

**Title:** Institutional Planning and Assessment

**Category:** Academic Affairs

**Responsible Cabinet Member:** Provost

### **Purpose**

The University is committed to an ongoing, institution-wide process of planning, assessment and evaluation to ensure effectiveness, accountability and continuous improvement in support of its mission and strategic goals. All designated academic, administrative and student support units are required to engage in systematic planning and assessment activities, including the evaluation of outcomes and the use of results to inform decision-making and resource allocation. These efforts promote alignment across units, foster evidence-based improvement and support institutional effectiveness and student success.

### **Scope**

This policy defines the responsibilities and reporting requirements for institutional planning and effectiveness activities at the University of Kentucky. It establishes a collaborative and consultative framework for decision-making, ensuring that planning and assessment activities align with the University's mission and strategic goals. These activities are guided by the following three (3) key objectives:

- **Alignment:** Ensuring that the processes and functions of administrative, educational, academic and student support services units are aligned with the University's strategic goals and mission.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Fully engaging all University units in the pursuit of continuous improvement as a core objective.
- **Informed Budgeting:** Using the outcomes of institutional effectiveness activities to inform the budget process in support of the University's mission.

**Applicability:** All designated administrative units, educational units, academic programs and academic and student support services units are expected to participate in planning and assessment activities as a demonstration of continuous improvement. The Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness maintains a complete list of designated units. These units and services include:

- Academic programs and, as applicable, the educational units that create and deliver these programs (see Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges [SACSCOC] standard 8.2.a).
- General education (see SACSCOC standard 8.2.b).
- Academic and student support services (e.g., libraries, faculty resource centers, tutoring, writing centers, academic computer centers, student disabilities support centers, financial aid, residence life, student activities, Dean of Student's office, etc.) (see SACSCOC standard 8.2.c).
- Administrative support services (e.g., finance and procurement, facilities and physical plant, administrative services, development, research, the Office of the President, etc.) (see SACSCOC standard 7.3)

### **Definitions:**

- **Institutional Planning and Effectiveness:** Institutional planning and effectiveness is the ongoing and institution-wide planning and evaluation process through which the University monitors the effectiveness of its units, programs and services to inform decision-making and resource allocation to support the University's mission and enhance the quality of education and student learning. It is critical that the University's administrative, educational, academic and student support services perform effectively for the institution to meet its mission.

- Each unit is responsible for regularly evaluating how efficiently, effectively and with what level of quality it performs its duties to identify areas of improvement or success. These evaluations must occur routinely to support a continuous assessment process and ensure the highest standards in all University functions.
- The following review and evaluation activities fall under the definition of institutional planning and assessment:
  - University strategic and operational planning, tracking and reporting
  - Periodic review of academic programs
  - Assessment of academic program student learning outcomes
  - Administrative unit planning
  - Assessment of academic and student support services effectiveness, including student learning outcomes
- Educational Unit: An “educational unit” has as its primary mission the performance of educational activities in instruction, research and service. Major educational units are assigned primary responsibility for implementing and coordinating institutional effectiveness activities for their areas.
- Academic Programs: Academic programs as defined for the purposes of this policy are a combination of courses and related activities organized for the achievement of student learning and for awarding respective academic credentials, such as a degree or certificate.
- Administrative Support Units: For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions of an administrative unit and an academic and student support service unit are used in order to align with SACSCOC’s Principles of Accreditation:
  - Administrative Unit Support Units (SACSCOC Standard 7.3): “Administrative Support Units” are those units that service the institution by providing support services necessary to supporting the strategic goals and operational efficiency of the institution. They indirectly support the University’s educational mission. Examples of these units include finance and procurement, facilities and physical plant, the Office of the President, human resources and the Office of the Vice President for Research. For the purposes of this policy, college dean’s offices are included as an administrative support unit.
  - Academic and Student Support Services Units (SACSCOC 8.2.c): “Academic and Student Support Services Units” are those units that provide support to students and faculty as related to their educational programs, indirectly support student learning, or a co-curricular mission that supports the University experience. Examples of these units include tutoring, residence life, financial aid, learning/information resources and faculty resource centers. For the purposes of this Administrative Regulation, the Libraries are included as an academic and student support services/unit.

## **Activities**

### **University Strategic Planning**

The President is responsible for initiating the University’s strategic planning process. This includes determining the period covered by the plan and appointing a committee(s) to develop an updated strategic plan.

- The University’s strategic plan is reviewed or revised at regular intervals.
- The University’s strategic plan includes the following core components: University mission statement; measurable goals or objectives; strategies; and measures of progress.
- As part of the University strategic planning process, the University will review, evaluate and publish student achievement goals and outcomes appropriate to the institution’s mission (SACSCOC Standard 8.1). These goals inform instructional decision-making, resource allocation and faculty development

initiatives to enhance student learning experiences, academic support services and instructional quality.

### **Periodic Academic Program and Unit Reviews**

- All academic programs, including degree and certificate programs, undergo a formal periodic review that aligns to institutional and state-level requirements. Academic programs housed within departments undergo review as part of their department assessment. Academic programs housed at the college level undergo review separate from review of their college.
- The periodic review process involves a systematic, comprehensive self-study of the unit and its academic programs to assess performance and effectiveness with respect to academic quality (curriculum, instruction, research, extension, and outreach activities), student success, faculty and staff, administration and governance, and budget and facilities.
- Self-studies are reviewed by OSPIE, dean, college administrators and an external peer review committee. The results of the external peer review should be reviewed with the dean, and with University and college administrators as appropriate. Findings from the self-study and external review committee are used to develop strategic planning and unit initiatives. A summary of the review process will be submitted to the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) as required by KRS 164.020(16).
- Programs with an external programmatic accreditation (e.g., LCME, APA) can conduct a focused review that meets the University's expectations for ongoing continuous improvement and quality assurance. The accreditation review will also stand in for the review by a member external to the University, but not for the review by University members. Accredited programs will use the process to develop strategic planning and unit initiatives and submit required documentation to the Kentucky (CPE).
- The appropriate chief academic officer (CAO) will determine the appropriate extent and scope of administrative and educational unit reviews, in consultation with OSPIE and the President, Provost or appropriate administrative designee.
- Except in extraordinary circumstances, for academic programs, the review must occur no less frequently than once every eight (8) years. Between reviews, academic programs are expected to implement recommended improvements and conduct annual student outcome assessments.

### **Academic Program Student Learning Outcome**

- Each academic program (see definitions) is required to define a set of learning outcomes, assess the extent to which these outcomes are achieved and provide evidence of seeking improvement based on an analysis of the results, ensuring continuous improvement in student learning and overall program effectiveness.
- Learning outcomes are clear, measurable statements that articulate the specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or values that students are expected to achieve or demonstrate upon completion of their academic program or at the time of graduation.
- Accredited programs are expected to participate in the University's program student learning outcomes assessment process and may use accreditor-defined learning outcomes, if they align with University requirements.
- Academic programs must develop and periodically review, revise and implement plans to assess the student learning outcomes.
- New academic programs must provide a draft student learning outcomes plan as part of the new program proposal. A final plan is to be provided to OSPIE no later than the end of the first year in which the new program has enrolled students.

- Academic programs are to provide annual reports to OSPIE that document student learning outcomes assessment procedures, results and actions taken that are expected to improve outcome performance. The program chair or designated program faculty are responsible for ensuring reports are submitted and the assessment activities are implemented.
  - Degree programs should prepare and submit their first Program Student Learning Outcome Reports by the end of their second full academic year of operation. Certificates and badges should be reported after the first cohort has completed the program.
- Student learning outcomes are assessed on a cycle established by OSPIE in partnership with the colleges. Programs can request a temporary exception to the reporting timeline due to such factors as delayed student enrollment, program closure, a significant curriculum change impacting the original learning outcomes and undergoing a review by an external accreditation. These exemptions should be submitted to OSPIE for review.

### **Annual Administrative Unit Plans**

Administrative, academic, and student support services units (see definitions) must participate in an annual planning and assessment cycle. The process is used to evaluate unit goals and objectives and support alignment with the University strategic plan. Designated units must submit annual reports that include the following, as applicable: mission statement, goals, objectives, measures of progress and results and evidence of seeking improvement.

OSPIE guides the annual planning and reporting cycle.

In addition to administrative outcomes, academic and student support service units must assess student learning outcomes as appropriate to their unit's mission. The requirements for these units' assessment include the following:

- Each CAO-designated unit will be required to assess the extent to which it achieves its outcomes and provide evidence of seeking improvement based on an analysis of the results.
- Academic and student support service units must develop, periodically review, revise and implement plans to assess the student learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are statements that identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or values students are expected to meet as a result of the participation in a service or program from an academic or student support service unit.
- Academic and student support service units must develop a final plan to be provided to their respective CAO or designee no later than the end of the first year in which it serves students.
- Student learning outcomes are assessed on a regular cycle established by OSPIE in partnership with the unit's CAO.

### **Budget Alignment**

Institutional planning and effectiveness is the ongoing and institution-wide planning and evaluation process through which the University monitors the effectiveness of its units, programs and services to inform decision-making and resource allocation to support the University's mission. Resource allocation occurs through a standard budget process used to translate institutional plans into action and foster accountability. The University budget process is aligned with the University's planning and assessment activities and ensures all budget matters follow the general organizational structure of the University. The University's fiscal plans and resource allocations are informed by and aligned with the University's strategic plan. As part of the overall budget process, designated units develop annual fact sheets that provide, as applicable:

- A mission statement;

- Unit description and services;
- High-level organizational structures;
- Accomplishments over the past year;
- Enrollment and degrees awarded over the past four (4) years;
- Sponsored research awards over the past five (5) years;
- Engagement in public service; and
- Goals for the coming year.

The University Budget Office (UBO) has the responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the current funds budgets. UK operates an annual operating budget process, referred to as the Budget Development Cycle, to develop the operating budget for the fiscal year. Each major area has an Area Fiscal Officer with responsibility for the budget, compliance and finances of that area. Responsible persons at the unit-level ensure that expenditures under their control align with institutional mission and priorities and do not exceed budgets. Each year, the Budget Cycle Calendar is distributed to all Area Fiscal Officers and business officers and is accessible via the UBO website. The UBO works in conjunction with University Financial Services to ensure that appropriate budgetary reporting and management are in place and function as intended.