

Quick Guides

Academic Units: Mission Statements

Definition: A mission statement is a brief (1 to 2 sentences), broad statement of the directions, values and aspirations of the academic program and should provide a clear description of its purpose. The mission statement should be understandable to a general audience and should align with the University's mission.

Note: All academic degree programs at The University of Alabama should have a mission statement. This guide can help determine if the mission statement for a particular program is effective and clearly in line with the current activities of the academic degree program.

Elements of the Mission Statement: When developing or reviewing a mission statement, consider the following. The well-written mission statement should:

- Define the broad purposes the program aims to achieve.
- *The mission statement is a clear description of the distinctive purpose of the academic program. It reflects how the program contributes to the education and careers of students graduating from the program.*
- Describe the community the academic program is designed to serve (students).
- *The mission statement should define the groups or individuals that participate in the academic program and those that will benefit from the program.*
- Be aligned with the mission of the university, college and department under which the academic program functions.

Note: As an option, some academic degree programs add a statement of vision, values, and/or guiding principles that support the mission. Vision, value, or guiding principle statements are not a required part of The University of Alabama's assessment process, but some academic degree programs choose to include them in their assessment documentation as a useful guide in planning and goal setting.

Structure or the Mission Statement: The following template puts the elements of a mission statement into a useable format. (Note: The order of the elements of the mission statement may vary).

"The mission of **(name of academic degree program)** is to **(primary purpose of program)** by providing **(primary functions or activities)** to **(stakeholders)**."

Examples:

- Needs improvement: The mission of the Biology program is to provide a broad education in life sciences.
Effective: The mission of the Biology B.S degree program is to prepare students for employment in various biology-related areas and/or for the pursuit of advanced degrees in biology or health-related professional schools. The Biology program educates students in the fundamental concepts, knowledge, and laboratory/field techniques and skills of the life sciences.
- Needs improvement: The mission of the Social Work program is to create an environment that encourages excellence.

- **Effective:** The mission of the B.S in Social Work program is to prepare competent generalist social workers with the knowledge, values, and skills for engaging in individual, family, group, organization, and community planned change processes. The Social Work program educates students to serve diverse rural, vulnerable, disenfranchised, and underserved populations locally, regionally, and globally.

Worksheet

Reviewing the Mission Statement: The following worksheet will help determine whether a mission statement for a particular program is effective and clearly written.

Write (or copy and paste) mission statement here and then complete the checklist:

Complete this checklist by placing a checkmark in the “yes” or “no” column.

Criteria	Yes	No
Is the mission statement brief and memorable?		
Is the mission statement distinctive and unique to the program?		
Does the mission clearly and concisely state the purpose of the program?		
Is the mission statement written so that it is understandable to a general audience?		
Does it articulate the primary functions or activities of the program?		
Does it identify the primary stakeholders?		
Does it clearly support the University, college or division's missions?		

List reasons for your choices here and discuss them with other stakeholders: