UM Statement of Academic Program Outcomes:
Student Learning, Educational Programs, and Student Achievements

The primary purpose of assessment is to systematically improve the quality of student learning, teaching, research, service, and processes at UM. We use our assessment process to demonstrate to our regional accrediting body, SACS-COC, that we are in compliance with a core requirement and several comprehensive standards required for accreditation. To ensure our compliance, every degree program and every unit on campus must provide evidence of improvement based on assessment results.

Until recently, the focus of assessment for degree programs was on Student Learning outcomes. Several modifications and clarifications to the SACS standards and federal regulations have resulted in a more divergent focus for assessment. We now interpret the requirements as including student learning, educational program, and student achievement outcomes. Assessment for each academic program should include a mixture of these types of outcomes.

Student Learning

Student learning outcomes are general statements of what you expect students to know, think, or be able to do when they complete the program (e.g., Graduates demonstrate professional presentation skills). The means of assessment should include direct examination of student work (e.g., papers, tests, presentations).

- Programs are required to include 2 or more Student Learning Outcomes each assessment cycle, each linked the appropriate university vision-statement.

- Undergraduate programs should consider linking one or more of these to the General Education outcomes (see http://www.olemiss.edu/provost/education.html)

Educational Program

Educational Program outcomes are general statements about the quality of the program (e.g., The program attracts and retains quality students, The program has an appropriate graduation rate, The program's curriculum is appropriate for the degree, Students engage in scholarship and/or internships, Students are satisfied with the educational program, The program provides effective advising). The means of assessment can include data from Institutional Research & Assessment (e.g., enrollment trends; retention and graduation rate data) and other sources (e.g., faculty activity report, graduating student survey), examination of the program by external reviewers, evidence that students have scholarly or professional student experiences, and/or surveys of faculty or students (e.g., student satisfaction).

- Programs should include 2 or more Educational Program Outcomes each assessment cycle.

Student Achievement

Student Achievement outcomes are general statements about the accomplishments of students who complete the program (e.g., Graduates will work secure or post-graduate placements in the field; Students will pass the state licensing examination; Students publish research or make presentations at professional meetings). The means of assessment can include data from licensing boards, surveys (e.g., graduating student survey, alumni survey), information about scholarship produced by students, number of students who enroll in graduate/professional programs, and/or surveys of employers.

- Programs should include 1 or more Student Achievement Outcomes each assessment cycle.

This UM Statement of Academic Program Outcomes combines the SACS-COC requirements of 3.3.1 and 4.1. This statement draws from the recent, July 2013, statement, "Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement," from the Higher Education Associations and Regional Accrediting Commissions.