

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
BYLAWS**

Approved by the University Assessment Committee on May 4, 2006
Revised: October 24, 2006; March 1, 2007; November 29, 2007; November 19, 2008;
April 4, 2009; September 30, 2009; December 2, 2009; October 21, 2010; December 5, 2012;
April 1, 2015, November 29, 2017

ARTICLE 1: Name

University Assessment Committee

Subcommittees:

University Assessment Committee - Academic

University Assessment Committee - Administrative

ARTICLE 2: Purpose

The purpose of the University Assessment Committee is to support the process of continual self-evaluation and improvement across all academic and administrative units at The University of Southern Mississippi. The committee's primary responsibility is to ensure that the institution complies with the Principles of Accreditation for Quality Enhancement published by the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools with regards to assessment:

- Section 8. Student Achievement
 - 1. The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success. **(Student achievement) (Core Requirement)**
 - 2. 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 in the areas below:
 - a. student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs, **(Student outcomes: educational programs)**
 - b. student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs, **(Student outcomes: general education)**
 - c. academic and student services that support student success. **(Student outcomes: academic and student services)**
- Section 7. Institutional Planning and Effectiveness
 - 3. The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved. **(Administrative effectiveness)**

Additional SACSCOC standards are also supported by assessment activity.

- Section 9. Educational Program Structure and Content
 - 6. Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate

programs, and are structured (a.) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b.) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training. **(Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum)**

- Section 14. Transparency and Institutional Representation
 - 3. The institution applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs, branch campuses, and off-campus instructional sites. **(Comprehensive institutional reviews)**

ARTICLE 3: Relationships and Responsibilities

Section 3.1. Relationships

Chain of Accountability:

University Assessment Committee

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Associate Provost

Provost

University President

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Section 3.2. Responsibilities

The University Assessment Committee:

- Advises and supports the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in all assessment matters.
- Assists in reviewing outcomes, assessment of those outcomes, and evidence of pursuing improvement.

Section 3.2.1. Responsibilities of the Chair

One Chair presides over the Academic Subcommittee and one Chair presides over the Administrative Subcommittee. The Chairs of the University Assessment Committees are responsible for establishing membership, calling and presiding over meetings, acting as spokesmen for the University Assessment Committee when required, and organizing the annual Assessment Showcase.

Section 3.2.2. Responsibilities of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for providing clerical support to the UAC, recording meeting minutes, placing minutes on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website, guiding the assessment process, assisting in organizing the annual Assessment Showcase and intersecting with the Southern Associations of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges..

Section 3.2.3. Responsibilities of the Voting Members

Voting members of the University Assessment Committee are responsible for representing their academic or administrative unit on the committee, attending all meetings, reviewing assigned assessment reports and plans, voting on agenda items, reporting on and promoting assessment matters to their respective academic or administrative units, and attending the annual Assessment Showcase. In the review of assessment reports, members serving as university representatives will be assigned departments as needed, independent of home college or unit.

ARTICLE 4: Members

Section 4.1. Academic Representatives

Faculty members are appointed by the respective deans, with at least two representatives from each college. If a college is required to submit 35 or more academic assessment reports, additional members may be appointed by the respective dean at the ratio of one additional member for every 15 additional reports or fraction thereof. Every third year, beginning with 2013-14, the number of representatives will be reviewed and reallocated based on the number of reports.

In addition, the President of Faculty Senate, the Chairs of Academic Council, General Education Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council, and the Council of Chairs will be invited to participate on the committee or they may designate a representative from their respective bodies.

Section 4.2. Administrative Representatives

The Executive Cabinet appoints seven committee members from administrative units and the Dean of Libraries appoints one representative from USM Libraries. In addition, the president of Staff Council will be invited to participate on the committee or he/she may designate a representative from his/her respected body.

Section 4.3. Ex Officio Members

Ex Officio members of the committee include the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Director of Quality Enhancement, Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, and Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness. Ex Officio members do not vote.

Section 4.4. Chairs

One Chair presides over the Academic Subcommittee and one Chair presides over the Administrative Subcommittee. The chairs of the University Assessment Committee are elected for a one year term by the appropriate subcommittee, by the end of spring semester for the following academic year. The chairs serve for one year, and may serve two additional years (for a total of three years). Members rotating off their second term of service are not eligible to be elected as chair. Members rotating off their first term of service are eligible to be elected as chair. Ex-officio committee members are not eligible for election to chair.

Section 4.5. Term of Service and Rotation

Each year, in August, one third of the committee is rotated off and a new third is seated. Appointed at the beginning of the fall semester, the faculty and administrative unit committee members serve a three-year term, beginning with the fall semester. Members may not serve more than two consecutive terms; however, former members are eligible to serve again after a one-year absence from the committee.

Representatives from the Faculty Senate, Academic Council, General Education Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council, Council of Chairs, and Staff Council will be appointed annually by the current president or chair of the respective body.

Section 4.6. Unexpired Terms of Service

If a member leaves the committee before the three-year term is completed, a replacement will be appointed, as described in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

ARTICLE 5: Meetings

Section 5.1. Regular Meetings

The chairs of the committee or the ex-officio members of the committee may call meetings. Monthly meetings are held during the academic year. In special circumstances, additional meetings may be called as needed. Meeting dates must be announced at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meetings and included in meeting minutes. Meetings are open to the University Community and to the public in accordance with the Mississippi Meetings Open Act (MCA § 25-41-1).

Section 5.2. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of not less than a simple majority of the voting members of the committee. No business shall be conducted if less than a majority of voting members is present.

Section 5.3. Voting

A motion carries when a majority of voting members present cast an affirmative vote.

Section 5.4. Proxy

For business conducted at the University Assessment Committee meeting, voting members may designate a proxy. Written notification of proxy must be sent to the appropriate Committee Chair and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Only a voting member of the committee may serve as a proxy for another member. No member can hold more than one proxy at a time.

Section 5.5: Removal for Cause

Committee members who fail to attend meetings or to actively engage in the business of the committee may be asked to vacate their position and a replacement will be appointed.

Section 5.6. Meeting Minutes

Minutes of each meeting of the University Assessment Committee for the past five years must be maintained in the Office of the Institutional Effectiveness and posted on the Web site of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

ARTICLE 6: Changes to University Assessment Committee Bylaws

The Bylaws of the University Assessment Committee may be amended at each respective subcommittee meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided that a quorum (a majority of all voting members) is present and that the changes were submitted in writing at a previous meeting or at least two weeks prior to the meeting

ARTICLE 7: Annual Report and Recommendations

At the conclusion of the academic year, the Chairs of the University of Assessment Committee will prepare an annual report of the committee's activities and any recommendations for submission to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by June 1 of each year.