



AUBURN

MONTGOMERY®

**Annual Assessment Reporting
Manual
Academic Programs**

Revised March 2017

Annual Assessment Reporting Manual: Academic Programs

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Background

Regional Governance

In the early 1980s, a reform of higher education was initiated by the federal government. From that point forward, regional accrediting agencies would be required to measure the effectiveness of institutions.

The regional accrediting agency responsible for setting standards for Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) is The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). According to the commission, the “mission is the enhancement of educational quality throughout the region and it strives to improve the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that institutions meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students,” (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2011). A core of the SACS philosophy is that each institution should be “engaged in an ongoing program of improvement and be able to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission,” and should engage in “continuous assessment and improvement.” (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2011). Requirements 2.5 and 3.3 as described by SACS explains in detail the expectations for demonstration of “Institutional Effectiveness” (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2012).

SACS website is <http://sacscoc.org/>. Accreditation standards can be found at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/Resource%20Manual.pdf>.

State Governance

At the state level, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) practices governance over some aspects of the Institution. One of the reasons of this governance is to ensure that taxpayers are afforded evidence of accountability. ACHE emphasizes the use of assessment results to improve services (Alabama Commission on Higher Education, 2001).

ACHE’s website is <http://www.ache.state.al.us/>.

Institutional Governance

Mission Statement

The mission of Auburn University at Montgomery is to provide quality and diverse educational opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate levels through the use of traditional and electronic delivery systems, and to foster and support an environment conducive to teaching, research, scholarship, and collaboration with government agencies, our community, and other educational institutions.

Core Values

Auburn University at Montgomery values and promotes:

- a Student-Centered Experience,
- Citizenship & Community Engagement,
- Excellence as Our Standard,
- Commitment to Constant Improvement,
- Diversity of People & Perspective with a Culture of Inclusiveness,
- Lifelong Learning, and an
- Environment of Collaboration

Vision 2018

Auburn University at Montgomery will become a university that...

- Is known for its commitment to developing dynamic and applied academic and research programs.
- Is a student's first choice in a variety of programs of distinction.
- Embraces and builds an international presence at home and abroad and is increasingly known for its ability to prepare students to thrive in a global community.
- Graduates students who become engaged alumni with a life-long interest in and personal connection to AUM.
- Is recognized as an integral community partner and a resource for the enrichment and economic development of the Southeast region and beyond.

An updated strategic plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2013. The Strategic Plan can be found at <http://www.aum.edu/docs/default-source/university-policy/final-strategic-plan---strategies-only---september-2013.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.

Programmatic/Professional Governance

Many AUM colleges, schools, and programs are nationally accredited or approved. These agencies all require assessment of program goals and student learning outcomes.

Two schools are nationally accredited in their entirety:

- The College of Business is accredited through the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The program last underwent reaffirmation in 2014 and remains accredited through 2020.
- The School of Nursing is accredited through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The Baccalaureate level reaffirmation occurred in 2012 and will remain in place until 2022. The Master's level reaffirmation occurred in 2014 and the next reaffirmation will occur in 2025.

