

Usability Testing Report  
for  
**COM-FSM Program Assessment and  
Program Review Procedures Manual**



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## II. Introduction

This report describes the results of the *usability test* for the *COM-FSM Program Assessment and Program Review Procedures Manual*. Usability testing is a *technique* for ensuring that the *intended users* of a system can carry out the intended tasks efficiently, effectively and satisfactorily. According to J. Nielsen (1994), “it is a technique used in a *user-centered interaction design* to evaluate a product by testing it on users.” Usability testing is fundamentally carried out pre-release so that any significant issues identified can be addressed.

As such, the working group conducted usability tests of the *COM-FSM Program Assessment and Program Review Procedures Manual* between March 8 and 9, 2013 employing the *walkthrough* as method in which an evaluator works through a procedure for testing and ask a set of questions from the perspective of the *participants*.

### Background

In comprehensive consultation and resourceful collaboration with several groups and individuals within the college community, the working group drafted, between December 21, 2012 and April 30, 2013, the *COM-FSM Program Assessment and Program Review Procedures Manual*. The *Manual* specifies a roadmap to guide all levels of decision makers in reaching consensus based on *criteria* and *outcomes* established by the College’s own mission, laws of the Federated States of Micronesia and mandatory policies.

At COM-FSM, *program assessment* and *program review* function as the blueprints for collecting and analyzing data. These data are used to (a) evaluate the *quality* of programs, and (b) inform decision-making about *allocation of resources*. External mandates likewise play a significant role in the planning and development of the college’s programs, not only for resource allocation but also for achieving the goals of the college’s strategic plan. The external mandates are mainly linked to accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Junior and Community Colleges (ACJCC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

**Table 1.0** below *outlines* the timeframe involved in the *development* of the *manual*.

**Table 1.0. The timeframe involved in the development of the manual**

Activities and Deliverables	2012				2013																			
	December				January				February				March				April				May			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Organizational meeting of the <i>working group</i> for drafting the <i>COM-FSM Program Assessment and Program Review Procedures Manual</i>																								
Program Review Handbook draft <i>template</i> , very <i>rough</i> draft of the <i>manual</i> , and working <i>references</i> or <i>resources</i> for the <i>manual</i>																								
Working group <i>face-to-face</i> meeting																								
Second <i>training session</i> for technical writers																								
Working group continued to work on writing the first <i>draft</i> of the <i>manual</i>																								
First <i>draft</i> of the <i>manual</i> transmitted to the VPIEQA/ALO as one of the																								

[illegible]

## Usability Test Objectives

The purpose of the usability test of the *COM-FSM Program Assessment and Program Review Procedures Manual* was to determine whether the user could follow the procedures without confusion or difficulty. In addition, the usability test assessed overall satisfaction and perception of the participants about the *manual* especially by asking the following questions:

1. In general, did you find this procedure easy to follow? Why or why not?
2. Which steps in the procedure were difficult to follow?
3. Which parts of the procedure most helpful?
4. What specific suggestion would you make to improve the manual?

### III. Methodology

The usability tests were conducted on the *participants'* offices between May 8 and 9, 2013. The testing process consisted of four stages: (1) identifying a testing group, (2) selecting a single procedure for testing, (3) administering the test, and (4) conducting a debriefing.

To determine the *manual's* level of usability, the *walkthrough* method was used in which an evaluator works through a procedure for testing, and ask a set of questions from the perspective of the *participants*. However, the usability test of the *manual* did not involve testing the *entire* manual, but one typical procedure from the *manual*. More so, it did not test participants by requiring them to *complete* the procedure; in lieu, participants were asked whether they can *understand* the procedure as written.

## Participants

Four participants were selected for usability testing of the *manual*. These participants were primarily *potential* users of the *manual*. Two participants are faculty members while the other two, support services staff. One of the participants went through the first workshop on writing procedures.

## IV. Usability Test Results

All of the four participants indicated that *overall* they *find* the *COM-FSM Program Assessment and Program Review Procedure Manual* especially on the procedures from the *manual* that were submitted them for review to be *easy to follow, straight forward, concise, and clear*. One of the participants *directed* to the *steps* are *clearly outlined* for the user, while another participant *cited* the *authentic examples* and a *flow chart* provided in the *manual*.

However, some participants *pointed out* some *areas* in the *manual* that they perceived to be *difficult* to follow. One participant cited **Stage 4** of the *Administrative Unit Program Review* process as difficult to understand in that it *re-reading* of the section to clearly understand it. Another participant *cited* **Stages 1 and 4** on *How to Complete an Academic Program Review*. While the participant did not expressed *level of difficulty* primarily in following the various stages for conducting an *academic program review*, she pointed out some *need areas*:

1. Consistency in the methods and tools used in collecting data
2. Timely fashion in which data are provided from source
3. Reviews get turned in but *feedback* is not received. There should be datelines to when feedback is sent to the authors of the review.

Additionally, a participant also expressed *level of difficulty* in understanding the *hierarchy* of the six stages in the *Administrative Unit Program Review* process including the confusion in terms of the difference between institutional goals and objectives and the usages of an *acronym* that is not defined in the *manual's* section on *glossary of key terms and acronyms*. And finally, participants also shared some suggestions and recommendations that they perceived helpful to improving the manual. Details of the responses of the four participants to several questions asked them during the usability testing of the manual are provided in **Table 2.0** below.

**Table 2.0. Responses of the Participants to five questions during the manual’s usability testing**

Questions	Participants			
	1	2	3	4
a. In general, did you find this procedure easy to follow? Why or why not?	I find this procedure easy to follow due to its smooth follow including <i>authentic samples</i> and a <i>flow chart</i> .	Overall, the procedure is easy because the steps are clearly outlined for the user. For example, it identifies in general the “ <i>who</i> ”, “ <i>what</i> ”, and “ <i>how the procedure is done</i> ”.	I find the procedure very <i>concise</i> and <i>clear</i> .	The procedure is well written and developed in a <i>clear</i> and <i>concise</i> manner. Although, it will be somewhat difficult to follow and know what input to put in <i>without examples</i> , the examples provided using OARR makes the procedure a <i>straight forward</i> and <i>easy to follow</i> . This is the part of the procedure that is most helpful, a set and clear example.
b. Which steps in the procedure were difficult to follow?	<b>Step 4</b> is the section that I have to <i>reread</i> to understand it more due to the <i>type of assessments</i> that are listed. It is difficult for me to understand <i>assessment</i> since that are many type and form of assessment (sic).	<p><b>Stages 1 and 4.</b></p> <p>Stage 1: the procedure itself is clear but the <i>question</i> is more on obtaining data to complete the step. Typically, questions are raised regarding the following: 1) consistency in the methods/tools used in collecting data; 2) timely fashion in which data are provided from the source (e.g., IRPO).</p> <p>Stage 4: reviews get turned in but <i>feedback</i> is not received. I think there is still confusion on who responds to the review in general. For example, VPIA office, DAP office, or CAC.</p> <p>Additionally, there should be datelines to when feedback is sent to the authors of the review. After all, worksheets are filled out in cycles. In order to be able to fill out worksheet 1, recommendations made in worksheet 3 from the previous years are needed. How will the people involved in the assessment process know if the recommendations are approved or not in order to make plans in worksheet</p>	I did not find any step that is difficult to follow.	<p>The <i>hierarchy</i> of the <b>6 stages</b> where I <i>misread</i> and <i>understood</i> which comes first between Stage 1, 2 and 3. I was confused on the difference between Institutional <i>Goals</i> and <i>Objectives</i>.</p> <p>One acronym used that I could not find in the list of acronyms is “<b>AP</b>” whether this stands for “Academic Programs”, “Action Plan” or others.</p> <p>The section on <i>outcomes</i> to be stated, it is not really clear whether we are geared to any type of <i>outcome</i> or to be more specific whether it should be “<i>Process outcome</i>”, “<i>Learning Outcome</i>” or “<i>Achievement outcome</i>,” etc.</p> <p>Confusion also was brought by the repetitive usage of a <i>label</i>, i.e., “Type of Assessment” shown as Formative but elsewhere further below under “Assessment Type” is shown as Survey. If the latter could be stated as “<i>Assessment strategy</i>” to be related to the description provided in the next row on the table</p>

		1?		
c. Which parts of the procedure are most helpful?	All parts are helpful due to the easy to follow way it is written. To pick a section that is most helpful would be section 3, this section provide <i>clear samples</i> even a sample table that any manager can modify and make it the specific office own (sic).	Generally speaking the overall process is <i>clear</i> and <i>easy to follow</i> . It is especially helpful in that <i>steps</i> are <i>clearly outlined</i> , identifying the <i>variables</i> involved in the process.	I find that section on “ <i>How to complete an Academic Program Review</i> ” was very helpful.	The <i>examples</i> .
d. What specific suggestion would make to improve the manual?	There are <i>too many examples</i> under each of the sections. This can be <i>distraction</i> and <i>overwhelming</i> for some readers. I would recommend 3-4 <i>samples</i> are enough.	I refer to <i>answer</i> for letter “b” above.	In terms of the <i>academic program section</i> , I find it <i>satisfactory</i> .	My suggestion for <i>Type of Assessment</i> if it can be more categorized into what is shown in the next page in the manual such as Survey, questionnaire, Direct Assessment etc.