Guidelines for Creating Assessment Descriptions

Writing the Assessment Description is the first step in the assessment process, as it outlines a plan for assessments of courses coming up on a program’s four-year cycle. Assessment Descriptions are used for new assessments and not reassessments of courses that have already been assessed (Action Plans are used to outline the approach for reassessments).

1. Review the Course Outcomes
We assess program outcomes and MOs through their alignment to course outcomes. Therefore, assignments will primarily measure course outcomes, as opposed to MOs or program outcomes. However, for the assessments of General Education courses, in which specific skills that are not necessarily reflected in the course outcomes must be assessed, assignments can be directly tied to MOs.

Before developing your description, you should check the master course syllabus to ensure that the alignments between course outcomes, program outcomes, and MOs are accurate and are applicable to the assessment being created. If alignments need to be changed, they should be approved by your dean and sent to Allen Richman and Mike Gavin.

2. Identify Embedded Assignments to Assess the Course
The assessments that are selected should be embedded in the course. In other words, the assignment must be a graded part of the course every term. Thus, an embedded assessment means that even when data is not being collected in a centralized manner, the assessments are being regularly used in the course to evaluate our students.

3. Select an Appropriate Format for Assignments
Review the language in the course outcomes, specifically the verbs, to develop an appropriate format for assignments. Typically, learning outcomes with verbs like “recognize” and ‘identify” can be assessed with multiple-choice assessments. Outcomes with verbs like “write,” “discuss,” “explain” should be evaluated through an assignment with a rubric. During the review of Assessment Descriptions, if the AAAC requests changes to the assignment format, those revisions must be implemented when developing drafts of assessment materials.

4. Select the Number of Assessments
Review the Course Outcomes to determine how many assignments should be used to assess all of the outcomes sufficiently. Some courses will require multiple assessments to cover all of the outcomes (see the example on page 3). Although there is no required limit on the number of assessments, we do not want to overburden the faculty with a large number of assessments when the course outcomes can be addressed in 1-2 assessments. On the Assessment Description form, list all of the outcomes (include both the number and text) that correspond to each assignment.
Guidelines for Creating Assessment Descriptions

5. **Provide a Clear overview of the Assignment(s)**
   In filling out the Assessment Description form, indicate the assessment format and write a brief but concrete description of the assignment(s). Please avoid vague language to provide a clear overview of what the students will do (e.g. write a 5 page paper on X, using Y; complete X hours of clinic practicum focused on A, B, and C working with mock patients; prepare a group class presentation addressing X, Y, and Z). The AAAC will need a detailed description to make sure that the assignment(s) align with the course outcomes. If multiple assignments will be used, describe each of them.

6. **Indicate when the Assignments will be Given During the Semester**
   When there is only one assignment, it should be given at the end of the semester, between weeks twelve and finals week. This will allow students to learn the appropriate skills and concepts before being assessed. When multiple assessments are given they should be given at a time that students can appropriately demonstrate mastery of the course outcome.

7. **Determine the value of the Assignments**
   The course assessment(s) must account for at least 15% of the final grade in the course. If multiple assessments are being used, then the combination of the assessments should equal 15%. Selected assessments under 15% would skew assessment results.

8. **Save and Name the File**
   To maintain consistency, please use the following naming convention for saving your file:
   **Course_Type of Document_Semester & Year.** First, list the course name and number. Next, indicate the type of document being submitted as “Description.” Finally, for the date, include the semester and year that the course is assessed, as opposed to the current semester and year. For example: EGL1010_Description_FA14
Assessment Description Example:

**Department:** English  
**Faculty member submitting plan:** Anthony Fulton and Bridget Brennan  
**Course:** EGL 0100  
**Semester:** Fall 2013

**Directions:** Please fill out an assessment description form for each course that will be assessed next semester (new courses only, no re-assessments).

1. **How many assessments will be used to assess this course?**  
   - □ 1  
   - □ 2  
   - □ 3  
   - □ more than 3

2. **Which assessment format will be used?** (check all that apply)  
   - □ multiple choice  
   - ✅ an assignment with rubric

3. **In the space provided below, please provide a brief description of the assignment, i.e. explain what students will do.** E.g. write a 5 page paper on X, using Y; complete X hours of clinic practicum focused on A, B, and C; prepare a group class presentation on X; ...

   **Students will write a researched-based essay that will be graded by a common rubric.**
Guidelines for Creating Assessment Descriptions

For multiple-choice assessment ONLY:

4. When will this assignment be given?
   
   □ final exam
   □ midterm exam
   □ some time between week 12 and 14 of the semester (or comparable time for accelerated courses)
   □ other, please specify Click here to enter text.

5. How much will this assignment be worth? The course assessment(s) must account for at least 15% of the final grade in the course. If multiple assessments are being used, then the combination of the assessments should be 15%.

6. Please list all the course outcomes (include both the outcome and the corresponding number) that will be assessed through multiple-choice questions. If more than 1 test/exam is used, please provide a breakdown per assignment.

For rubric assessment ONLY:

7. When will this assignment be given?
   
   □ final exam
   □ midterm exam
   □ some time between week 12 and 14 of the semester (or comparable time for accelerated courses)
   □ other, please specify Click here to enter text.

8. How much will this assignment be worth? The course assessment(s) must account for at least 15% of the final grade in the course. If multiple assessments are being used, then the combination of the assessments should be 15%.

The research-based essay will count for at least 15% of a students’ grade.
Guidelines for Creating Assessment Descriptions

9. Please list all the course outcomes that will be assessed through the assignment(s) with rubric. If more than 1 assignment is used, please provide a breakdown per assignment.

The research-based essay will cover the following outcomes:

(1.) Write, using Standard English, well-developed paragraphs of at least 150 words and essays of at least 500 words that have unified, restricted, and precise thesis statements; clear topic sentences that support the thesis; adequate development of the topic sentences in paragraphs; and a variety of sentence patterns or lengths.

(2.) Write prose with essential meaning unimpaired by grammatical errors, including fragments, run-ons (comma splices and fused sentences), faulty subject-verb agreement, and incorrect verb forms.

(3.) Write a summary or analysis of an assigned text.
Guidelines for Creating Assessment Descriptions

Assessment Description Template:

Please complete this form and submit it to the Dean’s Office by the due date. For more information on due dates, refer to the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Handbook on MyPGCC.

For more information on Assessment Descriptions, please refer to the “Guidelines – Creating Assessment Descriptions” document, which can be found on MyPGCC or in S:\\Assessment\Guidelines and Form.

To maintain consistency, please use the following naming convention for saving your file:
Course_Name of Assessment_Type of Document_Semester & Year. First, list the course name and number, followed by the name of the assessment. Next, indicate the type of document being submitted as “Description.” Finally, for the date, include the semester and year that the course is assessed, as opposed to the current semester and year. For example:
EGL1010_ResearchEssay_Description_FA14

Department: Click here to enter text.
Faculty member submitting plan: Click here to enter text.
Course: Click here to enter text.
Semester this course will be assessed: Click here to enter text.

Directions: Please fill out an assessment description form for each course that will be assessed next semester (new courses only, no re-assessments).

2. How many assessments will be used to assess this course? □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ more than 3

2. Which assessment format will be used? (check all that apply)
□ multiple choice
□ an assignment with rubric

3. In the space provided below, please provide a brief description of the assignment(s), i.e. explain what students will do. E.g. write a 5 page paper on X, using Y; complete X hours of clinic practicum focused on A, B, and C working with mock patients; prepare a group class presentation addressing X, Y, and Z; ... If you plan on using multiple assignments, please describe each of them.
Building Assessment Descriptions

For multiple-choice assessment ONLY:

4. When will this assignment be given?
   - [ ] midterm exam
   - [ ] final exam
   - [ ] some time between week 12 and 15 of the semester (or comparable time for accelerated courses)
   - [ ] other, please specify Click here to enter text.

5. How much will this assignment be worth? The course assessment(s) must account for at least 15% of the final grade in the course. If multiple assessments are being used, then the combination of the assessments should be 15%.

6. Please list all the course outcomes (include both the outcome and the corresponding number) that will be assessed through multiple-choice questions. If more than 1 test/exam is used, please provide a breakdown per assignment.

For rubric assessment ONLY:

7. When will this assignment be given?
   - [ ] midterm exam
   - [ ] final exam
   - [ ] some time between week 12 and 15 of the semester (or comparable time for accelerated courses)
   - [ ] other, please specify Click here to enter text.
8. How much will this assignment be worth? The course assessment(s) must account for at least 15% of the final grade in the course. If multiple assessments are being used, then the combination of the assessments should be 15%.

9. Please list all of the course outcomes (include both the outcome and the corresponding number) that will be assessed through the assignment(s) with rubric. If more than 1 assignment is used, please provide a breakdown per assignment.