



## UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL POLICY ON OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND NON-ACADEMIC UNIT OUTCOMES

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### Introduction

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#### PURPOSE

Consistent with its mission statement, UNC-Chapel Hill embraces "...an unwavering commitment to excellence" and as such is committed to continuous improvement informed by assessment of institutional effectiveness across all areas and levels. In addition to institution-level planning and evaluation, assessment of the outcomes of academic programs and non-instructional units is required by the University's regional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

The purpose of this policy is to articulate requirements for assessment of outcomes and use of results for improvement purposes in academic and non-academic units and to specify the roles and responsibilities for implementing and overseeing assessment processes to ensure compliance with this policy and with the requirements of SACSCOC.

This policy replaces "UNC-Chapel Hill Guidelines for Student Learning Outcomes Assessment" approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost in 2004 and last revised and approved in 2007, and codifies existing practices for assessment in non-instructional units.

#### SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to the following types of programs and units at UNC-Chapel Hill:

- Academic degree major and stand-alone certificate programs (undergraduate, graduate, and professional);
- Administrative units that deliver institutional services;
- Academic and student support units that deliver institutional services;
- Units with a primary focus on conducting or supporting research;
- Units with a primary focus on delivering or supporting public service/engagement;
- Schools, for assessment of internal support services and school-wide research and public service/engagement outcomes.



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## Policy

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### Policy Requirements

UNC-Chapel Hill's outcomes assessment process requires programs or units to articulate expected outcomes that should occur as a result of their primary work – whether that involves enhancing student learning and educational program quality, research, public engagement, academic and student support services, or administrative operations – and then to measure their success and make improvements based on the results.

The University requires academic programs and non-academic units defined above to prepare and submit the following to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, through their respective deans or vice chancellors:

- An assessment plan that contains a mission statement; expected outcomes (that include student learning outcomes for educational programs); appropriate evaluation methods or metrics to assess these outcomes; and performance targets.
- An annual assessment report describing assessments conducted, findings, analysis of results, and a description of how the results have been used to make improvements in the program or unit.

These assessment plans and annual reports are required in addition to any other evaluation-related reporting obligations, such as those for Program Review, specialized accreditation, administrator reviews, five-year reviews of centers and institutes, and sponsored research.

### Standards and Procedures for Outcomes Assessment

Each plan and report must meet standards that address required elements and appropriate assessment methodology developed from best practices for assessment of institutional effectiveness in higher education. These standards, as well as procedures for reporting, submission timelines, and review and approval processes, are described in the “Standards and Procedures Related to the Policy on Assessment of Academic and Non-Academic Units” document available on the website of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (<http://oira.unc.edu/institutional-effectiveness/>).

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost has overall responsibility and oversight for outcomes assessment processes for academic program and non-instructional units.

Deans and vice chancellors are responsible for ensuring that all of the academic programs and non-instructional units within their respective organizations have assessment plans, carry out assessments that meet prescribed standards, and submit annual reports that document improvements made based on assessment results.



**Issuing Office(s)**

Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor  
and Provost

**Responsible University Officer(s)**

Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor  
and Provost

Each dean and vice chancellor will appoint one or more Assessment Coordinators to manage internal assessment process and to serve as liaisons to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Coordinators of academic program assessment must be full-time faculty members. Assessment Coordinators will be responsible for collecting and reviewing assessment plans and reports, providing feedback to faculty and staff to improve the quality of their assessments, and providing the plans and reports to the dean or vice chancellor for approval prior to submission to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. Assessment Coordinators must participate in periodic training and professional development activities sponsored by the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will offer training and consultation to Assessment Coordinators and program faculty about effective assessment practices. They will publish the annual calendar of due dates for plans and reports and provide templates and other assessment resources through their website. In addition to maintaining a central repository for assessment plans and reports, they will also review these documents for compliance with standards, provide feedback to Assessment Coordinators on necessary changes, and report to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost concerning policy compliance and opportunities for process improvement.

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## Definitions

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**Academic Program:** A formal course of study that leads to a degree or a stand-alone certificate.

**Non-Instructional Unit:** An organization with a mission that does not include offering credit-bearing courses that lead to a degree or certificate but instead provides services and operational support in fulfillment of the University's mission.

**Outcomes:** Statements that describe what should occur as a result of a program or unit's work. Outcomes are often synonymous with goals and objectives; however, they are typically focused on the quality and impact of the unit's work as opposed to completion of tasks.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Statements that describe what students should know, think and be able to do upon completion of an academic program.

**Assessment Plan:** A document that articulates the program or unit's mission, the intended outcomes of its work, methods to be used to measure these outcomes, and targets for determining success.

**Assessment Report:** An annual report from a program or unit that describes the outcomes measured during the past year, the findings from those assessments, and how the results were used to make decisions and improvements.



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**Related Requirements**

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**EXTERNAL REGULATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

This policy was developed to ensure UNC-Chapel Hill's continued compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges *Principles of Accreditation*, Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1, Institutional Effectiveness, page 27.

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAcacreditation.pdf> . The consequences of failure to comply with SACSCOC requirements include sanctions and possible loss of accreditation.

**UNIVERSITY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

See "Standards and Procedures Related to the Policy on Assessment of Academic and Non-Academic Units" on the website of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (<http://oira.unc.edu/institutional-effectiveness/>).

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**Contact Information**

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**POLICY CONTACTS**

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**Important Dates**

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- Effective Date and title of Approver: March 1, 2017. Approved by Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost with the unanimous endorsement of the Chancellor's Cabinet including all deans and vice chancellors.
- Replaces "UNC-Chapel Hill Guidelines for Student Learning Outcomes Assessment" approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost in 2004 and last revised and approved in 2007.

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**Signature**

James W. Dean, Jr., Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Date: March 1, 2017