



**Spring 2010**

Guidelines for the Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness

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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 vitally important.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges expects institutions to engage in "ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its

mission”. (SACS *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 2.5, 2010, p. 16). More specifically, an accredited institution “identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results”. (SACS *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 3.3.1, 2010, p. 25). The areas which must demonstrate compliance with this comprehensive policy of planning and evaluation are:

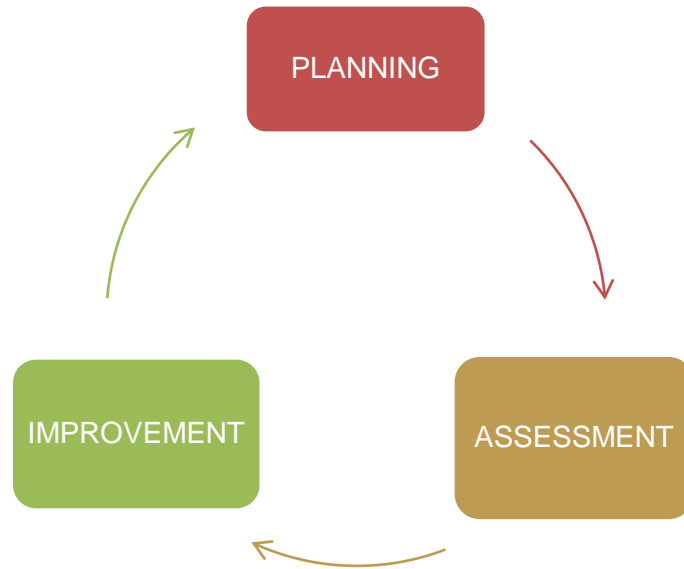
1. educational programs, including student learning outcomes
2. administrative support services
3. educational support services
4. research
5. community/public service

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 *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 3.5.1, 2010, p. 27).

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 Subcommittee, a subset of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, is responsible for assessing, documenting, and reporting findings and results showing evidence of improvement based on the process described in this document.

### The Institutional Effectiveness Cycle

The overall institutional effectiveness process includes an ongoing planning-assessment-improvement cycle that is applied at each level of the organization: institution, college, department, and program. 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.



### 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.** Clear concise statements that describe outcomes or objectives for educational programs, educational and administrative support units, and public service and research centers.
- **Method of Assessment.** Description of the procedures that will be used to collect information and criteria for success.
- **Findings.** Summary of assessment data collected and its analysis.
- **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 below. The template includes all categories that must be addressed by all units in the submission of plans and reports. In addition to the required components, the University Academic Assessment Subcommittee has modified the template to meet the needs of academic units (see Appendix A), and the University Support Units Subcommittee has modified the template to meet the needs of support units (see Appendix B). Rubrics and other supporting documentation will be submitted with plans and reports.

