

8.2.a Student outcomes: educational programs

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.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

The University of South Carolina Aiken identifies expected outcomes related to student learning, assesses the extent to which those outcomes are achieved through its educational programs, and effects curricular and programmatic improvements based upon the assessment results. Evidence of compliance with this standard is found in selected programs through professional accreditation and in all programs through the institution's own academic assessment procedures.

Program Effectiveness and Assessment Process. As a means for analyzing, evaluating, and improving the curriculum and learning process, academic assessment at USC Aiken is an ongoing activity at multiple levels that focuses on the extent to which learning outcomes are being met. As noted in the [Academic Bulletin](#) ^[1] and in the [Faculty Manual](#) ^[2], faculty in each program have the primary responsibility for determining appropriate educational outcomes which extend beyond student performance as registered by final course grades, as well as the methods and instruments for evaluating the level at which the outcomes have been accomplished.

Each academic unit implements an ongoing assessment program that clearly articulates goals and objectives for student learning in the major, measures these outcomes on a regular basis at several points in the program and in multiple ways, analyzes the findings, and uses the results for curricular improvements and adjustments. Each academic unit submits an annual report of assessment activities to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Compliance using Task Stream. Included in the report is an assessment plan that describes how a program will assess

students' performance during the upcoming academic year, and includes numerous components such as a program's mission statement, learning outcomes, curriculum map, measures and criteria, and methods. Programs that include offerings at remote sites or online, such as the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, include assessment of all offerings. Data are reported and examine in both aggregated and disaggregated forms to ensure comparable outcomes.

As a group, faculty within each degree-granting program are required to identify and articulate at least three measurable learning outcomes. Faculty also must describe the relevant direct and indirect measures that will be used to collect data for the purpose of measuring achievement of the established outcomes. Most indirect measures are in-house assessment tools such as exit surveys of graduating seniors and alumni surveys. Direct measures include in-house course-embedded assessments, capstone experiences, and thesis evaluated using a standardized rubric, or purchased outcome assessments such as ETS Major Field Tests and licensure exams like Praxis for Education and NCLEX for Nursing. At least one direct measure of student performance is required for each learning outcome, and the use of multiple measures is strongly encouraged. Faculty are encouraged to select measures and set criteria so that the data collected will be helpful in pinpointing strengths and weaknesses in the program and for use in ongoing decisions about program improvement. When all the assessment procedures have been completed, faculty then write the assessment report. Each assessment report presents data pertaining to the program's strengths and weaknesses garnered from the previous year's assessment activities, and delineates how the findings will be used to improve the program, and ultimately, student learning.

All assessment reports undergo internal review. Undergraduate programs are reviewed by the [Academic Assessment Committee](#) ^[3] on a [three-year cycle](#).^[4] In a similar manner, the [Graduate Advisory Council](#) ^[5] reviews assessment activities of each graduate program on a three-year cycle. Both committees are standing committees of the Faculty Assembly and serve in an advisory capacity for assessment of academic programs. Oversight by faculty committees allow faculty to embrace their responsibility to monitor and provide peer-directed guidance on assessment activities across

departments and schools. To facilitate a consistent review of programs across academic years, both committees use an [evaluative rubric](#) ^[6] that not only standardizes the evaluative process but also serves as a means to facilitate discussions among committee members and Department and School representatives. The rubric allows faculty to know in advance what each committee is looking for in a program review. Its use has facilitated the growth of an assessment-conscious culture on campus founded on best practices.

Faculty within each program are also attentive to possible performance differences in traditional, distance education and remote site delivery modes. If learning outcomes significantly differ, such distinctions are noted and discussed among faculty within the program. Academic programs rely on comparisons of student work products, such as assignments, exams, and portfolios, to demonstrate that students enrolled in distance education courses and remote sites perform at a level that equals or exceeds the level of performance of students enrolled in traditional courses.

Professionally Accredited Programs. More than 50% of the academic programs at USC Aiken are professionally accredited or recognized programs. Faculty within many of the programs submit regular continuous improvement reports to Specialized Professional Agencies (SPAs), while others conduct a self-study on a less frequent basis (e.g., every 5 years). Like SACSCOC, professional accrediting bodies require evidence of assessing student learning outcomes, and using the results of such assessments to effect continuous improvements. Professional accreditation reports are provided below in Table 8.2.a.

