Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Handbook

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General

The Student as the Primary Measurement Level

Prince George's Community College (PGCC) is committed to transforming the lives of its students. In order to meet this commitment, PGCC's student learning outcomes assessment process is focused primarily on the direct measurement of its students. Data are collected from students in their courses and then aggregated to assess learning outcomes for courses, programs/certificates, and student core competencies (general education learning outcomes).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement at PGCC is defined as successfully completing courses (i.e., completing a course with a passing grade) *and* obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary to begin subsequent course(s) successfully. Although more distal measures, like the completion of a degree, will also be examined, the primary focus of the assessment process is the value added to the life of a student through the completion of each individual course.

Academic achievement relies upon each course providing a rich learning environment that affords students the opportunity to master student learning outcomes (SLOs)—which include course outcomes, program/certificate outcomes, and student core competencies—and adequately prepares students for subsequent course(s).

How Assessment Data are Used at PGCC

Academic Affairs collects data on student performance for the *sole purpose of improving student success*. The collection of data at the student level allows PGCC to track individual students or cohorts of students to determine the academic achievement of a student/cohort and to ascertain students' progress from one course to another. **SLO data are never used to evaluate individual faculty members.**

Multiple Levels of Assessment

The PGCC student learning outcomes assessment process focuses on continually improving courses to better prepare students to achieve course outcomes. However, the improvement of individual courses and subsequent student performance produces an impact that goes beyond the course-level to have a global impact on all levels of the institution.

This global impact occurs because PGCC's course-level assessment uses direct, authentic measurements of students from classroom assignments to produce a range of data that can be used to analyze three distinct, yet connected, sets of learning outcomes: course outcomes, program/certificate outcomes, and student core competencies (institution-level outcomes).

Course-Level Assessment

Course-level assessment is performed by aggregating data across all assessed sections of a course. The goal of course-level assessment is to identify course outcomes that students are meeting/exceeding and course outcomes for which students are not achieving acceptable levels of performance. Course-level assessment includes a cycle of improvement that involves assessing course outcomes, identifying the areas in which courses may need adjustments/improvements, and reassessing to evaluate the effectiveness of adjustments/improvements.

Program/Certificate-Level Assessment (Four-Year Cycle)

Program/certificate level assessment is performed by aggregating student performance on course-level assessment across courses in a particular program. At this level, achieving program/certificate outcomes is the primary focus. This is based on the alignment between course outcomes and program outcomes which can be found in every master course syllabus.

As one of the first steps in PGCC's assessment process, department chairs and faculty created four-year assessment cycles for each program/certificate on campus. In each program's four-year cycle, department chairs and faculty identified **the series of courses that provide the best opportunities to measure students' mastery of program learning outcomes.** Over the course of the four-year cycle, each program/certificate will assess a set of courses that will collectively demonstrate students' success at achieving all of the program's learning outcomes. The data generated by this process will help departments to identify the program/certificate outcomes that students are meeting/exceeding and the program/certificate outcomes with which students struggle.

The purpose of program/certificate-level assessment is threefold: (1) to identify where students' performance on program/certificate outcomes needs to be improved (2) to identify courses that could be modified to improve that performance (3) to provide evidence of programs/certificates that are performing well and can be used as models/exemplars.

Institutional-Level Learning Assessment

Programs' four-year cycles include not only courses that will be used to assess program outcomes but also high-occupancy courses (many of which are general education courses). Through the aggregation of this wide variety of courses, the institution's general education outcomes are also evaluated. The courses provide data on the Measurable Outcomes (MOs) which are organized into six Student Core Competencies (SCC). This is based on the alignment between MOs and course learning outcomes which can be found in every master course syllabus. The goal of this aggregation is to identify SCCs that students are meeting/exceeding and those for which students are not meeting acceptable levels of performance. Institution-level assessment identifies student core competency performance that needs to be improved across the institution and identify courses that could be modified to improve SCC performance.

What a Common Assessment Means

Course-level assessment, the heart of PGCC's assessment process, involves the consistent measurement of students' achievement of course outcomes, which is accomplished through the use of *common assessment(s)* that are embedded within courses.

Using a common assessment means that identical assessment(s) are **embedded** in every section of an individual course. These assignments **must be a permanently embedded and a graded part of the course every time it is taught**, even during semesters when the course is not being formally assessed.

This methodology is used to ensure reliable and valid evaluations of the students' attainment of student learning outcomes (i.e., course outcomes, program/certificate outcomes, and student core competencies) every time the course is taught.