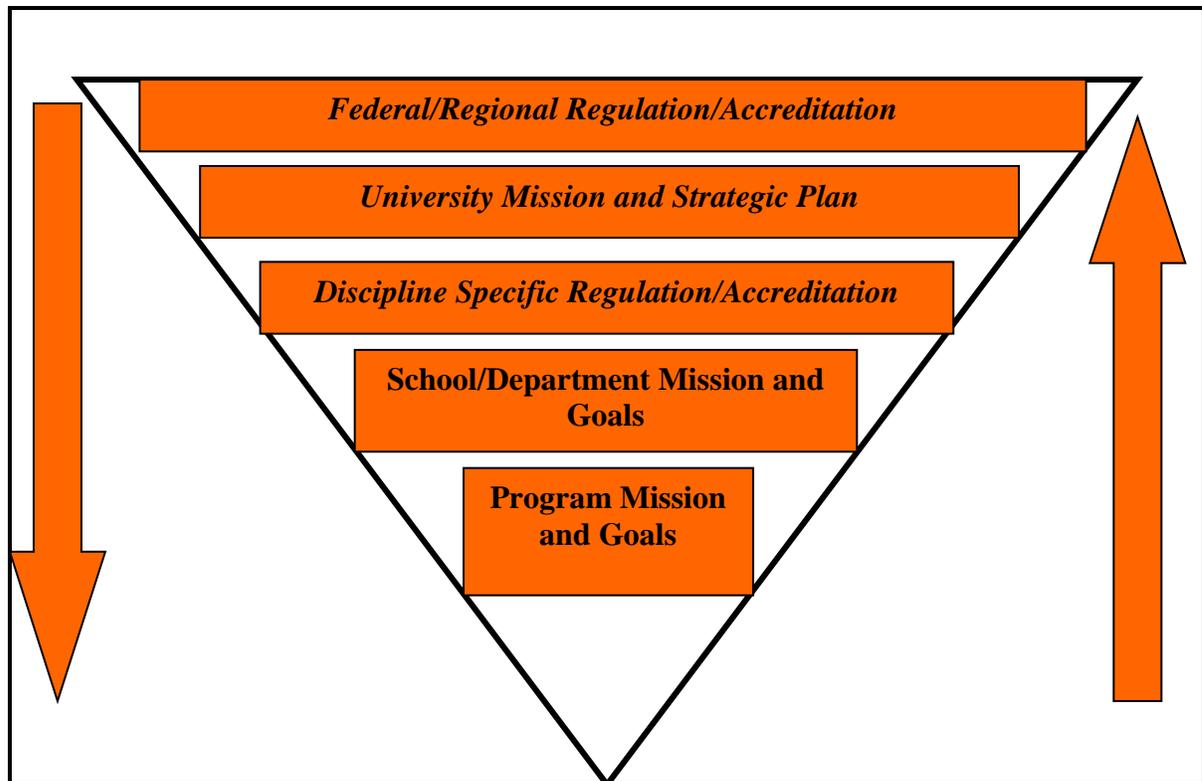
A number of programs are also nationally accredited or approved:

- In the College of Education, all programs that prepare elementary and secondary educators are accredited through the Council for Accreditation of Teacher Preparation (CAEP). The last reaffirmation was 2009 and Education programs remain accredited through 2014. The Master's School Counseling and Community Counseling programs are accredited through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). These programs were awarded accreditation in 2010 and remain accredited through 2018.
- The Master of Public Administration program is accredited through the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). The program remains accredited through 2021.
- Medical Laboratory Science is accredited through the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS). This program was reaffirmed in 2013 and will undergo the process again in 2020.
- In the Department of Justice and Public Safety, all Legal Studies options, including the Paralegal Certificate Program, remain approved through the American Bar Association (ABA). The prior re-approval occurred in 2010 and the next will occur in 2017.

Assessment Activities

Process

Assessment should be, in part, guided by extant regulations, accreditation standards, and the University Strategic Plan. These guidelines, as well as the missions and goals of AUM schools and programs, are areas for consideration during the assessment process.



Each program should review or develop a mission statement for their area that supports the University's mission. The mission statement will briefly summarize what the program does. The goals of the program must support this mission, which in turn supports the University's mission and strategic plan.

Programs should work collaboratively to review progress made toward meeting goals set during the last assessment cycle. Evidence should document areas of success or future opportunities for improvement. Results should be used to guide changes and in the development of adapted or new goals.

Primarily, assessment consists of several parts: planning, measurement, the interpretation of results, and adjustments made after interpretation. It is a continuous process with the most important part being the “closing of the loop”.



Development of Goals

Academic programs must measure both Operational/Administrative Process goals and Student Learning Outcomes each year. They must have clear criteria set to demonstrate success.

- **Operational/Administrative Process goals** are those measuring administrative operations of academic programs or student services provided by the program. Examples include:
 - Curriculum evaluation to ensure that students can access necessary courses
 - Assessment of academic advising effectiveness
 - Plans to staff adequate faculty and support personnel
 - Fund-raising activities and goals

<u>Operational Outcome Description</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific – describes the process exactly	<input type="checkbox"/> Vague – does not describe the process
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measurable	<input type="checkbox"/> Not measurable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attainable	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to attain
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results-oriented –information for decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not provide information for decision-making
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time-bound	<input type="checkbox"/> Not time-bound
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improvable	<input type="checkbox"/> Not improvable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identifies assessment tools	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment tools not identified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Describes/explains technical language	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not describe/explain technical language
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Includes data-supported justification for the goal	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not include data-supported justification

Example: In 2016-2017 Justice and Public Safety will hire one new faculty member. The search will begin in October of 2016. The position will be filled by spring semester 2017, and the new faculty member will be listed as the teacher of record on Justice and Public Safety graduate and undergraduate courses.

