



**ASSURANCE OF LEARNING PROCESSES
In the
McCoy COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION**

Prepared by:

The McCoy College Assurance of Learning Committee,
Dr. Michael Keefe, Chair
Dr. Vance Lesseig, Co-Chair
Dr. Mayur Mehta, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs

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McCoy COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

I. Introduction.

Faculty in the McCoy College of Business Administration are committed to assurance of learning processes and program-level assessment to improve student learning and retention. McCoy College faculty perform assessments in undergraduate and graduate core classes and by departments in major courses to improve the education obtained by students and to ensure currency and relevance to business disciplines and organizations that recruit and hire McCoy College graduates. Assurance of learning processes allow faculty to measure achievement of student learning of program-level and departmental goals and to provide in-process feedback for continuous improvement purposes. Assurance of learning is performed not only to satisfy demands for accountability by external agencies, but to fulfill faculty responsibilities for student learning.

This guide is separated into five sections. Section II – *McCoy College of Business Administration* includes the mission, vision, values, and strategic goals of the McCoy College. Section III – *Assurance of Learning Programs* includes information specific to the BBA program and department majors, the MBA, Macy, MSAIT, and the MSHRM, which are specialized graduate programs. Section IV – *Assurance of Learning Processes* details assessment process for direct (course-embedded) assessment of student learning and discusses indirect assessment processes and measures used to corroborate the results of direct assessments. Section V – *Accreditation Requirements and FAQ* elaborates on AACSB-International and SACS requirements and includes frequently asked questions concerning assurance of learning processes and procedures written specifically for McCoy College faculty

The McCoy College has Assurance of Learning web pages available from the McCoy College web site under the button “Faculty and Staff” → “Assurance of Learning.” Faculty and other interested constituents can find publically available information and specific direct and indirect assessment results published in the last five years.

II. McCoy College of Business Administration.

Mission.

The McCoy College of Business Administration fosters an engaged learning community that prepares a diverse student population for successful business careers as responsible global citizens. The College complements these efforts with research that adds to knowledge, provides solutions to business challenges, and contributes to pedagogical advances.

Vision.

The McCoy College of Business Administration strives to be a leader in experiential business education and business relevant, socially significant research.

Values.

Committed to supporting the mission of Texas State University as a Hispanic Serving Institution and designated emerging research institution for the state of Texas, we embrace:

- A unique combination of experiential learning, excellent faculty instruction, and a student-centered culture.
- Responsiveness, accountability, and on-going contributions through research and service to Texas and beyond.
- Excellence in all endeavors through self-study, innovation, and continuous improvement.
- Integrity and adherence to professional and ethical standards.
- Respect for individuals and a diverse culture that promotes a globally engaged community of students, staff, and faculty.
- Student engagement and development through active involvement in student organizations.
- Life-long learning and professional development of students, staff, and faculty.

Strategic Goals.

The following goals give direction to the McCoy College of Business Administration mission, and recognize that scholarship and service support aid the primary focus of teaching and learning.

- Maintain AACSB standards
- Develop a strong research culture while maintaining quality teaching
- Increase graduate student enrollment by providing innovative, market-driven programs
- Focus on global business initiatives
- Provide an environment for our learning community that enhances and supports diversity

- Foster business community relationships with primary emphasis on small and medium-size businesses
- Sustain a development program
- Support a dynamic student learning environment

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III. Assurance of Learning Programs.

The McCoy College offers the undergraduate BBA degree with majors in Accounting, Computer Information Systems, Economics, Finance, Management, and Marketing. At the graduate level, the McCoy College offers the MBA, MAcy, MSAIT, and MSHRM degrees. Information on each of the programs is presented in the following sections. All college level programs are accredited by AACSB-International and the Department of Accounting maintains separate AACSB Accounting accreditation. Additionally, Texas State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states.

A. *BBA Assurance of Learning – Program Level and Department level.*

Undergraduate Assurance of Learning in the McCoy College is essentially a two-tiered approach. AACSB assessment of college derived learning outcomes/goals takes place in college core courses required of all BBA majors. SACS assessment of learning outcomes specific to individual majors is managed by faculty in each department through the department chairs and the department curriculum committees. The synthesis of approaches allows for comprehensive assessment of student knowledge and skills and satisfies the requirements of accrediting agencies and other constituents.

Additionally, all undergraduate learning outcomes/goals and Assurance of Learning processes, both AACSB and SACS, are reviewed to ensure reinforcement of Texas State University General Education Competencies developed by the General Education Council. (See Appendix A for Texas State General Education Competencies.)

BBA Program Level Assurance of Learning

The McCoy College considers the development and management of curricula to be of critical importance. Assurance of Learning is an integral part of curricula management and revision in the continuous effort to improve the curriculum to reflect the changing nature of both our students and the business environment in general. The AACSB Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation (January 31, 2015) Standard 8 specifically states:

The school uses well-documented, systematic processes for determining and revising degree program learning goals; designing, delivering, and improving degree program curricula to achieve learning goals; and demonstrating that degree program learning goals have been met.

Further, the standard defines Assurance of Learning as:

Assurance of learning refers to processes for demonstrating that students achieve learning expectations for the programs in which they participate. Schools use assurance of learning to demonstrate accountability and assure external constituents such as potential students, trustees, public officials, supporters, and accrediting organizations that the school meets its goals. Assurance of learning also assists the school and faculty members to improve programs and courses. By measuring learning, the school can evaluate its students' success at achieving learning goals, use the measures to plan improvement efforts, and (depending on the type of measures) provide feedback and guidance for individual students. For assurance of learning purposes, AACSB accreditation is concerned with broad, program-level focused learning goals for each degree program, rather than detailed learning goals by course or topic, which must be the responsibility of individual faculty members.

As an AACSB-International accredited business college, the McCoy College utilizes Assurance of Learning to determine the success in students achieving the program learning outcomes/goals. The McCoy College Curriculum Committee has the responsibility, as the elected representative body of the College faculty, to determine the specific learning outcomes/goals for the BBA program. McCoy College program-level learning outcomes/goals indicate to constituents what the faculty want students “to be” or “to have” as well as “be able to do” on completion of their business degree program. The results of the Assurance of Learning process are shared with the committee and all faculty and are used to guide curriculum revision in the interest of continuous improvement to meet the changing dynamics of students and the business community.

Student performance related to each specific learning outcome/goal is assessed in multiple undergraduate courses through both direct and indirect methods. The results are also publicly available on the College website to ensure availability to all McCoy College and Texas State University stakeholders.

Department Assessment of Majors

In addition to the Assurance of Learning for the BBA program level goals, each department in the McCoy College has the responsibility to develop specific student learning outcomes for each undergraduate major in the department. Departmental faculty determine learning outcomes for each major and develop processes to measure these learning goals in courses for their majors. Combined with output from program-level assurance of learning procedures, each department can ascertain a comprehensive picture of student learning of their individual majors. This approach meets

Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 – Institutional Effectiveness as specified by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS Standards, p. 28, 2012 ed.).

B. MBA Program Assurance of Learning.

Assessment of students in the MBA program in the McCoy College is the responsibility of the collective faculty holding graduate faculty membership in the McCoy College at Texas State University.

AACSB-International standards for general management master's programs (Standard 9) stipulate that participation in a master's level degree program presupposes that students possess a base of general knowledge and skills appropriate to an undergraduate degree. Student learning at the master's level is developed in a more integrative, interdisciplinary fashion than undergraduate learning. Students completing an MBA program would normally include learning experiences in the following areas:

- Leading in organizational situations
- Managing in a global context
- Thinking creatively
- Making sound decisions and exercising good judgment under uncertainty
- Integrating knowledge across fields (Standard 9, p. 32)

Representing graduate faculty, the McCoy College Graduate Policies Committee determines and reviews program-level learning goals for the MBA program and develops assessment processes and procedures for measurement and reporting of student learning in the program. Measurement of specific program-level learning goals occurs in multiple graduate courses through both direct and indirect assessment methods.

C. Specialized Graduate Program Assurance of Learning

Assessment of students in the Macy program in the McCoy College is the responsibility of the graduate faculty in the Department of Accounting. Assessment of Students in the MSAIT program is the responsibility of graduate faculty in the Department of Accounting and the Department of CIS/QM with guidance from a joint Faculty Advisory Committee composed of graduate faculty from both departments. Assessment of students in the MSHRM program is the responsibility of the HRM graduate faculty in the Department of Management.

AACSB-International standards for a specialized master's level program (Standard 9) stipulate that participation in a master's level degree program presuppose that students possess a base of general knowledge and skills appropriate to an undergraduate degree. Students completing a specialized master's level program should possess and demonstrate the following knowledge:

- Understanding the specified discipline from multiple perspectives
- Framing problems and developing creative solutions in the same specialized discipline
- Applying specialized knowledge in a global context (for practice-oriented degrees) or
- Conducting high-quality research (for research-oriented degrees) (Standard 9, p. 32)

Graduate faculty in the Department of Accounting determine and review program-level learning goals for the Macy program and the Department of Accounting and the Department of CIS/QM determine and review the program-level learning goals for the MSAIT program. HRM graduate faculty in the Department of Management determine and review program-level learning goals for the MSHRM program. Graduate faculty assigned to these programs develops assessment process and procedures for measurement and reporting of student learning. Measurement of specific program-level learning goals occurs in multiple graduate courses through both direct and indirect assessment methods.

IV. Assessment Processes.

Assurance of learning outcomes in the McCoy College, regardless of program, is considered a *general faculty responsibility* to ensure that students learn critical skills and acquire knowledge deemed important and appropriate by college faculty members.

A. BBA Program and Department Majors.

For the BBA program, representing the collective college faculty, the McCoy College Curriculum Committee has the responsibility for determining specific “program-level learning goals” and periodically reviewing these goals to ensure currency and relevance to disciplines within the business field and organizations that hire McCoy College graduates. Given the large number of students enrolled in the college and multiple sections for each undergraduate core course, the undergraduate BBA program uses Core Course Coordinators who are responsible for coordination of multi-section core courses. Core course faculty develops assessment instruments and gathers data for reporting to the McCoy College Assessment committee. (See CBAPPS 2.04 – Planning, Developing, Monitoring and Assessing Undergraduate Curricula - for a list of core course coordinator responsibilities.) The Assessment Committee gathers assessment information from core course coordinators and interprets and publishes aggregate results of assessments. For department majors, all faculty members in each department have the responsibility for developing learning goals and assessment instruments, gathering data, and interpreting assessment results for students majoring in that department.

B. *MBA Program and Specialized Graduate Programs.*

The McCoy College Graduate Policies Committee, representing all McCoy college faculty members holding graduate faculty membership, sets and reviews broad policy for all graduate programs in the college. The committee also has the responsibility for determining and reviewing program-level learning goals and assessment results for the MBA program. The MBA program also has a core course coordinator system called the GC4 (Graduate Core Course Coordinator Committee). Faculty on this committee have the responsibility for coordinating core courses, developing assessment instruments, and gathering data for review by the Graduate Policies Committee. (See CBAPPS 2.07)

Graduate faculty in the Department of Accounting and the Department of CIS/QM have the responsibility for determining and reviewing program-level learning goals and assessment results for the MAcy and MSAIT programs. Graduate faculty in the Department of Management have the responsibility for reviewing program-level learning goals and assessment results for the MSHRM program.