Guidelines for Common Assessments:

- The embedded assessment(s) in a particular course **must measure all of the learning outcomes associated with the course (i.e., course outcome, program/certificate outcomes, and student core competencies).**
- In order to address all outcomes, more than one assessment may be necessary.
- The common assessment(s) is most often expected to be a culminating assignment, which requires students to demonstrate the highest level of learning indicated by the course learning outcome (e.g., synthesis, application, etc.).
- **The common assessment should account for at least 15% of the student's final grade for the course, taking into account all possible points. If more than one common assessment is used the cumulative percent of the grade should be 15%.**

Common Assessment NOT Necessarily Common Assignment/Exam

There are a number of options that can be used to embed a common assessment(s) in an individual course: (1) departments can use identical assignments (e.g., a common final exam or the same paper assignment) across all sections of a course. (2) departments can offer similar assignments in all the sections of the course (e.g., each faculty member assigns a similar paper assignment) but evaluate the different assignments with a common rubric. This way, each faculty member teaching the course can have his/her own writing assignment but must use the common rubric to assess the final product. (3) Departments can also have some elements of the assignment be common across sections. For example, a set of identical exam questions may be shared across sections, with the rest of the exam questions being created by the individual faculty member teaching the course.

The common assessment should be created so that faculty members in their individual sections can fulfill the requirements of the assessment but still have autonomy.

Putting it all together

The assessment conducted in each course provides data on course, program, and general education learning. This is accomplished by ensuring that all assessments are collecting data at the level of the course outcomes. When using a rubric, this is accomplished by connecting the rubric domains directly to learning outcomes in Tk20. When using a final exam, the Benchmark software connects each question to learning outcomes, and the output is percent-correct for each learning outcome in the course. All of data is compiled in Tk20. The reports generated in Tk20 provide data on the performance of each assessment, but also aggregate performance across assessments to provide the percentage of students performing at each performance-level for program and general education (MOs and SCCs) learning outcomes.

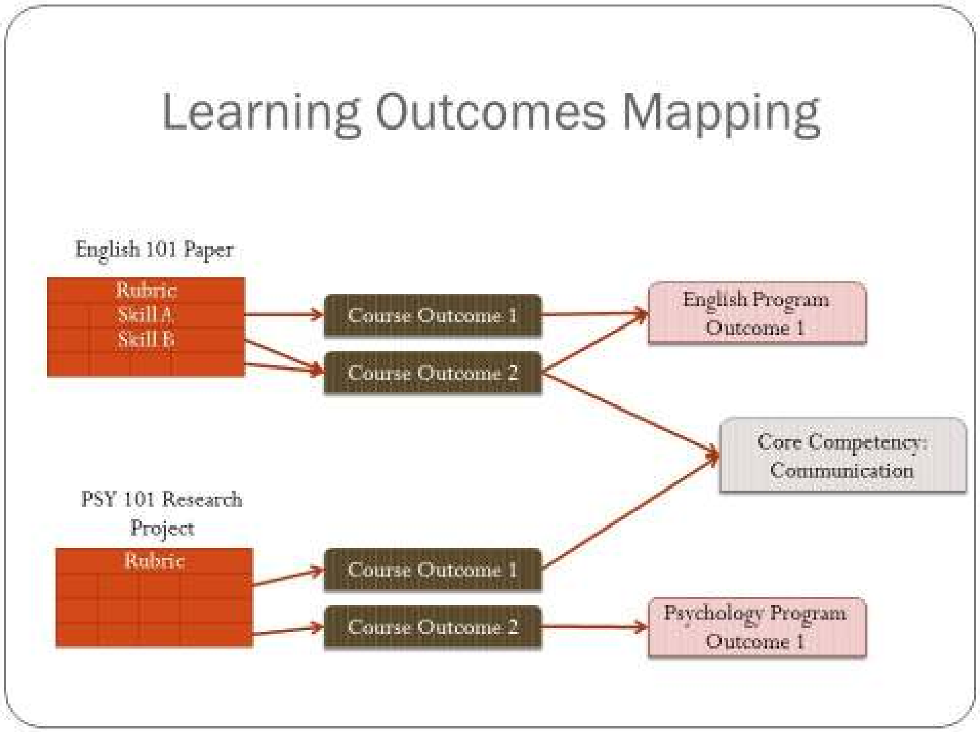

Figure 1: Learning Outcomes Mapping

Robust Evaluation of Student Learning

The PGCC assessment model is different from most, in that the assessment of learning outcomes across course, program, and general education are very closely connected. Also, we are collecting data on specific student skills, rather than performing more global evaluations of students. As Figure 1 clearly demonstrates, the data for the entire assessment system is founded on having robust data at the course-level. For this reason, it is imperative that the assessments be accurate measurements of the students' specific knowledge, skills, or values. This is also why any modification of a common assessment must be done at the departmental level and cannot be the choice of an individual faculty member.

Consistent Grading

No matter the format of the common assessment, the evaluation of the students' performance must be consistent to be valid. For the common assessments, all faculty must follow consistent guidelines for evaluating student performance so that all students are being evaluated in an identical way within and across sections of the course. It is imperative that the department clearly communicate the expectations of the assessment to all faculty teaching the course, to ensure consistent evaluation. Also, it is recommended that faculty make note of times when the rubric was difficult to apply to a paper, and bring up this situation during DAT and/or departmental meetings.

Modifying Common Assessments

Modifications to a common assessment must be done at the departmental level and cannot be done by an individual faculty member. It is also imperative that assessment personnel are informed about these changes, so that adjustments can be made in the software to reflect the altered assessment. Department-level changes ensure that the assessments are agreed upon by the faculty and chair as best practice and that the most appropriate connections are being made between course learning outcomes and program/institution learning outcomes.

Organizational Structure

At the top of the organizational structure for assessment is the Academic Affairs Assessment Committee (AAAC), which is a standing committee of the Academic Council. This Assessment Handbook and all decisions about learning outcomes assessment are created by and/or vetted by the AAAC. Recommendations from the AAAC are brought to the Academic Council for further vetting and approval.

The AAAC is composed of representatives from each academic division and include representation from the honors program and general education.

Seat	#	Representing / Role
Dir. Of Learning Outcomes and Institutional Effectiveness	1	Chair
Faculty member*	1	Vice-Chair
Two faculty members from each division who also serve as leader of their Departmental Assessment Team	10	Faculty / Discipline
Honors Program/certificate coordinator or designee	1	Honors Courses
General Education coordinator or designee	1	Gen. Ed Courses
* *also represents AAAC at Academic Council*	14	

Departmental Assessment Teams

Every department is represented in the assessment process by a Departmental Assessment Team (DAT) composed of at least three faculty members. The team members are responsible for guiding the assessment process within the department and ensuring that assessment practices are conducted with fidelity (for a full list of responsibilities see Learning Outcomes Assessment in the Department: Promising Practices on S://Assessment/Guidelines & Forms or MyPGCC-). In some cases, each department in a division has its own DAT, but some smaller departments might choose to be part of a combined DAT. In these circumstances, a single DAT oversees the processes for more than one department. Each DAT has a DAT leader who acts as the “chair” of their DAT. The leader of the DAT has the opportunity to represent his or her division as a member of the AAAC and should attend all AAAC meetings.

The Faculty

Ultimately, assessment is the responsibility of the faculty. **All teaching faculty at PGCC are responsible for ensuring that the college’s assessment processes and any assessments conducted in their courses are implemented with fidelity.** This means, first and foremost, that the course content of each course must be guided by the course outcomes. Second, faculty are responsible for ensuring that common assessments are appropriately embedded into courses and appropriately graded as a regular component of the course. Finally, faculty whose courses are being assessed are responsible for entering the assessment data (or saving the MC-exam files) so that they can be appropriately recorded and analyzed.

Assessment Hardware and Software

Tk20 Campus Wide

All data from assessments are centralized in the enterprise assessment software, Tk20. For assessments that are entered directly into Tk20 (e.g., rubric data), summary analysis reports are available to DAT members, chairs, and deans as soon as the data is entered. Assessment data that is collected outside of Tk20 (e.g., multiple-choice exam data) will be processed by the Director of Learning Outcomes and Institutional Effectiveness, and data reports will be available the semester following data collection.

Exam Scanners (Apperson Benchmark 3000)

Multiple-choice exams can be used as common assessments in a course. Once completed, the exams are scored using the Benchmark 3000 exam scanning units and analyzed using Datalink software. **In order for this to work, the exams must be scanned using an electronic answer key, which connects each question to the learning outcomes for the course.** This software package takes groups of questions on the exam that are related to a single learning outcome and aggregates the data so that faculty can immediately ascertain the proficiency of their students on each learning outcome.

Academic Calendar Overview (see S://Assessment/Guidelines & Forms or MyPGCC for complete list of dates)

Series of Events

Before the semester begins, the Assessment Team (the Director of Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness and the assessment coaches) will hold a meeting/training for any and all deans' office personnel. At this time, the assessment coaches will provide a **checklist** for each Division on the S:/Assessment shared drive. The checklist will include all materials due for the semester for each department and instructions for passing those files to the division assessment coach. A copy of this same checklist will be provided to all DAT members, chairs, deans, and to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs (VPAA).

Each semester the college will follow a set calendar for assessment:

- **Reminders** will be sent to DAT members, chairs, and deans two weeks before materials are due to the Assessment Team.

- **Due Dates**: Materials will be submitted to the appropriate dean's office on the 10th of the month, checked/validated by the dean's office, and uploaded to the S drive by the 15th of the month. Only materials that are in the proper format (i.e., using the forms the Assessment Team has created) and complete will be accepted.

- **AAAC Meetings:** The meeting schedule of the AAAC will align with the due dates so that assessment materials can be reviewed by faculty peers. This also allows for DAT members to see how other departments are assessing and to become better assessors themselves. **Because these materials are being reviewed by the AAAC during regular meetings, we cannot accept late materials unless an extension is granted by the Office of the VPAA because of extenuating circumstances.** On the rare occasion that an extension is granted, one of the assessment coaches will provide feedback for this assessment.

- **Feedback:** The AAAC will provide feedback to DAT, chairs, and deans for assessment descriptions, action plans, and assessment drafts. Some of this feedback will be recommendations, and some of the feedback may be mandatory changes that must be made to the assessment. The feedback provided will clearly state which changes are suggested and which are mandatory. The mandatory changes will be added to the checklist by the Assessment Coach. The dean's office will ensure assessments meet these mandatory requirements before the next due date.

Updates: After every due date, an update will be sent to the VPAA and the deans concerning any assessment pieces that were not submitted. The update to the deans will merely serve as a confirmation of materials received, as the deans' offices will already be aware of missing work because they are submitting the materials.

Fall

Reminder Message Sent to Deans, Chairs, DAT Members	**Due to Deans office on 10th***	**AAAC Meeting**	**Update Message Sent to Deans**
1st week back	*Checklist sent to Divisions from Assessment Team*		
September 1st	September 10th* – Final drafts of Fall assessments that are part of the 4-year plan – Final drafts of Fall assessments that are part of action plans	2nd Monday in September to discuss SLOAR	September 20th
October 1st	October 10th* – Spring assessment descriptions – Action plans for courses assessed in the previous Spring semester and scheduled for reassessment in the upcoming Spring semester	Last Monday in October and 1st Monday in November meet to review assessment descriptions and action plans	October 20th
November 1st	November 10th* – Rough drafts of all Spring assessments (new courses only)	Last Monday in November and 1st Monday in December meet to review assessment drafts	November 20th
Last Day Grades are Due	All assessment data and files collected from the Fall semester. It is the expectation that all assessment data will be reported on or before the due date for grades for the course.		

***Deans' offices will deliver/ensure all materials are uploaded on the S drive by the 15th of each month.**

Spring

Reminder Message Sent to Deans, Chairs, DAT Members	Due to Deans office on 10th*	AAAC Meeting	Update Message Sent to Deans
1st week back	*Checklist sent to Divisions from Assessment Team*		
February 1st	February 10th* – Final drafts of Spring assessments that are part of the 4-year plan – Final drafts of Spring assessment that are part of action plans	2nd Monday in February for professional development and/or to improve assessment plan.	February 20th
March 1st	March 10th* – Fall Assessment description due – Action plans for courses assessed in the previous Fall semester and scheduled for reassessment in the upcoming Fall semester	Last Monday in March and 1st Monday in April meet to review assessment descriptions and action plans	March 20th
April 1st	April 10th* – Rough drafts of all Fall assessments (new courses only)	Last Monday in April and 1st Monday in May meet to review assessment drafts	April 20th
Last Day Grades are Due	All assessment data and files collected from the Fall semester. It is the expectation that all assessment data will be reported on or before the due date for grades for the course.		

***Deans' offices will deliver/ensure all materials are uploaded to the S drive by the 15th of each month.**

For Deans

As the leader of the division, deans are responsible for ensuring that assessment processes move forward with fidelity in all departments within the division. The list below provides some meaningful ways deans can promote assessment and support the process of continuous improvement.

- At least one division meeting per semester should be largely dedicated to discussing assessment.
  - How departments are assessing
  - What their data are showing
  - Improvements that have been made in student performance
  - Feedback that the AAAC or Assessment Team should hear
- For departments that are struggling with assessment, deans can request training sessions from the Assessment Team, who offer training on writing outcomes, creating rubrics, creating multiple-choice exams, and a general training on understanding assessment and data.

Deans Office To-Do List for Each Semester:

Fall		
Date Materials must be ready for Assessment Team	**What is Due:**	**Description**
September 15th	Final draft of Fall assessments (including re-assessments)	A copy of each common assessment(s) must be uploaded to its department folders on S:\Assessment. The location to upload these materials is: S:\Assessment\Departments\[*Dept Name*]\ExamFiles\[CurrentTerm]). **What must be included:** **PLEASE NOTE: all files must follow the naming convention specified on the template** • **Copy of actual exam or assignment that students will receive** • **Any additional instructions faculty receive** • **A Rubric using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC and/or • **An exam answer key using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC
October 15th	Spring assessment descriptions and Fall action plan(s)	**Descriptions** A description of each common assessment for each class being assessed for the first time next **Spring** must be uploaded to its department folders on S:\Assessment. The location to upload these materials is:

		S:\Assessment\Departments\[*Dept Name*]\ExamFiles\[CurrentTerm]). **What must be included:** **PLEASE NOTE: all files must follow the naming convention specified on the template** • **One description document for each assessment using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC **Action Plans** Each semester, department faculty must work to improve courses and impact student learning. Thus an action plan for courses assessed in the previous Fall semester and scheduled to be reassessed in the upcoming Fall semester must be identified. **What must be included:** • **Action plan that identifies a specific problem and solution to the problem that focuses on improving student learning.**
November 15th	Spring assessment draft (including re-assessments)	**Draft Assessment(s)** A copy of each common assessment(s) must be uploaded to its department folders on S:\Assessment. The location to upload these materials is: S:\Assessment\Departments\[*Dept Name*]\ExamFiles\[CurrentTerm]).

