

Quick Guides

Non-Instructional Units: Mission Statements

Definition: A mission statement is a brief (1 to 2 sentences), broad statement of the directions, values and aspirations of the non-academic department or division 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 departments and divisions at The University of Alabama should have a mission statement. This guide can help determine if the mission statement for a particular department or division is effective and clearly in line with the department or division's current activities.

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

- 1) Define the broad purposes the department or division aims to achieve.
The mission statement is a clear description of the distinctive purpose of the non-academic department or division. The mission statement reflects how the department or division supports its stakeholders.
- 2) Describe the community the department or division is designed to serve (stakeholders).
The mission statement should define the groups or individuals that will benefit from the services the department or division provides.
- 3) Be aligned with the mission of the university, college and department under which the department or division functions.

Note: As an option, some departments or divisions 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 many divisions and departments 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 department or division)** is to **(primary purpose of department or division)** by providing **(primary functions or activities)** to **(stakeholders)**."

Examples:

The examples below are excellent, well written mission statements from several hypothetical nonacademic units.

- **Needs improvement:** The mission of the Office of Advancement is fundraising.
Effective: The Office of Advancement develops support for the university through alumni engagement and fundraising to advance the university's academic, research, scholarship and service priorities, consistent with a top tier university, and continue to promote growth and national prominence in these areas.
- **Needs improvement:** The mission of The Center for Veteran and Military Affairs is to provide support for veterans.

Effective: The mission of The Center for Veteran and Military Affairs is to provide, facilitate, or coordinate programs and services to meet the special needs of veterans, service members, dependents, and survivors in order to ease their transition to college life and fulfill their educational goals.

- **Example with an added values/vision statement:** The mission of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment is to provide institutional information to external reporting groups as well as University decision-makers in support of planning, policy formulation, resource allocation, and the advancement of University operations. It is our vision that the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment be a trusted provider of timely, relevant, and unbiased information and services.

Other Effective Non-academic Mission Statements:

- Facilities and Grounds: To professionally maintain a world-class campus environment, delivering the highest quality service to our campus community.
- Public Safety: To partner with members of the university community to maintain an environment of safety conducive to the accomplishment and fulfillment of the university’s overall mission by providing information and services that enhance personal safety and protect resources.
- The Office of University Relations is focused on increasing awareness of the positive impact the university has on individuals, the community, the state, the region, and the nation.

Worksheet:

Reviewing the Mission Statement: The following worksheet will help determine whether a mission statement for a particular department or division 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 department or division?		
Does the mission clearly and concisely state the purpose of the department or division?		
Is the mission statement written so that it is understandable to a general audience?		
Does it articulate the primary functions or activities of the department or division?		
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: