



Guidelines for the Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness is integral to the maintenance and development of high-quality academic and service programs as well as to SACSCOC accreditation. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC), with rotating faculty, staff and student membership, is appointed by the Provost. The charge of the committee is to develop, review and recommend policies and procedures for institutional effectiveness. On a periodic basis, the committee reviews the University's policies and procedures to determine what revisions, additions, and clarifications are needed. The IEC has three standing subcommittees appointed by the Provost: the University Academic Assessment Subcommittee, General Education Assessment Subcommittee and the University Support Services Assessment Subcommittee. After a review of the current status of the assessment process used for the evaluation of institutional effectiveness, the IEC revised these guidelines, reflecting upon current best practices. The guidelines were presented to Deans' Council, Council of Department Heads, Faculty Senate, and finally to the President's Staff Group for approval.

What is Institutional Effectiveness?

Institutional effectiveness is the systematic and ongoing process of collecting, analyzing and acting on data and information relating to the goals and outcomes developed to support the University's mission and purpose. Thus, institutional effectiveness is oriented towards measuring results and using those results to aid in decision-making and improvement.

Institutional effectiveness is a cyclical process in which continuous improvements and refinements on goals and methods are undertaken on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, institutional effectiveness, like the University itself, is an ever-changing and evolving process. Thus, it needs to be revisited continuously to ensure that the needs, purpose, and mission of the University are being met.

Why Should Southeastern Assess Institutional Effectiveness?

There are two general purposes for institutional effectiveness: improvement and accountability. For institutions of higher education in the 21st century, both of these purposes are important.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) expects that institutions “demonstrate a commitment to principles of continuous improvement, based on a systematic and documented process of assessing institutional performance with respect to mission in all aspects of the institution (*SACSCOC The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, Section 7: Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, 2017, p. 19). In doing so, the institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement in the following areas:

- a. Educational programs
- b. Academic and student services that support student success
- c. General education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs (*SACSCOC The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, Section 8: Student Achievement, 2017, p. 20).

Louisiana Board of Regent’s identifies General Education competencies for all state universities. Southeastern maps these competencies to courses within the General Education core. A separate General Education Assessment Subcommittee, a subset of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, is responsible for assessing, documenting, and reporting findings.

The Institutional Effectiveness Cycle

The overall institutional effectiveness process includes an ongoing planning-assessment-improvement cycle. Each instructional program and unit (administrative, educational support, research, and public service) is required to define outcomes, perform an annual assessment of its degree programs or operations, and report results and improvements from this self-assessment.



Academic and support units are expected to complete assessment of all outcomes within a three-year cycle. However, findings and improvements based on results are reported yearly in WEAVE, an assessment and planning management system that houses all assessment plans and reports for Southeastern.

Planning

- Identify expected outcomes aligned with the departmental/program primary functions and the University's mission.
- Assign specific assessment activities for measuring each outcome.
- Check for alignment of outcomes with curriculum (Academic units).

Assessment

- Conduct assessment activities.
- Evaluate the data to determine the extent to which outcomes have been accomplished.
- Identify possible explanations for results obtained.

Improvement

- Develop and implement specific strategies for program enhancement and/or improvement based on assessment findings.
- Modify expected outcomes based on improvements to repeat the cycle.

The Institutional Effectiveness Model and Process

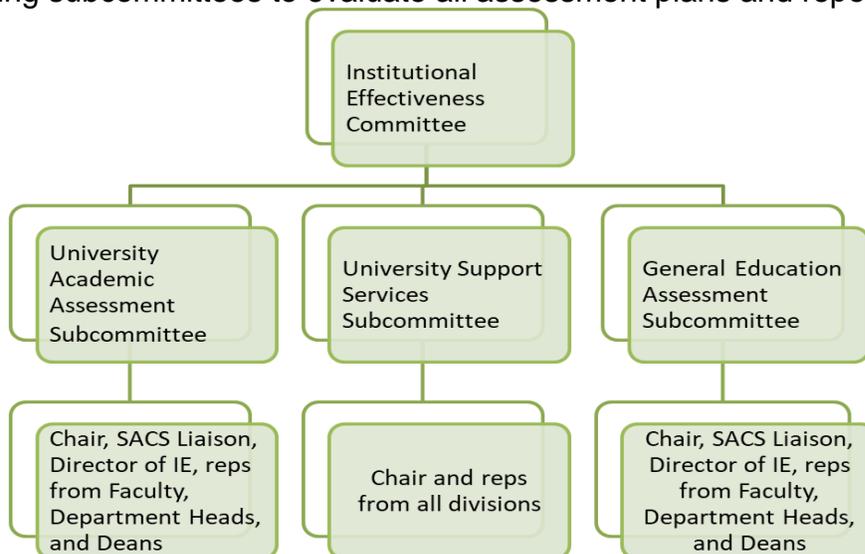
Southeastern has developed a standardized process for implementing and reporting assessment activities that provides consistency and uniformity among the diverse reporting units. All units use a conceptual model for assessment plans/reports that includes:

- *Purpose/Mission.* Statement of unit's mission and linkage to the University's mission and strategic plan.
- *Goals.* Mission-driven, broad statements about what services or processes the unit will accomplish with respect to each of the constituencies they serve.
- *Measurable Outcomes/Objectives.* Clear concise statements that describe outcomes or objectives for educational programs, educational and administrative support units, and public service and research centers.
- *Assessment Measures.* Description of the procedures that will be used to collect information.
- *Targets.* Criteria for Success. An overall level for satisfactory performance on a Measure-Outcome/Objective combination
- *Findings.* Summary of assessment data collected and its analysis.
- *Action Plans (Use of Results).* Identification of the improvements in programs and services that resulted from data collection and analysis.

This conceptual model is supported by the template in WEAVE Online.

Committee Structure

The assessment process is coordinated through the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and its subcommittees. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee has three standing subcommittees to evaluate all assessment plans and reports.



All assessment plans and reports are peer reviewed by the appropriate IEC subcommittee using defined criteria to increase the reliability of feedback given to the units. These reviews are posted in the Annual Report section of WEAVE Online.

The University Academic Assessment Subcommittee will evaluate all academic plans and reports. The University Support Unit Assessment Subcommittee will evaluate assessment plans and reports of those non-degree granting units that play a substantial role in furthering the mission of the University. These units are typically not associated with a specific academic college or department. These areas will include administrative support services, education support services, research, and community/public service.

Both subcommittees recommend improvements in the assessment process and informally assist units in planning and conducting assessments by sharing ideas and procedures.

Assessment Cycles

The cycle for assessing outcomes spans three years. Specifically, all units have three years to make sure all outcomes have been assessed at least once. However, findings and analysis of findings are reported yearly.

Units provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of assessment results in WEAVE in both the action plan and analysis questions. The goal is to document improvement over time.

Assumptions Underlying Southeastern's Program of Institutional Effectiveness

- A. The main purpose of Institutional Effectiveness is program improvement. While Southeastern recognizes that the institution must be accountable to accrediting agencies, the legislature, the public, and students, accountability is secondary to program improvement.
- B. Institutional effectiveness results are to be used for program/department/unit assessment and improvement only. They are not to be used for tenure and/or promotion review, merit review, or any other personnel decisions.
- C. Southeastern Louisiana University has focused on outcomes assessment as one of the key components of our commitment to excellence. Considerable effort has been focused on refining and implementing a comprehensive, effective, and efficient assessment program to determine the extent to which students' learning needs are met. Assessments may

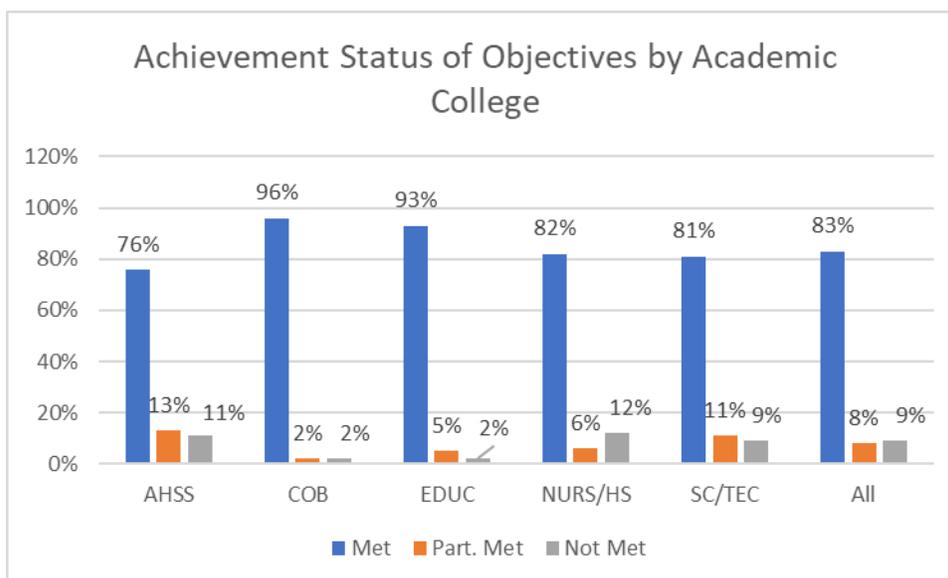
consist of activities such as standardized tests, computerized exit surveys, paper-and-pencil questionnaires, exit interviews, and other means. Although not all students complete the same set of assessment activities, all students will be asked to participate at some points in their academic careers. Since student involvement is critical to the success of outcomes assessment, student participation in assessment activities is both necessary and required.

The 2017 Cycle

The 2017 cycle is currently in progress. The cycle is based on the calendar year (January-December). Contributors deadline to add items for the current cycle, input findings, update/create action plans, answer analysis questions, complete annual special reporting section, and upload category of changes in WEAVE was February 22, 2018. March 15, 2018 was the deadline for assessment coordinators to complete their review and send their results back to the coordinators of each program. Coordinators will reply to the comments and make revisions by April 15, 2018. The reports will then be routed to their respective department head for review and for completion of annual special reporting of faculty and student accomplishments, to be completed by April 30, 2018. The reports are then routed to the academic deans for approval (due May 1, 2018). Goals that were either partially met or not met will require specific action plans to allow programs to reflect and make revisions as needed. As mentioned earlier, the institutional effectiveness process is by no means linear, but is instead a cyclical process that allows stakeholders to plan, assess, and improve.

Academic Assessment

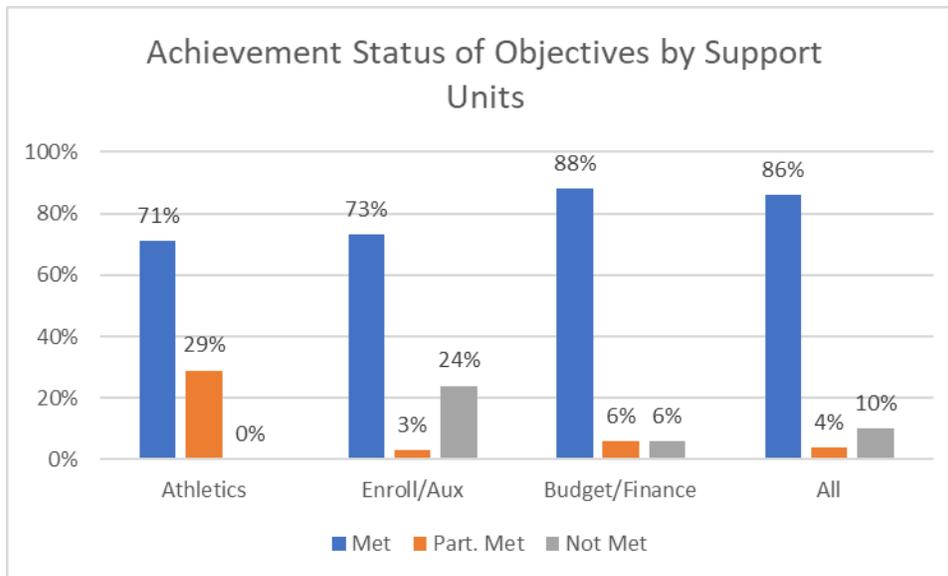
While the 2017 cycle is still in progress, contributors have already submitted their plans and assessment coordinators have reviewed these plans. Preliminary findings suggest that the majority of academic programs reported meeting their stated objectives (83%). Scores ranged from a low of 76% to a high of 96% (see Figure below).



Objectives that were partially met or not met included assessment plans. Assessment plans varied, but included specific actions to review and make revisions to the objectives themselves or the assessment process.

University Support Services Assessment

Preliminary 2017 data indicates that the majority of support unit objectives were reported as met. Scores ranged from a low of 71% to a high of 88% (see Figure below).



