

TracDat FAQ

1. *How do I access TracDat?*

TracDat can be accessed by the Institutional Research website through the “assessment” and “TracDat” links, or TracDat can be accessed directly at:

<http://tracdat.sfasu.edu:8081/tracdat/>

2. *Is there a users’ manual available?*

Yes. The **SFA TracDat Users’ Guide** is always available on the SFA Institutional Research web site.

To access the guide follow the links: SFA Home > Administration > Institutional Research > assessment > TracDat > SFA TracDat Users’ Guide, or access it directly at the following address. All users can be assured that the guide located there will always be up-to-date.

http://www.sfasu.edu/research/docs/tracdat/sfa-tracdat_user_guide.pdf

3. *Why do I not see the Action Status option on my Edit Results window?*

When a new Result is entered, the Action Plan and Related Documents Sub-Tabs will not appear at the bottom of the screen until **AFTER the Save Changes** button is clicked.

4. *Why have my objectives or assessment methods or results or documents disappeared?*

In many cases, multiple users have access to assessment units and are responsible for specific objectives. Users should be CAREFUL –**CAREFUL!**—that they are editing their own items before making any changes. It is incredibly easy to mistakenly delete a colleague’s hard day’s work.

5. *Why do I not see my objectives and assessment methods on the Results Tab?*

Objectives/Assessment Methods will not appear on the Results Tab **until a Result is entered** for that Objective and Assessment Method. They are available for entry once the Add Result button is clicked.

6. *Why are my related documents not located on my Documents Tab?*

The Documents Tab has two Sub-Tabs:

- a. Document Repository Sub-Tab
- b. Related Documents Sub-Tab

When the Documents Tab is clicked, the Document Repository Tab usually automatically opens. If documents are related on the Plan and Results Tabs directly to assessment methods and results, then they will appear on the Related Documents Sub-Tab, but they will not necessarily be placed in the Document Repository. Therefore, if **items have not been explicitly placed in the repository**, then it may be empty. However, if the Related Documents Sub-Tab is clicked, all the previously related documents will be visible.

7. *Can I share documents between assessment units?*

Yes. Users with administrator access to assessment units can share documents between assessment units. On the Documents Tab, users will click the “share folder” link above the documents list. In the Set Folder Permissions window, the user will choose the appropriate assessment units with which to share, scroll to the bottom of the window, and click “save permissions.” Thereafter, on the secondary assessment unit’s Document Tab, the “Show Folders for” drop-down menu will allow access to the shared folder.

If a user does not have administrator access, he will not have access to the share feature. To request administrator access, users should contact the SFA TracDat administrator.

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8. *How should I name my Related Documents?*

Of course, naming conventions will vary by user. However, the following items might be used in naming documents and/or folders in the repository to organize and maintain structure as repositories grow:

- a. Term to which the item applies.
- b. Objective to which the item applies.
- c. User name.
- d. Description of item.

Including the user name is especially useful to avoid **inadvertent deletion** of a colleague's documents.

9. *Can I copy objectives, assessment methods, and results from one assessment unit to a second assessment unit?*

Users with administrator access to assessment units can copy objectives and assessment methods between assessment units by the procedure:

- a. Click the Plan Tab.
- b. Click "copy" next to the objective to be copied.
- c. Edit the Objective Name if necessary.
- d. Check the boxes for Include Means of Assessment, Related Courses, Tasks, and/or Related Goals.
- e. Uncheck the box next to the current assessment unit.
- f. Scroll down to check box(es) for desired assessment unit(s) to copy objectives.
- g. Click Save Changes.

Objectives and assessment methods will now be available in additional assessment units.

Unfortunately, **Results cannot be copied.** Results must be entered manually, assessment unit by assessment unit. The copy-and-paste feature is the only short-cut available.

NOTE: If a user does not have administrator access, he will not have access to the "copy" feature for objectives and assessment methods. To request administrator access, users should contact the SFA TracDat administrator.

10. *Do I define a Start Date and End Date for my Objectives?*

No. There are options on the Plan Tab, Objective Sub-Tab, and Edit Objective Window to define Start and End Dates for Objectives. However, the University method is to utilize the Objective Status as "Active" or "Inactive," and **the Start Date and End Date fields will be left blank.**

11. *Why do I see Example Assessment Units in TracDat?*

All TracDat users have access to example assessment units. These were created for reference as SFA faculty and staff begin to build assessment plans and results in TracDat.

PLEASE NOTE: All TracDat users have the ability to add information to and delete information from these units, but it is requested that completed example assessment units not be edited. All users should be aware that it is incredibly easy to edit another person's assessment data without realizing the mistake. Users should **ALWAYS check the Selected Unit Field** and be aware of the assessment unit being edited.

12. *How do I enter a result from a previous year?*

Results from years prior to 2008-2009 are welcomed and encouraged in TracDat. To enter a "retroactive" result, simply enter the result as usual on the Result Tab, and enter a date in the Result Date field from the appropriate time frame.

For example, if submitting a result from the 2006-2007 academic year, the date 12/15/2006 might be entered into the Result Date field.

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13. Do I need to edit all the date fields?

No. When entering data into TracDat, all date fields will default to the current date. Only the **Result Date Field** on the Result Tab must be changed. However, it is VITALLY IMPORTANT that the Result Date be correct. All users should follow the steps below to confirm that Result Dates are correct in TracDat.

To be correct, the Result Date must fall within the term that the assessment occurred. For example, if an exam was administered during the Fall 2008 term, then the Result Date must fall between September 1, 2008 and December 15, 2008.

Procedure:

- a. Click the Results Tab.
- b. Click the Show Results Link to reveal each result.
- c. Click “edit” next to each result.
- d. Check the Result Date field.
- e. Edit Result Date if necessary.

14. How do I know if I am editing the correct assessment unit?

When opening TracDat, first check the **Selected Unit Field** at the top of the screen. Click the down arrow on the drop-down menu, and be aware of which Assessment Unit is chosen. Do not assume the assessment unit desired is the unit showing on the screen. If the wrong unit is selected, then objectives, assessment methods, and results will be entered into the wrong unit.

15. Should I designate an Assessment Method for every Assessment Result?

Yes. The University method is to **require an assessment method be defined for every assessment result**. In TracDat, it is systematically possible to enter a result and not define an assessment method. In the Select Assessment Method/Task Pop-Up Window, the other options available include “Task” and “Neither.” Do not choose either of those options.

Following these steps will assure that an assessment method is defined for every assessment result:

- a. Click the Results Tab
- b. Click the Add Result button (at the bottom of the screen).
- c. In the Select Objective Window, choose the appropriate Objective by clicking “select.”
- d. In the Select Assessment Method/Task Pop-Up Window, verify that “Assessment Method” (not “Task” or “Neither”) is chosen in the Select drop-down menu.
- e. Beside the appropriate Assessment Method, click “select.”
- f. In the Edit Result Window, enter the Result.

If a result is mistakenly entered without an attached Assessment Method, the result can be easily edited by the following procedure:

- a. Click the Results Tab
- b. Click the “Show Results” link to reveal your results.
- c. Click “edit” next to the result.
- d. Click the Change Objective button at the bottom of the screen.
- e. Beside the appropriate objective, click “select.”
- At this point, the appropriate Assessment Method can be designated.*
- f. In the Select drop-down menu choose Assessment Method.
- g. Beside the appropriate assessment method, click “select.”
- h. Click Return.
- i. Repeat for other necessary objectives.

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16. *Should non-academic units enter the entire **Assessment Unit Mission**?*

Non-academic assessment units are required to enter a unit mission into TracDat. (This step was not covered in TracDat training.) The Mission field is located on the Assessment Unit Tab and the General Sub-Tab.

If the unit mission is excessively long and includes items such as strategic plans, the unit may decide to enter only the main mission statement and attach a mission document on the Document Tab.

17. *How do I choose an Assessment Method Category?*

As the experts, it is at the TracDat users' discretion to determine the appropriate Assessment Method Categories. Concerns can always be directed to TracDat Administrators.

18. *Are my objectives or learning outcomes "Active"?*

Yes. As of the implementation of TracDat, **all objectives should be designated as "Active"** by following these steps:

Procedure:

- a. Click the Plan Tab.
- b. Click the Objectives Sub-Tab.
- c. Click "edit" next to each objective.
- d. Check the Objective Status field.
- e. Choose Active from drop-down menu if necessary.

19. *Do I need to Relate Documents to either assessment methods or assessment results?*

Yes. Not only should supporting documentation be placed on the Documents Tab in TracDat, but they should also be **related to specific assessment methods and assessment results** on the Plan and Results Tabs. As a reminder, the following steps will relate documents to assessment methods and results.

Procedure (Relate Documents to Means of Assessment):

- a. Click the Plan Tab.
- b. Click the Means of Assessment Sub-Tab.
- c. Click the down arrow on the Objective Name drop-down menu and select an objective.
- d. Click the "edit" link next to each Assessment Method.
- e. In the Edit Assessment Method window, click the Relate Document button at the bottom of the screen.
- f. Choose "New Document," "Document From Repository," or "Previously Related Document."
- g. Browse to document.
- h. Click relate.
- i. Remember to utilize common file formats such as Word, Excel, or PDF.

Procedure (Relate Documents to Results):

- a. Click the Results Tab.
- b. Click the "Show Results" link.
- c. Click the "edit" link next to each Result.
- d. In the Edit Result window, click the Relate Documents sub-tab at the bottom of the screen.
- e. Click the "Relate Document" link at the right side of the screen.
- f. Choose "New Document," "Document From Repository," or "Previously Related Document."
- g. Browse to document.
- h. Click relate.
- i. Remember to utilize common file formats such as Word, Excel, or PDF.