		What must be included: **PLEASE NOTE: all files must follow the naming convention specified on the template** • **Copy of actual exam or assignment that students will receive** • **Any additional instructions faculty receive** • **A Rubric using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC and/or • **An exam answer key using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC

Spring		
Date Materials must be ready for Assessment Team	**What is Due:**	**Description**
February 15th	Final drafts of Spring assessments (including re-assessments)	A copy of each common assessment(s) must be uploaded to its department folders on S:\Assessment. The location to upload these materials is: S:\Assessment\Departments\[*Dept Name*]\ExamFiles\[CurrentTerm]). **What must be included:** **PLEASE NOTE: all files must follow the naming convention specified on the template** • **Copy of actual exam or assignment that students will receive** • **Any additional instructions faculty receive** • **A Rubric using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC and/or **An exam answer key using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC
March 15th	Fall Assessment Descriptions and Fall Action Plan(s)	**Descriptions** A description of each common assessment being assessed for the first time for next **Fall** must be uploaded to its department folders on S:\Assessment. The location to upload these materials is:

		S:\Assessment\Departments\[*Dept Name*]\ExamFiles\[CurrentTerm]). **What must be included:** **PLEASE NOTE: all files must follow the naming convention specified on the template** • **One description document for each assessment using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC **Action Plans** Each semester, department faculty must work to improve courses and impact student learning. Thus an action plan for courses assessed in the previous Fall semester and scheduled to be reassessed in the upcoming Fall semester must be identified. **What must be included:** • **Action plan that identifies a specific problem and solution to the problem that focuses on improving student learning.**
April 15th	Fall assessment draft (including re-assessments)	**Draft Assessment(s)** A copy of each common assessment(s) must be uploaded to its department folders on S:\Assessment. The location to upload these materials is: S:\TK20\Departments\[*Dept Name*]\ExamFiles\[CurrentTerm]).

		What must be included: **PLEASE NOTE: all files must follow the naming convention specified on the template** • **Copy of actual exam or assignment that students will receive** • **Any additional instructions faculty receive** **A Rubric using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC and/or **An exam answer key using the template (the template can be found on** S:\Assessment\Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC

Things to check before materials are submitted:

Mandatory

1. Only materials related to the course(s) slated to be assessed in the 4-year plan will be accepted. Changes to the courses being assessed in an individual semester listed in the 4-year plan must be approved at the beginning of the prior semester by the dean and the Director of Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness.
2. All course outcomes must be addressed by the assessment(s).
    a. This includes all course outcomes listed on the master syllabus, which is posted on MyPGCC.
    b. This also means that the department and dean should check to ensure that the alignments between course outcomes and program outcomes and MOs (as listed on the master course syllabus) are applicable in the context of the actual assessment(s) being done. For example, if a course is assessing course outcome 1 through a domain on a research paper rubric, it would be inappropriate for the master course syllabus to have course outcome 1 linked to **MO1.2**: **Speak** in standard English at the college level. Similarly, if a department is using a multiple choice test, it would have to revise any alignments on the master course syllabi to MO 1.1. **Write** in Standard English at the college level, as no writing is done on a multiple-choice exam.
    c. Measureable Outcomes are best addressed through overlapping with course outcomes, but can also be handled by having a domain of a rubric or a multiple-choice question directly connected to a MO.
3. Assessments must clearly measure the outcome (e.g., a learning outcome that says "the student will write" cannot be measured through multiple-choice).
4. All assessments must be common, embedded assignments.

Multiple Choice

5. Multiple-choice exams must have at least three questions per learning outcome.
6. Each question can be connected to only one learning outcome.
7. Multiple-choice questions must follow best practices. Deviations from best practices (e.g., having only two answer options) will be indicated, and adjustments must be made.

Rubrics

8. All rubrics must use five performance levels (exceptions can be granted by the Director of Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness for accreditation reasons).
9. Each rubric must provide an appropriate name for each domain (e.g., intro paragraph, citations, etc., not "domain 1").

10. Each rubric must follow a reasonable point/percentage alignment with letter grades. For example, for a 20-point domain, the score for “excellent” can range from 19-20 (20 out of 20 equals 100%, 19 out of 20 equals 95%), the score for “good” can range from 17-16 (17 out of 20 equals 85%, 16 out of 20 equals 80%), and so on.
11. Each performance level must include a unique description that separates it from any performance levels above and below it.
12. Each domain can be linked to no more than two learning outcomes.
13. Rubrics must follow best practices (e.g., avoid the use of vague language, measure skills and knowledge discretely, etc.).

