

CR 8.1 (Student achievement)

Standard 9.3 (General education requirements)

8.2.c 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 academic and student services that support student success. (*Student outcomes: academic and student services*)

Rationale and Notes

Academic and student support services that support student success normally include such activities as library and learning/information resources, faculty resource centers, tutoring, writing centers, academic computer centers, student disability support centers, financial aid, residence life, student activities, dean of students' office, and so on. Most institutions would also include admissions offices within this category. These units provide direct support to faculty and students as related to their educational programs, indirect support for student learning, or a specific co-curricular mission that supports the college experience.

It would be common to find that some of these units have expected student outcomes very similar to those of educational programs. Examples might be a library unit tasked with providing information literacy instruction to students, or wellness programming aimed at influencing student behaviors. Regarding library and other learning/information resources, see Standard 11.3 (*Library and learning/information access*), which specifically addresses instruction in the use of the library. In other cases, expected outcomes might not be related to a directly measurable student learning outcome but instead related to quality of service. An example might be a maximum percentage “downtime” target for levels of academic computing network availability.

As discussed in the “Rationale and Notes” for Standard 7.3 (*Administrative effectiveness*), it is sometimes difficult to separate assessment of outcomes of administrative goals from assessment of outcomes related to academic and student support services. Generally, these “dual function” units would be addressed in this part of the *Principles*. If those units are instead addressed in Standard 7.3, it is incumbent on the institution to explain how this determination follows from its mission and organizational structure; it is strongly suggested that this explanation appear in both standards of the Compliance Certification. While institutions may organize functions differently, it is expected that all services, whether administrative or academic student support services, engage in institutional effectiveness processes.

NOTES

See the Standard 8.2 discussion as well as this substandard for full coverage of this standard within the Resource Manual.

Often, the nature of academic and student support services differs between services for graduate students and those for undergraduate students. Similarly, some services are geared

toward commuter students and others primarily target residential students. While institutions have moved more services online, making them available to residential, online, and off-campus students, this is not always the case. Institutions should take care to explicitly address how outcomes assessment activities take these (and other) student populations into effect.

Questions to Consider

- Has each unit developed expected outcomes in clearly defined and measurable terms?
- For units that have direct instructional responsibilities, or that provide specific co-curricular activities, are there measurable expected student learning outcomes for these functions?
- What types of assessment activities are undertaken by each unit?
- How (and by whom) are the findings analyzed in order to take possible action on the findings?
- If weaknesses are found, what is the process for seeking improvements in the delivery of academic and student support services? What are some of the efforts made to improve services?
- If the institution used sampling, why were the sampling and findings an appropriate representation of the institution's academic and student support units?

Sample Documentation

- Information as to how the institution's academic and student support services units are structured for reporting purposes.
- Specific expected outcomes for academic and student support services units, to include expected student learning outcomes as appropriate.
- Specific evidence of the assessment of outcomes.
- Information as to how findings are analyzed.
- Examples of units seeking improvements based on this analysis.
- If sampling is used, (1) how the sampling is representative of the institution's mission, (2) documentation of a valid cross-section of units, and (3) make a case as to why sampling and assessment findings are an appropriate representation of the institution's units.
- Discussion of how assessments address different types of student populations.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policy: [Distance and Correspondence Education](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

- CR 7.1 *(Institutional planning)*
Standard 7.2 *(Quality Enhancement Plan)*
CR 8.1 *(Student achievement)*

- CR 11.1 (*Library and learning/information resources*)
- Standard 11.3 (*Library and learning/information access*)
- CR 12.1 (*Student support services*)