

|  |
| --- |
| Instructions for Certificate and Minor Assessment Reports  Cycle: 2024-2025  Due: September 5, 2025 |
| **Academic Program Assessment** |

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) conducts annual assessments at the program-level, including certificates and minors, to document support of ***SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation Section 8: Student Achievement***.

Student learning and student success are at the core of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support student learning outcomes for its education programs.

**Standard 8.2**:

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvements based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

**Standard 8.2 a**:

For each of its educational programs.

|  |
| --- |
| **New for this year…** |

* Certificates/Minors are asked to refrain from entering the Analysis of Findings and Action Plans in the Weave software. These will now be captured in the analysis document.
* The former Program Analysis field has been modified to the “Additional Information” field.

|  |
| --- |
| Certificate/Minor Report Guidelines |

Certificates and minors must be assessed annually. The following components are required in Weave ([log-in to Weave](https://app.weaveeducation.com/login?returnUrl=%2Fdashboard)) for a complete assessment report:

1. **Program Description**: A brief description of the certificate/minor. How will this program benefit students? What will students be able to do because of this program (i.e., career opportunities). The program description should also include the number ofhours required for the certificate/minor, delivery location (Hattiesburg, Gulf Park), and mode of delivery (face-to-face, online).
2. **Student Learning Outcomes**: *All certificates/minors must identify a minimum of 2 SLOs.*
   1. SLOs should answer: “When students complete this program, they will be able to…”
3. **Measures and Targets**: *Each SLO must be assessed by at least 1 measures, and the measure must be direct. Each measure should have one target.* A measure identifies evidence and methods used to determine achievement of expected outcomes. Measure descriptions should be detailed, specific, and include how the measure is graded/evaluated/scored. Measures can be direct (i.e., directly measure/evaluate a student’s work – exams, papers, portfolios, projects, etc.), or they can be indirect (i.e., methods that reflect on students’ learning – interviews, surveys, etc.) Targets are the quantitative criteria for how success will be measured. Measures and targets should show progressive distinction between degree levels, if applicable.
   1. Targets should be aspirational; it is not a requirement to meet the target. The goal of assessment is to continuously improve the program and student learning. The target name should be left blank.
   2. Depending on the findings, the Target status should be “met” or “not met.” If there is a two part target, the target status may be “partially met.”
4. **Findings**: Findings are the results of the program’s measures. *Findings must be reported separately by site/mode of delivery and include all sites and/or modes for certificates/minors with more than one teaching site/mode of delivery.* Sample sizes must be included. If sampling is used, a detailed description of the sampling method must be included. Semesters the data is from must be included (Fall, Spring, and if applicable, Summer and intersession).
   1. If additional space is needed to disaggregate findings, continue the findings in the section titled “analysis of findings” within Weave.
   2. The analysis of the findings/data for all measures should be included in the analysis document.

***The following fields in the Weave software should be left blank:*** *Target Descriptions and Analysis sections (unless an Analysis section is needed to display additional findings).*

1. **Analysis Document**: The *Annual Program and Action Plan Analysis* document must be completed, and the document must be uploaded as a project attachment in Weave.
2. **Report Status:** Once the report has been completed and the analysis document and other documents have been attached, the status of the report should be changed to Completed. For a report to be considered complete by IE, data must be entered and the analysis document and any other supporting documentation must be attached.

|  |
| --- |
| Program Analysis and Program Review |

The Word document, *Annual Program and Action Plan Analysis 2024-2025,* is required annually. Additional details are included below. **All applicable sections of the Word document must be completed and attached to your project in Weave for your project to be considered complete**.

|  |
| --- |
| **Analysis of Findings** |

The results are analyzed to determine direction for continuous improvement. If a target is “not met,” what can be done to improve student learning? Have actions already been taken to improve student learning? For targets which are “met,” what action plans were implemented that led to this result? What best practices are in place? What challenges remain or have been overcome? Do new targets or measures need to be chosen now that the target has been met? Remember, the goal of assessment is continuous improvement.

* 1. *Stating that the targets were “met” and that no further action is needed is not an acceptable analysis.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Action Plans** |

An action plan is an organized activity undertaken to help programs more effectively achieve intended outcomes, or an activity developed by faculty to improve the program for the future. A new action plan is required at least every other year and if a target is not met. Action plans should focus on measures/targets that were not met. Action plans may be specific to individual student learning outcomes or to the program overall. The goal of action plans is to provide evidence of continuous improvement and evidence of seeking to improve student learning. These plans should not contain vague phrases such as “we will look into this” or “no action required.”

* 1. If an Action Plan was completed in the previous year and the results were discussed in a previous analysis document, it should be deleted from this year’s report.
  2. *All programs are encouraged to develop action plans in the analysis document, not within the Weave platform. Weave entered action plans will need to be deleted or phased out over time.*
  3. Set SMART action plans: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

All action plans should be listed under the Action Plans header. For clarity and consistency, please use the provided action plan template in the analysis document.

Title: The title of the action plan.

Affiliated Outcome: The SLO the action plan is connected to. If the action plan is for the program as a whole, state the plan is program-level.

Due Date: Goal date for when the actions will be completed. May be a specific month/ academic year or semester.

Status: Status of the action plan. Planned action plans have not been implemented yet. In-Progress action plans are currently being implemented. Completed action plans have already been implemented and the results are available.

Description: Describe the action plan. What specific steps will be taken and why.

Updates/Results/Closing the Loop: If the action plan is In-Progress, what has been implemented thus far? Have any changes been noticed already? If the action plan is Completed, what were the results of the action plan? Comparing data, were any improvements observed? If improvements were not seen, why not, and what additional efforts may be implemented in the future?

|  |
| --- |
| **Additional Information (optional - not required)** |

Sometimes the report does not have a prompt for information that is pertinent to understanding the program. This section provides the opportunity to provide any information/context that is not already listed in other areas of the report but is helpful for readers to understand. For example, this section may include changes to the curriculum, changes to mode of delivery, etc.

|  |
| --- |
| **Program Review** |

**Certificates and minors are not required to complete the enrollment and graduation tables; however, the Enrollment and Graduation Narrative and Action Plans section should still be completed. If there is no enrollment/graduation data to report, delete the Program Completion/Impact section.**

Consider the following questions when completing the enrollment and graduation narrative:

* What is the ideal cohort size for the program? How many students can be supported with current resources and course offerings/capacities?
* How do current enrollment rates compare to this program’s ideal cohort size?
* If current enrollment is below the ideal number, what efforts will be made to meet this ideal cohort size?
* What action plans will be/have been implemented that are related to strengthening annual enrollment and graduation rates?

You may utilize the graduation and enrollment data included in the *Program Review* dashboard of Institutional Research’s internal site and from the *HelioCampus Program Review Snapshot* (certificates only) that was sent to Program Coordinators in January 2025. Instructions for accessing the *Program Review* dashboard are included within the analysis document.

|  |
| --- |
| Resources |

If you have any questions regarding the assessment plan and guidelines or Weave, please contact Claire Villarreal (Claire.Villarreal@usm.edu), the Institutional Assessment Coordinator. Additionally, [the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website](https://www.usm.edu/institutional-effectiveness/index.php) contains resources regarding program assessment, navigating weave, and SACSCOC requirements.

|  |
| --- |
| **Best Practices / Tips** |

* Gather data after each semester; do not wait until close to the due date to gather all data.
* Discuss the assessment report with other members of your school. Let faculty know the results of the report, and as a group, identify areas for improvement.
* Have a variety of measures. Use multiple assignments instead of one or two to measure all SLOs.
* See the program’s previous review rubric for feedback on specific areas for improving the report.
* Review the examples of strong assessment components found in the Resources section of the [Academic Assessment page](https://www.usm.edu/institutional-effectiveness/academicassessment.php) of the IE website.
* To ensure Weave information is not lost, have all data/Weave information saved as a Word document (prior to entering it into Weave) and ensure there is a strong connection to the internet when working in Weave.

|  |
| --- |
| **Reviewing and Submitting the Report** |

* Proof-read the report; check for grammatical errors, spelling errors, and typos. Remove any “empty/blank” sections that are not used.
* Use the compliance/review rubric to ensure all parts of the report are complete.
* Determine if the report supports SACSCOC Standard 8.2.a:
  + Does the report provide evidence of…
    - Identifying Student Learning Outcomes
    - Assessing the achievement of Student Learning Outcomes
    - Seeking improvement based on analysis of the results
* Have your school director the assessment report, if applicable.
* Change the status of the project to “Complete” in Weave.
* Celebrate!

|  |
| --- |
| ***Thank you for your efforts and commitment to continuous improvement!*** |