



Southeastern Louisiana University

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 SACS 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 two standing subcommittees appointed by the Provost: the University Academic 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 (SACS) Commission on Colleges expects that institutions identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas (SACS *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 3.3.1.1, 2011, p. 27):

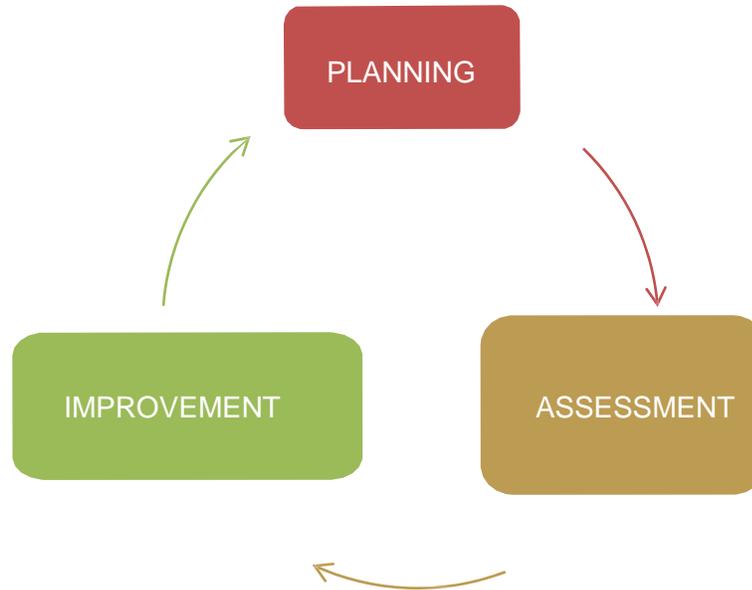
1. educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
2. administrative support services
3. academic and support services
4. research within its mission, if appropriate
5. community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

In addition, the University must comply with 3.5.1, "The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them." (SACS *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 3.5.1, 2011, p. 29).

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

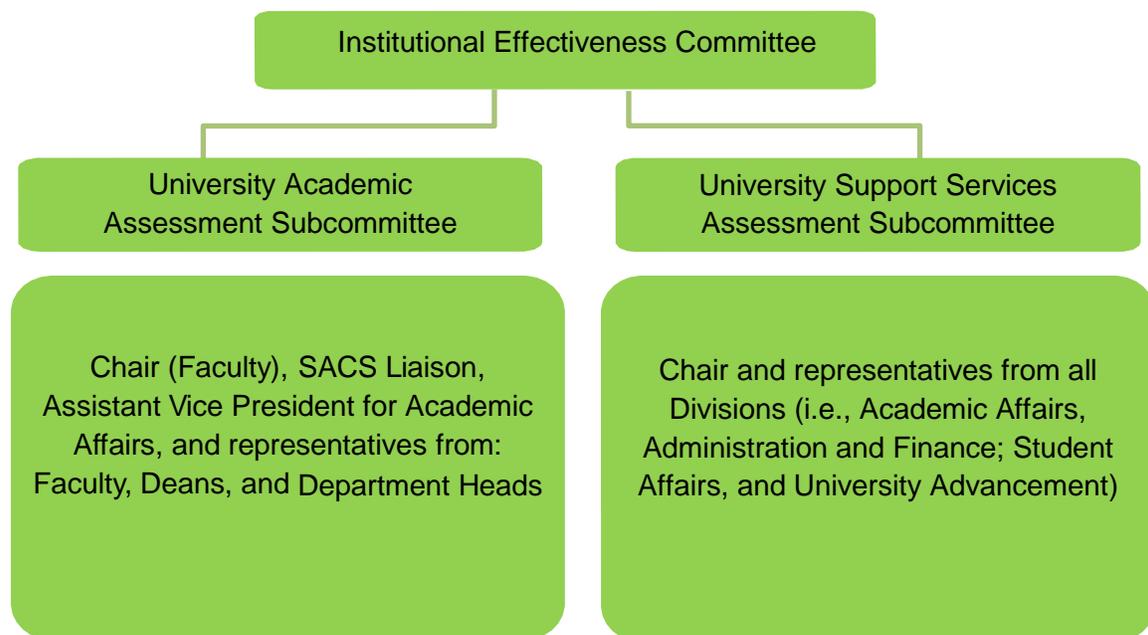
plans/reports that includes:

- *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.
- *Measureable 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 two 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 (see Appendix A and B) 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.

