

Assessment/Assurance of Learning FAQ

1. Are assessment and assurance of learning the same thing?

AACSB uses the term 'Assurance of Learning' rather than assessment to focus attention on student learning and away from instructor evaluation; however, the process by which colleges determine whether students know what the faculty think they know is assessment. Long story short, the terms are used interchangeably.

2. Who requires that we assess student learning?

Three different entities have mandated assessment: the Florida Legislature, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and AACSB.

3. Do they all ask for the same information?

Unfortunately, no. The Florida legislature requires that colleges and universities that are part of the state system complete academic learning compacts (ALCs) for each of their undergraduate programs; program here is defined as major. The compacts are intended to convey to students, parents, and other stakeholders the program mission and the discipline-specific, critical thinking, and communication skills graduates of the program can expect to acquire.

SACS requires essentially the same information as the legislature for undergraduate programs; however, SACS uses the term 'Assessment Plan.' SACS also requires assessment plans for master's level and doctoral programs.

Because we grant a single undergraduate degree, the BS/BA in Business Administration, rather than separate degrees in each major (e.g., BS/BA in Accountancy) AACSB considers us to have a single undergraduate program comprising the core courses all business students take. So, for AACSB, our focus at the undergraduate level is assessment of the core. AACSB also requires assessment plans for master's level and doctoral programs.

4. So—what do we actually have to do to satisfy everyone?

Here's what it looks like:

Assessment Mandates

Program	Legislative Mandate	SACS	AACSB
Undergraduate Core			X
Individual Majors (ALCs)	X	X	
MBA, Executive MBA, Cohort MBA		X	X
Discipline-based Master's Degrees		X	X
Doctoral Program		X	X

5. Who is responsible for developing assessment plans, ALCs?

Each department or program should have an assessment committee comprising faculty who teach in the program(s). Departmental committees are responsible for developing/approving assessment plans for: departmental core courses (based on overall core objectives), the department/discipline-based major, the department/discipline-based master's degree, and the Ph.D. program.

The Undergraduate Programs Committee (UPC) is responsible for interdisciplinary undergraduate programs including International Business and the GBA Singapore programs; the UPC shares responsibility with the departments and the Center for Entrepreneurship for the GBA major because that major comprises minor concentrations in the six disciplines plus entrepreneurship.

The Graduate Policy Committee (GPC) is responsible for the MBA and Executive MBA programs; the Center for Entrepreneurship is responsible for the MS in Entrepreneurship.

The Doctoral Program Committee has overall responsibility for the doctoral program.

6. Who gathers and analyzes the data?

Departments/programs are responsible for gathering and analyzing outcomes data for the undergraduate major, the minor concentration in the GBA major, the department/discipline-based master's program, and the doctoral program. Undergraduate Studies has responsibility for the International Business Major and the GBA Singapore; the Office of MBA Programs is responsible for gathering and analyzing outcomes data for MBA programs; the Center for Entrepreneurship is responsible for gathering and analyzing data for the MS in Entrepreneurship.

7. What happens after data is analyzed?

Two things happen after the data is analyzed: the department/program completes the section of the assessment plan that asks for assessment results and use of results for program improvement and the department/program compiles a summary report that is sent to the appropriate committee: UPC, GPC, or Doctoral Programs Committee. Each of these committees then prepares a summary report for the College Assessment Committee.

8. What happens if we just don't do it?

Assessment is serious business on several levels. If we fail to assess learning via ALCs, we'd be in violation of Florida law. If we fail to do assessments for SACS, it imperils the university's accreditation; loss of SACS accreditation would mean that students would no longer be eligible for federal aid and researchers would no longer be eligible to apply for grants. If we fail to do assessments for AACSB, we can lose that accreditation. And, we would never know what our students do and don't know when they complete their programs of study.