Educational Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Assessment oversees Southern’s institutional research and effectiveness programs. Educational effectiveness reflects the strength and integrity of educational programs. Academic programs and administrative units establish learning outcomes / objectives, identify appropriate measures, and set achievement targets. Student and unit performance are assessed annually and the findings are used to improve programs and service offerings. Southern also evaluates its institution-wide performance through ongoing strategic planning processes led by the Office of the President.

Southern assesses time-to-completion for its undergraduate and graduate programs annually as one mark of its educational effectiveness. For 2013–2014, 71% of undergraduate completers finished their program in less than five years. Among master’s students, 63% of Master of Divinity students completed their program in under five years while 65% of students in all other master’s programs completed their degrees in less than five years. Within the area of doctoral studies, 74% of professional doctoral students completed their program within five years while 69% of research doctoral students earned their degree within five years.

In its graduate programs, Southern also considers student placement as an indicator of effectiveness. Among self-reporting completers from the 2012–2013 academic year, 56% of graduates had found or were not seeking placement; 10% were pursuing another degree; and 33% were seeking placement.