



Accreditation: The designation that an institution earns indicating that it functions appropriately with respect to its resources, programs, and services. The accrediting association, often comprised of peers, is recognized as the external monitor.

Accountability: The demand by stakeholders for schools to demonstrate that money invested in education is being efficiently utilized. This demand is met through measured learning and outcomes assessment. The process includes reporting to stakeholders the degree to which expected results have been achieved.

Action plan: A statement of what will be done to change or improve the program, unit, or assessment process based on the analysis of assessment results, when level of achievement is not met.

Analysis of findings: Examination of the data gathered during the assessment cycle, including reflective consideration about what actions, if any, should be taken.

Annual Planning & Assessment Report: An evaluation tool completed using a standardized reporting template by designated persons in academic programs, administrative support services units, and academic and student support services units. This document describes how assessment results are used in planning and to inform the continuous improvement cycle.

Assessment: A systematic, ongoing process to identify, collect, analyze, and report on data that is used to determine achievement. Results are used for understanding and improving teaching, student learning, support services and operations.

Assessment of student learning: The systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning. There are two terms used to describe the method of assessment along the continuum of learning.

Formative assessment: Assessment that involves gathering and interpreting evidence of learning along the progression of students' studies.

Summative assessment: Assessment that involves gathering and interpreting evidence of learning at the end of a program and is used to help make decisions about program continuation, termination, expansion or adoption.

Assessment instrument: Also referred to as an assessment or measurement tool used to evaluate assignments, activities, artifacts, or events that support outcomes or objectives. These can be measurement tools such as standardized tests, locally designed examinations, rubrics, exit interviews, or student, alumni, or staff surveys.

Assessment map: Matching the assessments used for Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO) to specific courses in a degree program. The assessment map shows the courses in which the assessment of a particular PSLO occurs and identifies the assessment tool. The assessment map is a subset of the curriculum map. The assessment map for programs at B-CU should explicitly if the assessments are direct measures or indirect measures, and the course in which each assessment will be completed (e.g. BI 131). If post-graduation, simply state it.



Assessment plan: A document that outlines and describes assessment activities, including identifying outcomes, methods, and criteria. The plan should include enough detail that anyone could read it and know exactly what to do to implement the plan. The plan should be reviewed frequently and revised any time new learning or operational goals are identified.

B-CU Report Card: Selected metrics used to benchmark against other institutions (HBCUs, Peer and Aspirant). The B-CU report Card is published annually.

Benchmark: To collect data for use in comparison to similar data studies.

Capacity: Our ability to seek solutions to our challenges so that we can achieve our goals and objectives.

Capacity building: Providing faculty and staff with the skills and tools needed and strengthening our ability to work together.

Closing the loop: The phrase indicates the ability to demonstrate the use of data to drive improvement, i.e., the use of data in the next year's planning process.—through a cycle of collecting, analyzing, and reporting on data— for the continuous improvement of curricular, programmatic, or operational efforts. Closing the loop calls for using assessment results to improve programs and operations.

Commission on Colleges (COC): The regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states that award associate, baccalaureate, master and doctoral degrees. The COC accredits universities in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Latin America. (SACS)

Continuous improvement: Most accrediting bodies require institutional commitment to the concept of quality enhancement through continuous assessment and improvement. The assessment process is considered cyclic. (SACS)

Criteria: Standards by which student performance is evaluated; help assessors maintain objectivity and inform students about expectations. (New Horizons)

Culture of assessment: An institutional characteristic that shows evidence for valuing and engaging in assessment for ongoing improvement.

Culture of evidence: According to Michael Middaugh, "Accrediting agencies – both at the institutional level and the programmatic level – are now operating in a culture of evidence that requires institutions to qualitatively and quantitatively demonstrate that they are meeting student learning goals and effectively marshalling human and fiscal resources toward that end."

Curriculum map: A table of a program's curriculum that identifies in which courses Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) are being assessed. A curriculum map at B-CU will also identify where Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs), PSLOs, and Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) are being introduced, reinforced, and mastered.

Curriculum mapping: The process of scoping and sequencing content to identify gaps and redundancies. The mapping is used to improve the coherence of course content for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of a program of study, for example.



Direct measure: An assessment tool that provides tangible confirmation of student learning where it is clear that a specific learning competency is attained through visible and compelling evidence. Among the direct measures most commonly used are:

- external examiner
- capstone projects, senior theses
- embedded questions in examinations or quizzes
- behavioral observations
- oral exams
- portfolios
- simulations
- performance appraisal
- standardized or local examinations (including licensure tests)
- student writing (e.g. essays or papers)

Effectiveness: The degree to which programs, events, or activities achieve intended results. Effectiveness indicates how well the curriculum, program, and even the university, achieves their purpose.

Embedded assessment: A means of gathering information about student learning that is already existing in courses/curriculum has been built into a course's curriculum. Can assess an individual student's performance or the performance of the whole class.

Evaluation of results: The process of interpreting or making meaning of the data. The evaluation compares the results to the intentions and explains how they correlate.

Expected level of achievement: A statement of how well students will meet expectations of what they should know and be able to do. Could be a numeric or descriptive standard against which performance is judged.

Fact Book: The annual compilation of high-level University data serving as a resource to internal and external stakeholders.

Feedback: Providing information to students, faculty, staff and other stakeholders about how they performed in light of a goal, objective or outcome. Feedback also entails providing assessment results and analysis to interested constituents in order to increase transparency.

Goal: A broad statement about what the program, unit, or institution is trying to accomplish to meet its mission. These are usually not measurable and are primarily used for general planning.

