

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 for student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs. (Student outcomes: educational programs)

Rationale and Notes

For purposes of this standard, an academic program is a credential as defined by the institution. A degree with a defined major is clearly a program. On the other hand, programs in the same field but taught at different levels (e.g., a BBA and an MBA) are typically viewed as distinct programs. The <u>Institutional Summary Form Prepared for SACSCOC Reviews</u> should be a useful guide as to how programs are defined within this standard.

The expectation is that the institution will engage in ongoing planning and assessment to ensure that for each academic program, the institution develops and assesses expected student learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes students are expected to attain in courses or in a program. Methods for assessing the extent to which students achieve these outcomes are appropriate to the nature of the discipline and consistent over time to enable the institution to evaluate cohorts of students who complete courses or a program.

Shared widely within and across programs, the results of this assessment can affirm the institution's success at achieving its mission and can be used to inform decisions about curricular and programmatic revisions. At appropriate intervals, program and learning outcomes and assessment methods are evaluated and revised.

NOTE

See the Standard 8.2 discussion as well as this substandard for full coverage of this standard within the Resource Manual.

Questions to Consider

- Is there a common process across programs at the institution, or is the means of establishing outcomes assessment processes widely dispersed? If the latter, how is information collected and evaluated?
- What is the role of faculty, chairs, deans, oversight committees and others in the process?
- Is the process systematic and ongoing?
- Are expected student learning outcomes clearly defined in measurable terms for each educational program?
- What types of assessment activities occur to determine whether learning outcomes are met?
- How are results from periodic assessment activities analyzed?
- How does the institution seek improvements in educational programs after conducting these analyses?

- If programs consistently report "no improvements needed," what happens?
- If the institution used sampling to present its process and to establish compliance with the standard, why were the sampled programs an appropriate representation of all the institution's programs?
- Were multiple assessment methods used? If so, describe.
- How has the institution's use of assessment results improved educational programs?

Sample Documentation

- Lists of program-specific expected student learning outcomes for educational programs (usually embedded into individual program or unit reports).
- Descriptions of the assessment measures used to collect information on student learning.
- Details on the assessment and analysis of results from these assessments.
- Specific examples where the findings from analysis of results have led to efforts to make program improvements.
- If sampling is used, (1) how the sampling is representative of the institution's mission, (2) documentation of a valid cross-section of programs, and (3) make a case as to why sampling and assessment findings are an appropriate representation of the institution's programs.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policy: Distance and Correspondence Education

SACSCOC interpretation: Interpretation on Sampling

Interpretation of Standard 8.2.a

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

CR 7.1 (Institutional planning)

Standard 7.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan)

CR 8.1 (Student achievement)