C. *Direct (Course Embedded) Assessment.*

Direct assessment methods require students to demonstrate knowledge and skills and provide data that directly measure achievement of expected outcomes. The McCoy College measures each learning goal in multiple classes using multi-method approaches to validate results. For example, in the BBA program, student learning of the goal “critical thinking” is measured in twelve core courses using exams, projects and application assignments. This goal is reinforced in courses throughout the college through common programs and software packages that are introduced at the freshman level, fully applied at the senior level, in accordance with Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning, and necessary for the successful completion of other courses in the curriculum.

D. *Indirect Assessment of Program Learning Goals.*

Indirect assessment of college learning goals is used to corroborate the results of direct (course embedded) assessments. Indirect assessments may include surveys of students or alumni, consultation with multiple advisory boards within the college, consultation with employers and the Texas State Career Services Office, departmental internship directors, Business Leadership Week participants, and other constituents to provide perceptual information on how students “feel” about what they have learned. The McCoy College uses multiple indirect assessment techniques to corroborate direct classroom assessment.

V. *Accreditation requirements and FAQ.*

A. *Accreditation Requirements.*

Texas State University is accredited by The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). SACS is the regional accrediting body for

the accreditation of degree-granting institutions in the Southern States, and is sanctioned by the Department of Education.

The McCoy College of Business Administration is accredited by AACSB International - The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, which is an association of educational institutions, businesses, and other organizations devoted to the advancement of higher education in management education. It is also the premier accrediting agency of collegiate business schools and accounting programs worldwide.

Both accrediting organizations establish standards for assessment of student learning. SACS standard 3.3.1 (Institutional Effectiveness) states:

“The institution identifies expected outcomes, assess to the extent it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in...

3.3.1.1. Educational programs, to include student learning outcomes.” (SACS Standards, p. 28, 2012 ed.)

AACSB-International standard 8: Curricula Management and Assurance of Learning: states:

“The school uses well-documented, systematic processes for determining and revising degree program learning goals; designing, delivering, and improving degree program curricula to achieve learning goals; and demonstrating that degree program learning goals have been met.” (AACSB Standard 8, p. 29)

The McCoy College has established assessment programs to satisfy the accreditation standards stated above. This two-tiered assessment requirement has fostered a more comprehensive picture of student learning and the development of curricula to enhance student learning.

B. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

The following questions and answers concerning assessment were derived from multiple sources and rely on information from AACSB-International and SACS, as well as other assessment resources. Responses to various questions have been modified to suit the circumstances of McCoy College faculty. Specific questions not addressed in this section should be directed to the Chair of the McCoy College Assessment Committee, Department Chairs or the Associate Deans for undergraduate and/or graduate programs.

1. What is “Program-Level” Assurance of Learning as specified by AACSB?

The college or school must specify program-level learning goals for each separate degree program. Generally, such goals are anticipated for each degree, not for separate majors

or concentrations within a degree. For example, the McCoy College offers a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree with defined majors in accounting, CIS, economics, finance, management, and marketing. A set of program-level learning goals for the BBA degree must be provided and assessed. The MBA, MAcy and MSAIT programs have program-level learning goals reflecting graduate-level learning outcomes.

2. *What is “Program-Level” Assurance of Learning as specified by SACS?*

Given the broader role of SACS in accrediting all facets of the University, the primary difference between AACSB-International and SACS occurs at the undergraduate level. SACS requires that each individual undergraduate major be evaluated and assessed where AACSB is concerned with the BBA program for all undergraduate majors. Essentially, AACSB allows the college to assess student learning goals in courses common to all BBA majors in the college, where SACS requires student learning goals specific to a particular major. Thus, for SACS review, each department has a set of student learning goals which is a combination of departmental learning goals specific to the major field and college learning goals for all undergraduate students.

