

What is Assessment?

Assessment is simply determining the current state of something through some form of measurement. In higher education and specifically at KSU, *assessment of learning* focuses on specific expected outcomes pertaining to student learning and student success.

- **Student Learning Outcomes:** Expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, or competencies that students are expected to acquire.

Assessment tells us the extent to which students have learned what we expect them to learn. Assessment has moved beyond a mere accountability paradigm (i.e., reporting for accreditation purposes). Instead, the emphasis is now on “closing the loop” and use of results, essentially “continuous improvement.”

What is Continuous Improvement?

Assessment and continuous improvement go hand in hand. Assessment provides the information (or data) we need to determine strengths and areas of weakness in student learning. We must celebrate our successes, but then also strategize how to improve in those areas where students are struggling or underperforming. After implementing those strategies for improvement, we measure again to find out if student learning has increased.

This cycle of assessment and improvement continues until there is no more room for improvement in that specific area. However, we do not stop there. Instead, our focus moves to another area that has been identified through assessment as having room for improvement. We continuously improve in order to become the best we can possibly be at what we do. KSU’s Continuous Improvement Model (next page) illustrates the process we follow for our academic assessment process, *Assessment of Learning*.

Linkages to KSU Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Priorities

Assessment and continuous improvement support our KSU Mission and Strategic Priorities. Assessment tells us how well we are achieving our mission, achieving the goals set forth in the strategic plan, and living our values on a daily basis. Our focus on continuous improvement ensures we make the necessary changes in our work when deficits are identified. The specific *Student Learning Outcomes* for your own program should align with the KSU mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities (below), as well as those of your college and/or department.

Mission Statement: At Kennesaw State, we serve as a powerful example of the impact a student-centered, research-driven university education can deliver. We help students succeed through exploration, collaboration, and rigor, uniting a diverse spectrum of backgrounds and talents. At KSU, students become the individuals who people want as colleagues and leaders.

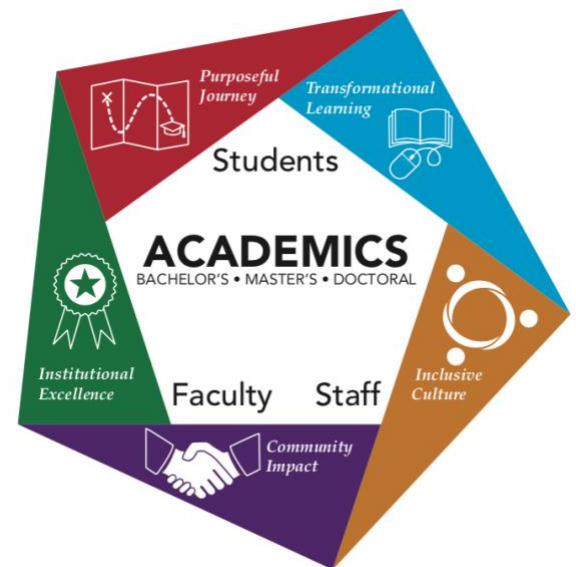
Vision Statement: Kennesaw State will exemplify the power and promise of a student-centered, research-driven university. Authentically diverse, uniquely attainable and endlessly impactful, we will unleash the potential in every student we serve.

Values:

<i>We are...</i>	<i>We believe in...</i>
Student-inspired	Fueling aspiration and delivering pathways – enabling students to stretch and strive, embrace a dream, and create actionable plans.
Promise-fulfilling	Being committed and ready – making promises we can keep to fuel opportunity for every student and spark economic growth for the region.
True to ourselves	Staying genuine, guided by honesty, intention, and purpose – no matter how we change, grow, or evolve – never forgetting who we are.
Elevational	Raising trajectory – chasing, creating, pursuing, building.
Open	Embracing the true power of openness – valuing and leveraging diverse perspectives to find better solutions and gain an edge.
Impact-generating	Delivering a difference – impacting individuals and communities for positive change.

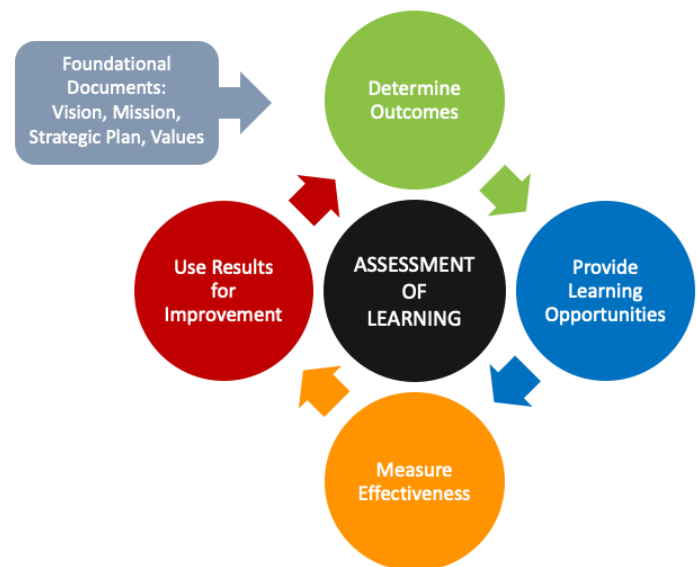
KSU's Strategic Priorities:

- A Purposeful Journey: The central mission of Kennesaw State University is to offer high-quality academic programs, providing each student with a clear and timely academic pathway that leads to graduation.
- Transformational Learning: Kennesaw State University is a place where students, faculty and staff pursue transformative and relevant learning experiences based on personalized development, critical thinking, dedicated teaching, and rigorous scholarship.
- Our Inclusive Culture: Kennesaw State University is a diverse and inclusive community where we celebrate a diversity of ideas, expressions, and viewpoints, engage in civil and respectful discourse, and have the freedom to engage with one another in the pursuit of mutual understanding and intellectual growth.
- Community Impact: As a comprehensive, engaged university, Kennesaw State University creates and maintains strategic, interactive partnerships in our professional and civic communities.
- Institutional Excellence: Kennesaw State University pursues exemplary academic, business, and administrative practices to support our faculty, staff, and students.



Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement

- Begin with a clear, well-communicated mission and a core set of values for the institution.
- Develop a shared vision and a clear strategy on how to get there.
- Share a simple, clear continuous improvement model to guide the process (see figure to the right).
- Become a collaborative, “learning organization” (Senge, 1990).
- Communicate expectations and model the process at all levels of the institution.
- Identify and communicate common ties among initiatives.
- Keep continuous improvement “top of mind” and part of the institutional lexicon.
- Integrate with human resource systems, such as job descriptions, performance reviews, and training.
- Utilize and build on existing measurement tools and improvement processes.
- Understand improvement takes time and is not always a straight path.
- Share ideas, tools, and innovations; break down a “silo” mentality.
- Communicate, celebrate, and reward successes!



Additional Resources

The [Assessment of Learning website](#) provides additional resources to support your assessment efforts. Please contact the Assessment Office at assessment@kennesaw.edu if you have any questions or you would like to schedule a consultation. Thank you for your commitment to continuous improvement at KSU.