



Policy Title	Institutional Effectiveness Planning and Assessment
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Responsible Office	Office of the President
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### 1. Policy Purpose Statement

Kennesaw State University (KSU or the University) strives to continuously improve the quality of all aspects of the institution by employing integrated and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that will ensure it is effectively accomplishing its mission. KSU's vision and mission statements and its strategic plan serve as the blueprint for defining the fundamental criteria for assessing its institutional effectiveness. This policy defines the University's institutional effectiveness model and its criteria that fulfill federal, regional, and state requirements and their associated reporting requirements.

### 2. Background

The U.S. Department of Education requires regional accrediting agencies to measure the effectiveness of their accredited institutions. KSU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and is governed by the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia (USG). Both SACSCOC and the BOR require its institutions to identify expected outcomes, assess the extent to which it achieves the outcomes, and provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of its assessment results.

Data-based results from the assessments are utilized by KSU to become more effective at its mission and to ensure the continuous improvement of all facets of the institution, including its educational programs, administrative support, academic support, student support, research, and community service. Institutional effectiveness includes the processes that KSU employs to determine how well it is accomplishing its mission. These processes include planning, outcomes-based assessment, data analysis and reporting, performance monitoring and improvement, and project and change management.

### 3. Scope (Who is Affected)

This policy covers all University entities, reporting units, programs, and services. KSU administrators, faculty, and staff are responsible for completing the assessment of their respective units, educational programs, and/or services. Educational programs include stand-

alone certificates, degrees and majors, and each separate implementation of a program no matter their location or form of instructional delivery.

#### 4. Exclusions or Exceptions

There are no exclusions or exceptions to this policy.

#### 5. Definitions and Acronyms

See the appended [Glossary](#).

#### 6. Policy

The measurement of institutional effectiveness (IE) requires a systematic comparison of institutional purpose and performance. KSU's IE model includes assessment and quality improvement aligned with the University's mission and strategic plan. For each KSU reporting unit and educational program, leadership must identify performance outcomes, assess the outcomes, analyze the results of the assessments, and demonstrate improvements that follow from the analyses in one or more of the following areas:

- educational programs including stand-alone certificates, degrees and majors, and each separate implementation of a program;
- administrative support services;
- academic support services;
- student support services;
- research;
- community and public service; and
- other (as deemed appropriate by a unit's respective vice president or by an educational program's academic college dean).

##### a. Assessment Plans

Each KSU reporting unit or educational program must develop and maintain an assessment plan. At a minimum, an approved assessment plan will include the following:

- 1) identification of the individuals or group that lead(s) development, implementation, report completion, and maintenance for that unit's or program's assessment plan;
- 2) statement of how the plan supports the KSU mission and strategic plan;
- 3) clearly stated performance outcomes, each outcome's relation to the KSU mission and strategic plan, performance criteria or targets, assessment methods, and data sources; and
- 4) funding and resources tied to the accomplishment of outcomes and projected improvements.

Each unit and educational program assessment plan must be approved by the unit's or program's administrators. For each educational program, the program faculty must approve the plan prior to implementation. All units and educational programs plans must update their assessment plans annually.

b. Assessment Methodologies

Multiple assessment methods must be employed for each performance outcome. Direct and indirect assessment methods, and qualitative and quantitative data may be used. However, each unit or educational program must not rely solely on indirect methods. Indirect assessment of an outcome should be paired with one or more direct assessments of that same outcome. When available, external standards (industry or professional standards; national or international), validated instruments, and widely accepted protocols should be employed.

c. Data Analysis

Collection and analysis of data must utilize techniques that ensure the rigor of the results by:

- 1) maintaining safe and secure storage of data;
- 2) using appropriate statistical tests for quantitative data;
- 3) utilizing data analysis technique(s) to code and form themes for qualitative methods;
- 4) interpreting all results accurately; and
- 5) addressing issues of reliability and validity (quantitative) and trustworthiness (qualitative).

In addition, units and educational programs will identify and analyze policies, procedures, processes, and practices that impact their ability to achieve stated outcomes or performance targets.

d. Assessment Results

From the data and analyses, each unit and educational program must report accomplishments, potential areas for improvement, and at least one strategy or practice to be implemented for each of those areas.

e. Improvement

Each unit must report verified improvements related to performance outcomes that follow from data analyses.

f. Reports and Records<sup>1</sup>

On University-defined due dates, each head of a unit and/or educational program will provide a report of assessment activity since the end of the unit's or educational program's previous reporting timeframe. Reports must include:

- 1) description of the unit or educational program, and identification of the individuals or group that lead(s) development, implementation, report

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<sup>1</sup> Annual reports of assessment activity will be submitted via the KSU's assessment system. Reports of assessment activity may include a program or discipline accreditation report in addition to other information as stated in 6f. OIE staff will collaborate with institutional units on this requirement.