Assessment-related Reports. All available assessment related reports are provided below in Table 8.2.a. The linked documents in the table provide a comprehensive perspective of the university's efforts to assess student learning outcomes and academic departments' performance to analyze collected data, and to use the results of data analysis to make improvements. Included in the table are academic units' annual reviews, educational program requirements, curriculum maps, academic program review reports, and professional accreditation reports.

- **Contents of Academic Units' Annual Reviews.** Departments and schools annually track several key indicators including the percentage of credit and contact hours that are taught by part-time faculty, teaching overloads, and average class size for lower, upper and graduate level classes across disciplines, advisement and scholarly activities. The reports reflect efforts by each department to align activities with the institutional strategic plan and to monitor key metrics in keeping with the university's mission. Along with assessment data of student learning outcomes reported in the Academic Program Reviews, these indicators are used by Academic Council in recommendations to allocate new full-time faculty slots. Among other things, these reports include high impact learning practices and efforts to improve class pedagogies for classes that have a relatively high proportion of DFW grades. The reports include documentation of program improvement efforts.
- **Contents of Educational Program Requirements.** Each academic program's curricular requirements are provided as a linked document in the second column of Table 8.2.a. These documents allow for a fuller perspective on the curricular strategies and structure adopted to meet the student learning outcomes that are reported under the Academic Program Reviews.
- **Contents of Curriculum Maps.** The curriculum for each program is mapped onto student learning outcomes each year. Because the common educational core that constitutes General Education is separately mapped onto common student learning outcomes with administrative oversight for the assessment and the use of assessment results handled by a General Education Committee, program curriculum maps are limited to those classes that constitute the major requirements of the program. Details regarding the assessment activities of General Education are presented in the [narrative response to Standard 8.2.b - Student outcomes: General education](#).^[7] The student learning outcomes are identified in the map as being introduced by faculty, practiced by students, reinforced by faculty, or mastered by students in appropriate classes. Curriculum maps ensure that what is being taught in the program can be tied to

one or more student learning outcomes and are used to facilitate the identification of target areas within the curriculum that, based upon assessment data, might be in need of attention.

- **Contents of Academic Program Reviews.** Academic Program Reviews are annual reports that include identification of student learning outcomes; assessment plans; and evidence of assessment of student learning outcomes, analysis, and use of data to make improvements. Within an assessment plan, measures and their targets are identified. A link to the assessment tool (e.g., tests, rubrics, surveys) is typically provided. For some measures, the assessment tool is a standardized test (e.g., Major Field Test, Praxis, or NCLEX) and the actual test is not available. In those instances, a link to practice tests, study guides, or a description of what is covered in the test is provided. Assessment data are collected annually and reported under findings. Statements that summarize the findings for a given year are provided for each assessment measure followed by a link to the data that substantiate conclusions made based on the data analyses. Action plans and follow-up reports of actions taken based on analyses of data are also included; typically, a minimum of two actions are undertaken each year within an academic program in an effort to continuously improve – this is a requirement even if the targets for all measures are met or exceeded. Some of the academic programs are new and have yet to graduate students; thus their assessment reports do not include a complete set of data or action plans based on an analysis of the data.

- **Contents of Professional Accreditation Reports.** Table 8.2.a provides links to 15 professional accreditation or approval reports. Similar to academic program reviews, the professional accreditation reports include sections that identify learning outcomes, assessment plans with links to assessment instruments, evidence of collected data typically presented as trends across several semesters, and details on the use of the assessment data to effect continuous improvement. Links to reports for SPAs have been configured as pdf portfolios; the reports open to show all attached files (i.e., the assessment

instruments, data, and analyses), while actions to effect improvements to the program can be found in the report.

Table 8.2.a. Assessment-related Reports for Academic Units

Professional Schools				
Academic Unit Annual Reviews	Educational Program	Curriculum Maps	Academic Program Review Reports	Professional Accreditation Reports
School of Business Administration ^[8]	Master of Business Administration ^[22]	MBA Curriculum Map ^[56]	MBA Program Review ^[88]	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Report ^[119]
	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Business Administration) ^[23] <i>includes traditional on-campus, online completion, and remote site completion programs</i>	Business Administration Curriculum Map ^[57]	Business Administration Program Review ^[89]	
School of Education ^[9]	Master of Education (Educational Technology) ^[24]	MEd (Ed Tech) Curriculum Map ^[58]	Ed Tech Program Review ^[90]	Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) SPA Report ^[120]
	Master of Education (Educator Leadership) ^[25]	MEd (Ed Leadership) Curriculum Map ^[59]	Ed Leadership Assessment Plan ^[91] <i>New program introduced in the 2018-19 academic year and has yet to graduate students and collect assessment data</i>	
	Bachelor of Arts in Education (Early Childhood Education) ^[26]	Early Childhood Education Curriculum Map ^[60]	Early Childhood Education Program Review ^[92]	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) SPA Report ^[121]
	Bachelor of Arts in Education (Elementary Education) ^[27]	Elementary Education Curriculum Map ^[61]	Elementary Education Program Review ^[93]	Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) SPA Report ^[122]
	Bachelor of Arts in Education (Middle Level Education) ^[28]	Middle Level Education Curriculum Map ^[62]	Middle Level Education Program Review ^[94]	Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) SPA Report ^[123]

	Bachelor of Arts in Education (Secondary Education - Comprehensive Social Studies) [29]	Secondary Education - Social Studies Curriculum Map [63]	Secondary Education - Social Studies Program Review [95]	National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) SPA Report [124]
	Bachelor of Arts in Education (Secondary Education - English) [30]	Secondary Education - English Curriculum Map [64]	Secondary Education – English Program Review [96]	National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) SPA Report [125]
	Bachelor of Science in Education (Secondary Education - Sciences) [31] <i>Includes Biology and Chemistry concentrations</i>	Secondary Education - Sciences Curriculum Map [65]	Secondary Education – Sciences Program Review [97]	National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) SPA Report [126]
	Bachelor of Science in Education (Secondary Education - Mathematics) [32]	Secondary Education - Mathematics Curriculum Map [66]	Secondary Education - Mathematics Program Review [98]	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) SPA Report [127]
	Bachelor of Arts in Special Education [33] <i>Includes traditional on-campus and online completion programs</i>	Special Education Curriculum Map [67]	Special Education Program Review [99]	Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) SPA Report [128]
School of Nursing [10]	Bachelor of Science in Nursing [34] <i>Includes traditional on-campus, online completion, and remote site completion programs</i>	Nursing Curriculum Map [68]	Nursing Program Review [100]	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Report [129]
College of Sciences and Engineering				
Academic Unit Annual Reviews	Educational Program	Curriculum Maps	Academic Program Review Reports	Professional Accreditation Reports
Department of Biology & Geology [11]	Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science (Biology) [35]	Biology Curriculum Map [69]	Biology Program Review [101]	

	Bachelor of Science (Clinical Laboratory Science) [36]	Clinical Laboratory Science Curriculum Map [70]	Clinical Laboratory Science Program Review [102]	
	Bachelor of Science (Earth Systems Science) [37]	<i>new program starting Fall 2020</i>		
Department of Chemistry & Physics [12]	Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science (Chemistry) [38]	Chemistry Curriculum Map [71]	Chemistry Program Review [103]	American Chemical Society (ACS) Self-Study [130]
Department of Exercise & Sports Science [13]	Bachelor of Science (Exercise and Sports Science) [39]	Exercise & Sports Science Curriculum Map [72]	Exercise & Sports Science Program Review [104]	
Department of Mathematical Sciences [14]	Bachelor of Science (Applied Computer Science) [40] <i>includes online completion program</i>	Applied Computer Science Curriculum Map [73]	Applied Computer Science Assessment Plan [105] <i>New program introduced in the 2019-20 academic year and has yet to graduate students and collect assessment data</i>	
	Bachelor of Science (Applied Mathematics) [41]	Applied Mathematics Curriculum Map [74]	Applied Mathematics Assessment Plan [106] <i>New program introduced in the 2019-20 academic year and has yet to graduate students and collect assessment data</i>	
	Bachelor of Science (Industrial Process Engineering) [42]	Industrial Process Engineering Curriculum Map [75]	Industrial Process Engineering Program Review [107]	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) Initial Accreditation Report [131]
Department of Psychology [15]	Master of Science (Applied Clinical Psychology) [43]	MS Applied Clinical Psychology Curriculum Map [76]	MS Psychology Program Review [108]	Master in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC) Report [132]
	Bachelor of Science (Psychology) [44] <i>Includes traditional on-site and online completion programs</i>	Psychology Curriculum Map [77]	Psychology Program Review [109]	

College of Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences				
Academic Unit Annual Reviews	Educational Program	Curriculum Maps	Academic Program Review Reports	Professional Accreditation Reports
Department of Communication [16]	Bachelor of Arts (Communication) [45] <i>Includes traditional on-site and online completion programs</i>	Communication Curriculum Map [78]	Communication Program Review [110]	
	Bachelor of Arts (Communication & Digital Art) [46]	Communication & Digital Art Curriculum Map [79]	<i>New program introduced in the 2019-20 academic year</i>	
Department of English [17]	Bachelor of Arts (English) [47]	English Curriculum Map [80]	English Program Review [111]	
	Bachelor of Fine Arts (Writing) [48]	Fine Arts Writing Curriculum Map [81]	Fine Arts Writing Assessment Plan [112] <i>New program introduced in the 2019-20 academic year and has yet to graduate students and collect assessment data</i>	
Interdisciplinary Studies [18]	Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies [49]	Interdisciplinary Studies Curriculum Map [82]	Interdisciplinary Studies Program Review [113]	
Department of History, Political Science and Philosophy [19]	Bachelor of Arts (History) [50]	History Curriculum Map [83]	History Program Review [114]	
	Bachelor of Arts (Political Science) [51]	Political Science Curriculum Map [84]	Political Science Program Review [115]	
Department of Sociology [20]	Bachelor of Arts (Sociology) [52]	Sociology Curriculum Map [85]	Sociology Program Review [116]	
Department of Visual and Performing Arts [21]	Bachelor of Arts (Art) [53]	<i>new program starting Fall 2020</i>		
	Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) [54]	Fine Arts Curriculum Map [86]	Fine Arts Program Review [117]	
	Bachelor of Arts (Music) [55]	Music Curriculum Map [87]	Music Assessment Plan [118] <i>New program introduced in the 2019-20 academic year and has yet to graduate students and collect assessment data</i>	National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) Report [133]

Supporting Documentation

1. [Academic Bulletin: Assessment Requirements](#)
 2. [Faculty Manual: Assessment Requirements](#)
 3. [Faculty Manual: Academic Assessment Committee](#)
 4. [Program Assessment cycle](#)
 5. [Faculty Manual: Graduate Advisory Council](#)
 6. [Assessment Report Evaluative Rubric](#)
 7. [Narrative response to Standard 8.2.b - Student outcomes: General education](#)
 8. [School of Business Administration End-of-Year Reports](#)
 9. [School of Education End-of-Year Reports](#)
 10. [School of Nursing End-of-Year Reports](#)
 11. [Department of Biology & Geology End-of-Year Reports](#)
 12. [Department of Chemistry & Physics End-of-Year Reports](#)
 13. [Department of Exercise & Sports Science End-of-Year Reports](#)
 14. [Department of Mathematical Sciences End-of-Year Reports](#)
 15. [Department of Psychology End-of-Year Reports](#)
 16. [Department of Communication End-of-Year Reports](#)
 17. [Department of English End-of-Year Reports](#)
 18. [Interdisciplinary Studies Program End-of-Year Reports](#)
 19. [Department of History, Political Science, & Philosophy End-of-Year Reports](#)
 20. [Department of Sociology End-of-Year Reports](#)
 21. [Department of Visual & Performing Arts End-of-Year Reports](#)
 22. [Master of Business Administration Program](#)
 23. [Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Program](#)
 24. [Master of Education \(Educational Technology\) Program](#)
 25. [Master of Education \(Educator Leadership\) Program](#)
 26. [Bachelor of Arts in Education \(Early Childhood Education\) Program](#)
 27. [Bachelor of Arts in Education \(Elementary Education\) Program](#)
 28. [Bachelor of Arts in Education \(Middle Level Education\) Program](#)
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29. [Bachelor of Arts in Education \(Secondary Education - Comprehensive Social Studies\) Program](#)
 30. [Bachelor of Arts in Education \(Secondary Education - English\) Program](#)
 31. [Bachelor of Science in Education \(Secondary Education - Sciences\) Program](#)
 32. [Bachelor of Science in Education \(Secondary Education - Mathematics\) Program](#)
 33. [Bachelor of Arts in Special Education Program](#)
 34. [Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program](#)
 35. [Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science \(Biology\) Programs](#)
 36. [Bachelor of Science \(Clinical Laboratory Science\) Program](#)
 37. [Bachelor of Science \(Earth Systems Science\) Program](#)
 38. [Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science \(Chemistry\) Programs](#)
 39. [Bachelor of Science \(Exercise and Sports Science\) Program](#)
 40. [Bachelor of Science \(Applied Computer Science\) Program](#)
 41. [Bachelor of Science \(Applied Mathematics\) Program](#)
 42. [Bachelor of Science \(Industrial Process Engineering\) Program](#)
 43. [Master of Science \(Applied Clinical Psychology\) Program](#)
 44. [Bachelor of Science \(Psychology\) Program](#)
 45. [Bachelor of Arts \(Communication\) Program](#)
 46. [Bachelor of Arts \(Communication & Digital Art\) Program](#)
 47. [Bachelor of Arts \(English\) Program](#)
 48. [Bachelor of Fine Arts \(Writing\) Program](#)
 49. [Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies Programs](#)
 50. [Bachelor of Arts \(History\) Program](#)
 51. [Bachelor of Arts \(Political Science\) Program](#)
 52. [Bachelor of Arts \(Sociology\) Program](#)
 53. [Bachelor of Arts \(Art\) Program](#)
 54. [Bachelor of Arts \(Fine Arts\) Program](#)
 55. [Bachelor of Arts \(Music\) Program](#)
 56. [MBA Curriculum Map](#)
 57. [Business Administration Curriculum Map](#)
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58. [MEd \(Ed Tech\) Curriculum Map](#)
 59. [MEd \(Ed Leadership\) Curriculum Map](#)
 60. [Early Childhood Education Curriculum Map](#)
 61. [Elementary Education Curriculum Map](#)
 62. [Middle Level Education Curriculum Map](#)
 63. [Secondary Education - Social Studies Curriculum Map](#)
 64. [Secondary Education - English Curriculum Map](#)
 65. [Secondary Education - Sciences Curriculum Map](#)
 66. [Secondary Education - Mathematics Curriculum Map](#)
 67. [Special Education Curriculum Map](#)
 68. [Nursing Curriculum Map](#)
 69. [Biology Curriculum Map](#)
 70. [Clinical Laboratory Science Curriculum Map](#)
 71. [Chemistry Curriculum Map](#)
 72. [Exercise & Sports Science Curriculum Map](#)
 73. [Applied Computer Science Curriculum Map](#)
 74. [Applied Mathematics Curriculum Map](#)
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 84. [Political Science Curriculum Map](#)
 85. [Sociology Curriculum Map](#)
 86. [Fine Arts Curriculum Map](#)
 87. [Music Curriculum Map](#)
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88. [MBA Program Review](#)
 89. [Business Administration Program Review](#)
 90. [MEd - Ed Tech Program Review](#)
 91. [MEd - Ed Leadership Assessment Plan](#)
 92. [Early Childhood Education Program Review](#)
 93. [Elementary Education Program Review](#)
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 95. [Secondary Education - Social Studies Program Review](#)
 96. [Secondary Education – English Program Review](#)
 97. [Secondary Education – Sciences Program Review](#)
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 112. [Fine Arts Writing Assessment Plan](#)
 113. [Interdisciplinary Studies Program Review](#)
 114. [History Program Review](#)
 115. [Political Science Program Review](#)
 116. [Sociology Program Review](#)
 117. [Fine Arts Program Review](#)
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118. [Music Assessment Plan](#)
119. [Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business \(AACSB\) Report](#)
120. [Association for Educational Communications and Technology \(AECT\) SPA Report](#)
121. [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\) SPA Report](#)
122. [Association for Childhood Education International \(ACEI\) SPA Report](#)
123. [Association for Middle Level Education \(AMLE\) SPA Report](#)
124. [National Council for Social Studies \(NCSS\) SPA Report](#)
125. [National Council of Teachers of English \(NCTE\) SPA Report](#)
126. [National Science Teachers Association \(NSTA\) SPA Report](#)
127. [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics \(NCTM\) SPA Report](#)
128. [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\) SPA Report](#)
129. [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\) Report](#)
130. [American Chemical Society \(ACS\) Self-Study](#)
131. [Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology \(ABET\) Initial Accreditation Report](#)
132. [Master in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council \(MPCAC\) Report](#)
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