



FALL 2019

# USING TRACDAT

TIPS FOR AMERICAN UNIVERSITY USERS

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# QUICK GUIDE FOR USING TRACDAT

## INTRODUCTION

### **What is TracDat?**

TracDat is a software system that is designed to help AU report and track the assessments of academic programs. Access is managed by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA).

### **Why TracDat?**

Having to report using a software vs. a simple Word document may seem cumbersome but TracDat has the following advantages:

- It enables departments to share assessment results in a very short format. No long reports are necessary. You can simply write a paragraph about the assessments you've done, a paragraph for what you've learned, and a paragraph for how you're using the results.
- It facilitates the goal of linking assessments to specific learning outcomes.
- It enables departments to store all its assessment plans, rubrics, assessment data all in one place. This makes it easier to transfer the responsibilities of assessment to others (should someone go on sabbatical, for example). It also makes it easier to share this responsibility within a department.
- It enables the Senate Committee on Learning Assessment (COLA) to better administer the process by being able to track which reports are in, trends in the types of assessments being done on campus, and who the assessment contacts are for each unit. It gives them an easy way to upload suggestions to you.

### **How is TracDat organized:**

The important thing to remember is that assessment of student learning is organized by a program's learning outcomes. For each outcome you:

- Describe the learning outcome in one sentence;
- Set one or more ways (methods) to assess the outcome;
- Set standards (targets) for what you'd like the results to be; and
- Set a schedule (cycle) for how often the assessment is done.

This information is called the assessment "plan". Assessment methods and the results are all organized around a specific learning outcome.

The implication of this set up is that if you do a very general assessment (like a survey of students), you'll be entering your survey results in the context of each learning outcome. So, the survey results for the survey question on whether they know theories would be entered in the "Theory" learning outcome section. The survey question results on whether they learned to write would be entered in the "Communication" learning outcome section.

## TRACDAT: NUTS AND BOLTS (logging in, resetting password, etc.)

### How to Login:

Your department decides who has access. Oftentimes, it is more than one person. If you are not sure if you have TracDat access, please request access from Karen Frosliid Jones ([kfrosliid@american.edu](mailto:kfrosliid@american.edu)) or Nicole Stohmann ([ns9960a@student.american.edu](mailto:ns9960a@student.american.edu)) from OIRA. When you request access, please let us know which academic programs/majors you need access to so that we can be sure that you have what you need.

Once access is set up go to the website to login: <http://american.tracdat.com>

You can use your regular AU Eaglenet ID and password.

### Access to Reports:

At the top of your screen is a drop down menu with all the assessment plans. If you have a program that is missing, please contact OIRA.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Methods	Assessment Results (What we learned)	Use of Findings	Follow-Up
✓ Problem Description	1	0	0	0
✓ Method Description	1	0	0	0
✓ Results Discussion	1	0	0	0
✓ Conclusion	1	0	0	0

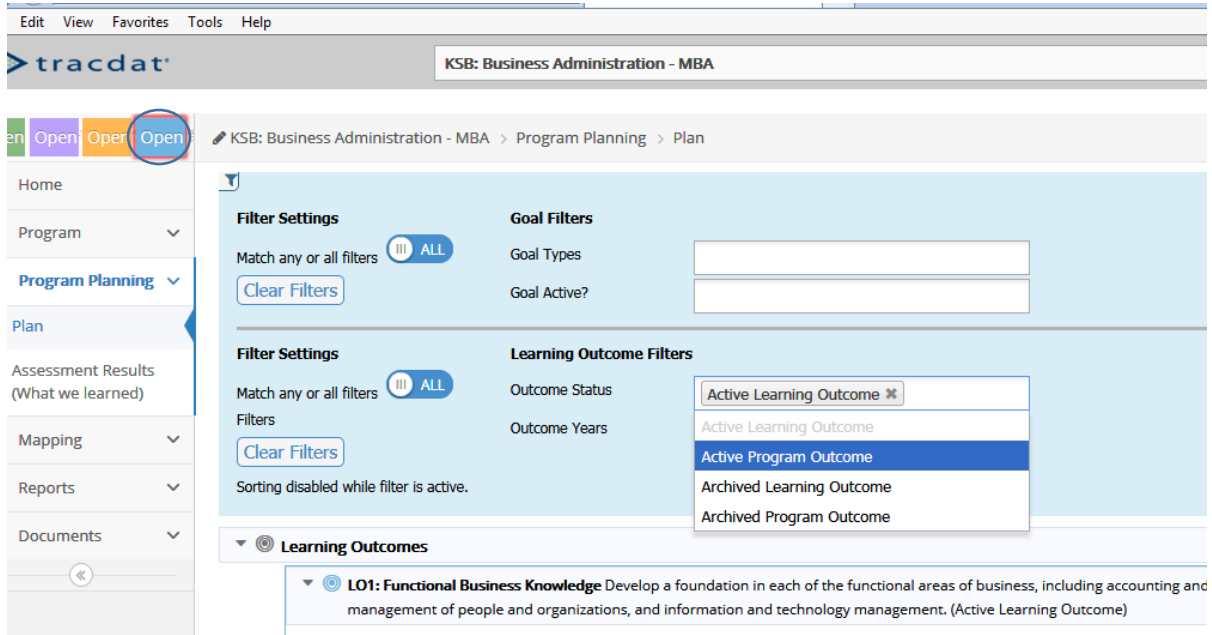
### What is on the main screen?

The front screen has a program planning summary that shows you each learning outcome for your program, the number of assessment methods you use for each learning outcome, the number of results, the number of times you have written how you plan to use the findings, and the number of times you have written up a follow-up report on what happened as a result of using the findings. If you have a red flag it means that you have a learning outcome that has not yet have an assessment method planned. Please consider adding an assessment method, even if that method will not be done for a few years.

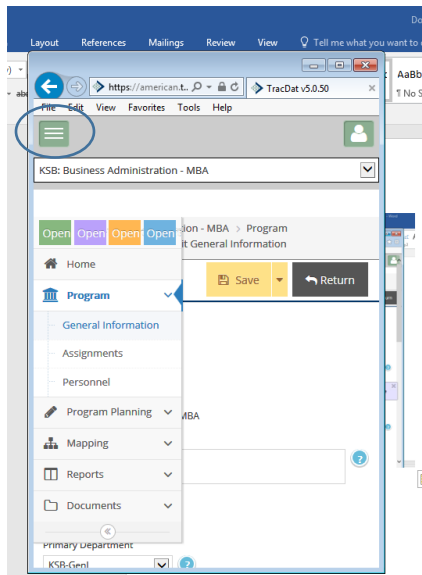
Assessment Methods
1
0
0
1
1

## There are “old” learning outcomes showing. How do I see only my current learning outcomes?

“Filter” for only the active learning outcomes for your program by clicking on the blue button (it may have a funnel icon) and then choose the learning outcome filters to pick only the “Active Learning Outcomes”. Hit enter and you should be set. If they still show, it means that you still need to archive the old outcomes. (Feel free to call OIRA for assistance!)



## What is in the Menu? Where is it!?



Normally, you'll see a menu on the left hand side of your screen. TracDat is also accessible via a mobile format and, depending on how you are accessing it, you may see only a green square with three lines. In that case, click on the green square on the upper left and the menu will appear.

## What is on the main menu?

Here is a quick summary:

- **Program** – The “General Information” tab has basic information on the program, including the mission, school/college affiliation and department.
- **Program Planning** – This is the heart of TracDat!
  - The “Annual Updates” tab helps COLA keep track of the status of reports.
  - The “Plan” section has your learning outcomes and planned assessment methods.
  - The “Assessment Results” section is just as it sounds.
- **Mapping** – We would like units to use this, if possible. “Mapping” is simply linking individual courses to the learning outcomes in your program as a way to keep track of where your learning outcomes are actually taught. Separate training on this is possible. If you’d like to link a course, but don’t see the course listed, let OIRA know.
- **Reports** – The main reports you are likely to use are the “Standard Reports”. There are three reports in this section: the “Academic Assessment Report by Learning Outcome Report” and “Program Four Column Report” include your assessment results (but in different ways) and the “Assessment Plan Only” shows your learning outcomes and assessment plan.
- **Documents** – Here is the spot where you can load supporting documents for your results. This is also the place where COLA will upload its comments or suggestions about your assessment report.

## How can I get assistance with TracDat?

For general questions about TracDat you can feel free to email TracDat at [support@nuventive.com](mailto:support@nuventive.com). You can also send an email to Karen Frosolid Jones ([kfrosolid@american.edu](mailto:kfrosolid@american.edu)) with a cc to Richard Laurberg ([laurberg@american.edu](mailto:laurberg@american.edu)). We will respond as soon as possible. Of course, you can always call Karen directly at x6155.

## WHAT IS MY ASSESSMENT PLAN? HOW DO I PRINT IT OUT?

On the left hand side, use the menu to choose “Standard Reports” in the report tab. Then “Assessment Plan Only”. (We suggest keep it simple and not check off any of the “options” that are listed when you “run” the report.) There may also be an ad hoc report available called “Summary of Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods”.

The screenshot displays the TracDat v5.0.50 web application interface. The browser address bar shows the URL <https://american.tracdat.com/tracdat/faces>. The page title is "CAS: Chemistry - MS". The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: Home, Program, Program Planning, Mapping, Reports, Ad Hoc Reports, and Documents. The "Reports" menu item is highlighted with a blue oval, and a blue arrow points to the "Standard Reports" sub-item, which is also circled in blue. The main content area displays the "Standard Reports" page, which is categorized into "Program Reports" and "Course Reports". Under "Program Reports", there are three options: "Academic Assessment Report by Learning Outcome", "Assessment Plan Only" (circled in blue), and "Program Four Column Report". Each option has a brief description. Under "Course Reports", there is a "Mapping" option. A "Legal Notice" link is visible at the bottom of the main content area. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system tray with the date and time: 11:58 AM, 3/3/2016.

## HOW DO I CHANGE/UPDATE MY ASSESSMENT PLAN?

If you look at your plan and say, “We will never do the assessment that is listed!” or “Who came up with that crazy learning outcome!” have no fear. You can edit it all you want.

### STEP ONE: ACCESSING YOUR PROGRAM’S PLAN

Use the menu on the right hand side and choose “Program Planning” then “Plan”. You’ll notice that the first thing you’ll see are the learning outcomes. Nested within each outcome are the assessment methods.

### STEP TWO: ADDING LEARNING OUTCOMES OR ASSESSMENT METHODS

Add new learning outcomes or assessment methods. Use the green circles to add information. The circle by the learning outcome adds an outcome. The green circle by the assessment method adds a new assessment method for that outcome.

The screenshot shows the TracDat software interface. The browser address bar displays the URL: [https://american.tracdat.com/tracdat/faces/assessment/unit\\_planning/assessmentPlan.xhtml](https://american.tracdat.com/tracdat/faces/assessment/unit_planning/assessmentPlan.xhtml). The page title is "Academic Program: Example - Basket Weaving practice plan". The sidebar on the left has a "Program Planning" menu with a "Plan" option highlighted. The main content area shows a list of Learning Outcomes. The first outcome is "Knowledge of Terminology" with details on outcome years, start/end dates, and a list of Assessment Methods including "Quiz/ Exam". Other outcomes listed are "Basket Weaving" and "Oral Presentation". Green plus icons are visible next to the learning outcomes and assessment methods, indicating where to click to add new information. Blue arrows point from text boxes to these icons.

