

ADMIN: 104: Assessment and Continuous Improvement

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ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION Administration	POLICY NUMBER ADMIN: 104
POLICY TITLE Assessment and Continuous Improvement	
SCOPE OF POLICY USC Beaufort	DATE OF REVISION 6/25/2024
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER USCB Chancellor	ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE Office of the Chancellor

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify that planning, assessment, and improvement at the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) are a shared responsibility. USCB implemented an institutional effectiveness cycle with a series of activities and a timeline to ensure a continuous planning process and a feedback loop regarding the desired outcomes of its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services. Demonstrating the quality of the institution to the community and to external accrediting agents such as the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is critical.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Educational Programs: an undergraduate or graduate degree with a defined major

Learning Outcomes: statements that describe, in measurable terms, the knowledge, skills, values and/or abilities that students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of the educational program or general education curriculum. Learning outcomes should clearly support the mission of the educational program.

Learning Outcomes Assessment: an on-going process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. This process includes establishing outcomes for student learning, setting expectations for those outcomes, systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence of how well student performance matches those expectations, and most importantly, using the resulting information to improve performance.

Administrative and Educational Support Services: Areas and units devoted to assisting students and faculty obtain success in the learning environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

USCB requires that each educational programs and the general education curriculum develop student learning outcomes and establish ways to evaluate students' performance on those outcomes. These learning outcomes are posted annually in the USCB Bulletin. By measuring performance against learning outcomes, examining the results, faculty can discern what

strategies or techniques are working well and what needs to be changed or modified. In addition, USCB administrative and educational support services are required to establish expected goals and outcomes and produce results that identify if those were achieved. Assessment activities are mandated by its regional accrediting body, SACSCOC, as well as in some fields, by discipline-specific accrediting agencies.

A. Policy Oversight

The Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that assessment is ongoing in the administrative and educational support services areas. The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring that the learning outcomes for all educational programs and the general education curriculum are assessed. The responsibility for learning outcomes assessment is primarily borne by faculty because faculty are the experts in their disciplines and know best how to evaluate student mastery of program and general education learning outcomes.

The Office of Planning, Analytics, and Compliance (PAC) facilitates a systematic assessment process that directs and guides decision-making, strategic planning, and continuous improvement. PAC is responsible for supporting good assessment practices and documenting assessment processes for institutional and external reporting needs. This ensures the institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

1. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.
2. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.
3. Academic and student services that support student success.

It is critical that each educational program and the general education curriculum assesses its student learning outcomes and report assessment results as outlined in this policy regardless of method of delivery. An area is non-compliant if it fails to develop an assessment plan, submit an assessment report, or revise and resubmit a report returned by the deadline. If an area is non-compliant PAC notifies both the department and program chair. PAC and the relevant administrators then develop a mutually satisfactory timeline for reporting of an acceptable assessment report. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved among the parties, PAC will ask the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to intervene.

PAC oversee the administrative and educational support assessment plans and reports. An area is non-compliant if it fails to develop an assessment plan, submit an assessment report, or revise and resubmit a report returned by the deadline. If an area is non-compliant PAC notifies the area supervisor and relevant administrator. PAC and the relevant administrators then develop a mutually satisfactory timeline for reporting of an acceptable area assessment.

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved among the parties, PAC will ask the Chancellor to intervene.

PROCEDURES

1. Academic Program Assessment

Faculty are responsible for educational programs design and execute program assessment. They report results periodically and make changes that improve programs in areas including but not limited to assessment, curriculum design processes, and delivery of the educational program and services. Each area uses a variety of measures to determine the extent to which its outcomes are achieved. Faculty supporting educational programs must assess student learning in those programs. Programs are asked to establish student learning outcomes and evaluate the performance of their students against those outcomes. Program Coordinators are responsible for working with the relevant faculty in the department to review the assessment results and make recommendations for improving student learning based on the results of the assessment.

Results of the assessment of the learning outcomes are reported to PAC and the Academic Program Assessment Committee (APAC). Any budget implications based on assessment are forwarded to the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

2. General Education curriculum

The General Education curriculum is designed to provide USCB students with a well-rounded education. Students receive instruction and practice in effective oral and written communication, cultivate an understanding of the liberal and fine arts, broaden their historical and cultural awareness, and develop a proficiency in one foreign language. Students study the social and natural sciences, acquire technological and information literacy, and build skills in numerical and analytical reasoning. The assessment of the General Education curriculum is collectively managed by faculty, a director for General Education and the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Results of the assessment of general education learning outcomes are reported by the Director of General Education to PAC, APAC, and the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Since program coordinators serve on APAC, they are responsible for working with the department chair and relevant faculty in the department to review the assessment results and make recommendations for improving student learning based on the results of the assessment. Recommendations from the departments are sent to the Director of General Education, APAC and then to the Faculty Senate's Committee on Curricula and Courses to determine how the assessment results can be leveraged for improvements to the general education curriculum.

3. Administrative and Educational Support Services Assessment

Each administrative and educational support service area is responsible for designing assessment plans that support USCB's strategic planning goals and ultimately student success. Objectives are determined and evaluated. Outcomes are used to make recommendations for improvement.

Results of the assessments for each area are reported to PAC and the Administrative Area Assessment Committee (AAAC). Any budget implications based on assessment are forwarded to the appropriate Vice Chancellor or administrator.

For additional information contact the USCB PAC Office.

B. Interpretation

Questions about the interpretation of this policy should be directed to the Office of Planning, Analytics, and Compliance (PAC); in ambiguous, controversial, or unprecedented cases, PAC will consult with the academic official for the unit or with the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs before rendering an opinion.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[The 2024 Edition of the Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement Resource Manual for the 2024 Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
6/25/2024	New policy approval

APPENDICES

(If applicable)