

SOUTHERN WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

P O L I C Y

Policy Title: Administrative Unit Assessment	Policy Number: 6.18
Authority: President	See Also: • SACSCOC Standards 7.3, & 8.2.c
Date Submitted: 05/06/2026	
Date Adopted: 07/07/2026	

I. PURPOSE

Southern Wesleyan University (SWU) is committed to ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and assessment. These processes are intended to (a) increase institutional effectiveness and quality and (b) provide a systematic review of unit goals and outcomes to ensure consistency with institutional mission and values. To fulfill this commitment, each administrative unit engages in ongoing assessment of goals and outcomes. This policy and procedures document is intended to clarify the processes and responsibilities for planning & assessment within SWU's non-curricular administrative units.

II. DEFINITIONS

This policy addresses planning and assessment by non-curricular administrative units. The assessment process focuses on goals or outcomes of individual administrative units. In this policy, when the terms *assessment* or *review* occur, they refer to a process of ongoing assessment by administrative units of goals or outcomes.

The terms *goal* and *outcomes* are used interchangeably throughout this policy to refer to deliverables that each administrative unit reasonably believes and genuinely intends to achieve within a defined time period established by the unit.

The term *administrative unit* refers to those areas of the institution that do not directly oversee educational curriculum. Administrative units may or may not be student-facing. Administrative units are those designated as such by vice presidents, which are typically areas of the organization that have a “director” or director-level employee.

III. PHILOSOPHY/RATIONALE

Four general institutional commitments inform SWU's participation in ongoing and intentional unit planning and assessment.

1. SWU is committed to **Biblical faithfulness**. Scripture is replete with commands and examples of general assessments. At the creation, God assesses the “goodness” of His creation (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 2:18). Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly affirms that He assesses human behavior, and, therefore, His people should perform honest self-assessments (1 Samuel 16:7; Matthew 12:33, 35; Lamentations 3:40; Haggai 1:5; Proverbs 27:23; Acts 20:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5).
2. SWU is committed to **integrity**. SWU aims to have institutional integrity by effectively accomplishing institutional goals. Assessing progress toward accomplishing these goals is one way that SWU demonstrates institutional integrity and increases confidence among internal and external stakeholders (Matthew 7:17-20; 15:7-9; 23:27; James 3:11-12).
3. SWU is committed to **improvement**. A commitment to continuous quality improvement is how SWU demonstrates its commitment to strengthening the institution’s efficiency and effectiveness. SWU recognizes that there is always room for improvement in quality and excellence, and assessment of administrative unit effectiveness contributes to thoughtful and intentional improvement efforts (Genesis 2:15; Proverbs 21:5, 29-30; 2 Timothy 2:15).
4. SWU is committed to **accountability**. Assessing administrative units is a way for the institution to be accountable to internal and external stakeholders and constituents. As a part of institutional accountability, assessment is mandated by the institution’s external accreditor, SACSCOC (Romans 2:6; Colossians 3:23; 1 Timothy 4:16; Titus 3:1).

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

All administrative units are required to participate in planning and assessment.

All administrative units must have unit-level goals and a plan for regularly assessing achievement of those goals. These goals may be of varying duration; some outcomes may be annual in nature, others may be long-term goals. The assessment plan should be on file with the unit’s vice president (or equivalent cabinet-level representative) and accessible by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE). Regardless of the unit’s goal duration, the unit reports on its progress toward achieving its identified outcomes annually.

The administrative **unit director** is designated by the area vice president. Typically, this will be a director-level employee. The unit director has primary responsibility for unit assessment and reporting.

The **vice president** (or equivalent cabinet-level position) ensures that all units within his/her organizational division participate in assessment. Vice presidents confirm that each administrative unit (1) has an assessment plan; (2) carries out assessment; and (3) submits an annual assessment report that documents improvements based on assessment results.

Vice presidents are responsible for reviewing the assessment reports submitted by the unit directors to ensure that all appropriate parts of the reports are completed adequately. Vice presidents are the ones responsible for “closing the loop” of the assessment cycle. As a part of closing the loop, they should facilitate discussion of the assessment results with appropriate staff within their unit.

The **President** is responsible for ensuring that assessment is occurring across the university.

The Office of **Institutional Effectiveness (IE)** is responsible for supporting the assessment process and for documenting the process for internal and external stakeholders. IE is the system administrator for any university-level assessment technology software/solution. Questions about the interpretation of this policy should be directed to the Office of IE. In cases that are controversial, ambiguous, or unprecedented, IE will consult with the appropriate university leadership before rendering an opinion.

V. PROCEDURES

For further information and guidance regarding the implementation of this policy, please consult the “Guide to Assessment” prepared by the Office of IE.

Assessment Planning

All administrative units must have an assessment plan on file with the unit’s vice president (or cabinet-level equivalent). These plans should be accessible by IE.

The unit director should develop an assessment plan for the administrative unit with feedback from unit staff/employees as appropriate.

The unit assessment plan should have the following components:

1. **Mission Statement(s).** SWU’s mission statement should at least be included. This encourages unit alignment with the institution’s overarching mission. If the unit has a unique mission statement this should also be included.
2. **Goals/Outcomes.** Goals or outcomes should be identified. The outcomes should be formatted using the SMART model: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, & Time-based. The duration of the outcome (e.g. annual or longer) must be identified.
3. **Measures and Targets.** Each outcome should have appropriate measures identified. Measures are those means by which a unit determines whether it has achieved its identified goals. When measure data is collected or available or when a measure is deployed should also be reported. Where applicable, measures should have a target or benchmark that identifies the level of performance that a unit deems acceptable to demonstrate success related to that outcome.

Assessment Reporting

At the end of each academic year, units will submit an assessment report. The table below describes the assessment process.

Event / Communication	Description	Responsible Person/Office	Dates
Assessment Report Submitted	Unit Directors submit completed assessment reports to area vice president.	Unit Directors	By July 31 st
Assessment Reports Submitted to President	IE reviews (for completeness) and archives assessment reports. Final reports are presented to the President.	IE	By Aug. 15 th

The assessment report is completed by the unit director and should contain: (1) analysis of the data gathered during the previous year's assessment; (2) a report on the extent to which the unit's outcomes were achieved; and (3) planned actions to facilitate unit improvement.

The unit director submits the assessment report the unit's vice president for discussion and approval. A final copy of the report is filed with IE in the university's assessment technology software/solution.

IE ensures that all units have completed an annual assessment report and affirms this to the President. With approval from the President, IE provides internal and external stakeholders with appropriate information gleaned from the assessment reports.