Important considerations

1. Does the question/assessment clearly demonstrate the skill it is being connected to? *–this may need to be examined further by individuals outside of the department but should be clear for individuals within the division.*
2. The scope of the assessment is appropriate—*all assessments are to account for at least 15% of the final course grade, and committee members will note if they believe that the assessment is too small or too cumbersome.*
3. The timing of the assessment is appropriate—*If only a single assessment is being given, it should be given towards the end of the term as a culminating assignment. If multiple assessments are being given then they should be spread throughout the term appropriately. Committee members will look for when a single assessment is given at the beginning or at mid-term if there are concerns or questions with timing of multiple assessments.*

For Chairs

As the leader of the department, it is the responsibility of the chairs to ensure that assessment processes move forward with fidelity in all courses within the department. The list below provides some meaningful ways chairs can promote assessment and support the process of continuous improvement.

- Include updates about the assessment process as part of regularly scheduled department meetings. Department meetings are also a good time to work on creating assessment materials.
- Establish regular meetings with your Departmental Assessment Team to discuss progress on assessment materials.
- Ensure that the entire faculty is engaged in the assessment process. The following should be considered as faculty collaboratively create assessments:
    - What is the purpose of the course?
    - What activity/product *best* demonstrates student's attainment of the course outcomes?
    - Will assessment require more than one activity/product?
- Ensure that all common embedded assessments are *meaningful* to the faculty and students and represent the skills, knowledge, and/or values that should be obtained in the course or program.
- Request trainings as needed from the Assessment Team. The assessment coaches and the Director of Learning Outcomes and Institutional Effectiveness are here to support you and help faculty understand the assessment process.

Assessment Duties for Chairs

Review data from previous semester: Every semester the Assessment Team creates a Student Learning Outcome Assessment Report (SLOAR). This report provides data on all assessments collected in the previous semester. As a whole, the faculty in the department should be made aware of the data and a discussion should be held about how the course might be adjusted to help students improve any low performance. Chairs should work with their DATs to identify a department meeting to dedicate to the discussion of this assessment data.

Create Assessments for NEXT semester: The DAT should be a resource in the department to help guide faculty through the assessment process. Also, the DAT can help get materials into proper format and meet requirements. However, DATs should not be the sole individuals working on assessment. Assessments should be created by the faculty with DAT members assisting those faculty groups who are creating the assessments.

Training: Each semester, the department should strive to improve the faculty's understanding of assessment. The Assessment Team offers a range of trainings that can be conducted specifically for the department. The chair should identify a focus of each semester/year and work with the DAT and the Assessment Team to facilitate further training.

Things to check before materials are submitted:

Chairs should go over this checklist with their DAT before the DAT submits the materials to the Dean's office.

Mandatory

14. Only materials related to the course(s) slated to be assessed in the 4-year plan will be accepted. Changes to the courses being assessed in an individual semester listed in the 4-year plan must be approved at the beginning of the prior semester by the dean and the Director of Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness.
15. All course outcomes must be addressed by the assessment(s).
    a. This includes all course outcomes listed on the master syllabus, which is posted on MyPGCC.
    b. This also means that the department and dean should check to ensure that the alignments between course outcomes and program outcomes and MOs (as listed on the master course syllabus) are applicable in the context of the actual assessment(s) being done. For example, if a course is assessing course outcome 1 through a domain on a research paper rubric, it would be inappropriate for the master course syllabus to have course outcome 1 linked to **MO1.2**: **Speak** in Standard English at the college level. Similarly, if a department is using a multiple choice test, it would have to revise any alignments on the master course syllabi to MO 1.1. **Write** in Standard English at the college level, as now writing is done on a multiple-choice exam.
    c. Measureable Outcomes are best addressed through overlapping with course outcomes, but can also be handled by having a domain of a rubric or a multiple-choice question directly connected to an MO.
16. Assessments must clearly measure the outcome (e.g., a learning outcome that says "the student will write" cannot be measured through multiple-choice).
17. All assessments must be common, embedded assignments.

Multiple Choice

18. Multiple-choice exams must have at least three questions per learning outcome.
19. Each question can be connected to only one learning outcome.
20. Multiple-choice questions must follow best practices. Deviations from best practices (e.g., having only two answer options) will be indicated, and adjustments must be made.

Rubrics

21. All rubrics must use five performance levels (exceptions can be granted by the Director of Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness for accreditation reasons).

22. Each rubric must provide an appropriate name for each domain (e.g., intro paragraph, citations, etc., not "domain 1").
23. Each rubric must follow a reasonable point/percentage alignment with letter grades. For example, for a 20-point domain, the score for "excellent" can range from 19-20 (20 out of 20 equals 100%, 19 out of 20 equals 95%), the score for good can range from 17-16 (17 out of 20 equals 85%, 16 out of 20 equals 80%), and so on.
24. Each performance level must include a unique description that separates it from any performance levels above and below it.
25. Each domain can be linked to no more than two learning outcomes.
26. Rubrics must follow best practices (e.g., avoid the use of vague language, measure skills and knowledge discretely, etc.).

