

# Assessment Guidelines for Academic Programs

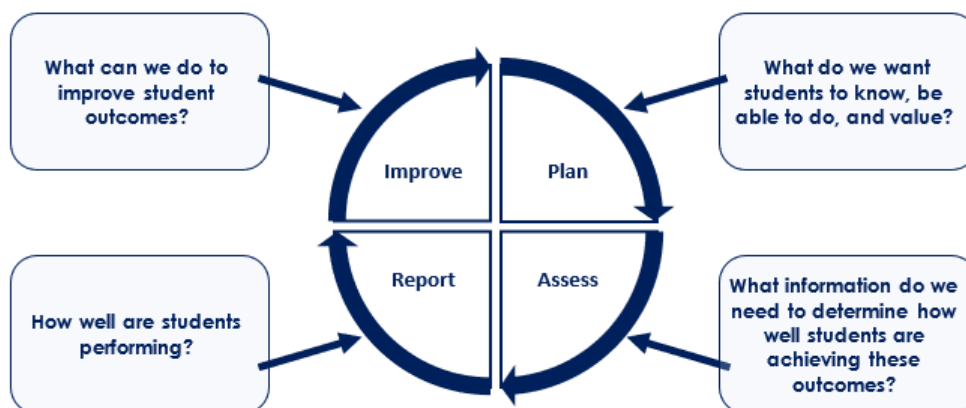
## Assessment Overview

Assessment is a systematic, cyclical process focused on continuous improvement. More simply stated, it is a process of asking questions to gather information used to inform decisions that affect student learning:

1. What do we want students to know and be able to do when they complete our program? *Plan*
2. What information do we need to determine how well students are achieving these outcomes? *Assess*
3. How well are students achieving these outcomes? *Report*
4. How can we use this information to improve student outcomes? *Improve*

As displayed in Figure 1, these questions align with the basic steps of the assessment process.

**Figure 1: Assessment – A Process of Asking Questions**



The intent of assessment is to gather information that allows us to determine what students have learned and how we can better assist them in their learning. Assessment guides for each step of the process are available on the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) website.

To support the reporting of assessment activities, the terminology in this and other assessment guides is aligned with the University's assessment management system, Watermark's *Planning & Self-Study* (P&SS). The table below maps the steps in the assessment process to the sections of an assessment plan in P&SS.

Assessment Process	Planning & Self-Study
Plan	Learning Outcomes
Assess	Measures
Report	Results & Findings
Improve	Action Plan

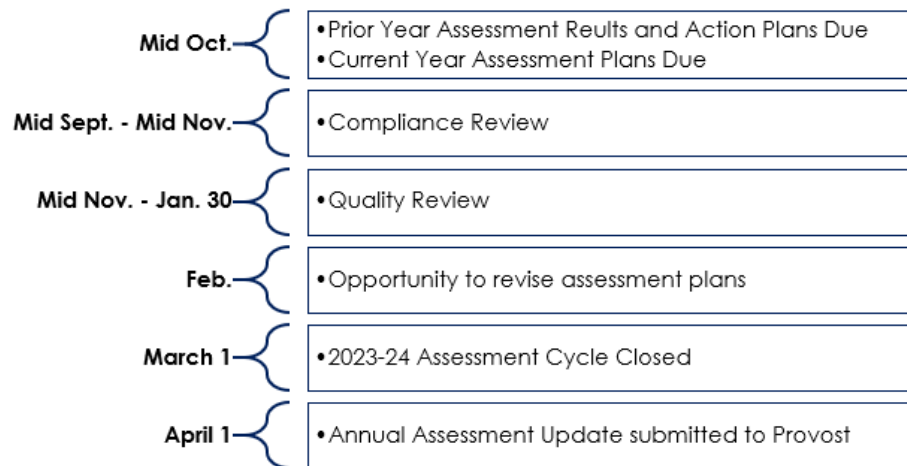
The remainder of this guide provides reference information on (1) annual assessment plan requirements, (2) a typical assessment reporting period, and (3) a crosswalk between P&SS and Nuventive, the University's former assessment management system.

# Reference Information

## Annual Assessment Plan Requirements

Assessment Process	Element	Expectation
Plan	Learning Outcomes (LOs)	Degree programs must have a minimum of 3-5 LOs (2-3 for certificate programs).
Assess	Measures	Each LO must have at least one direct measure.
	Schedule	Each LO is assessed at least once every 2 years.
	Targets	There is an expectation of success identified for each measure.
Report	Results	Each measure has a reported or attached result.
	Findings	There is an analysis of the results reported for each measure.
Improve	Action Plans	There is at least one action plan for each finding.

## Assessment Reporting Period



## Nuventive and Planning & Self-Study Crosswalk

Nuventive	Planning & Self-Study
Intended Outcome	Learning Outcome
Assessment Methods	Measure
Criterion	Target
Result Type	Measure Status
Result Statement	Findings: Analysis
Result Trend	Action Plan
Use of Results	Action Plan Description
Follow-Up	Update to Action Plan

### Additional Assistance

Additional resources can be found on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website at [https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/institutionaleffectiveness/academic\\_program\\_assessment\\_reporting\\_resources.html](https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/institutionaleffectiveness/academic_program_assessment_reporting_resources.html). You can also contact us at [assessment@southalabama.edu](mailto:assessment@southalabama.edu).