

SACSCOC Standard 8.2.a: Student Outcomes in Educational Programs

What the standard asks and how Berea's process meets it

The standard

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

a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs. (Student outcomes: educational programs)

Source: SACSCOC, The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement (2024 edition).

A note on names and numbers. SACSCOC became **The Commission on Colleges and Universities** on September 1, 2026. A revision of the Principles is in draft, and the draft rennumbers the standards. The numbering here follows the 2024 edition, which remains the reference until the Commission sets an implementation date for the revision.

What it means in plain language

Every degree program needs to do three things, and show evidence of each:

1. **Identify** what students should be able to do when they finish (the SLOs).
2. **Assess** how well students actually achieve those outcomes.
3. **Seek improvement** by using the results to make changes.

The third part is where institutions most often fall short. Collecting data isn't enough; reviewers look for evidence that results led to decisions or changes, and that programs checked whether those changes helped.

How Berea's process lines up

The standard asks...	Berea's process
Identify expected outcomes	Each major keeps four to six measurable SLOs, published in the College Catalog.
Assess the extent of achievement	Every SLO is assessed at least once in each three-year cycle, using at least one direct measure and a target set in advance (Parts B and C).
Provide evidence of seeking improvement	Part D records actions and reassessment dates; Part A documents what happened last time, closing the loop.

The standard asks...	Berea's process
For each educational program	Every major submits an annual report, reviewed with a common rubric. Programs with specialized accreditation may follow an approved alternative process.

What reviewers tend to look for

- Outcomes for **every** program, not a sample of programs
- Measures that actually fit the outcomes (direct evidence of learning, not just grades or surveys)
- More than one cycle of results, showing assessment is ongoing
- Specific examples of changes made because of results
- Evidence that the process is the institution's own, consistently carried out

Related standards: **8.2.b** covers general education, and **8.2.c** covers academic and student services. The 8.2.c handout is available on this site.

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