3.3.1.1

USC Columbia has a comprehensive institutional assessment program based on yearly reports that are developed and monitored through the Provost Office and the Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance and as overseen by an institution-wide Assessment Advisory Committee. The individual academic programs are required to list at least three student learning outcomes in their annual plans. These outcomes are then evaluated and the results are used in future planning efforts. While this process is well-established, and uses both direct and indirect measurement of success, it appears to rely heavily on the learning outcomes measured in individual course work. The committee observes that the institution might consider such things as best practices in higher education rather than relying so heavily on individual course outcomes. The system that is in place is reinforced by yearly reporting requirements to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. For periodic assessments over longer intervals and involving external reviews, the University relies primarily on program accreditation bodies and reviews, results of which are reviewed and followed-up through the Provost Office. For programs that have no accrediting bodies, periodic external review is "recommended." According to a recent memorandum from the Provost to USC Columbia academic deans, acknowledgement is given to the impact of recent budget rescissions on external review procedures.

The USC Columbia assessment program appears to be the same process at the four regional campuses at Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter and Union, with appropriate accountability to the USC Columbia. Assessment efforts are also addressed yearly in the Accountability (also dubbed the Baldrige) Report to the South Carolina State Budget and Control Board. This report also notes that surveys (including course evaluations, National Survey of Student Engagement, Alumni) are conducted yearly or on two- or three-year cycles.