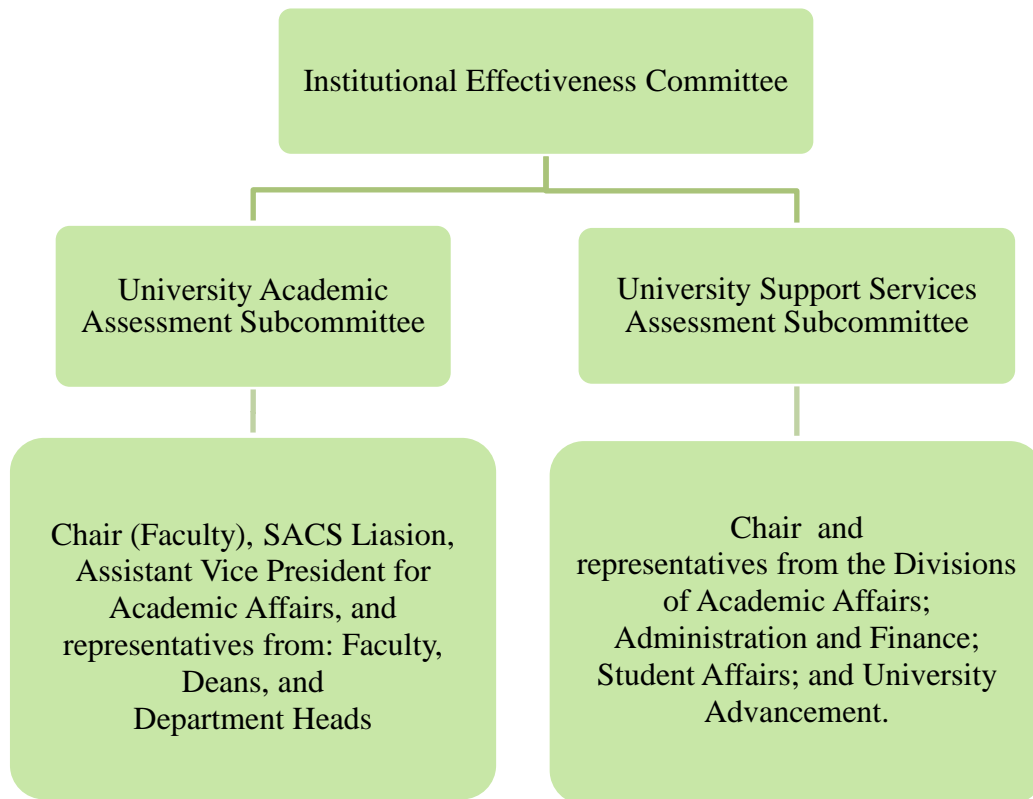
### Assessment Template

<b>UNIT ASSESSMENT PLAN _____</b>				
<b>Unit:</b>			<b>Date Submitted:</b>	
<b>University Mission:</b>				
<b>Unit Purpose/Mission Statement:</b>				
Unit Goals	Measurable Outcomes	Assessment Method	Findings	Use of Results

### 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. Each semester, the subcommittees meet to review and evaluate all plans and reports that have been

submitted.



All assessment plans and reports are peer reviewed by the appropriate IEC subcommittee using defined criteria (See Appendix C and D) to increase the reliability of feedback given to the units.

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. All plans and written reports reflecting the findings of the subcommittee will be sent to the unit and to the appropriate Dean, Assistant Vice President, and/or Vice President.

## Assessment Cycles

The assessment cycle is different for the academic component of the university and the support services component of the university. The assessment of educational programs

is conducted on a two-year cycle with an annual report submitted between the two years. This allows for data collection to span two academic years.

### **Academic Assessment Cycle**

Spring 2011	Two-year Assessment plans due by April 1, reviewed by appropriate assessment committee, and feedback provided before the Summer session.
Summer 2011/Fall 2011/Spring 2012	Implement Assessment Plans. Ongoing data collection and review.
Summer 2012	Submit Annual report * by July 1. Report should contain status of assessment and include any modifications as appropriate.
Fall 2012	Continue Assessment Plans with any modifications identified in review of annual report.
Spring 2013	Assessment Reports* and New/revised two-year Assessment Plan due by April 1, reviewed by appropriate assessment committee, and feedback provided before the Summer session.
After Spring 2013, assessment reports and new/revised assessment plans will be submitted every two years by April 1 and annual reports will be submitted every year by July 1.	

\*Units provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of assessment results in both the annual report and final Assessment report. The goal is to document improvement over time. The annual report will be a snapshot in time summarizing where academic units are in the assessment process.

The assessment cycle for support units spans one year. Most support units conduct annual evaluations of services to faculty, staff, and students, and continue to update services annually to better meet the needs of the university community.

### **Support Unit Assessment Cycle**

Spring 2011 to Spring 2012	Assessment plans due by April 1, reviewed by appropriate assessment committee, and feedback provided by July 1.
	Implement Assessment Plans. Ongoing data collection and review.
	Assessment Reports completed and submitted for review by April 1. New/revised Assessment Plan due by April 1, reviewed by appropriate assessment committee, and feedback provided by July 1.
After Spring 2012, assessment reports and new/revised assessment plans will be submitted each year by April 1	

## Assumptions Underlying Southeastern's Program of Institutional Effectiveness

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- 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

Unit Academic Assessment Plan/Report Template						
					Date Submitted:	
1. College:				2. Department:		
3. Unit:				4. Degree:		
5. University Mission:	The mission of Southeastern Louisiana University is to lead the educational, economic, and cultural development of southeast Louisiana.					
6. Unit Purpose/Mission Statement:						
<b>(A) Unit Goal #1</b>						
Year 1					Year 2	
<b>(B) Measurable Outcomes</b>	<b>(C) Assessment Method</b>	<b>(D) Direct/Indirect</b>	<b>(E) Where and By Whom Assessed</b>	<b>(F) When Assessed</b>	<b>(G) Findings</b>	<b>(H) Use of Results</b>
<b>(A) Unit Goal #2</b>						
Year 1					Year 2	
<b>(B) Measurable Outcomes</b>	<b>(C) Assessment Method</b>	<b>(D) Direct/Indirect</b>	<b>(E) Where and By Whom Assessed</b>	<b>(F) When Assessed</b>	<b>(G) Findings</b>	<b>(H) Use of Results</b>

## Appendix B

<b>Support Unit Institutional Effectiveness Plan/Report Template</b>			
<i>Date Submitted:</i>			
<b>Division:</b>	<b>Unit:</b>		
<b>University Mission: The mission of Southeastern Louisiana University is to lead the educational, economic, and cultural development of southeast Louisiana.</b>			
<b>Unit Mission:</b>			
<b>Goal 1:</b>			
Measurable Outcomes	Assessment Method	Findings	Use of Results
<b>Goal 2:</b>			
Measurable Outcomes	Assessment Method	Findings	Use of Results

## Appendix C

### Criteria for Evaluation of Academic Assessment Plan/Report

<b>UNIT ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PLAN/REPORT _____ (cycle)</b> <i>Date Submitted: _____</i>	
<i>1. College</i>	<i>2. Department</i>
<i>3. Unit</i>	<i>4. Degree</i>

Component the Plan should include	M = Component Met	P = Component Partially Met	N = Component Not Met	Rating	Written Feedback
<b>(#6) State the unit purpose/mission statement</b> --statement of Unit's mission and linkage to the University's mission and strategic plan.	Unit mission clearly stated; relationship to University's mission apparent.	Unit mission stated with some clarity; relationship to University's mission is implied, but lacks clarity.	Unit mission lacks clarity or not stated; relationship to University's mission unclear or missing.		
<b>(A) State unit goals</b> --mission-driven, broad statements about what services or processes the unit will accomplish with respect to each of the constituencies they serve.	Goal clearly stated.	Goal stated with some clarity.	Goal lacking clarity or not stated.		

<p><b>(B) State intended student-centered measurable outcomes in measurable or observable terms--</b> clear concise statements that describe outcomes or objectives for educational programs, educational and administrative support units, and public service and research centers.</p>	<p>Measureable outcomes clearly stated.</p>	<p>Measureable outcomes stated with some clarity.</p>	<p>Measureable outcomes lacking clarity or are not stated.</p>		
<p><b>(C) Describe assessment methods for the measurable outcomes--</b> describe the procedures that will be used to collect information and the criteria for success.</p>	<p>Methods clearly stated, appear appropriate, and include the criteria for success.</p>	<p>Methods stated with some clarity, appear appropriate and include the criteria for success.</p>	<p>Methods lacking clarity, appropriateness not clear and/or criteria for success not clear or not stated.</p>		
<p><b>(D) Identify assessment as direct or indirect and for each goal have sufficient direct or indirect measures of assessment.</b> <i>Direct measures</i> of student learning require students to display their knowledge and skills as they respond to the instrument itself. Objective tests, field based experiences, clinical experience, essays, presentations, and classroom assignments are examples of direct measurement. <i>Indirect measures</i> of student learning require students to reflect on their learning rather than to demonstrate it. Techniques include student surveys, exit interviews, alumni surveys, and employer surveys.</p>	<p>Sufficient direct and/or indirect measures identified.</p>	<p>Insufficient direct and/or indirect measures identified.</p>	<p>Direct and/or indirect measures are not used.</p>		

<p><b>(E) For each measurable outcome describe where and by whom assessed.</b> Which course or research unit will conduct the assessment?</p>	<p>Where and by whom assessed is clearly stated and appears appropriate.</p>	<p>Stated with some clarity</p>	<p>Lacking clarity or not stated</p>		
<p><b>(F) For each measurable outcome, identify when the outcome will be assessed.</b> During which semester, year will the assessment take place?</p>	<p>When the assessment will be conducted is clearly stated and appears appropriate.</p>	<p>Stated with some clarity</p>	<p>Lacking clarity or not stated</p>		
<p><b>(G) Present findings of assessment activities as summaries of actual student learning outcomes data that have been collected by the unit--summary of assessment data collected and is analysis</b></p>	<p>Results are clearly stated.</p>	<p>Results from the assessment activities are presented with some clarity documentation</p>	<p>Results lacking clarity or not stated.</p>		
<p><b>(H) Describe how conclusions drawn from assessment data are or will be used in academic planning processes for the program--identification of the improvements in programs and services that resulted from data collection and analysis</b></p>	<p>Clearly Stated</p>	<p>Stated with some clarity</p>	<p>Lacking clarity or not stated</p>		

Action Decided by the University Academic Assessment Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_ Revision Needed and Submitted to Committee by July 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ Assessment Plan Approved

\_\_\_\_\_ Report Approved

Feedback on actions that are needed before approval:

## Appendix D

### Criteria for Evaluation of Support Services Assessment Plan/Report

Division:		Unit:			
Component: The plan includes	M = Component Met	P = Component Partially Met	N= Component Not Met	Rating	Written Feedback
<b>Unit Mission:</b> Broad statement of describing values and aspirations of the unit, which support the University's mission.	Unit mission clearly stated; relationship to University's mission apparent.	Unit mission stated with some clarity; relationship to University's mission is implied, but lacks clarity.	Unit mission lacks clarity or not stated; relationship to University's mission unclear or missing.		
<b>Goal:</b> Mission-driven, broad statements about what services or processes the unit will accomplish with respect to each of the constituencies they serve.	Goal is clearly stated.	Goal is stated with some clarity.	Goal lacks clarity or is not stated.		
<b>Measurable Outcomes:</b> Clear, concise statements that describe in measurable and observable terms what the unit will accomplish, and the criteria for success.	Outcomes consistently stated in measurable & observable terms; Criteria for success identified.	Outcomes present, but only some are stated in measurable & observable terms; Criteria for success sometimes identified.	Outcomes stated, but none are written in measurable & observable terms; Criteria for success not apparent.		
<b>Assessment Method:</b> Description of the procedures that will be used to collect information and the timeline for collection.	Assessment Method very clearly stated and appears appropriate; When data will be collected is included.	Assessment Method described but appropriateness difficult to ascertain; When data will be collected not always included.	Assessments named but are insufficiently described to ascertain appropriateness; When data will be collected not included.		
<b>Findings:</b> Summary and presentation of the data that has been collected by the unit.	All findings are presented, if no current findings, explanation is given.	Some of the findings are presented.	Findings are not presented.		

Component: The plan includes	M = Component Met	P = Component Partially Met	N= Component Not Met	Rating	Written Feedback
<b>Use of Results:</b> How the results were reviewed by unit staff and what improvements were made in response to the results.	Clearly states how and when staff reviewed findings, procedure or unit changes explicitly stated or if none made, explanation as to why.	How and when staff reviewed findings is implied, procedure or unit changes are not clearly stated.	How and when unit reviewed findings is not indicated, procedure or unit changes are not present.		

Action Decided by the University Services Assessment Support Subcommittee:

\_\_\_\_\_ Revision(s) Needed, Return by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Assessment Plan Approved

\_\_\_\_\_ Report Approved

Feedback on actions that are needed before approval: