



Assessment Manual

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WHY ASSESSMENT?

“Assessment is the process of collecting and analyzing information to determine if progress is being made toward a desired end.”

-- Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education

Assessment is the responsibility of everyone at the institution. It should be a team effort including faculty and staff from all areas of responsibility. The purpose of assessment is to improve the programs, services, and learning of students. Assessment should be ongoing semester after semester, year after year. It is not a brief exercise to satisfy an accreditation requirement. Continuous improvement should be a goal of all employees of the institution.

Assessment provides not only an opportunity for internal reflection and adaption of learning and service delivery but also an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the institution's programs and services to outside constituents. Expectations for accountability among institutions of higher education are increasing. According to the US Department of Education (2006):

In this consumer-driven environment, students increasingly care little about the distinctions that sometimes preoccupy the academic establishment, from whether a college has for-profit or nonprofit status to whether its classes are offered online or in brick-and-mortar buildings. Instead, they care - as we do - about results (xi).

The Department of Education's report expressed concerns about the quality of student learning at colleges and universities nationwide and emphasized the importance of institutions of higher education becoming more transparent regarding not only metrics like cost of attendance but also student success outcomes. Now, perhaps more than ever, institutions of higher education are expected to demonstrate the quality of student learning and student success with published data.

Assessment Versus Grades

For academic programs, students receive a grade at the end of a course. Faculty may wonder why assessment reports are a separate expectation from course grades. However, final course grades are not always a solid metric for assessing student performance on a particular

learning outcome. For example, final grades in a course might reflect attendance and participation, neither of which measure whether or not a student learned a particular topic. A late assignment might receive a lower grade but could still demonstrate mastery of the topic. The entire course covers a wide variety of topics whereas key student learning outcomes are often more narrow and specific. Students may perform well on other course topics but not the particular outcome in question. As a result, using narrow data from a specific assessment to determine mastery of a specific learning outcome can be more useful to determine student achievement.

Assessment Versus Surveys

Surveys are often conducted to determine the satisfaction of students and employees with college services. Surveys are important assessment tools for non-academic units. However, like with student data, it is important for those areas of the institution to review the survey results as a team, compare with data from previous years, analyze the results, and determine plans for improvement. Surveys alone are of little value if the results are not analyzed and used for future improvement.

***“Assessment has three fundamental purposes:
Ensuring and improving educational quality, stewardship, and
accountability.”***

--Suskie, 2018

SACSCOC EXPECTATIONS

Institutional effectiveness is an area of the institution that is closely monitored in the reaffirmation of accreditation process. According to SACSCOC (2017), “At the heart of SACSCOC’s philosophy of accreditation, the concept of quality enhancement assumes that each member institution is engaged in ongoing improvement of its programs and services and can demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission” (p. 4). The phrase “ongoing improvement” assumes that a college will continuously evaluate the effectiveness of its services and programs and then make changes based on the results of those assessments to provide the highest quality of education and support for its students, who deserve no less than our best. The SACSCOC standards related to institutional effectiveness are listed below.

7.1 - The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.

7.2 - The institution has a QEP that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement.

7.3 - The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.

8.1 - The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution’s mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.

8.2 - The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

- a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.
- b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.
- c. Academic and student services that support student success.

ASSESSMENT CYCLE

The beginning of the academic year (August) is also the beginning of an assessment cycle. Results of assessment from the previous academic year should be reviewed by the entire unit (not just the supervisor). Plans for improvement that were developed based on those results should be put into action. Adjunct instructors should be included in the communication on those plans for improvement. Assessment plans should also be created and communicated to all members of the team at the beginning of the academic year by asking the following questions: Are you assessing the same learning/service outcomes from the previous year? Does a new outcome need to be assessed? Remember that if adjunct instructors are teaching courses where assessments are administered, they should be provided with the assessment instrument, given instructions on administration, and provided a deadline for returning results to a lead faculty member or chair. Assessment should take place in all delivery methods (traditional, online, hybrid, blended) as well as at off-campus instructional sites. If a campus-wide survey of services will be administered, plans should be made for dissemination and timing. Throughout the academic year, data collection takes place as learning and service opportunities are provided to students and employees. After collection of data, the results should be analyzed to determine the degree to which the outcome was met. Finally, the results should be used to make plans for improvement for the upcoming academic year. Annual assessments of learning or service/administrative outcomes are due June 15 of each year.

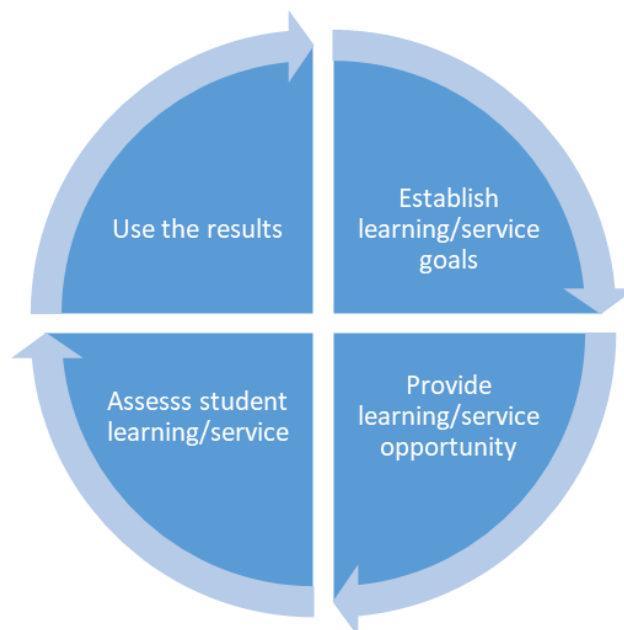


Figure 1: Assessment Cycle

Suskie, L. (2018). *Assessing student learning: A common sense approach* (3rd ed). Jossey-Bass.

Program/service reviews are completed on a three-year review cycle. Service reviews (non-academic units) are due June 15. Program reviews (academic units) are due December 15. Both program and service reviews look back at the previous three academic years.

Table 1: Assessment Calendar

	Activity
August	Review plans for improvement from previous review cycle. Make plans for assessment and implementation of improvement during the coming academic year.
September - December	Implement plans for improvement. Conduct assessments.
December-January	Compile data from assessments. If necessary, make minor changes for the upcoming semester.
January	Make plans for assessment and implementation of improvement during the coming semester.
February - May	Implement plans for improvement. Conduct assessments.
May-June	Compile data from assessments from fall and spring semesters. Discuss with entire team. Create plans for improvement. Finalize and submit Learning/Service Outcomes document.

SOURCES OF DATA

Course-level Assessment

Student learning outcomes are often assessed in individual courses. There are numerous methods of assessing student learning in a classroom setting, including the following:

- Speeches
- Written papers
- Test questions
- Student portfolios
- Standardized exams
- Capstone projects

Consider using a rubric or other marking guide to provide guidance and consistency for multiple instructors. Be sure that the assessment measures the specific learning outcome. For example, a standardized certification exam might contain 100 questions, only 10 of which pertain to a specific student learning outcome. Use student achievement only on those 10 questions when assessing the extent to which students achieved that outcome.

Service-level Assessment

Service and administrative areas also have diverse methods of data collection to choose from based on the specific outcomes. There are numerous methods of collecting data on services including the following:

- Surveys
- Interviews/focus groups
- Sign-in logs
- Audit findings
- Before and after reflection

Be sure that the assessment method is specific to the service outcome. Avoid over-surveying whenever possible. For example, consider including questions on a larger survey that is going out campus-wide rather than each unit sending its own, individual survey to the same population.

Performance Measures

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) publishes performance measures annually that include basic skills student progress, student success in college-level English and math courses, first-year progress, college transfer performance, and others. As part of

the assessment process, SACSCOC expects the College to identify thresholds of acceptability (minimum target) for these measures of student achievement. While these measures are not “student learning outcomes,” they are metrics of student achievement which need to be monitored and evaluated by the institution and may be tracked as program outcomes for appropriate areas.

Institutional Services Survey

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness disseminates a survey to campus employees each spring semester with specific questions regarding the services of the following areas: bookstore, institutional technology, Midway Café, business office, Business and Industry Center, facilities/maintenance, print shop, eSupport, institutional effectiveness, safety, human resources, student and enrollment services, SWELL, and the library. These results are shared with the supervisors in each area and are available for use in the service outcomes assessment and service review as applicable.

End of Course Evaluation

Each semester, students complete an evaluation of the instruction for each class taken. Students also receive an institutional services survey simultaneous with the end of course evaluation. General questions are asked regarding facilities, bookstore, library, security, advising, tutoring, registration, financial aid, and other areas. Supervisors of these areas can also use these results as appropriate in the assessment of their service outcomes.

Graduation Rates

There are multiple sources of data available to NCC to monitor graduation rates of NCC students. These include the IPEDS report, National Student Clearinghouse, and dashboards provided by the NCCCS. As part of its overall institutional effectiveness plan, SACSCOC expects NCC to monitor graduation rates as a metric of student achievement. The National Student Clearinghouse is the College’s official completion metric for SACSCOC reporting. Like the NCCCS Performance Measures, the College needs to establish thresholds of acceptability (minimum target) for graduation rates and monitor the progress of the institution.

PROGRAM/SERVICE REVIEW

Program and service reviews provide academic and non-academic areas the opportunity to take a retrospective look at the previous three academic years while also looking forward to future needs. There are elements that are common between the reports and others that are unique for academic programs. All program and service areas should be mindful of including attachments as requested in the different sections.

Area Overview

- Purpose statement - Describe the basic reason that the department exists.
Example: The purpose of the Culinary Arts program is to provide instruction to prepare students for careers in the foodservice industry.
- SOAR - Outline the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results facing the department/program
- Vision statement - Describe the aspiration of the department over the next 3-6 years (a “stretch” goal that may not be measurable or attainable).
Example: The vision of the Culinary Arts program is to provide the local area with well-trained chefs to fulfill the employment needs of the surrounding market and to promote and enhance fine dining opportunities within the Nash/Edgecombe/Wilson region.

Data Elements (Academic Programs Only)

Academic programs evaluate a variety of program statistics including student demographic breakdowns, graduates, FTE, and licensure passing rates. Observations regarding these demographics could be helpful regarding future recruitment and marketing efforts.

Employees

Programs and departments summarize the number of full-time and part-time employees over the last year. This section provides an opportunity to reflect on changes as well as make projections for needs over the next three years. This section includes summaries of several areas of operations for employees over the previous three academic years: professional development, committee assignments, special college functions, club advising, workload (academic programs only), and academic advising/supplemental instruction (academic programs only). Reviewing this information can assist supervisors and administrators in considering funding for professional development, future committee assignments, and so forth to ensure workload equity among employees.

Advisory Committees

The advisory committee section provides an opportunity for academic programs and services to reflect on the contributions of the advisory committee over the last three years and review changes that have resulted based on the committee's input. In addition to summarizing the recommendations of the advisory committee, programs and services are asked to attach minutes from the last three years of meetings.

Curriculum (Academic Programs Only)

Academic programs use this section to examine the existing program of study, ensure that the program information is correct on the website, and consider whether changes are needed based on the assessment of student learning outcomes. For example, if student learning outcomes reveal a deficiency in a particular subject area, additional coursework might be needed to enhance mastery of that material. Library resources should be examined as part of this assessment of the curriculum. Due to SACSCOC requirements regarding off-campus instructional sites and delivery method, academic programs need always to remain mindful of the percentage of a degree, diploma, or certificate that is taught at an off-campus location or online. This percentage should be documented in the program review as well as annual outcomes assessment.

Facilities

This section provides programs and services an opportunity to examine their existing facilities and address the adequacy of those facilities considering both present circumstances and expected future expansion of the service or program.

Equipment and Supplies

Like the facilities section, this section allows programs and services to summarize their existing equipment and anticipate needed changes for future maintenance and growth. For those areas with extensive tools and equipment, an exhaustive listing of every item is not necessary; instead, general summaries are acceptable.

Students (Academic Programs Only)

This section allows academic programs the opportunity to reflect on past enrollment as well as anticipate and plan for future growth. For example, a program might be aware of a new industry coming to the community that will likely need additional graduates with the skills of its program. Likewise, a program could be aware that an industry is closing and predict a decline

in enrollment. An honest reflection in this section can help the program personnel plan for the changes that are anticipated in the way of additional staffing, supplies, equipment, and course offerings.

Tutoring/Supplemental Instruction (Academic Programs Only)

Tutoring and supplemental instruction offered to students varies greatly by program. By reflecting on what is currently offered, programs should also think forward as to additional resources that are needed to strengthen the tutoring options for students.

Graduates (Academic Programs Only)

As they interact with students, program faculty should gather information whenever possible regarding where students transfer and find employment. This information can help the program in terms of recruitment for new students as well as placement for future students.

Additional Reflections

The categories above might not provide the ideal opportunities for programs or services to reflect on changes that have occurred over the previous three years. Curriculum programs might have completed a system-wide Curriculum Improvement Project. Institutional reorganization could affect the staffing, purpose, vision, and workload of a service/administrative area. Departments are encouraged to use this final section to speak to any changes of significance that were not adequately addressed in the sections listed above.

Rotation Schedule

Program and service reviews are completed on a three-year rotation cycle so that approximately one-third of areas submit each year. The three-year cycle allows for greater observations of trends than would be possible with an annual review. The respective cycles are demonstrated below, subject to change based on institutional reorganization of departments.

Table 2: Academic Departments

Year 1 Cohort - Deadline December 2024 (Reflecting on years 2021-2022; 2022-2023; 2023-2024)	Year 2 Cohort - Deadline December 2025 (Reflecting on years 2022-2023; 2023-2024; 2024-2025)	Year 3 Cohort - Deadline December 2026 (Reflecting on years 2023-2024; 2024-2025; 2025-2026)
Applied Engineering (CIM, WLD, AUT)	Applied Engineering/Corporate and Economic Development (Electric Line, Electrical Systems, Industrial Systems)	Applied Engineering (CET, EET)
Business and Information Technologies (ACC, BUS)	Business and Information Technologies (BPT, MOA, OA)	Business and Information Technologies (AGD, IT)
Health Sciences	College Transfer (English, HSS, Math, Natural Sciences)	Emergency Management Services
		Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
		Public Services

Table 3: Service/Administrative Departments

Year 1 Cohort 2022-2023	Year 2 Cohort 2023-2024	Year 3 Cohort 2024-2025
Admissions	Advising Services	B&I
Cafe	Business Office	Bookstore
Financial Aid	Career Placement	CDC
HR	Digital Teaching and Learning	Continuing Education
IT	Marketing	Facilities/Maintenance
Library	Registrar	Foundation
SWELL	Security	Student Engagement

ANNUAL OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Analysis of outcomes provides departments an opportunity to evaluate the achievement of programs, the level of learning of students, and the provision of services over the course of an academic year. Outcomes assessment reports are due annually and should be reviewed by all members of the team to develop plans for improvement for the next academic year.

Academic programs should also evaluate the percentage of a program that is taught at an off-campus location and the percentage of a program that is taught online each year and include this information on the assessment report.

Summary of Improvement

Each area should provide an overview of the efforts at improvement made over the course of the last academic year. This overview provides the team with the chance to reflect on whether or not plans for improvement were implemented and to address other changes that were made to the curriculum or service area.

Outcomes

- **Student Learning Outcomes** - All academic programs should identify key student learning outcomes for which they wish to track achievement. These outcomes are often developed in conversation with advisory committees regarding the key skills that are expected of graduates in a program. According to SACSCOC (2018), “student learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes students are expected to attain in courses or in a program” (p. 69).

Examples

- Students will perform inspections, test, repair, and verify the operation of steering and suspension systems.
- Students will write, film, edit, and produce video spots, promos, instructional, and entertainment-based videos for broadcast.
- Students will recognize situations where ethical dilemmas occur and formulate effective, ethical strategies for dealing with these situations.
- Students will safely calculate medications for administration.

- **Program Outcomes** - Academic programs may also choose to track program outcomes that are not direct measures of student learning. These metrics might include retention, graduation rates, and passing rates of standardized exams. Programs with external accreditors are often required to track these items as part of their reaffirmation of accreditation.

Examples

- Students will perform within 5% of the national average of the NCLEX_RN first take.
 - Program retention level will be at or above the state average.
 - NCCCS Performance Measure - Student success rate in college-level math courses.
- **Service/Administrative Outcomes** - Service and administrative areas may choose a variety of metrics to measure ranging from short-term projects to long-term satisfaction with service delivery. Service outcomes might revolve around the quality of services provided to “customers” (students, employees, or external stakeholders), efficiency of operation, mock audits, or other administrative functions that are geared toward internal college operations.

Examples

- Improve transcript tracking for existing employees and new hires.
- Employees will report overall satisfaction with facilities/maintenance experience and services.
- Provide additional professional development training for lockdown and campus safety.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Identify your audience especially if the outcome is measuring another person’s performance or satisfaction.
 - Students will...
 - Employees will...
- Use action verbs to emphasize the skills/abilities/service that you are measuring.
 - See Appendix A: Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy for suggestions.
- Avoid vague terms such as “demonstrate an understanding” or “have knowledge of” that are difficult to measure.
- Outcomes should be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound.

Benchmark

Benchmarks are the goal for achievement of each outcome. The benchmark provides a metric by which areas can determine the “success” of its outcomes. The benchmark might be set based on historical performance on an outcome, accrediting board standards, state averages, or simply a personal achievement goal by a service entity.