Appendix A (Academic Units Report Evaluation Rubric)

Degree Program:	Committee Team Review			Assessment Coordinator Responses to Committee Review (please return to committee team when completed)
Mission Statement	YES	NO	Comments	
• Is identified for the degree program, clearly states the purpose, and indicates primary functions the program offers				
• Is consistent with the program website				
• Supports University and College missions				
Goals				
• Each goal is directly linked to the program mission				
• Goals are broad statements written clearly and concisely				
• Appropriate number and scope of goals (generally about 3-5 goals)				
Learning Outcomes/Objectives				
• Minimum of two learning outcomes for each goal are identified				
• Outcomes are clear and stated in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes expected of students (Use action verbs; consider Bloom's taxonomy)				
• Outcomes align with the curriculum; Curriculum map developed				
Measures				
• Appropriate measures for each outcome with at least one direct measure; Includes a clear description of how and where data are collected				
• If multiple-item surveys or multiple-item tests, or multiple-item				

collections (e.g., portfolios) are used, it is clear which specific items are used as measures of which outcomes				
<p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If applicable, rubrics and surveys are provided. • Rubrics are not duplicated—attach only under “Measures” 				
Targets				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance criteria identified and targets set at a reasonable level for the learning outcome and for the level of student (i.e. upper or lower division or graduate) 				
Findings				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates whether outcome has been Met, Partially Met, or Not Met. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates number of students who completed the assessment 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semester data is reported separately 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data are presented for each outcome in the form of quantitative and qualitative descriptors 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data tables are included to give a thorough picture of findings as necessary. For example, include number of students at different levels on rubric—met, exceeded, etc. 				
Action plans				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New action plans are included for new findings that were Not Met or Partially Met. Action plans from previous years are updated. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan conclusions are reasonable and derived from the data/findings. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans indicate how results are discussed with faculty 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows change or improvement in curriculum 				

Achievement Summary/Analysis Questions				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to Analysis Questions show meaningful reflection on results 				
Annual/Special Reporting				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes highlights of faculty and/or student accomplishments related to student learning. 				
Other				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment plan shows evidence of continued striving to improve Student Learning Outcomes. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No personal identifiers (i.e. W numbers). 				

Appendix B (Support Unit Report Evaluation Rubric)

Unit Name:	Committee Review			Assessment Coordinator Responses to Committee Review (please return to committee team when completed)
Mission Statement/Purpose	YES	NO	Comments	
• Includes a relationship in support of the University mission				
• Includes a broad statement describing aspirations of the unit				
• Describes key services provided by the unit				
• Describes who the unit serves or target audience				
• Is consistent with unit web page				
• Acronyms or uncommon terms are fully articulated				
Goals				
• Each goal is directly linked to the unit mission				
• Goals are broad statements written clearly and concisely				
• Includes key services or processes to improve				
• Acronyms or uncommon terms are fully articulated				
Outcomes				
• Describes desired outcome and what the unit will accomplish				
• Outcome is measurable and realistic				
• Acronyms or uncommon terms are fully articulated				
• Is there at least one outcome for every goal?				
Measure				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes procedure used to collect data and has an appropriate balance of direct and indirect measures 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment method is appropriate for desired outcome 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If multiple-item surveys are used, it is clear which specific items are used as measures of which outcomes 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrument(s) are identified and attached. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies who will collect the data (position) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there at least one measure for every outcome? 				
Target				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes criteria for success--target number (i.e. unit number, percentage etc.), a baseline or standard for comparison 				
Findings				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates whether outcome has been met or not 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes findings for every measurable outcome 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include number of assessments used to report findings 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown of findings provided; data tables attached if appropriate 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an action plan for every target "Not Met" or "Partially Met"? 				
Action Plans (Use of Results)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes all results in detail 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid conclusions were drawn from the available data and instrumentation 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of improvement are stated 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All concerns that need to be addressed are identified 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New action/strategy identifying areas to improvement are stated (If outcome is the same, the same action plan will be used going forward. Implementation notes will be used to update each year until outcome is no longer used.) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies resources needed for new action/strategy 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicate when and how results are discussed with staff 				
Achievement Summary/Analysis Questions				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements Achieved-- completed and followed through from previous year 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis Questions Complete 				
Annual/Special Reporting (optional)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights of accomplishments related to how unit has contributed to the mission of the unit and the university--not assessed elsewhere, but related to program effectiveness 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No personal identifiers (i.e. W numbers). 				