

## Assessment Glossary

General Assessment Terminology	
Assessment	A process by which information is gathered on university operations and student learning to be evaluated for the purpose of improvement of student experiences and improved operational efficiencies.
Institutional Effectiveness	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, measuring results and using those results to aid in decision-making and foster improvement.
SACSCOC	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices primarily among the diverse institutions.
SACSCOC Standard 7.1	The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission. (Institutional Planning) [Core Requirement]
SACSCOC Standard 7.2	The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement. (Quality Enhancement Plan)
SACSCOC Standard 7.3	The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved. (Administrative effectiveness)
SACSCOC Standard 8.1	The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success. (Student achievement) [Core Requirement]
SACSCOC Standard 8.2. a	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)
SACSCOC Standard 8.2. b	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 collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student outcomes: general education)
SACSCOC Standard 8.2. c	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 academic and student services that support student success. (Student outcomes: academic and student services)
WEAVE	Campus wide assessment at NKU is housed in the Weave platform. All units on campus keep their assessment plans in Weave. Support for Weave is organized along divisional lines with a campus wide Weave support group that includes members from Academic Affairs and Planning and Institutional Research.

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### Assessment Cycle Terminology

Assessment Loop	The assessment process is cyclical with stages of planning, assessing, analyzing, and improving. After improvements are made, the cycle begins again. This may involve revising the initial objectives, adjusting assessment methods, or refining the criteria based on feedback and outcomes from the previous cycle to strive for continuous monitoring and improvement.
Phase I: Planning Stage	Administrative divisions articulate objectives based on mission and goals, define measures, establish targets, suggest a timeline for implementation.
Phase II: Assessment Stage	Administrative divisions determine assessment methods, define assessment/performance criteria, and collect data.
Phase III: Analysis Stage	Administrative divisions evaluate progress to meeting unit-level Objectives, post Findings for each Target, complete the Analysis of Finding under each Finding.
Phase IV: Improvement with Action Plans	Administrative divisions improve through Action Plans by using Analysis of Findings to create action plans for the next assessment cycle.
Closing the Loop	Using the results of an assessment to inform future actions, such as decision-making, resource allocation, and quality improvement.

### Assessment Content Terminology

Mission	Primary purpose, highest aims for the entity. The mission statement succinctly communicates the entity's overall purpose and distinguishes it from similar units. The mission statement clearly aligns with the university's mission.
Goal	Derived from the division's mission statement and are broad statements describing the overarching long-term intended outcomes of the division/sub-division. Goals indicate the major priorities of the division during the assessment cycle but should be broad enough to extent to multiple units. Goals are primarily used for general planning and are starting points to the development and refinement of objectives. Goals may have more than one objective associated with them.
Objective	Statements of intention, describing a task to be accomplished or a point to be reached aligned with a goal and should specify how the goal will be achieved. Objectives can be linked to specific supported initiatives (e.g., Strategic Plan) or to external accreditation standards from a professional organization. Objectives should be <b>SMART: Specific, Measurable (verifiable), Actionable/Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, Time-bound (Doran, 1981)</b>
Student Learning Outcome	Specifies the knowledge, skill, or ability students are expected to gain by the end of a specific time period, such as completion of an academic program.
Supported Initiative	A connection to show alignment to the University's strategic plan or other institutional priorities. Supported initiatives are linked to Objectives and provide evidence of continuous improvement.
Strategic Initiative	Strategic Initiatives are university level outcomes, specific to the university strategic plan, that can be linked to objectives in a WEAVE assessment plan to demonstrate how divisions are supporting the University's mission and goals. Strategic Initiatives are a type of Supported Initiative.
❖ Institutional Priority	Institutional priorities are university level outcomes, projects, initiatives, or other priorities that are not specific to the university strategic plan but carry a high-level of importance to the university. Institutional priorities can be linked to

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	objectives in a WEAVE assessment plan to demonstrate how divisions are supporting the University's mission and goals. Institutional priorities are a type of Supported Initiative.
Action Plan	Activities implemented in response to the previous year's findings and are designed to improve your findings on the assessment outcome/objective, which demonstrates "Closing the Loop" that leads to continuous improvement.
Measure	A Measure is a method used to gauge achievement of expected results. The measure is not the actual target for achievement, but rather the approach used to evaluate whether the target was achieved.
Types of Measures	Type of measure refers to what is being evaluated—the dimension of performance or outcome you want to capture.
❖ Efficiency Measures	Indicators of how well resources (time, money, people, facilities, processes) are being used to deliver services or achieve outputs. Examples: Average processing time for applications, cost per student served, turnaround time for work orders.
❖ Quality Measures	Indicators of the accuracy, consistency, validity, reliability, and alignment of services, programs, or outcomes with established standards and expectations. Examples: Percentage of reports meeting accuracy standards, accreditation pass rates, student/faculty satisfaction with services.
❖ Impact Measures	Indicators of the longer-term results, outcomes, or changes produced by a unit's work — the difference made for students, faculty, staff, or the community. Examples: Retention or graduation rates, increased enrollment from targeted regions, number of initiatives citing research office data.
Categories of Measures	Category of measure refers to how the evaluation is carried out—the method used to collect evidence.
❖ Direct Measure	Measure using tangible, visible, self-explanatory evidence.
❖ Indirect Measure	Measure using perceptions of performance, efficiency, or satisfaction.
Target	The overall level for satisfactory performance within a reporting period. A Target is quantifiable. It is usually expressed in terms of percentages, ratios, or actual numbers. Targets should be appropriately challenging and attainable in the given timeframe.
Findings	The reporting of the data collected from the assessment measure. Findings are reported as data become available in comparison to the Target, with a final analysis that the target was <b>Not Reported This Period, Met, Partially Met, Not Met, or Exceeded</b> .
Analysis of Findings	This is the opportunity to summarize the takeaways from the information reported in the Findings, explaining why the division/unit achieved the results it did.
Next Steps	<b>Next Steps</b> are identified within the <i>Analysis of Findings</i> and reflect lessons learned by answering the question, "What now?" These actions, discussed at the conclusion of an assessment cycle, inform improvements or modifications to the subsequent year's assessment plan. Incorporating Next Steps into the following cycle demonstrates the <b>Closing the Loop</b> process by showing how assessment results are used to guide continuous improvement.