- **Student learning outcomes (SLOs)** are designed to generate information about what students should be able to do at the end of a class, a core curriculum, or a program. These assess students' ability to *demonstrate* skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

Examples include:

- The demonstration by Speech and Language Pathology students that they can successfully conduct hearing screenings
- The demonstration of Secondary Education students that they can apply successful classroom management strategies
- The demonstration by Psychology students that they can develop appropriate research methodology

*Note: All examples are created for the purposes of illustrating good practices. They do not necessarily reflect actual goals and outcomes set by AUM programs.

<u>Student Learning Outcome Description</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Behavioral based	<input type="checkbox"/> Not focused on behaviors
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Directly measured	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly measured
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Easily embedded in existing processes	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires additional processes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identifies where assessment will occur	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify where assessment will occur
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identifies the population being assessed	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify the population
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identifies assessment tools	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment tools not identified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Describes/explains technical language	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not describe/explain technical language
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results-oriented –information for decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not provide information for decision-making
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time-bound	<input type="checkbox"/> Not time-bound

Example: Students who graduate with a Masters in Psychology in 2016-2017 will demonstrate their understanding of assessment and test construction. This will be assessed using Comprehensive Exam items related to test construction and assessment.

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Good outcome statements should be concise and precise. Verbs should be action verbs!
 Consider using Bloom's Taxonomy:

	Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Definitions						
Bloom's Definition	Remember previously learned information.	Demonstrate an understanding of the facts.	Apply knowledge to actual situations.	Break down objects or ideas into simpler parts and find evidence to support generalizations.	Compile component ideas into a new whole or propose alternative solutions.	Make and defend judgments based on internal evidence or external criteria.
Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange • Define • Describe • Duplicate • Identify • Label • List • Match • Memorize • Name • Order • Outline • Recognize • Relate • Recall • Repeat • Reproduce • Select • State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classify • Convert • Defend • Describe • Discuss • Distinguish • Estimate • Explain • Express • Extend • Generalized • Give example(s) • Identify • Indicate • Infer • Locate • Paraphrase • Predict • Recognize • Rewrite • Review • Select • Summarize • Translate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply • Change • Choose • Compute • Demonstrate • Discover • Dramatize • Employ • Illustrate • Interpret • Manipulate • Modify • Operate • Practice • Predict • Prepare • Produce • Relate • Schedule • Show • Sketch • Solve • Use • Write 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze • Appraise • Breakdown • Calculate • Categorize • Compare • Contrast • Criticize • Diagram • Differentiate • Discriminate • Distinguish • Examine • Experiment • Identify • Illustrate • Infer • Model • Outline • Point out • Question • Relate • Select • Separate • Subdivide • Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange • Assemble • Categorize • Collect • Combine • Comply • Compose • Construct • Create • Design • Develop • Devise • Explain • Formulate • Generate • Plan • Prepare • Rearrange • Reconstruct • Relate • Reorganize • Revise • Rewrite • Set up • Summarize • Synthesize • Tell • Write 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraise • Argue • Assess • Attach • Choose • Compare • Conclude • Contrast • Defend • Describe • Discriminate • Estimate • Evaluate • Explain • Judge • Justify • Interpret • Relate • Predict • Rate • Select • Summarize • Support • Value

Intended Results

An intended result describes exactly what is expected if the outcome is met. It should specifically state what will happen if the outcome is met.

Measurement

All outcomes (or intended results) must be measurable. Methods of measurement will depend on the type of outcome and the nature of what is being assessed. Ideally, direct methods will be used to measure results and when possible, multiple assessment method should be used to measure results for each outcome.

- Direct measures include:
 - Comprehensive or capstone examinations that are developed to measure unique concepts
 - Professionally judged performances and demonstrations
 - Standardized tests (CAAP, EST Major Field Tests)
 - Rubrics to evaluate written/oral material
 - Embedded questions on examinations
 - Measures of practical skills in clinical settings, practica, and internships
 - Counts, such as of faculty hired or students advised
 - Funds raised
- Indirect measures include:
 - Self-reported data, from instruments such as:
 - Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory
 - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
 - Graduating Senior Survey
 - Alumni Survey
 - Course grades (note: course grades are not considered a direct measure because frequently professors calculate many variables into final course grades that are not directly related to the skill or knowledge being assessed).
 - Number or rate of students who become employed or attain further education after graduation

Criteria

Criteria should be developed to indicate a satisfactory standard of performance. Individual student learning is not being measured; instead, aggregate student performance allows professors of courses and administrators of programs to confidently assert that students who complete a course or a program can adequately demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Criteria should be set to indicate when a goal is being met or when change is indicated. Criteria should indicate what percent of scores meet a minimum threshold or above to show that the goal has been met.

