



**Policy Title**  
**Institutional Course-Level Assessment Policy**

**Policy Number**  
**6-005**

<b>Responsible Unit:</b> Office of Institutional Accountability & Accreditation	<b>Effective Date:</b> November 17, 2023
<b>Responsible Official:</b> Vice Chancellor for Institutional Accountability & Accreditation	<b>Last Reviewed Date:</b> November 17, 2023
<b>Policy Classification:</b> Governance Policy	<b>Origination Date:</b> February 11, 2022

**I. POLICY PURPOSE**

This policy defines the Institutional Course-Level Assessment process for the Southern University Law Center (SULC), which is used as an internal measure of SULC’s adherence to its Institutional Learning Outcomes and is designed to evaluate each student’s ability to comprehend, analyze, and communicate information distributed within SULC’s assessment courses which are embedded in its curriculum.

**II. POLICY SCOPE**

This policy applies to SULC students, faculty, and staff. This Policy will be exercised during the fall and spring semesters.

**III. POLICY COMPLIANCE**

Failure to adhere to the Institutional Course-Level Assessment Policy could jeopardize the Law Center’s accreditation status with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and with the American Bar Association (ABA). A law student who does not comply with this policy could negatively affect the trajectory of their matriculation through law school. A law student who violates this policy is subject to possible sanction as defined and articulated in the SULC Code of Student Conduct.

**IV. POLICY DEFINITIONS**

- A. SULC ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE DOCUMENT is the document (which is attached hereto) that contains the applicable operating procedures for the development, staffing, administration, analysis, results, reporting, and utilization of

assessments.

- B. **ASSESSMENT COURSES** are the courses SULC identifies to gauge its students' ability to comprehend, and express their understanding of the concepts, principles and doctrines commonly tested on state bar examinations. Each assessment course is a required course for every student at the Law Center regardless of whether the student is enrolled in the common law or civil law curriculum. Current assessed courses are defined in the **SULC ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**.
- C. **LEAD PROFESSORS** are professors who have been appointed for each assessment course to guide the development of assessment questions.
- D. **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS** are essay questions administered to each student mid-way through the assessment course to provide meaningful feedback to them in advance of the summative assessment, which will take place at the end of the course.
- E. **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT DATE** is the specific date on which formative assessments are administered to law students during the fall and spring semesters.
- F. **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS** are the assessment questions that are administered at the conclusion of the assessment course. These questions are designed to measure the student learning with respect to the Institutional Learning Outcomes as applied through the assessment course. The summative assessment question assesses the same area(s) of law as the formative assessment question but utilizes a different fact pattern.
- G. **GRADING RUBRIC** is the scoring mechanism used to measure student learning with respect to the Institutional Learning Outcomes. The student's performance is measured in four areas, namely, Issue Spotting, Analysis, Quality of Writing, and Doctrinal Knowledge. For each category, the student will receive a score of either Excellent, Accomplished, Developing or Beginning.
- H. **THIRD-PARTY ASSESSORS** are selected by the Institutional Accountability and Accreditation Unit to assess the students' formative assessment essays.
- I. **INTERVENTION COURSES** are courses that have been approved by the SULC faculty and enforced by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to assist students who have scored at a defined level in the assessment process. Each intervention course is designed to aid students with increasing their skill level with respect to the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes.

## **V. POLICY AND APPLICABLE PROCEDURES**

SULC faculty will designate the courses in which formative and summative assessments will be given during the Fall and Spring semesters of each academic year. The Institutional Accountability & Accreditation Unit (IA&A) is solely responsible for the development and implementation of the assessment procedure upon approval from the SULC faculty. The IA&A Unit will solicit advice and counsel from other SULC units as needed. The current formative assessment procedures are contained in the **SULC Academic Assessment Guidance Document**, which is attached hereto.

All assessments will be administered to students electronically. Formative assessments will be administered to all students at or near mid-semester on the Formative Assessment Date. The Formative Assessment Date for the fall and spring semesters of each academic year will be set

in advance of the start of the academic year in coordination with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs as part of the Academic Calendar.

Use of the formative assessment question is limited to the formative assessment process. Professors may award students credit (points) in the course for completing the formative assessment on the Formative Assessment Date. However, professors may not use the formative assessment question for any other purpose during the course of the academic year in which the formative assessment question is used as part of the formative assessment process.

After the formative assessments have been scored, students will be given access to all feedback on their assessment performance. Students will also be expected to meet with their professor(s) to obtain any additional feedback or guidance on how to increase their performance prior to the summative assessment. Based on the results from the summative assessment performance, a student may be required to enroll in one of SULC's intervention courses.

#### **VI. POLICY RELATED INFORMATION**

Further information related to the assessment process may be found in the SULC ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE DOCUMENT, which is attached hereto, and the Institutional Effectiveness Manual, which is published on the SULC website at, <http://www.sulc.edu/assets/sulc/Policies/SULC.InstitutionalEffectivenessManual.September6.2023.pdf> or such later versions as will be adopted.

#### **VII. POLICY HISTORY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

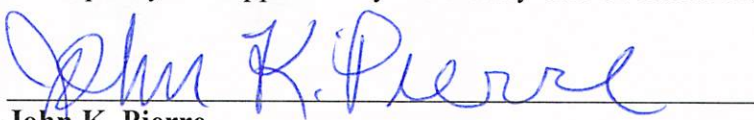
SULC started course-level assessments of its students in 2014. The assessment policy was last modified February 11, 2022. This policy revision is for the following reasons: 1) revise how the Formative Assessment Date is set each year; 2) establish sanctions for student violations of this Policy and established procedures for the effective and efficient administration of the assessment process; 3) codify the long-standing policy and practice of faculty limiting use of the formative assessment question to the formative assessment process ONLY. The Vice Chancellor for Institutional Accountability & Accreditation shall be the responsible person for the implementation of the Institutional Course-Level Assessment Policy, and this Policy will continue to be developed, modified, and managed by SULC's IA&A Unit, subject to approval by SULC faculty, which shall timely recommend any modifications or adjustments to this process to ensure the efficiency of the process and the reliability of its results. This policy is subject to a three-year policy review cycle.

#### **VIII. PUBLICATION OF POLICY**

The policy is published on the SULC website at [www.sulc.edu](http://www.sulc.edu).

#### **IX. POLICY APPROVAL**

This policy was approved by the faculty on November 17, 2023.

  
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John K. Pierre  
Chancellor

Date November 17, 2023

## SULC Academic Assessment Guidance Document

The current slate of assessment courses includes: Torts I; Torts II; Constitutional Law II; Evidence; Successions, Donations, and Trusts; Wills, Trusts, and Estates; and Federal Jurisdiction & Procedure. Any changes to the slate of assessment courses must be approved by a faculty vote.

During the first month of the fall semester, law students will receive (via email communication) detailed information about the Law Center's formative assessment process and instructions on how to submit and review their assessments. Professors will assist with ensuring that all students register to use the learning management system's website and database in advance of the Formative Assessment Date.

During the first month of the fall and spring semesters, assessment professors will receive any needed access to the learning management system's website and database that is used to administer and evaluate formative and summative assessments. A lead professor will be appointed for each assessment course being taught during the appropriate semester.

The faculty teaching each assessment course will collaborate on the development of a formative assessment question, and the lead professor will submit the questions and grading rubric to the Institutional Accountability & Accreditation Unit ("IA&A") by a date (set by the IA&A Unit) in advance of the formative assessment day. The faculty (whether teaching an assessed course or not) will not discuss the formative assessment question with students in advance of the Formative Assessment Day. In addition, the faculty will not use the formative assessment question for any purpose other than for the formative assessment and feedback purposes. Faculty, however, may assign some value to students completing the formative assessment within the established formative assessment process. The formative assessment question will be used in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Accountability & Accreditation.

Third-party assessors will be assigned to score the assessments in each assessment course. Third-party assessors are given approximately two weeks after the Assessment Day to read, score, and offer helpful comments to the student regarding their performance.

Students are then encouraged to schedule a conference with their professors for any additional feedback on their performance. Faculty may discuss the feedback with their students in order to provide guidance in areas where students are in need of improvement.

The grades and the statistical data from the formative assessment for each assessment course will be accessible in the learning management system (and may be distributed to the professors upon request) of that course so that they can adjust, where necessary, the remaining class sessions to improve student learning. Professors may facilitate student learning by offering additional assignments, scheduling multiple conferences with the students as needed, or scheduling and conducting additional review sessions with the students prior to the final examination, which includes the summative assessment.

Prior to the final examination cycle, lead professors will develop a summative assessment question that addresses the same area(s) of law assessed via the formative assessment, but with a new fact pattern. Each assessment professor in a common assessment course must include the common summative assessment question on their final examination with a heading identifying the summative assessment question. Each individual professor will determine the weight the summative assessment question will have on their own final examination.

After all final examinations have been administered, the assessment professors must score the summative assessment question for each student and save the scores in the learning management system's website and database used to administer and evaluate formative and summative assessments. All assessment professors will then be provided with the statistical information from their respective courses to be used in preparation for subsequent semesters' course coverage.

Thereafter, SULC Analytics extracts formative and summative assessment data, and other relevant information, and analyzes this data to determine which students qualify for registration into one of SULC's intervention courses. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Registrar will assign the eligible students into the intervention course based on the students' matriculation status in law school to improve student learning.

Last Revised November 17, 2023.