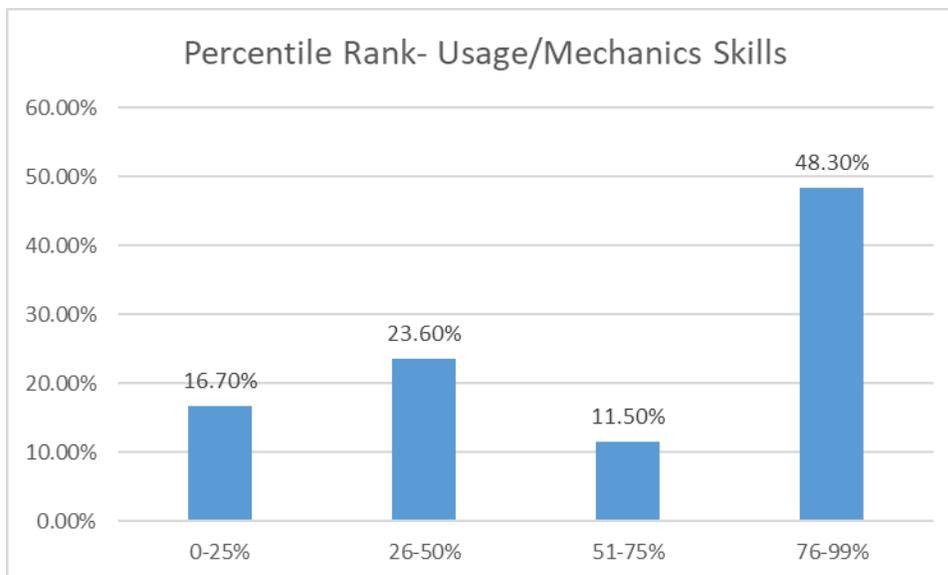
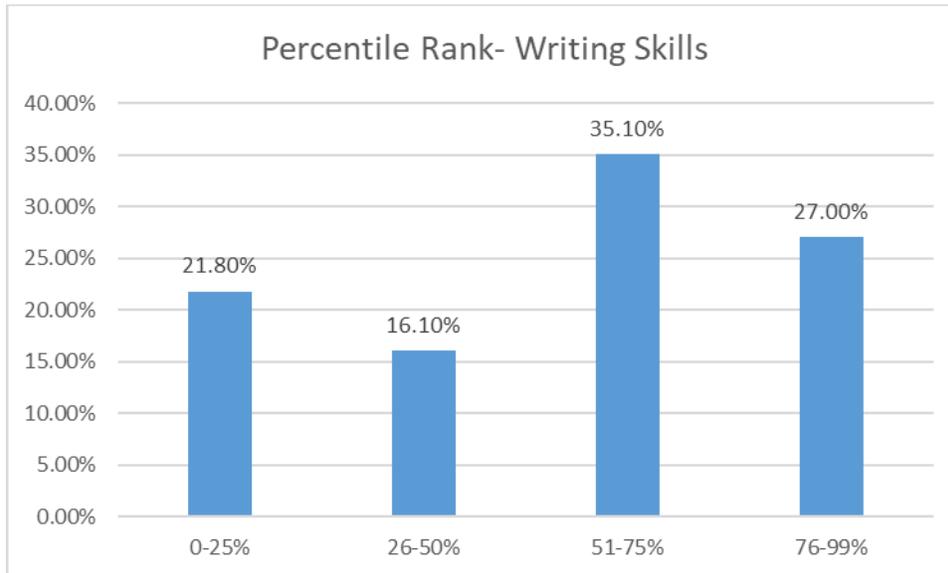
Similarly, objectives that were partially met or not met included assessment plans. Assessment plans varied, but included specific actions to review and make revisions to the objectives themselves or the assessment process.