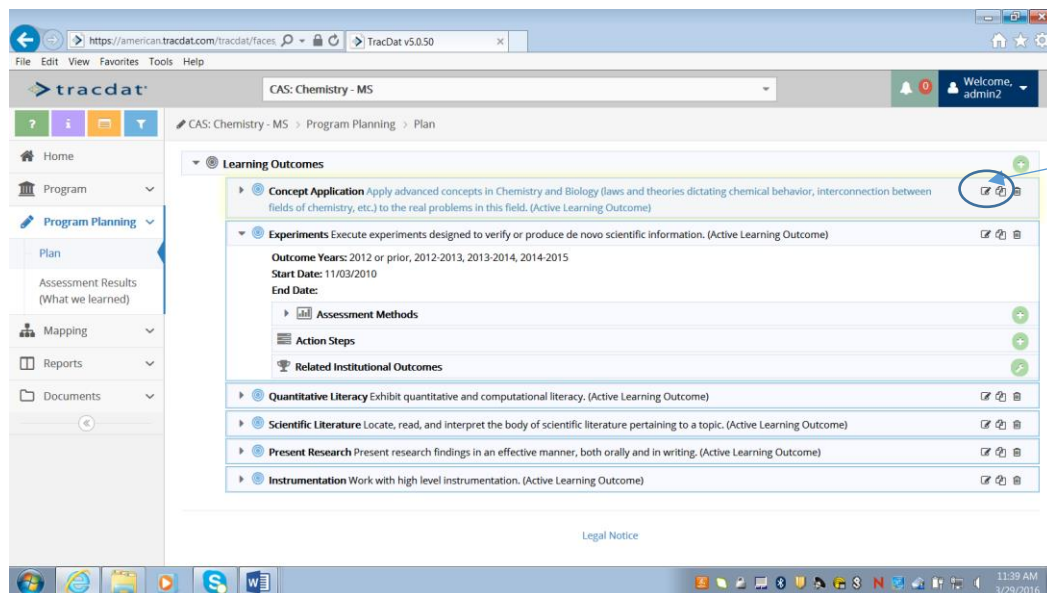
The arrows are used to expand your view. This is how you see the assessment methods.

Use the green circles to add information (The circle by the learning outcome adds an outcome. The green circle by the assessment method adds a new assessment method)

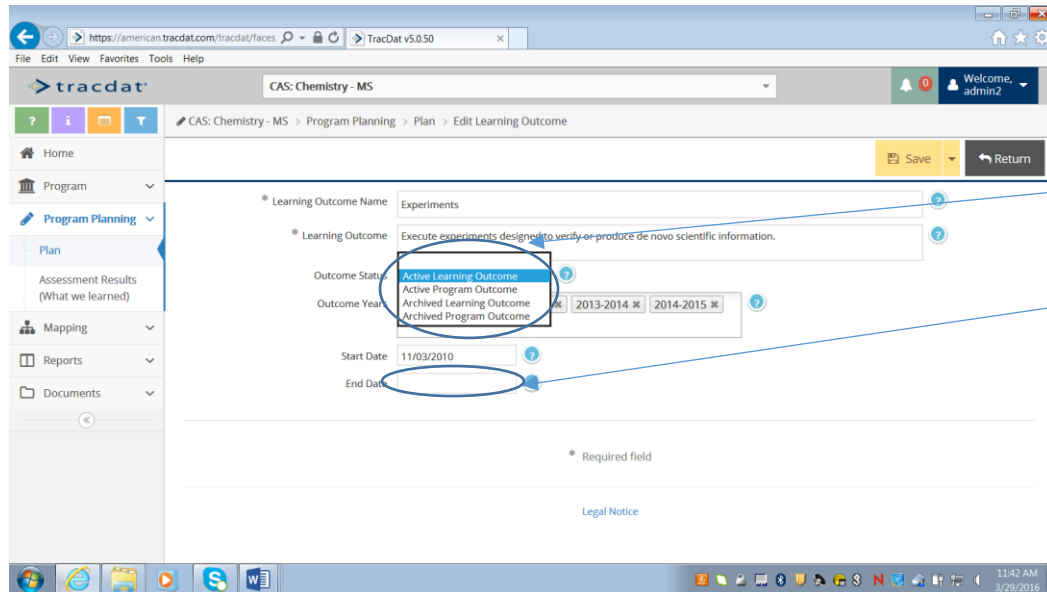


### STEP THREE: EDITING OR ENDING A LEARNING OUTCOME

Choose the edit button (the pencil within a square) next to the outcome you'd like to edit or end.



We recommend that instead of deleting old learning outcomes, you simply make them inactive. This way, the history of your assessment plan is preserved. Change the status of the outcome from “Active Learning Outcome” to “Archived Learning Outcome” in the drop down menu.