Examples

- 85% of students will achieve a 3 or higher on the assessment rubric.
- Provide at least 6 trainings per year on HR and personal wellness related topics.
- All students will score a 75% or higher on the grading rubric.
- 75% of IT work orders will be resolved within four business days.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Provide as much detail as possible for an outsider to understand the target.
- Consider including a time period for completion if appropriate.
- Avoid simply providing a number without context for what it means.
 - For example, if you simply state 70%, what does that mean? All students will score 70%? The average of all student scores will be 70%? 70% of students will make a 100?
- Consider revising the benchmark after several years of assessment based on the historical results particularly if results vary widely from the benchmark.

Results

The results section provides programs and services with the opportunity to highlight the data that was collected through assessment. For outcomes that are assessed over multiple years, the results column should include data from the last three academic years to allow for an easy comparison of results and analysis of past performance.

Examples

- 12/13 or 92% of students reported satisfaction.
- Fall 2019 - Average student score 82.7; Spring 2020 - Average student score 89
- 2019-2020 - 97 class presentations; 1575 students

HELPFUL HINTS

- Consider disaggregating instructional data by delivery method to allow for greater comparison of student results.
- If the assessment method changes in the middle of the three-year cycle, be sure to make a note of when it changed so that it is evident that not all three years of results may be an accurate comparison to one another.

Method of Measurement

In this column, programs and services describe the manner and place (if appropriate) in which data collection takes place.

Examples

- BPT 231 Interview Assignment (combines writing, setup, lighting, filming, audio, and editing)
- National Restaurant Association ServSafe Food Safety Certification Exam (CUL 110)
- Student lab exercises will be assessed using an evaluation rubric in ELC 117 - Motors and Controls
- Rating of good or excellent on the Annual Evaluation of College Services Survey

HELPFUL HINTS

- Academic programs are encouraged to include the course in which assessment takes place as well as a brief description of the assignment.
- If a rubric is used, provide the total point value to help give context for the scores.
 - For example - A persuasive essay given in ENG 111 graded on a 5-point rubric.
- If select questions are used from a larger exam, make that distinction in this column.
 - For example - Select objective questions from the CJC 111 final exam.

Analysis of Results

While the results column might include very broad summary data (average score of 78%; survey rating of 92%), the analysis column provides departments with the opportunity to give a more detailed narrative explanation of the results. This explanation might include comparing the results over the three years of data represented and commenting on trends; analyzing the differential results of students based on course delivery method; or providing a more detailed explanation of survey responses than are apparent from the summary in the results column.

For example, the results column might show that 93% of students scored a 3 or better on the ENG 111 rubric for the persuasive essay. However, a careful analysis of that data might reveal that 70% of those students struggled the most with grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Comment on that finding in the analysis column. The more closely that a department examines its data, the more detailed and specific it can develop plans for improvement.

Examples

- 8 out of 9 students made a C or better on their Graphic Design II Final Project. In the spring 2020 semester, the online class was taught by an adjunct faculty, and the blended class was taught by a full-time faculty. There was an 11% decrease in the number of students who made a 'C' or better on their final project.

Students struggled with using certain tools in Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop that were needed to complete the project. For example, one part of the project required students to create a label and place on a jar. There are features in Adobe Illustrator that allow you to render a label on a jar. Its apparent students forgot how to use certain tools and features in the software to allow them to successfully create a 'rendering'. Some students also struggled with following directions to complete the project.

Some students still struggled with knowing how to show emphasis to certain areas of a design to establish a focal point. And students seemed to struggle with knowing how to establish a successful visual hierarchy.

- Data indicates students have weaknesses in preventing improper bead tie-ins, slag inclusions, undercut, and cold lap transitioning from overhead to vertical with an upward progression with fast-fill SMAW electrodes.
- New Hire Orientation has improved significantly. Binders are provided to each new hire. Following orientation, links and training opportunities are forwarded to the new hire so they have most of their necessary/required resources. Feedback and active participation and interaction during orientation is highly encouraged throughout the process. Additional times for follow-up are set aside via calendar appointments following orientation to make sure that new hires are getting and understanding the information provided to them during orientation.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Examine data results closely to determine the specific areas of weakness even if the overall scores met or exceeded the benchmark.
- Compare the data trends over the reporting years.
- Consider examining differences based on delivery method for academic outcomes.

Plans for Improvement

After providing an analysis of the results of the assessment, programs and services need to provide plans for improvement for the future. As noted above, the more detailed the analysis of the results, the more detailed and specific the program or service can develop plans for improvement.