Indirect measure: Assessment tools/measures that show some signs that students are likely learning or engaging in the educational experience. An indirect measure produces evidence that is less clear and less convincing than direct evidence. Indirect data sources include:

- Graduate Exit Survey
- Employer Satisfaction Survey
- Graduate Satisfaction Survey
- Archival data
- Job and graduate school placement



- Focus groups
- Course grades (and grade distributions)
- Graduation and retention rates

Institutional Effectiveness (IE): The term used to describe the degree to which the institution accomplishes its Mission through the systematic, comprehensive and continuous assessment of its educational strategic plan and annual initiatives. It focuses largely on SACS-COC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 that states: The institution identifies expected outcomes for its academic programs, its administrative support services, and its academic and student support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

Institutional Profile: Presents select data on an institution.

Instrument: An assessment tool that is used for the purpose of quantifying someone's knowledge or perception of something..

IPEDS: The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that institutions that participate in federal student aid programs report data on enrollments, program completions, graduation rates, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, and student financial aid. These data are made available to students and parents through the College Navigator college search Web site and to researchers and others through the IPEDS Data Center.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI): A performance measure used to assess progress on strategic goals. High-level metrics such as retention and default rate that can be used over the life of the strategic plan (usually 5 years) and are also recognized among peers as acceptable metrics.

Learning outcome: The specific, measureable knowledge, skill, or ability that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of their studies. These are also called student learning outcomes and can be defined at the institutional, school, program, or course level.

Method: Describes the procedures used to collect data for assessing an outcome, including identifying the assignment or activity and the process for measuring or scoring it.

Mission statement: Explains why a program, department, or institution exists and identifies its purpose. It articulates the organization's essential nature, its values, and its work and should be aligned with institutional mission.

Objective: Smaller in scope than a goal, it is a measurable statement that, in general, one must achieve in order to obtain a goal and thus, be successful.

Objective measure: A score, grade, or evaluation that relies on a consistent, valid, and predetermined range. It does not depend on subjective opinion.



Outcomes: Administrative / Academic & Student Support areas typically have outcomes that focus on the critical functions, services, and processes that impact the student learning environment with an emphasis on satisfaction, efficiency and quality. For academic programs, see **learning outcome**.

Peer assessment: The process of evaluating or assessing the work of one's peers.

Planning: A process of thinking about and organizing to achieve a result or goal. At B-CU, planning is tied to assessment and budgeting.

Program review: An in-depth process of reviewing most aspects of a program, including operational, financial, programmatic, and academic inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

Qualitative data: Non-numeric information such as conversation, text, audio, or video. Often refers to difference in kind.

Quantitative data: Numeric information including quantities, percentages, and statistics.

Results: Report the qualitative or quantitative findings of the data collection in text or table format. They convey whether the outcomes were achieved at desired levels of performance.

Rubric: A systematic, relatively objective scoring guideline used to evaluate student performance (e.g., papers, speeches, exams, portfolios) using a detailed description of performance standards. When students are made aware of rubrics prior to instruction and assessment, they know the level of performance expected and are more motivated to reach those standards.

Sample: A defined subset of the population chosen based on 1) its ability to provide information; 2) its representativeness of the population under study; 3) factors related to the feasibility of data gathering, such as cost, time, participant accessibility, or other logistical concerns.

Self-assessment: The process of evaluating or reflecting on one's own learning and development.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools—Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC): This is the accrediting agency of higher education institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Maintaining fully accredited status ensures that B-CU remains in compliance with federal expectations and continues to receive federal funding.

Standard of performance: A specific expectation of student performance that shows progress toward a criterion.

Strategic goal: A statement, often general, about what an organization want to achieve.

Strategic plan: A roadmap, designed to assess the extent to which a University is achieving its mission and vision.

Subjective measure: A score, grade, or evaluation that relies on opinion or judgment.

VALUE Rubric: Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education is a campus-based assessment initiative sponsored by AAC&U as part of its LEAP initiative. VALUE provides needed tools to assess students' own authentic work, produced across their diverse learning pathways, to determine whether



and how well they are progressing toward graduation-level achievement in learning outcomes that both employers and faculty consider essential. VALUE builds on a philosophy of learning assessment that privileges multiple expert judgments and shared understanding of the quality of student work through the curriculum, co-curriculum, and beyond over reliance on standardized tests administered to samples of students disconnected from an intentional course of study.

Some definitions in this glossary were adapted from the following sources:

Association of American Colleges & Universities (2014). VALUE rubric development project. Retrieved February 2015 from <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>

Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (2013). Criteria for accrediting computing programs, 2014-2015. Retrieved February 2015 from <http://www.abet.org/cac-criteria-2014-2015/>

Florida Institute of Technology. (n.d.) Assessment terms and definitions. Retrieved February 2015 from http://www.fit.edu/apac/documents/doc_mgr/696/Assessment%20Terms%20and%20Definitions.pdf

Leskes, A. (n.d.) Beyond confusion: An assessment glossary (Modified by EJC). AAC&U Peer Review, Winter/Spring 2002, 4(2/3). *Association of American Colleges and Universities*. <http://www.aacu.org/index.cfm>

New Horizons for Learning (2002). Assessment terminology: A glossary of useful terms. Retrieved September 2015 from www.newhorizons.org

SACS Commission on Colleges (2012). Principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement. Retrieved February 2015 from <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide*. 2nd edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

The University of Tampa (n.d.). Glossary of assessment terms. Retrieved February 2015 from <http://www.ut.edu/planning/effectiveness/terms/>

The University of Texas (2011). Institutional effectiveness glossary. Retrieved February 2015 from <http://www.utexas.edu/provost/iae/resources/pdfs/Glossary.pdf>