## Assessment Definitions for Academic Areas

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| 1. **Strategic Plan** is a long-range planning document outlining the goals and objectives of the University over a specified period of time. | University’s Strategic Plan  
  * http://southalabama.edu/departments/presidentsoffice/strategicplan.html |
| 2. **Goals** are broad and generalized statements derived from the mission of the University. | Advance the research, discovery, and creative activities of the University. |
| 3. **Performance indicators** are priorities identified by Divisions and Colleges/Schools based on the University’s Strategic Plan. The assessment of which occurs at the departmental or program level. | Increase the number of grant proposals submitted per year by 10%. |
| 4. **Learning objectives** are brief clear statements that describes how the desired learning outcome of instruction will be achieved, i.e., the plan of instruction. | Create formulas in Excel.  
  * Add pictures to a PowerPoint presentation  
  * Create graphs in Word. |
| 5. **Learning outcomes** identify the desired results of instruction. Specifically, learning outcomes are:  
  * What students should be able to do at the end of a/an activity, course or program.  
  * Are measurable or observable and  
  * Are aligned to the assessment method.  
  Format for a writing a student learning outcome  
  * Identify the audience and the activity/timeframe: “Students” or “First year students” who participate, exhibit or complete an activity or a program.  
  * Describe what students will be able to do: (Action verb)  
  “Design a research project to include each step of the research process.” | Utilizing reporting and presentation software, students will be able to develop a research project and report of professional quality. |
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| 6. Assessment methods provide evidence of student learning. | • Standardized exams  
• Locally developed exams  
• Essays  
• Oral presentations  
• Oral exams  
• Exhibitions  
• Demonstrations  
• Performances  
• Products  
• Research papers  
• Poster presentations  
• Capstone experiences  
• Practical exams  
• Supervised internships & practicums  
• Portfolios  
• Surveys |

| 8. Criteria are the expectations of success as it relate to student achievement. | • 85% of students enrolled in the Campus-based culminating experience course will score 4 on each area of the rubric: (1) context of purpose of writing, (2) content development, (3) genre and disciplinary conventions, (4) control of syntax mechanics and (5) sources and evidence. |
When writing student learning outcomes, avoid words that are “fuzzy” or difficult to define such as:

- Believe
- Capacity
- Comprehend
- Conceptualize
- Depth
- Experience
- Feel
- Hear
- Know
- Listen
- Memorize
- Intelligence
- Perceive
- Realize
- Recognize
- Self-Actualize
- See
- Think
- Understand