- Some suggested appropriate criteria:
 - Students will be able to demonstrate that they can think critically. This will be scored using a rubric. *At least 90% of the scores will be at the competent level or above.*
 - Students will be able to demonstrate that they can identify a chemical compound. This will be measured by an embedded exam question. *At least 75 of the answers will be correct.*
 - Students will be able to demonstrate that they have the ability to write well. This will be measured by scores on a nationally normed standardized test. *At least 80% of the AUM scores will be among the top quartile of national scores.*

<u>Success Threshold (Demonstration of an acceptable result)</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Describes satisfactory results	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not set a threshold for satisfactory results
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be reasonable but challenging	<input type="checkbox"/> Not reasonable and/or challenging
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be data (numbers) based	<input type="checkbox"/> Not data (numbers) based

Example (Student Learning Outcome): It is expected that median of all scores on the Psychology Comprehensive Examination items related to test construction and assessment will be 60% or higher.

Example (Operational/Administrative Process Goal): It is expected that one new faculty member will be hired in Justice and Public Safety and will teach at least three courses in the spring 2015 semester.

*Note: All examples are created for the purposes of illustrating good practices. They do not necessarily reflect actual goals and outcomes set by AUM programs.

Documenting Results and “Closing the Loop”

After goals and outcomes are measured, programs must document the results and use them to make decisions about how to create improvement.

Results describe what actually occurred. There are two parts that should be included to explain results:

1) Degree to which success was achieved. For example, a scale can be used such as:

- Not at all achieved
- Minimally achieved
- Adequately achieved

2) Specific **evidence** of what actually occurred. *Concrete* outcomes should be described. This includes survey results, scores, or records. The actual result should show performance related to the target that was set. Include any exhibits to support the evidence (item scores, calculations on rubrics, etc.)

<u>Describe and Interpret Results (Provide a description of how well the criteria or threshold was met)</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Related to criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> Not related to criteria
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indicates how well expectations were met	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not indicate how well expectations were met
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Describes what was learned that will be useful for decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not describe what was learned that will be useful for decision-making
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clear/succinct	<input type="checkbox"/> Not clear

Example (Student Learning Outcome): The median of all scores on the Psychology Comprehensive Examination items related to test construction and assessment was 70%. This result was satisfactory.

Example (Operational/Administrative Process Goal): Justice and Public Safety hired one new faculty member in 2014-2015 who was listed as the teacher of record for one undergraduate and two graduate courses during the spring semester.

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The assessment process is not completed unless decisions are made from what is learned from results. To **close the loop**, assessors should set future goals specifying changes that will be made because of what was learned from the assessment.

Programs should always strive to improve. Therefore, it is not good assessment practice to measure the same outcomes every year if all of the targets are consistently being met. It is expected that either targets should be re-evaluated to determine if they are appropriately rigorous or that new outcomes will be developed to improve student learning.

<u>Use of Results (What changes were made based on the results?)</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Describes changes that have been made based on results, such as changes in processes or expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> No changes or no justification for why no change is needed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addresses any gaps in expectations and actual performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not address gaps in expectations and actual performance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Details changes that have been made (past tense)	<input type="checkbox"/> Details changes that have not been made (future tense)

Example (Student Learning Outcome): Beginning in fall 2017, admission policies changed and Psychology graduate students are only admitted in the fall semesters. Each cohort is limited to approximately 10 students. The goal of this change is to ensure that students are able to have access to testing materials and also experience small class sizes as a unified learning community. It is expected that these changes will increase the median scores on the test construction and assessment items on the Comprehensive Exam.

Example (Operational/Administrative Process Goal): In 2015-2016, the number of Justice and Public Safety courses being instructed by adjunct professors were reduced by 20% as the result of the hiring of one new faculty member in 2014.

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Timeline

Fall, spring, and summer semesters – It is expected that goals and outcomes will be set by/at the beginning of each fall semester and that measurement will occur in fall, spring, and summer (if applicable). Results should be recorded and decisions should be made on how to improve by the end of the following summer semester.

Assessment is 100% mandatory.

Academic Assessment Committee

Since 2012, AUM has had an Academic Assessment Committee with members who are available to provide assistance with assessment activities. Each AUM school or college has at least one representative on the committee. For more information about how to contact representatives, visit <http://www.aum.edu/academics/institutional-effectiveness/assessment/aum-academic-assessment-committee>.

References

Alabama Commission on Higher Education. (2001). Proposal for a new baccalaureate degree program. Retrieved from <http://www.ache.state.al.us/Content/Departments/Instruction/Instruction.aspx>.

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