financial aid data. Faculty can easily manage course information and advise students. Finally, Banner manages the capacity effectively by providing statistical data into enrollment patterns, course demand, progression and attrition.

Grade reports are generated and distributed in the following way:

1. The official grade reporting system, Banner, is enabled by the Office of the Registrar on the first day of final exam week so faculty can enter final grades. Though the due date for Midterm and Final grades varies from semester to semester, generally grades are due two days after either the Midterm or Final exam. The student is able to view his/her grades the following day through their Banner Self-Service.
2. During the semester all class assignments, quizzes, tests, homework, labs, presentations, portfolios, Midterm and Final exams are recorded in Class Action to calculate grades for students and record the grades in their individual Class Action Grade-Keeper. Grades are sent to each student in the IEP program on a weekly basis through Class Action. Final grades are then submitted to the Office of the Registrar by the faculty through Banner Self-Service.

Transcripts and Interpretation of Academic Readiness

A transcript listing of all the classes a student has registered in, and the final grades earned over the course of the student's tenure in AUK's IEP, can also be produced at the student's request from the Office of the Registrar (LS-2-3).

The students receive a proficiency chart with an interpretation of a student's transcript in terms of academic readiness (C-1-2).

Graduation from the IEP

If a student is thus eligible, he or she submits an "Application for Admittance into Undergraduate Level from IEP" form to the Director of IEP (SS-4-2). Subsequently, the form is submitted to the Office of Admissions for all prospective graduating students approximately one month before final exams. The Office of Admissions returns the form to the Director of IEP on the first day of Finals Week. After final grades are determined, the IEP Director returns the approved and signed application to the Office of Admissions.

In addition to grade reports, issued automatically each semester to students, and transcripts, issued upon student request, all students who meet the following conditions are eligible to graduate and receive a Certificate of Completion from the IEP (SA-3-2). Students must:

1. Successfully complete 099
2. Successfully complete 030 and 031

Midterm, Early Warning, Lack of Progress, and End-of-Semester Progress Reports

A Class Action *Student Progress Report at Mid-Term* is generated by the faculty and assessable to students in their AUK email account. In addition, the accumulated grades at Midterm are entered into Banner at the end of Week 8. As mentioned in Student Achievement 2, at least two weeks before Midterm Exams, instructors fill out an "Early Warning Form" (SS-4-5). The Early Warning Reports target those students who are deemed in need of counseling on academic or behavioral issues. The reports are then sent to the Retention Specialist, who contacts students on an individual basis for counseling and/or assignment of specialized tutors. In addition, a Lack of Progress Report is compiled by the

instructor at the end of the semester informing administration of the appropriate action needed and possible reasons why each student has failed to progress (SA-2-14). The reports are sent to the Director of IEP to determine what action needs to be taken for the next semester. The Lack of Progress Reports details those students who do not attend regularly, who do not complete assignments, who worked hard but need more time but are not at risk of failing, and who are at risk with serious deficiencies and in need of specific areas for targeted tutoring. Finally, at the end of Week 16 (similar to Week 8), instructors are required to write End-of-Semester Reports. Instructors generate grades out of Class Action, which are then emailed to their students to be accessed on their service sites as well as enter the final accumulative grades into Banner.

Recommendation letters

For more specific information on individual performance and study habits, students may also request letters of recommendation from their teachers (SA-3-24).

Section B 1) documents in the report

Student Progress Report Class Action	SA-3-1
Syllabus Level 1 Reading and Writing (IENG 011) (Operations Manual pp. 345-352)	C-2-2
Student transcript sample	LS-2-3
Proficiency Chart (Operations Manual II Placement and Assessment pp. 46-47)	C-1-2
Application for Admission into the Undergraduate Level from IEP	SS-4-2
Certificate of completion statement (Operations Manual II Placement and Assessment p. 52)	SA-3-2
Early Warning Form (Operations Manual Appendix L Students at Risk p. 640)	SS-4-5
Lack of Progress description (Operations manual II Placement and Assessment p. 51)	SA-2-14
Sample letter of recommendation	SA-3-3
Banner Self-Service	www.auk.edu.kw/ Registrar/ AUK Self-Service

2) documents on site

Class Action grades folder	M:Drive/GradeKeeper/(faculty name)/Semester
----------------------------	---

Section C Performance self-appraisal.

All IEP students have official and unofficial access to written and electronic reports of their proficiency. Within an official capacity, students can request official written documents from the registrar in regards to their attained proficiency. Within an unofficial capacity, students who maintain a student status have electronic access through self-service to Banner on-site and off-site computer environments at any time. Once Class Action documents are sent to students via email, students can access their email on and off-site through Self-Service at any time. The ease of student access to their levels of proficiency the program encourages efficient and effective among students, faculty and administrators. It also supports the culture of transparency that undergirds the IEP administrative and educational environment.

The grade scale used by IEP is the same used by the American University of Kuwait and is commonly used by American academic institutions; it is thus readily recognizable and

interpretable. The detailed Midterm and Final reports fulfill the requirements of most sponsors, and the transcripts and recommendations are sufficient for other universities.

The interpretation of the proficiency scale and the grading criteria in each respective course are outlined in every course syllabus distributed in the IEP. After the dissemination of the course syllabus to students at the beginning of each semester, students are requested to sign a contract form that verifies that they understand the course expectations including the proficiency scale and grading criteria. The written interpretation of the scale has at all times been understood. In the event that students have further questions regarding the proficiency scale or grading criteria, they are encouraged to make an appointment with the respective faculty, advisor, or the Director of the IEP. In the history of the IEP, all contract forms have been signed by students indicating that the written interpretation of the scale has been understood. Furthermore, during the faculty meetings at the beginning of each semester, faculty is re-acquainted with the proficiency scale and grading criteria for IEP courses. Any queries and questions regarding the interpretation are addressed during the meeting.

Section D Recommendations, plan of action, timeline, persons responsible

No changes are planned in this area at this time.

Student Achievement Standard 4: The program or institution informs students of the assessment procedures used to determine placement, progression from level to level, and completion of the program, as well as their individual results.

Section A Description of current operations to show how the standard is met.

The IEP has numerous methods to inform students, sponsors and other interested parties, both written and verbal, about its general placement and assessment procedures. There are also methods in place to inform students, sponsors and other interested parties about the students' progress through the program levels towards program completion. Some information in our assessment procedures is provided even before the student applies to the program. More information is offered in various formats and levels specifically until program completion or beyond, if former students request that reports of their progress be made to others. These informational methods, already described in some detail in Student Achievement Standards 1-3 and in Student Services Standards 2-4, include the following, in rough chronological order of their use:

- *Intensive English Program Brochure (Appendix B):* In the IEP Program promotional brochure, the following brief information appears on IEP program structure:
 - This course consists of a minimum of 288 total hours of study at three levels of instruction and a minimum of 72 total hours of lab. All language skills are taught: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students accepted to the IEP must have adequate control of English basics; this course is not designed for zero-level beginners. Completion of the course should result in English language proficiency. ... Students meet for a total of 4 hours daily, 5 days a week, and are expected to complete a minimum of 5 hours per week in the multimedia lab.
- *Acceptance packet (SS-3-2)* Written information and letter explaining enrollment, registration, and orientation, among other things, is sent to students after they are accepted into the IEP.
- *IEP Student Orientation and Registration (Appendix D):* New student Orientation and Registration is scheduled the week before classes begin and discussed with the IEP and Student Affairs staff for all new students during Weeks 0 of the semester. Student Life, Student Success, the Director of IEP, and the Registrar give an oral overview of IEP enrollment policies as well as topics such as diagnostic testing, program structure and options, registration, prerequisites, retention specialist, advising, counseling, tutorial services, and attendance policies (SA-4-1).
- *Student Handbook and Planner 2008-2009 (on site):* Updated each academic year and given out to all new students at the first orientation meeting, the Handbook describes policies on course schedule and timetables of classes, attendance, grading, failure consequences, graduation and special awards. There are also sections which explain where to take questions or complaints; for example, "Where do I go for help on Campus?" page 16 and 17 of the Student Handbook. In those sections of the Handbook and orally in orientation meetings, students are invited to take advantage of the availability of the Director of Student Success and/or the Student Life to answer questions or address any concerns they have. These include questions related to their assessment, academic progress, etc. They are also encouraged to talk to their instructors or, if still are not satisfied, to the Director of IEP.

- *Advising during registration appointment:* A Registration Advisor (an administrator or instructor who has gone through the minimum of a one-hour training session for this duty) works with a student one-on-one to discuss course options based on the student's placement scores or prior courses completed and prerequisites thus met, and then to select courses (see Advising Manual on Site). Arabic student workers are on hand to assist some students with lower help with communication.
- *Diagnostic Tests (C-3-2):* these are administered in all courses by Day 3 of the semester. Besides checking the accuracy of placement and diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses, these tests serve to inform students of the kind of performance they will be expected to demonstrate in order to pass the course. The diagnostic tests are not returned to students; however, students are allowed to discuss their test errors with the instructor (SA-2-12).
- *Course syllabi (SA-4-2):* handed out by instructors to students by Day 2, course syllabi explain to students (as the curriculum descriptions in the Operations Manual do for staff) the focus of the class, the requirements (homework, attendance, participation and effort, projects, and tests) for passing the class, and the grading scale to be applied. As diagnostic tests, other tests, and assignments are completed during the semester, and as attendance is taken daily, the dialogue continues between instructor and student over what is required in order to pass the class.
- *Class Action Midterm Reports:* At midterm, instructors are required to send Student Reports to sponsored students and to students who seem to be in danger of failing, informing the latter group of their lack of progress and giving them ideas on how they might improve their performance.
- *Warning letters attendance:* The IEP policy that students accrue no more than 20% absences for any reason during a semester is strictly enforced. Therefore, as a courtesy, after five absences, students receive a warning letter from the Retention Specialist, reminding them of the policy and urging them to see the Retention Specialist or their instructor to discuss the issue. In addition, the warning letter is sent to students lacking normal progress within the course.
- *Performance contracts:* An instructor, in consultation with the Retention Specialist, can have a performance contract developed which specifies what assignments or activities need to be done in order for a particular student to pass a class. The student is asked by the Retention Specialist to sign the contract to indicate understanding of the conditions stipulated by the instructor (SA-4-3).
- *Grade reports, transcripts, End-of-Semester Report, special awards, and letter of recommendation:* These written documents provide a variety of ways for the IEP to report to an individual student (and/or a sponsor or other appropriate party) on the student's progress to course completions, general progress, and special accomplishments or needs (SS-4-4). These documents are described in the Student Handbook 2008-2009. Examples of these types of reports are: listing special awards given out and a form used by instructors to nominate students for the Outstanding Student Award (SA-2-11).

Section B 1) documents in the report

IEP English/Arabic brochure	Appendix B
Acceptance package	SS-3-2
Agenda for New Student Orientation and registration	SA-4-1

Course Syllabus Policy (Operations Manual Appendix I p. 508)	SA-4-2
Diagnostic in-class testing (Operations Manual II Placement and Assessment, p. 51)	C-3-2
New Student Orientation Package	Appendix D
Level 2 writing dialogistic test (Operations Manual Appendix M, pp. 654-658)	SA-2-12
Assessment Guidelines (Operations Manual II Placement and Assessment, pp. 52-57)	SA-2-11
Sample performance contract	SA-4-3
Sample student conference	SA-4-4

2) documents on site

Sample of corrected test and essays	Director's Office
-------------------------------------	-------------------

Section C Performance self-appraisal.

Information about the IEP's assessment procedures for determining placement and progress through its levels toward completion is available prior to, during, and at the end of a student's course of study in the IEP Program through a variety of formats, both oral and written, formal and informal, one-on-one, in small groups, in class, and in large student orientation meetings. As a result, the student, along with any sponsors, is kept well-informed of his or her progress and program options. There are also opportunities to ask questions, thus ensuring that all students, whatever their level of English proficiency, get the information they need to understand their own progress and make reasoned decisions about their course of study.

During the self-study, we decided to develop and introduce a survey to determine student satisfaction with the admission, registration, and placement. In Fall 2008, students were given an opportunity to rate the administration's handling of placement and registration as well as the requirement that instructors' reports on student performance be both accurate and timely. The goal is to attest to the strength of those components of assessment. The Assistant to the Director developed the survey and coordinated the timing of the survey with the faculty. The results were gathered and analyzed by the Director and staff.

Furthermore, the system which informs students of their placements and progress in the IEP depends on the administration's handling of placement and registration and of its requirement that instructor' reports on student performance are both accurate and timely.

Section D Recommendations, plan of action, timeline, persons responsible

No recommendations for change and improvements are necessary.

Student Achievement Standard 5: The program or institution has a plan, in writing, for regular review and modification of its assessment and reporting practices.

Section A Description of current operations to show how the standard is met.

Changes in Assessment and Reporting: When, Why, How, and by Whom?

Assessment and reporting practices in the AUK IEP have been developed and modified since the program's inception, as have the curriculum and administrative support systems of which they are components. Changes to the assessment instruments, testing procedures and reporting systems have continuously evolved over the course of the four (4) years in tandem with the change in the program's ability to more accurately assess the needs of the students, increase of student enrollments, expansion of the curriculum, and the practical and logistical demands on teachers and administrative staff that have become correspondingly more complex (See IEP Annual Reports for curriculum changes on site).

The IEP program has worked to stay flexible by keeping channels of communication open—inviting ideas on assessment instruments—thus allowing suggestions to flow in regularly and continuously from all directions. Minor changes in the IEP, including its assessment and reporting practices, are often discussed, approved and implemented quickly by those immediately responsible. For example, a group of teachers can agree on their own to insert new questions into an exit test (unit tests, Midterms, Final exams) for a course they are all teaching, as long as these changes do not signal a revision of the existing Operations Manual curriculum description (See minutes of final exam meeting, SA-2-13), and as long as revised components are rendered harmonious with the curriculum and the mission. Furthermore, the process also requires that instructors who amend and/or develop new assessment instruments share the information with coordinators as a final check and balance in order to assure consistency and eliminate redundancy relative to assessing the learning outcomes, and in order to assure the pedagogical value that is extended through any given instrument.

On the other hand, more systemic changes or those which have a broader impact on program operations or staff typically maneuver through the procedures in place for assessment development and revision. Such changes go through an extended vetting process involving informal discussion and research of an idea, followed by the drafting of a proposal which is often reviewed by the Director, coordinators, and senior instructors (See job descriptions Senior Instructor and Coordinator, Appendix A, p. 255-256 and 259-260 respectively). At times, multiple proposals will develop in the search for a consensus, and email balloting will be called for by a certain date. New assessment instruments will be piloted and after a successful pilot will be adopted. The Director or other persons responsible will make a policy decision and then announce it. Finally, the new policy will be added to the Operations Manual, the Student Handbook, or wherever appropriate, for future reference and transmission (See minutes of ENGL 099 development meeting and research, SA-5-1).

Assessment and Minor Changes

Most changes in the IEP curriculum are minor ones that take place at the course level, often within the component called "Evaluation," which frequently calls for final tests, i.e., those tests (unit tests, Midterms, Final exams) that determine whether a student passes or fails the course. Changes in final test items, including reformatting of questions or whole sections, or writing of alternate forms of a test, can all take place among a group of instructors who are teaching different sections (A, B, C, etc.) of the same course under the guidance of the Coordinator.

Instructors are not required to change the tests used in previous quarters. However, they are required to meet at least once at mid-semester in order to reach agreement on tests or other assignments to be used as exit criteria. The person responsible for initiating the meeting is the coordinator for each IEP skill. At that meeting, instructors often do decide to make revisions on the final test, based on problems noticed with particular test items, test length or difficulty level, change of textbooks, new ideas on how to evaluate student performance on a particular objective, etc.

Assessment—Broader Changes

With the major IEP curriculum revision of 2007 came many larger assessment-revision tasks:

- Recalibrating the IEP Placement Test and its scoring guidelines to distribute students effectively among the newly-defined levels, this involved piloting test items on already-placed students to find questions that distinguished reliably between the new levels;
- Rewriting the curriculum mapping for the new or re-leveled courses, including specification of exit criteria to measure achievement of the revised course objectives;
- Adapting old core course diagnostic tests to the new curriculum;
- Creating new tests or revising old tests to serve as the new exit assessment instruments.
- Development of an Assessment Plan (SA-5-2).

Such major overhauling required the mustering of program-wide, concentrated energies over an extended period, including the summer. The change process began with the analysis of IEP Curriculum Survey and other program data in 2006-2007, which led to the realization that much more than fine-tuning was needed (SA-5-3). It wasn't until Fall 2007 that the new curriculum, along with all its attendant placement and assessment tools, was ready to be implemented (see IEP Annual Report on Site).

Additionally, IEP's "norming" sessions, which are conducted four (4) to five (5) times per semester, either prior the submission of major essay assessment or the IEP portfolios, include identifying problem areas relative to specific assignments. The norming sessions become a forum in which grading criteria and scales are re-articulated in order to solicit co-operative recognition and appreciation of the forms of grading in assignments, and which components of an assessment instrument are reviewed in terms of what aspects require emphasis and/or de-emphasis. Adjustment of thinking and eventual adjustment to the assignments take place by coordinators or under the supervision of coordinators. With the approval of the Director of the IEP, the revised assessment is piloted. Upon a successful pilot, a program-wide implementation takes place.

New forms of assessments are developed based on student learning outcomes and are based on independent assessment development on the part of faculty and coordinators, and based on research conducted of comparable programs at leading American post-secondary institutions with similar student learning outcomes. For example, the change in the type of Language Placement exam was based on research conducted on comparable Language Placement Exams utilized at Universities in America which have a high percentage of English as a Second Language Students—specifically Hispanic students (See page 5 on Student Achievement Standard 1.) The replacement of the former English Placement test with ACCUPLACER OnLine™, substantially affected testing procedures in terms of efficacy.

Furthermore in the 2007/08, the Institutional Research and Planning Director at the American University of Cairo (AUC), Gina Cinali, was contacted for the purpose of sharing the results of the Institutional Assessment Guide for Administration and Academics, which

included forms for assessment mapping, an assessment matrix and an annual assessment plan of AUC. The Director the IEP used the above as a blueprint for the assessment process at AUK.

Insuring Validity and Reliability in Assessment

In spite of the various major and minor changes in the instruments the IEP has used to measure student achievement, the validity and reliability of assessment has not been compromised. In fact, currently we are more effective and efficient in assessment now than ever before due to the following program elements:

- The curriculum objectives in the Operation Manual serve as the guideposts, which keep all measurements of student achievement in line. All tests must measure students’ performance on them, weight them appropriately, and conform to the evaluation methods specified. Syllabi must reflect the curriculum guidelines, making it clear to students what the course objectives and learning outcomes are, and how they will be expected to demonstrate working ability of those outcomes.
- The IEP Placement Test and core course diagnostic tests have been well-calibrated and items piloted to ensure accurate placement of students into appropriate levels before instruction begins. Having written guidelines for placement testing and an experienced team of “hand-placers” guarantees placement consistency across semesters.
- Course organizational meetings being required for teachers of the same core course provides for standardization of testing and other exit criteria across sections. It also means that assessment procedures get the benefit of many eyes and minds scrutinizing each item, making it more likely that obscure or unfair items are weeded out and that a test will reflect clearly what has been taught and seen as fair and reasonable by students (See IEP Semester Reports on Site).

Section B 1) documents in the report

Minutes Final Exam Meeting (M:Drive/Administration/ Meeting/ IEP Meeting)	SA-2-13
Senior Instructor and Coordinator Job Descriptions (Operations Manual , Appendix A, p. 255-256 and 259-260)	Appendix A
Minutes ENGL 099 Development (M:Drive/Administration/ Meeting/ IEP Meeting)	SA-5-1
Assessment Plan	SA-5-2
Grammar Changes (IEP Annual Report 2004-2005 pp. 28-29)	SA-5-3

2) documents on site

IEP Annual Reports (2004/05; 2005/06; 2006/07; 2007/08)	Director’s Office
IEP Semester Reports	Director’s Office

Section C Performance Self-Appraisal

The processes for on-going review of assessment and reporting practices in the IEP continue to be effective for a number of reasons as follows:

- The system is flexible. It is continuously open to change to keep up with curriculum revisions and changing needs of students, instructors and administrators. This openness to ideas allows for deliberate fine-tuning of practices and policy, thus avoiding crises which precipitate a last-minute action.

- Input is invited from all sectors of the program and given respectful consideration. Input ranges from highly structured, regular survey data to regular faculty meetings such as norming sessions, and ad hoc comments. Particularly important is the empowerment of teachers in this arena. They are encouraged to continually examine existing assessment tools as these relate to their students' achievements in their classes on a daily basis. Moreover, teachers are given the administrative and technical support to analyze and implement their ideas for improvement. Specifically useful in the assessment review process is the Class Action software as it enables the generation of student achievement data efficiently and effectively. Thus, based on the data, and on instructors' daily interaction with students, the IEP is capable of determining more accurately the academic appropriateness of the assessment instruments and techniques in place.
- The insights from current research in testing and language acquisition have avenues of influence on established IEP assessment procedures due to the department's support of staff development (attending professional meetings where new ideas are discussed, in-service sessions, and independent research practices related to professional development, etc.) and involvement of students in our programs with teachers, researchers, materials writers, and more. Research conducted relative to the Language Placement Test has had a profound impact in ascertaining an appropriate procedure most compatible to student learning outcomes and the curricular structure of the IEP.
- Checks and balances developed throughout the systems, which review and revise assessment practices serve to maintain the close connection between the curriculum objectives and their measurement in terms of student achievement, as well as to ensure reliability of measurement from student to student and test to test, semester after semester.
- The aggregate proficiency data defined as the overall success or failure rate of IEP students is measured according to pass/fail ratio and student GPA in the University's undergraduate programs and retention rates in the IEP's and the University's undergraduate programs. Since the beginning of operations, the overall program quality has been on the incline with a student fail-ratio that has decrease from 15% to 8% of total population of IEP students within the IEP program, and an increase in IEP students' GPA in the University's undergraduate program from 2.4 to 2.83.

Section D Recommendations, plan of action, timeline, persons responsible

In Student Achievement Standard 2, the IEP will develop the Assessment Plan over the next six years. No other changes are proposed in assessment and reporting policies.