


[SACS Home](#)
[Committees](#)
[Compliance Table](#)
[Quality Enhancement Plan](#)
[Supporting Document Index](#)

- [Alphabetical](#)
- [By Standard](#)

[Focused Report](#)

Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.2

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

3.3.1.2 Administrative Support Services

Judgment: Compliant

Response:

System/Columbia

The University of South Carolina has a well-established, systematic means for on-going planning, budgeting, and assessment for its administrative support services. This process, called the **Blueprint for Service Excellence**, is a comprehensive plan for identifying expected outcomes for all administrative support units on campus, assessing progress toward achieving these outcomes in accordance with each area's vision, mission, and goals, and providing evidence of progress and improvement based on university and unit goals. The **Blueprint for Information Technology** addresses the technical support for distance learning. In addition to the Blueprint process, the University of South Carolina fulfills external reporting requirements that outline and demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement.

The primary objective of the Blueprint process is for all administrative units to effectively plan for the future and to assess progress in achieving the desired outcomes in each area. Through this process, administrative units annually summarize their major goals and priorities, outline key initiatives and action plans necessary to achieve those goals, identify specific performance indicators to document and measure progress, and demonstrate the ability to accomplish their stated goals within the budget resources they have been allocated. The process also includes the opportunity to assess annually the effectiveness of past initiatives and provide administrative leaders with feedback to improve effectiveness going forward. At the Executive level, the President works closely with the Vice Presidents to review each service unit's Blueprint proposal, assess past performance and effectiveness, and consider/evaluate each unit's plans for improvement. From these plans, each unit is regularly and systematically assessed against its vision and mission to ensure proper alignment with the overall strategic direction of the University and continuous improvement in the administrative support the unit provides to the institution.

While the Blueprint process provides an effective means for program assessment and effectiveness, it also provides an important opportunity to influence funding decisions as an integral part of the annual budget process. During the annual budget cycle, each unit's funding levels are reviewed and evaluated in light of the unit's vision, mission, and primary goals. Based on the unit's contribution to the mission of the institution, funding levels are evaluated and approved for the upcoming fiscal year. In addition, requests for new funding initiatives are considered in light of their potential contribution to the goals for the unit and alignment with the strategic direction for the institution. Through this annual programmatic and budgetary review of each area, progress toward previous goals is assessed, evaluation of current and future direction is conducted, and continuous improvement in both quality and effectiveness are ensured.

At a broader level, the University participates in external reporting initiatives to demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. The **State Accountability Report** provides an avenue through which the University of South Carolina can document its major achievements, key strategic goals and initiatives, and most prominent strategic challenges. Through **USC's reports**, the University outlines its commitment to effective strategic planning and documents key performance indicators by which continuous improvement is measured. This report, which aligns with the **Baldrige National Quality Program's Education Criteria for Performance Excellence**, also outlines the University's commitment to systematically evaluating and improving work processes that support the administrative operations of the institution.

Lancaster

Administrative support services are included in planning and evaluation activities to gauge the level of satisfaction among students and other stakeholders. Student surveys are conducted at periodic intervals; the **most recent** was conducted in 2007. Additional evidence is included in **Institutional Effectiveness** and **Accountability Reports**. USC Lancaster collects and assesses information from current, former, and future students in order to assist in evaluation of programs and services. The information is used to ensure that administrators keep programs relevant to student needs. Alumni surveys are conducted in conjunction with the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Report and at other times for strategic planning purposes. The IE Report requires assessment of certain administrative functions on a rolling schedule: Summer 2009 -- Library Resources and Alumni Placement; Summer 2010 -- General Education and Success of Transfer Students; Summer 2011 -- Student Development and Alumni Placement; Summer 2012 -- Academic Advising and Success of Transfer Students.

The surveys prepared for strategic planning purposes, i.e., the Blueprint for Academic Excellence, are quite extensive and allow for open-ended comments in addition to traditional formats that allow scoring.

For example, the Student Survey in 2007 included this question: Q17 – What advice, if any, do you have for the administration at USC Lancaster to improve the programs of the college? The Faculty Survey in 2007 sought feedback (Q12) on four specific aspects of campus administration and included a general comments area to in which to expand feedback.

Development of strategies and action plans to address stakeholder concerns are evidenced in the [Blueprint for Academic Excellence](#) and the annual progress reports incorporated therein.

Salkehatchie

The University of South Carolina Salkehatchie identifies and annually evaluates outcomes of administrative support services through the [Employee Performance Management System](#), in which supervisors evaluate the performance of classified state employees.

Assessment of the effectiveness of services provided is also evaluated continually through an online [Student Satisfaction Survey](#). Students are invited to take a survey about the performance of personnel in academic advisement, business office, financial aid office, student support services, library, bookstore, and computer labs.

The progress in annual recruitment and enrollment is tracked, and outcomes are benchmarked against internal enrollment goals (see [Enrollment Analysis](#)). This includes actual increases in enrollment and new student enrollment, as well as increases in geographically-segmented recruiting areas. Total enrollment figures are gathered from the university's [Common Data Set](#). Internal goals are measured using monthly application reports and annual new student data analysis.

Prepared yearly is the [Annual Accountability Report](#), an extensive report required by the South Carolina Budget Office. This report provides detailed description of the university's senior leadership; strategic planning; student, stakeholder, and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; faculty and staff focus; process management; and organizational performance results.

Sumter

The University of South Carolina Sumter identifies and annually evaluates outcomes of administrative support services through the [Employee Performance Management System](#), in which supervisors evaluate the performance of classified state employees.

The progress in annual recruitment and enrollment is tracked, and outcomes are benchmarked against internal enrollment goals. This includes actual increases in enrollment and new student enrollment, as well as increases in geographically-segmented recruiting areas. Total enrollment figures are gathered from the university's [Common Data Set](#). Internal goals are measured using monthly application reports and annual new student data analysis.

Prepared yearly is the [Annual Fiscal Accountability Report](#), an extensive report required by the South Carolina Budget Office. This report provides detailed description of the university's senior leadership; strategic planning; student, stakeholder, and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; faculty and staff focus; process management; and organizational performance results.

The process for setting goals and expected outcomes and assessing those outcomes is handled with a different procedure than academic assessment. Goals and expected outcomes for the administrative offices are embedded in the campus [strategic plan](#) and assessment is undertaken by planning unit heads (mostly Directors and Coordinators of various offices) and reported annually to the [Long Range Planning Committee](#), who then compile the information and make recommendations to the campus dean, who then provides feedback to the Long Range Planning Committee and determines if action is needed in a given area. Assessments are reflected in the annual reworking of the strategic plan; assessment data is also reported on several expected outcomes in the Governor's Annual [Fiscal Accountability Report](#).

Several changes and improvements have occurred recently as a result of this process. They include: upgrades to campus security systems, including security cameras for all buildings; installation of emergency defibrillators in all campus buildings; a shift toward moving internal paperwork in several administrative offices from real paper files to electronic files; a reorganization of the process of procuring office supplies; a readjustment of lab fees; and a reorganization of space in the student union to help upgrade our wellness center by devoting more space, to accommodate newly acquired free weights for use by the general student body, student athletes, and members of the campus community.

Union

Administrative support services at USC Union have customer satisfaction as their only goal. Satisfaction with the services of the administrative support units (Dean's Office, Student Affairs, Business Affairs) and their functions (where applicable) are assessed each semester as a part of the [Student Evaluation of Instruction](#) (Questions 5.3, 5.4, 5.7, 5.8). Similar questions are asked of students in the [Withdrawal Survey](#) (Questions 7, 7) administered when a student graduates, switches USC campuses, transfers or withdraws. Results of the surveys are shared with the appropriate personnel in each department and are reported in the [Annual Accountability Report](#) (p.35, Graph 7.2-3). Each unit makes changes based on the survey results. USC Union Administrative Services maintain an almost 100% customer satisfaction (satisfied/very satisfied) rate.

Supporting Documentation:

| Description | Source |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Blueprints for Service Excellence | http://ipr.sc.edu/SACS/blueprints/ |

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| Blueprint for Information Technology | http://busfinance.admin.sc.edu/blueprint/USC_DOIT_Blueprint09.pdf |
| Lancaster Blueprint | http://usclancaster.sc.edu/planning/ |
| University Budget Process | http://busfinance.admin.sc.edu/budget/budget_process11.asp |
| External Reporting | |
| State Accountability Cover Letter | http://www.budget.sc.gov/webfiles/OSB/accountability_planning/Higher_Ed_cover_ltr.pdf |
| State Accountability Report Guidelines | http://baldrige.nist.gov/Education_Criteria.htm |
| State Accountability Reports | http://www.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/state/ |
| State Institutional Effectiveness Reports | http://www.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/IEReports/ |
| Lancaster Planning Reports | http://usclancaster.sc.edu/planning/ |
| Surveys | |
| Lancaster Sample Stakeholder Survey | http://usclancaster.sc.edu/planning/student_survey_2007.pdf |
| Salkehatchie Student Satisfaction Survey | http://uscsalkehatchie.sc.edu/SACS/StudentSurvey2009.doc |
| Union Student Evaluation of Services | http://uscunion.sc.edu/about/USCUnionStudentEvaluationForm.pdf |
| Union Withdrawal Survey | http://uscunion.sc.edu/about/uscunionwithdrawalsurvey.doc |
| Employee Performance Management System | http://hr.sc.edu/profdevp/classes/epms/handouts/epms.handout2.pdf |
| Common Dataset | http://www.ipr.sc.edu/cds/ |
| Salkehatchie Enrollment Analysis | http://uscsalkehatchie.sc.edu/SACS/EnrollmentAnalysis2007-2009.doc |
| Sumter Long Range Planning Committee Charter | http://www.uscsumter.edu/index.php/long-range-planning-committee-charter.html |

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