Important considerations

4. Does the question/assessment clearly demonstrate the skill it is being connected to? *—this may need to be examined further by individuals outside of the department but should be clear for individuals within the division.*
5. The scope of the assessment is appropriate—*all assessments are to account for at least 15% of the final course grade, and committee members will note if they believe that the assessment is too small or too cumbersome.*
6. The timing of the assessment is appropriate—*If only a single assessment is being given, it should be given towards the end of the term as a culminating assignment. If multiple assessments are being given then they should be spread throughout the term appropriately. Committee members will look for when a single assessment is given at the beginning or at mid-term if there are concerns or questions with timing of multiple assessments.*

For DAT members

Overview

Every semester, departments engage in two separate activities as part of the assessment plan: (1) the “cycle of assessment,” through which each department is creating the assessment materials (assignment(s) and answer keys/rubrics) for the following-semester (2) the “cycle of continuous improvement,” which involves the department identifying ways to improve student performance in courses that have already been assessed, implementing changes in courses, and reassessing the courses. These two cyclical series of events are further explained below.

Cycle of Assessment

In the Spring of 2012, a four-year cycle of assessment was set for every program and certificate on campus. This four-year cycle defines the courses that will be “initially” assessed each semester. At the end of four years, each program/certificate will have a complete picture of students’ performance on every program/certificate learning outcome. Using the four-year cycle to identify upcoming courses, departments are always working on the *next* semester’s assessments.

Cycle of Continuous Improvement

As mentioned above, the four-year cycle identifies which courses will be assessed “initially” each term. After this, all assessed courses enter into a cycle of continuous improvement. The following are the series of steps taken after a course is initially assessed:

- **Review** data: The data is aggregated across sections, reviewed, and reported in the SLOAR, which is distributed to deans, chairs, and DATs the semester following a course assessment. Going over the data should be the primary focus of at least one departmental meeting in the semester.
- Identify **major concerns**: Each department is responsible for reviewing the data from all courses assessed and identifying the areas in which students’ performance is most concerning.
- Create an **Action Plan** to improve: Based on the identified “major concerns,” each department is responsible for identifying means to improve student performance in the course(s).
- Carry out Action Plan & **Reassess**: improvements to the course will be implemented and assessed the semester after the action plan is submitted. Thus, for a course initially assessed in Spring 2012, the department would plan improvements in Fall 2012, and implement the improvements and reassess in Spring 2013. In this manner, the data will be reviewed to ascertain whether the improvements had the expected impact and indeed were effective.

Assessment Duties for DATs:

Most Important:

- DATs must work closely with the department chair to ensure that the chair is informed about assessment.
- DATs should shepherd assessment in the department but should not be the primary creators of assessment materials. The faculty should work as a whole or in designated groups to create meaningful assessments.
- Assessments must be meaningful to both the faculty and the students. The process at PGCC is not about doing assessment because we have to, but integrating assessment into the foundation of knowledge of all faculty and including strong assessment practices into all of our courses.

Final Copies of Common Assessment(s): All assessment materials are turned into the division dean. You should check with your dean's office to identify exactly who will accept the materials. At the beginning of every semester, it is the responsibility of the DAT to provide a copy of the actual assignment(s)/exam(s) that are to be used that semester. This includes any assignment directions, scoring guides, rubrics, and/or answer sheets. Rubrics and answer sheets must follow a specific format so the Assessment Team can appropriately prepare these assessments for Tk20 and/or the Benchmark 3000. A copy of the templates for the rubrics and answer keys can be found on S:/Assessment/Guidelines and Forms and on MyPGCC

Review data from previous semester: Every semester, departments need to engage in a regular review of data collected from the previous semester(s). The goal of this is to identify the areas in which students' performance is in the most need of intervention. Work with your chair to identify a department meeting that can be dedicated to a discussion of this assessment data. The focus of the meeting should be on identifying the biggest concerns and what the department might be able to do to improve the students' performance in these areas.

Preliminary plan for NEXT semester: All assessment materials are turned into the division dean. You should check with your dean's office to identify exactly who the materials should be sent to. As a DAT member you should hold a meeting with instructors of the courses that will be assessed in the following semester. You should discuss the purpose of the course and what constitutes a meaningful assessment for the course. The instructions for completing the description can be found on S:/Assessment/Guidelines and Forms and on MyPGCC

Training: Around mid-semester of each Fall and Spring semester, departments can ask for training sessions conducted by the Assessment Team. Also, around this time in the semester, Tk20 and the Benchmark 3000 exam scanner training will be held. The AAAC portal page lists the dates for all training sessions.