3. *What ratio of “direct” versus “indirect” assessments should be performed?*

AACSB-International requires that assurance of learning include both “direct and indirect measures” of student learning. To meet AACSB expectations regarding assurance of student learning, the majority of a college or school’s assessment plan should rely on direct measures of student learning, and the McCoy College used a multi-course, multi-method assessment approach for each learning goal. Indirect methods are an appropriate method to gather data on specific program-level learning goals; however, data from indirect methods are used to corroborate data gathered through direct methods. This corroboration will yield constituent perceptions of how a curriculum is functioning and complement direct assessments of student learning.

4. *Must all students be assessed?*

For the purpose of meeting AACSB-International standards, sampling may be utilized, as long as it is representative. Faculty teaching college core courses for undergraduate and graduate programs, as scholars in their respective fields and under the leadership of the Core Course Coordinator or program director, have the responsibility for determining appropriate representative sample sizes. Courses taught at the Round Rock campus or online should always be assessed to evaluate consistency of curriculum delivery. Course coordinators or program directors may require census data from graduate courses for assessment purposes.

5. *Should college core course faculty and coordinators gather data and submit results to the assurance of learning committee every year?*

AACSB standards allow for program-level learning goals to be reviewed on a scheduled rotational basis. At least two program-level goals are reviewed each year, and college core courses covering that particular program goal are required to submit the results of course-embedded assessment to the assurance of learning committee or program director during the scheduled review year. Since the McCoy College views assessment as a continuous process, core course coordinators and core course faculty are encouraged to gather data every year for the longitudinal reporting of assessment results.

SACS reporting requires that data be reported to the University every year for each departmental undergraduate major goal and for graduate programs. Program directors for graduate programs may require assessment data to be gathered and reported each year.

6. *Who sets performance standards for learning goals and how many students must meet or exceed the performance standard on a given learning goal?*

The Assurance of Learning Standards by AACSB states that data on student learning on program-level learning goals is to be used for the purposes of improving business curricula to enhance student learning. For each program-level learning goal assessed in a college core course, the faculty will determine their minimum expectation or standard, and the overall evaluative standard will be *continuous improvement* of student learning on the specified goal.

SACS prefers specific numerical standards for the evaluation of learning goals and the number/percent of students expected to “meet expectations” for each goal. Department faculty, core course faculty, or program directors should specify the minimum performance level for “meets expectations” and the global performance on the goal. A SACS standard for a particular learning goal might be “at least 70% of students will score 70% or above” on a direct assessment measure of student learning.

7. *How should student performance on learning goals be reported?*

For reporting data on any learning goal, core course coordinators or faculty members should aggregate data and report the results by three levels: Exceeds Expectations; Meets Expectations; or Does Not Meet Expectations.

In order to preserve the integrity of the assessment process in multi-section courses, core course coordinators should release aggregate data by core course (all sections) to the assurance of learning committee, program director or department chair and not individual results by each professor teaching the course. Program Assessment in the McCoy College is not the evaluation of individual faculty performance in the classroom; it concerns the aggregate level of student learning of various program-level goals.

8. *Why is it important to use multiple measures in the assessment of program learning goals?*

The very nature of assessment makes it important that decisions concerning student learning are not based on performance in any single course or a single assessment methodology. Relying on the results from one core course to assess a program-level goal could result in misleading perceptions of student performance across the program. Students may perform better on assignments relating to a particular goal in one core course and poorer in another core course. Thus, the focus should be on program/major assessment of student learning across multiple core courses and methodologies, and information on student performance in any single core course should allow for core course faculty and departments to examine pedagogy and standards for that course. Additionally, when direct assessments in core courses are corroborated by indirect assessment measures, the results should provide a clearer picture of student learning.

9. *What documentation must be retained by faculty and/or core course coordinators for review by outside constituents?*

Faculty or core course coordinators should retain copies of instruments used for direct assessment, such as assignments, written products, test questions, rubrics, scoring grids, etc. They also must retain sample student products relating to the instruments used. Aggregate results of direct assessments for various learning goals gathered and/or submitted should be retained by the faculty member or course coordinator by semester or year for longitudinal review. Minutes of meetings to discuss curricula and assessment of student learning should be retained.

The McCoy College Assurance of Learning Committee, Department Chairs, and Program Directors all have the responsibility to maintain assessment results. These groups also have the responsibility to make faculty and other constituencies aware of assessment results and to publish results and recommendations where appropriate.

10. *Why can't course grades be used to indicate student learning?*

Course grades measure the students' mastery of a course topic taught by a specific professor. The course grade is an aggregate measure comprised of students' performance on multiple exams, assignments, projects, homework, extra credit, etc. Even if professors teach from a common syllabus, a course grade is too aggregate a measure to provide an assessment of specific skills or knowledge (program-level learning goals). For example, a course may include an oral presentation assignment that is worth 20% of the course grade. It is possible for one student to get an exceptional grade on that assignment, and another student to fail that assignment, with both students receiving a "C" for the final course grade. The course grade provides no measure of students' demonstrated oral presentation skills or the capacity of the curriculum to produce the desired oral communication traits in its students.

On the other hand, the grades on the oral assignment are an indicator of students' oral skills. If the core course teaching faculty agree on how the assignment is to be evaluated (including articulating minimum performance standards (meets expectations)), an oral presentation assigned within a course may be an appropriate program assessment measure. Thus, course products (cases, papers, presentations, exercises, directed test questions, etc.) may be used to meet assurance of learning standards, but course grades, by themselves, cannot.

11. What makes assessment of student learning different than grading?

The list below is not a set of opposites, and it is not exhaustive. It is suggestive. Assessment and grades differ, but they can overlap. Annotations for some terms appear below the table.

Assessment	Grades
Formative	Summative
Diagnostic	Final
Non-Judgmental	Evaluative
Private	Administrative
Anonymous	Identified
Partial	Integrative
Specific	Holistic
Mainly Subtext	Mostly Text
Suggestive	Rigorous
Usually Goal-Directed	Usually Content-Driven

Formative refers to the formation of a concept or item where *summative* refers to an “adding-up” or summary stage. Assessments usually occur in mid-progress. Grades are usually recorded at the end of a project or class in order to summarize academic quality.

Assessment is *non-judgmental* in the sense it focuses on learning, which is the outcome of many influences, including teaching style, student motivation, time on task, study intensity, and background knowledge. Therefore, no one element can be singled out for praise or blame for student learning of a given program-level learning goal. In contrast, grades carry *evaluative* weight as to the worthiness of student achievement and are applied, for good or ill, directly to them.

Assessments tend to be used in *private* and become public only under the assessor's control. Grades, while not truly public, are part of the *administrative* record available throughout an educational institution. Assessments are almost always collected in *anonymous* fashion, and the results are released in the aggregate. Grades are *identified* with specific students.

Assessment looks at *specific* parts of the learning environment. Grades are *holistic* in the sense that they record academic achievement for a whole course. Grades tend to reflect student mastery of disciplinary course *content*; whereas, assessment usually aims at the (program) *goals* for all baccalaureate and/or graduate students in a given program, such as written communication, oral communication, critical thinking and analytical skills. Final grades reduce academic achievement for an entire semester to a single mark.

The *text* of a course is its disciplinary content; grades tend to focus on that. The *subtext* of a course involves transferable baccalaureate skills, such as critical thinking, written communication, and analytical skills. For example, the “text” of course in introductory management course may revolve around knowledge of management functions and processes. The “subtext” of such a course might include critical and analytical thinking skills, problem solving and written and oral communication skills. Grades tend to focus on text; assessment tends to emphasize subtext.

Assessment findings tend to be *suggestive* and have pedagogical significance. That is, assessment findings shift pedagogy that need not be justified statistically but can be justified when students learn better. In contrast, grades are recorded in a *rigorous* manner that does have statistical significance.