- completion and maintenance for that unit's or educational program's assessment plan;
- 2) clearly stated outcomes (at least three outcomes for each unit; at least three performance outcomes and at least three student learning outcomes for each educational program);
  - 3) each outcome's relation to the KSU mission and strategic plan;
  - 4) data from multiple assessment methods for each outcome;
  - 5) analyses of the data;
  - 6) potential areas of improvement that follow from the analyses;
  - 7) verified improvements related to the outcomes;
  - 8) plans for the next reporting cycle, including any changes to the existing assessment plan.

Assessment results and reports are an integral part of the University's decision-making process. As such, assessment reports will be made available to the President's Cabinet and the President's Planning and Budget Advisory Committee. Additionally, reports, redacted as necessary, should be made available to all relevant constituents.

Each head of a KSU unit and educational program is responsible for maintaining information related to the assessment process to include assessment plans, methods, data, and analyses; planned changes and resulting improvements; assessment reports and reviews completed by internal and external entities; and external agency accreditation reports, follow-up responses/reports, and University actions.

g. Programmatic/Discipline Accreditation

Programmatic and discipline accreditations held by units of KSU have significant impact on the accreditation and operation of the University. Therefore, correspondence with external accreditors, including annual and multi-year reports, responses, and actions are shared with the responsible member of the President's Cabinet and with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

SACSCOC policy<sup>2</sup> emphasizes the relationship between accrediting agencies, stating:

*Any institution seeking or holding accreditation from more than one USDOE recognized institutional accrediting agency must describe itself in identical terms to each agency with regard to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents, and must keep each USDOE recognized accrediting body, including SACSCOC, apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting agency.*

The director of Program Quality and Accreditation is available to collaborate on the requirements, reporting cycles, and reviewer reports for those programs/disciplines accredited or certified by any external body.

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<sup>2</sup> SACSCOC Policy "Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies."

## 7. Associated Policies/Regulations

- a. U.S. Department of Education, Accreditation in the U.S.
- b. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Principles of Accreditation:
  - 1) Core Requirement 2.5, Institutional Effectiveness;
  - 2) Comprehensive Standard 3.1.1, Mission;
  - 3) Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1, Institutional Effectiveness;
  - 4) Federal Requirement 4.1, Student Achievement.
- c. Board of Regents *Policy Manual*, 2.9, Institutional Effectiveness: Planning and Assessment
- d. Board of Regents *Policy Manual*, 3.6.3: Comprehensive Academic Program Review
- e. Board of Regents Records *Policy Manual*, 10.4, Records Retention
- f. University System of Georgia Records Retention Guidelines, Category A, Administration and Finance, (2) Administrative Reports
- g. University System of Georgia *Academic Affairs Handbook*, 2.3.6: Comprehensive Program Review
- h. Kennesaw State University, *Institutional Effectiveness Handbook* [hyperlink pending]

## 8. Procedures Associated with this Policy

- a. Procedures associated with this policy are located on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website at [will be added later - pending new web site].

## 9. Forms Associated with this Policy

- a. Forms associated with this policy are located on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website at <http://oie.kennesaw.edu/> .

## 10. Violations

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness staff is responsible for preparing an annual report on the status and progress of assessment by all KSU units and of all educational programs. These annual reports are presented to the University president and leadership for review and action. The president and leadership will determine appropriate responses to violations of this policy.

## 11. Review Schedule

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness reviews this policy annually to ensure that the policy and associated materials and procedures remain in compliance with internal and external accreditation and assessment requirements.

## Appendix A: Glossary

**Academic support services:** Academic support services pertain to students at all levels as well as to faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, academic teaching and resource centers, tutoring, academic advising, counseling, disability services, resource centers, laboratories, and information technology. (Reference: *SACSCOC Resource Manual*.)

**Accreditation:** Accreditation is the recognition that an institution or degree program maintains standards requisite for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions of higher learning or to achieve credentials for professional practice. The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality. Maintaining an accredited status plays a role in fostering public confidence in an institution and helps to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with specific expectations.