Action Plan: Each department is responsible for documenting the actions taken to improve student performance in courses. Based on the review of data from previous semester(s), the department must identify the areas in which student performance needs the most help and create a plan to improve that performance. The Action Plan requires only a brief description of the identified student performance concern and the strategy to improve. Later, after data has been collected for the second time, the action plan will need to be updated with data demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention. Examples of actions include but are not limited to changes in classroom activities leading up to this assessment, adjustments to the assignment or rubric itself, or other classroom interventions aimed at improving student performance. These action plans do not require the complete redesign of a course. Instead they should focus on specific problems and look for relatively small adjustments to course content and methods that can be made consistently across sections and will likely improve student performance. The instructions for completing the action plan can be found on S:/Assessment/Guidelines and Forms and on MyPGCC

Assessment Draft: At the end of every Fall and Spring semester, a draft of the common assessment(s) and any accompanying rubric/answer key for the next semester are due (this includes both courses being assessed for the first time and courses being re-assessed). The DAT should ensure that the materials are in the appropriate format and meet all requirements. DATs must review the assessment draft with the chair before submitting the assessment(s) to the dean.

Support Assessment

In addition to the above tasks, the DAT members are a resource for faculty in the department. It is the responsibility of the DAT members to assist other faculty with assessment processes and to keep the department informed about assessment occurring at PGCC. For a description of the DAT Member duties see "Learning Outcomes Assessment in the Department: Promising Practices" on S:/Assessment/Guidelines and Forms and on MyPGCC
S: \Assessment LAN
The **S:\Assessment drive** is a restricted-access local area network folder. Within this folder each Department has its own folder where assessment documents can be archived. If you need access to this drive, your dean must request access from your division Assessment Coach.

For Faculty

As the individuals in the classroom directly interacting with students, faculty are the best resource for ensuring that the assessment process is accurately measuring our students' abilities. It is the responsibility of all faculty to engage in the assessment process, regularly communicate with DAT members, and provide input on any issues or concerns about the common assessments or the assessment process. Faculty are responsible for working on the creation of assessments and on the action plans.

Common Embedded Assessments

Departments have identified the courses that best offers students the opportunity to demonstrate specific program outcomes, and these courses will contain common embedded assessments. These assessments are a permanent part of the course conducted in every section, every semester. The assessment(s) are created by the faculty of the department and are recognized by the department as the best demonstration of the student's attainment of the course learning outcomes. On a regular schedule, defined by your department, the embedded assessments will be recorded using either Tk20 or the Benchmark 3000 exam scanners. These data are as important, as the students' grades and should be treated as such, ensuring that the grading and data entry into the system are completed accurately and on time.

Tk20

Tk20 is a software package that allows for the collection of a wide range of assessment data . If the common assessment in your class is a paper/project graded by a rubric then you will be directly accessing Tk20 to enter in student performance through either an Observation or an Assignment in Tk20 (instructions for entering an observation can be found on S:/Assessment/Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC). Training materials and other resources about Tk20 can be found on the Tk20 page on MyPGCC.

Exam Scanners (Apperson Benchmark 3000)

If the common assessment in your class is a multiple-choice quiz/exam, it will be graded using the Benchmark 3000 with Datalink software (for the locations of these scanners and how to use them see S:/Assessment/Guidelines and Forms or MyPGCC). **In order for the data to be collected correctly, the exams must be scanned using an electronic answer key, which connects each question to the learning outcomes for the course.** This scanning software creates a data file that must be sent to the designated person in your department (ask your DAT members who the designated person is for your department). This software allows you to run a number of useful reports concerning the performance of individual students as well as the class as a whole.

Support for Assessment.

Faculty questions or concerns about assessment should be brought to DAT members to convey to the AAAC. Faculty are also always welcome to attend AAAC meetings (for a schedule of meetings go to AAAC on MyPGCC).

Appendix G: DAT Member Description of Responsibilities

Double Click on the face page below to open the full document

DAT Member Description of Responsibilities

Departmental Assessment Team: Every department is represented by a Departmental Assessment Team (DAT) composed of at least three faculty members. The DAT is responsible for working closely with the Chair of the department to shepherd assessment in their department.

DAT Membership: While the primary focus of each DAT will be on their department and the specific programs of that department, DAT members are providing significant service at all levels (College, Division, and Department). DAT members will receive professional development around assessment and be at the forefront of information concerning state and federal reporting requirements. Additionally, DAT members will be the leaders in their department for all assessment activities and will play a significant role in molding programs to improve student success.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Attend assessment trainings and remain informed of best practices in assessment
- Act as a resource to faculty within the department for assessment practices at PGCC and general assessment best practices.
- Aid in the completion of assessment activities required every semester of each department.
- Shepherd the implementation of course assessments and any "tweaks" made to courses.
- Document departmental assessment efforts.
- Ensure that data on departmental assessments is shared with department faculty.

Each DAT will have an identified "Leader" who serves as the chair of the DAT. Two DAT leaders from each division will serve as the division representatives on the AAAC. These DAT leaders have the additional responsibility of:

- Attending Academic Affairs Assessment Committee meetings.
- Disseminating AAAC meeting minutes and information to other DAT leaders within the division.