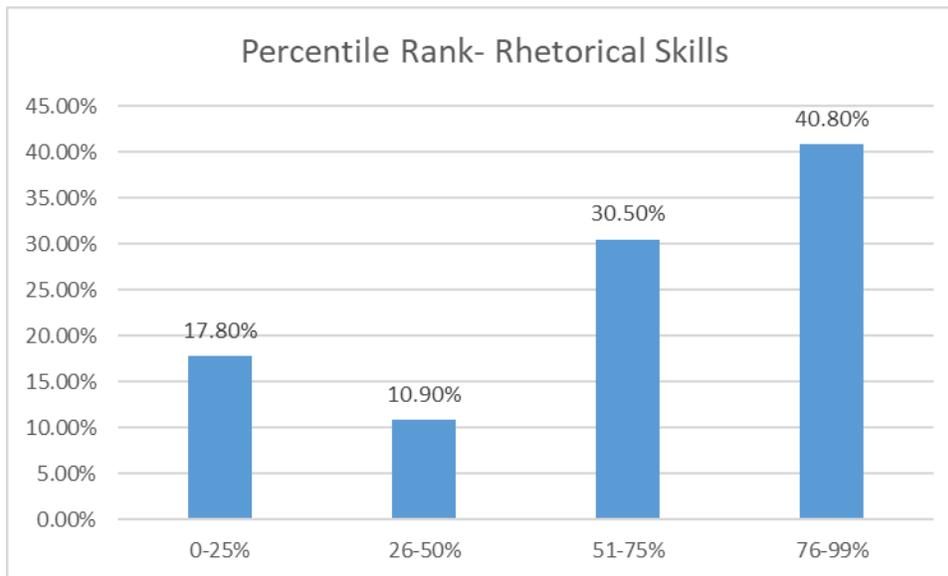
General Education Assessment

The General Education Assessment Subcommittee evaluates and assesses plans related to general education competencies as they relate to specific student learning outcomes (SLO). The General Education Assessment Subcommittee has identified student learning outcomes based on communication, rhetorical skills, critical writing, mathematical and analytical reasoning, cultural traditions, human behavior, data interpretation, and scientific inquiry. Specific measures included specific assignments, writing samples, and/or specific responses to identified questions on examinations. Additional measures included scores received on the ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP). The CAAP is a standardized, nationally normed assessment that helps institutions evaluate their general outcomes. It was administered at Southeastern Louisiana University in March, 2017. The examination was administered in a total of 24 capstone or senior-level seminar courses.

Writing Skills

Assessment from the 2017 calendar year indicated that the mean CAAP score of local (Southeastern students) students exceeded the national average (63.3% vs. 62.3%). Additionally, a similar pattern was revealed with respect to usage/mechanics (16.8% vs. 16.6%) and rhetorical skills (16.6% vs. 16.2%). In comparing percentile rank, the majority of respondents ranked in the 51-75 percentile, followed by the 76-99 percentile. Respondents scored higher on usage/mechanics and rhetorical skills, with modal scores in the 76-99 percentile (see Figures below).

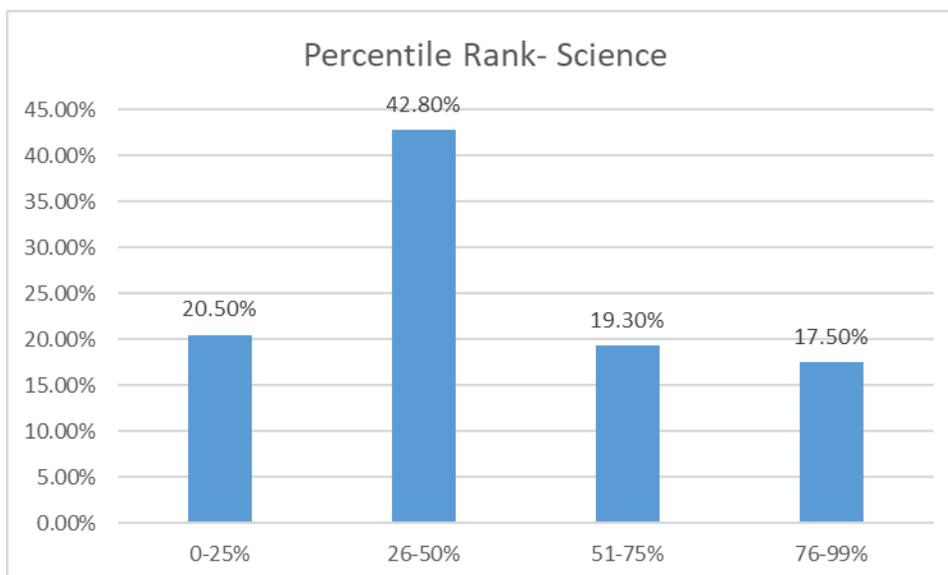




Writing skills was also assessed in the classroom setting. Students enrolled in English 102 must complete an English proficiency examination. The target is that at least 75% will demonstrate independent critical reading; writing a timed essay on a prompt related to that reading; developing an argument that integrates information drawn from the reading; and documenting sources using MLA style. Based on 2017 data, the target goal was met. Overall, approximately 93% of the students who submitted a portfolio received a passing score, well above the 75% threshold.

Science

Assessment from the 2017 calendar year indicated that the mean CAAP score of local (Southeastern students) students mirrored the national average (both 61.3%). In comparing percentile rank, the majority of respondents ranked in the 26-50 percentile (see Figures below).



In class assessment data in the form of examinations is yet to be finalized as the 2017 cycle is still open. Additional findings will follow.