- Accreditation may be achieved at the national, regional, or programmatic level. In the U.S., the federal government relies on accreditation to assure the quality of institutions and programs for which the government provides federal funds and for which the government provides federal aid to students. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) does not accredit educational institutions or programs. However, the Secretary of Education is required by law to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies that the secretary determines to be reliable authorities as to the quality of education or training provided by the institutions of higher education and the higher education programs they accredit. An agency seeking national recognition by the Secretary must meet the Secretary's procedures and criteria for the recognition of accrediting agencies. USDE-recognized accrediting agencies are posted on the USDE website at:  
[http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation\\_pg5.html#NationallyRecognized](http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg5.html#NationallyRecognized).
- Institutional accreditation is a voluntary and self-regulatory process that is awarded following on a review of an institution's mission, programs, resources, and services according to standards and requirements specified by an accrediting body.
- National accreditation focuses on the evaluation of curriculum provided by career, vocational, and trade schools across the United States.
- Regional accreditation is a form of *institutional* accreditation that involves a comprehensive review of all institutional functions. Regional accrediting organizations do not accredit individual programs, although new programs are actively reviewed through the substantive change process.
- Specialized or professional accreditation focuses on programs in a specific discipline within an institution but does not evaluate the entire institution. Specialized accreditation exists in the fields of business, education, engineering law, medicine, nursing, chiropractic, computer science, and more than 90 other disciplines. Some professions that are regulated by and dependent upon a state or national licensing board may require job applicants to have graduated from specific academic programs that have specialized, professional, or programmatic accreditation status. Most specialized accreditors require regional accreditation as

a foundation for their reviews and as assurance of the fiscal integrity and health of the institution.

**Administrative support services:** Administrative support services normally include finance, administrative facilities, administrative services, development/advancement, the president's office, etc. (Reference: *SACSCOC Resource Manual*.)

**Assessment:** The systematic collection, review, and use of information undertaken for the purpose of improving performance or student learning and development.

**Assessment method:** A tool used to collect data about a specified topic.

**Community and public service:** Community/public service within an institution normally includes (1) centers and institutes that focus on community needs and (2) units and formal programs that deliver the outreach mission. (Reference: *SACSCOC Resource Manual*.)

**Direct assessment methods:** Gathering evidence about student learning based on student performance that demonstrates the learning itself. It can be value added, related to standards, qualitative or quantitative, embedded or not, using local or external criteria. Examples are written assignments, classroom assignments, presentations, test results, projects, portfolios, and direct observations.

**Indirect assessment methods:** Acquiring evidence about how students and/or other constituents feel about learning, their learning environment, and/or other aspects rather than actual demonstrations of outcome achievement. Examples include surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and reflective essays.

**Institutional effectiveness:** The term used to describe how well an institution is accomplishing its mission and how it engages in continuous improvement. It focuses largely on two of the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*, Core Requirement 2.5 and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1. More information on these standards may be read at <http://www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp> .

**Mission:** A written declaration of an entity's core purpose and focus, its constituency, what it offers and its sphere of operation. A mission statement additionally articulates an entity's values and its work, and is the foundation for its strategic plan.

**Performance outcome<sup>3</sup>:** Performance outcomes are descriptions of specific goals for the unit or educational program. For educational programs, outcomes include program outcomes and student learning outcomes.

**Qualitative assessment:** Qualitative assessments use flexible, naturalistic methods and are usually analyzed by looking for recurring patterns and themes.

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<sup>3</sup> Terminology may differ among accrediting organizations. For example, outcomes-related terminology used by ABET includes student outcomes and program educational objectives.

**Quantitative assessment:** Quantitative assessments use structured, predetermined response options that can be summarized into meaningful numbers and analyzed statistically.

**Research:** Research within an institution normally includes (1) research units, research centers, institutes, etc.; (2) sponsored research programs, usually with defined areas of research (e.g. energy environment, innovative technologies, etc.); and (3) degree programs and courses where research is an expected outcome. (Reference: *SACSCOC Resource Manual*.)

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC):** Federally recognized regional accrediting body of higher education institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Latin America. SACSCOC accredits institutions that award associate, baccalaureate, masters, or doctoral degrees. The SACSCOC official website is at <http://www.sacscoc.org/index.asp> .

**Student support services:** The term student support services applies to undergraduate and graduate programs that enhance the educational development of students at all levels. This includes support services and programs for students at all locations, including off-campus instructional sites, branch campuses, and those enrolled in distance and correspondence education.