#### STEP FOUR: EDITING OR DELETING ASSESSMENT METHODS

If you have never used an assessment method before, feel free to delete it. Choose the trash can to delete or the edit button (the pencil within a square) to edit it. You can make the assessment method inactive by making sure the “active” button is not checked. (See example below.)

The screenshot displays the TracDat web interface for editing an assessment method. The browser address bar shows the URL <https://american.tracdat.com/tracdat/faces>. The page title is "CAS: Chemistry - MS" and the breadcrumb trail is "CAS: Chemistry - MS > Program Planning > Plan > Edit Assessment Method". The main content area shows the following details:

- Active:**  (unchecked)
- Measure Type:** Quiz/Exam
- \* Assessment Method:** Performance on written comprehensive exams. Assessed by all faculty on a thesis committee every four years (2011-Yr. 3)
- Target:** 75%
- Schedule/Cycle:** Administered yearly (2011-Yr. 3). Comprehensive exam requirement was eliminated during the 2011-2012 AY. Instead, an oral presentation of proposed research is now required.

A yellow arrow points from a callout box containing the text "Uncheck the active button." to the "Active" checkbox. A "Required field" asterisk is visible at the bottom of the form.

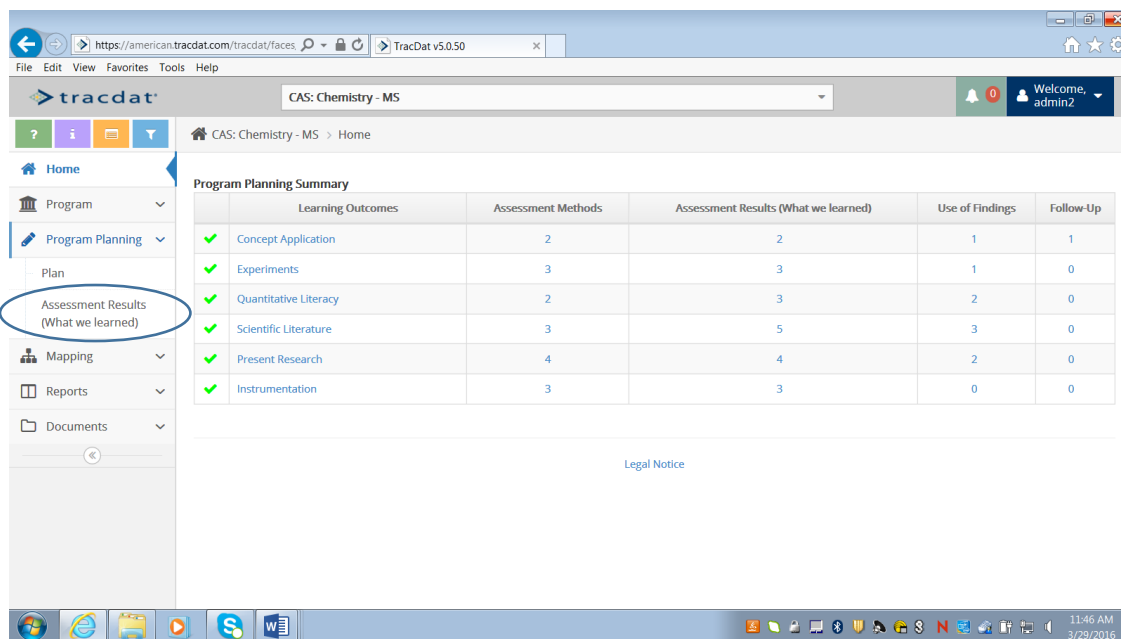
#### STEP FIVE: REVIEW YOUR CHANGES

We suggest you print out a copy of your assessment plan just to make sure the changes are as you would like them to be.

# HOW DO I ENTER ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN TRACDAT?

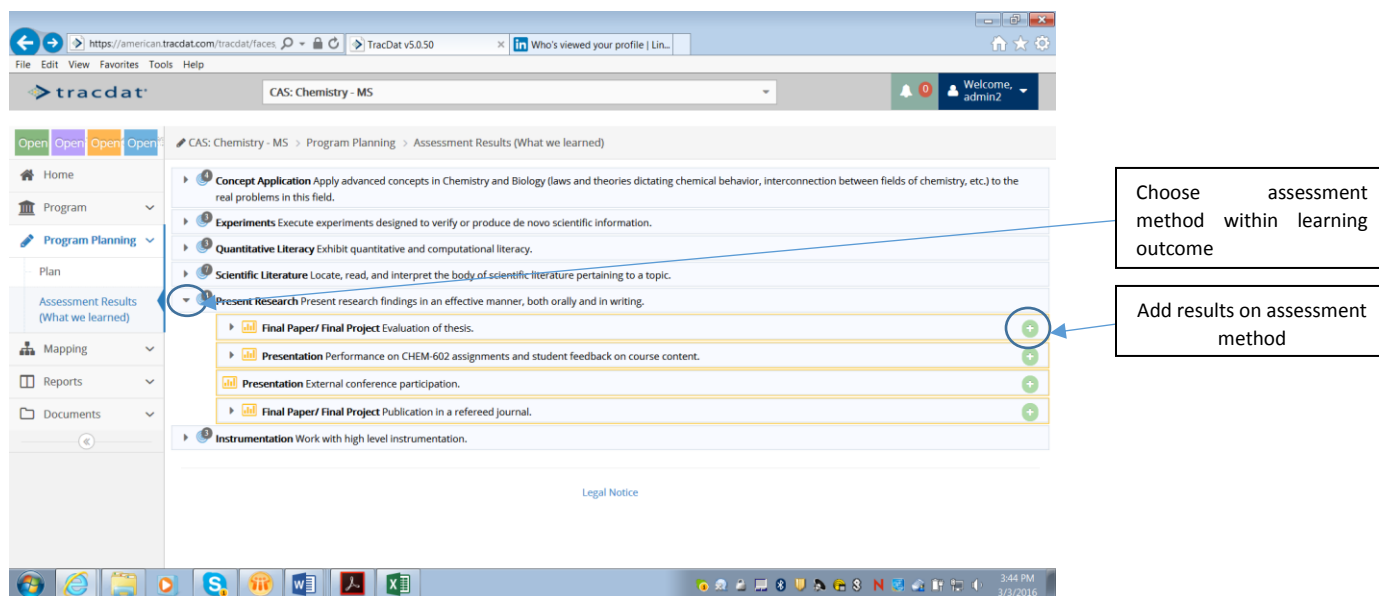
## STEP ONE:

Choose “Assessment Results (What we learned)” from the drop down menu under “Program Planning”.



## STEP TWO:

Use arrow by the learning outcomes to see the assessment methods and choose the assessment method you used. (Note: if you don't see the assessment method you used, you'll have to add it to your assessment plan first. See the instructions on changing your assessment plan to add the new assessment method.)



### STEP THREE:

Add a one or two paragraph summary (at the most) of your findings. Be sure to relate them to the targets that you have set so that a reader will get a sense of how you did in comparison to your goals. Provide information like the number of papers reviewed, or the fact that you used a rubric. Tell us who reviewed the student work (or the other form of assessment) that you did. See the document “Examples of Good Assessment Write Ups” for tips.

The screenshot shows the TracDat web application interface. The browser address bar displays 'https://american.tracdat.com/tracdat/aces'. The page title is 'CAS: Chemistry - MS'. The breadcrumb trail is 'CAS: Chemistry - MS > Program Planning > Assessment Results (What we learned) > Add Assessment Result (What we learned)'. The main content area shows a form for adding an assessment result. The form includes a section for 'Present Research' with a description: 'Present research findings in an effective manner, both orally and in writing.' Below this is a 'Final Paper/ Final Project' evaluation section with a target average of 4/5 and a schedule cycle of every four years. The form fields are: '\* Assessment Result (What we learned) Date' (03/04/2016), '\* Assessment Result (What we learned)' (highlighted with a blue oval), '\* Observation Status' (dropdown menu), and '\* Summary of what we learned' (dropdown menu). A 'Required field' asterisk is shown below the form. A 'Legal Notice' link is at the bottom. A text box on the right contains the instruction: 'Write one or two paragraphs summarizing results' with an arrow pointing to the highlighted text area.

Write one or two paragraphs summarizing results

The default date for the assessment will be today's date. Feel free to backdate it to when the data was collected or the review completed.

You'll be required to enter some sort of summary under "Observation Status" and "Summary of What we Learned". Don't worry about this too much. These help us to track AU's overall progress in assessment but they are not used to evaluate individual programs.

#### STEP FOUR:

After you save your results you'll be able to see your results summarized. Now, add the actions you will take as a result of this assessment results. (See "Use of Findings" tab.) Do you plan to review the assignments in a course? Add a new required course? Ask faculty to emphasize something in a course? Advertise positive findings to prospective students? Feel free to keep your description short and focus on how you will use the results to improve student learning. (You can also add how you plan to improve assessment techniques but this is not the purpose of this section.)

#### STEP FIVE:

We suggest you print out a report so that you can see what it looks like as entered. Go to the reports tab and pick one of the standard reports that include assessment results.

## HOW DO I UPLOAD A RUBRIC OR OTHER DOCUMENTS INTO TRACDAT?

If you have a rubric, a longer report, a detailed summary of results, or anything else you'd like to share, feel free to add them to TracDat.

### Step One:

Choose "Documents" then "Document Repository" from the left menu.

### Step Two:

Create a new folder for this year's documents, if you'd like, by highlighting your program name. You'll see a down arrow and an option to add a new folder. Call it anything you like, such as "supporting documents for 2017".

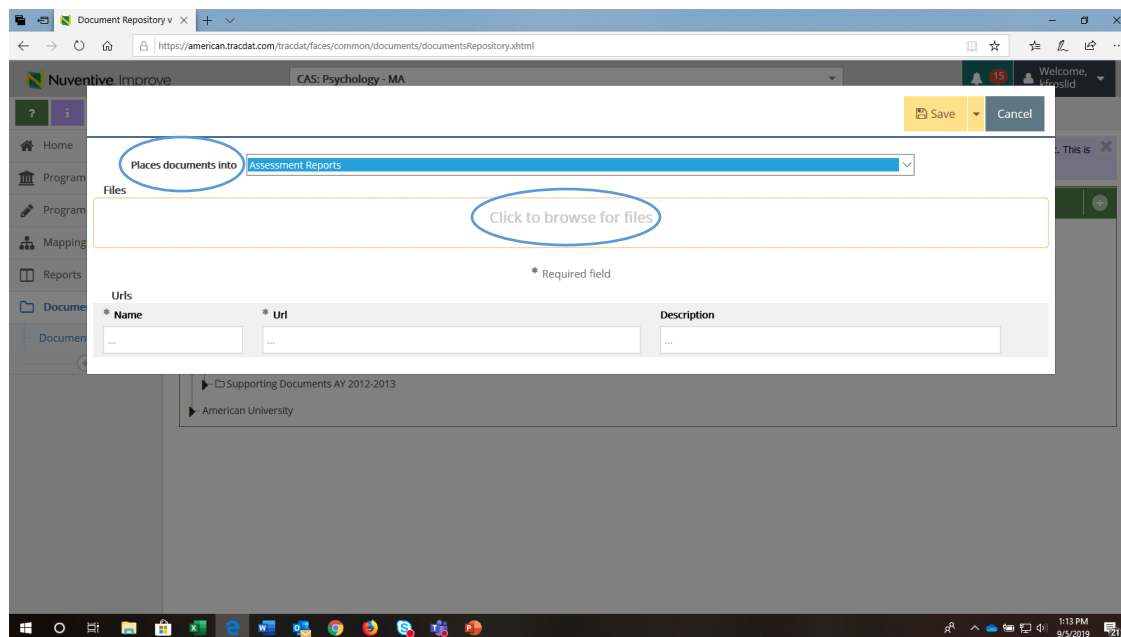
### Step Three:

Click the "plus" sign (in green) to add a document.

The screenshot shows the TracDat web application interface. The browser address bar displays the URL: <https://american.tracdat.com/tracdat/faces/common/documents/documentsRepository.xhtml>. The page title is "Document Repository". The left sidebar menu includes "Home", "Program", "Program Planning", "Mapping", "Reports", "Documents", "Document Repository", and "Settings". The "Documents" and "Document Repository" items are circled in blue. The main content area shows a tree view of folders under "CAS: Studio Art - BA", including "Assessment Reports", "Assessment Results: 2013", "CAS", "Feedback/Communication from COLA", "Supporting Documents AY 2010/11", and "Supporting Documents AY 2011/12". A green plus sign icon is circled in the top right corner of the main content area, with a callout box pointing to it that says "Create new folder".

## Step Five:

Click the box that says “browse to add files”. Pick your document and “save”. (You’ll notice, above the browse to add files box is a drop down menu so that you can pick which folder to put it in so choose the right one!)



That is it!

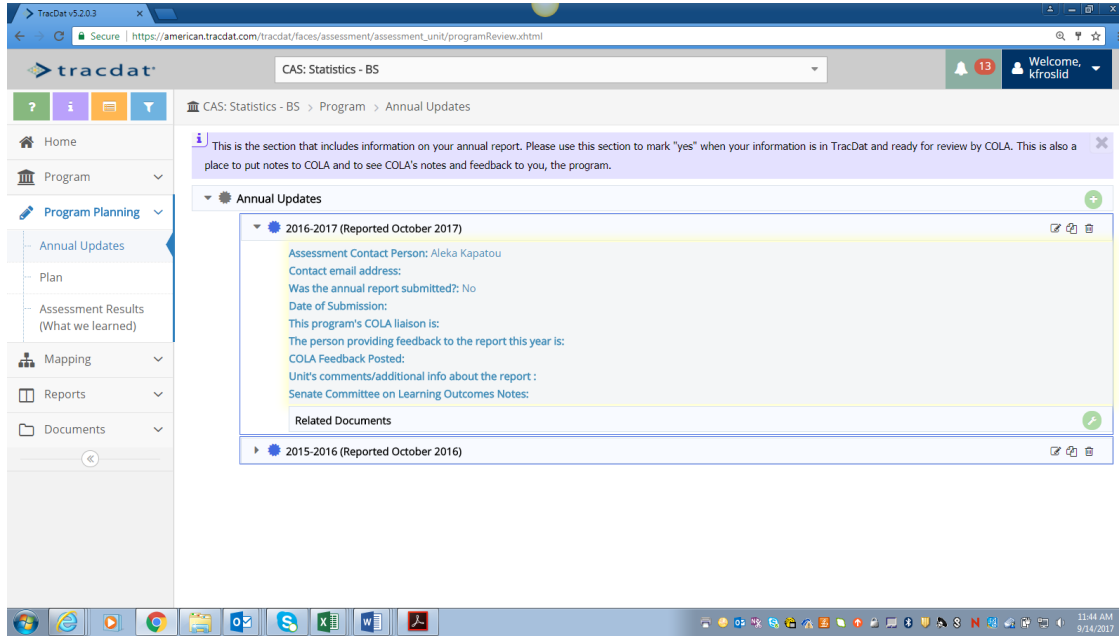
## Optional:

Now that the document is uploaded you can “link” it to an assessment method. You can do this by either drilling down to a specific assessment method in the “plan” or by drilling down to a specific assessment result. You’ll see an area called “Related Documents”. Click the little wrench icon and “relate the appropriate document.”

## HOW DO I LET COLA KNOW THAT MY ANNUAL REPORT IS SUBMITTED?

To complete your report choose the “Annual Updates” tab under “Program Planning”. Click the little pencil on the upper right hand side to edit information. Simply put “yes” under the question about the report being submitted. Date the submission. That’s it!

If you’d like to leave comments to COLA please do so. You’ll notice that COLA keeps its own set of notes here, keeping track of communications that we’ve had with you. If you have any documents that relate to your report, you can also link them to this section using the “Related Documents” tool.



You’ll note that there is a drop down menu to submit your document. Please switch it to “yes”. There is also a place to indicate that you have changed learning outcomes or changed assessment methods. By answering these questions, it helps the Senate Committee on Learning Assessment better review your report.

You’ll also notice that there is a place to write comments. Please feel free to communicate to us here. You may also send an email to [AULearning@american.edu](mailto:AULearning@american.edu) letting us know that the report is in or telling us something about your report.