Examples

- Faculty will continue giving additional resources to students to help students with showing emphasis on certain design elements to establish a focal point. Additional resources will also be given to students to show them how to create an effective visual hierarchy.
- Plan of Action - Increase individualized instruction time with students to build upon their SMAW pipe welding technique on a 45-degree angle on 6-inch schedule 40 and 80 pipe. Future lectures will place more emphasis on properly cleaning root, intermediate, and cover passes. Hands-on practice will concentrate on grinding the root and hot pass.
- Single stop assistant will train new career coaches and success coaches. Single Stop assistant will complete classroom presentations to High School Equivalency and 12-16 week continuing education classes. Provide refresher training and ongoing outreach to currently trained Single Stop coaches.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Develop plans of improvement specific to the areas of weakness.
- For survey results, review qualitative responses that might help pinpoint areas of weakness beyond the overall numerical results.
- Consider developing a new outcome if the results for multiple years are so strong that no improvement is needed.

Budgetary Implications

The final box on the outcomes assessment report allows departments an opportunity to record budgetary needs that would support the improvement of the outcomes represented in this assessment. This might include additional personnel, specialized equipment, supplies, funding for professional development, and so forth. If there are no budgetary implications from the assessment, state that, so it is clear that the box was not accidentally omitted.

HELPFUL HINTS

- If available, include a cost estimate for new budget items specifically if they are high cost items.
- When presenting the budget at the institutional budget hearings, use outcomes assessment results to explain requests for new funding for a department.

GENERAL EDUCATION

In addition to the assessment of student learning, service, and administrative outcomes, SACSCOC expects all institutions to have a plan for the assessment of general education outcomes. All degree programs at NCC have a general education core, and all graduates are expected to attain a level of proficiency with these general education skills prior to graduation. The general education competencies for NCC are as follows:

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will develop and articulate logical, workable solutions to problems by the following: identifying and explaining a problem or question at issue; gathering information; recognizing diverse perspectives and positions; evaluating and assessing the credibility of information; and determining consequences, conclusions, or solutions based on appropriate evidence.
- **Problem Solving/Analytical Skills:** Students will solve problems using the appropriate techniques, analyze and solve applications using the appropriate mathematical and/or scientific models, communicate the results clearly and concisely, and use appropriate technology as a tool. Students will demonstrate the use of discipline-specific vocabulary, fundamental laws and concepts in a designed course of study, and apply laboratory experiences to the concepts presented.
- **Oral Communication:** Students will demonstrate college-level oral communication skills through completion of an informative speech including the following: appropriate delivery skills including appropriate physical appearance, eye contact, effective articulation and pronunciation, volume, vocal variety, and gestures; an introduction that captures the audience's attention, identifies the topic, and previews main points; effective transitions; a body with identifiable main points, logically organized and supported with relevant details and accurate content; a conclusion that summarizes main points and provides strong closure; and presentation aids that are clearly seen, well-designed, used appropriately, and integrated naturally throughout the presentation.
- **Written Communication:** Students will demonstrate college-level writing skills by composing an effective essay which includes an introduction, supporting body paragraphs, and a conclusion by means of the following: analysis of audience and selection of topic; formulation of a clear thesis statement and support of this thesis using various methods of paragraph development; correct MLA format and citations; and standard English grammar, spelling, and mechanics.
- **Computer Skills:** Students will create a basic word processed document, spreadsheet, and electronic presentation.

The General Education Student Learning Outcomes Team (GESLOT) is an interdisciplinary committee of faculty and staff that meets at least twice a year to review the data from assessment of general education outcomes and develop plans for improvement.

Standardized assessments and grading rubrics are used to ensure consistency in the assessment. Students are assessed in day, night, hybrid, blended, and online courses.

General education competencies are assessed in the following courses:

Table 4: General Education Competencies

Critical Thinking	HUM 110; HUM 115; HUM 120; POL 120; HIS 131; HIS 132
Problem Solving/Analytical Skills	BIO 110; BIO 111; CHM 151; MAT 143; MAT 171; MAT 271
Oral Communication	COM 110; COM 231
Written Communication	ENG 111
Computer Skills	CIS 110

Faculty of general education courses should be aware of the importance of these assessments and take an active role in collecting data, analyzing the results of assessment, and implementing plans for improvement. Those who serve on GESLOT can share the results of the general education assessment with their departments to help disseminate the results across the campus community. Faculty in other disciplines should also seek opportunities to reinforce these general education skills in their classrooms. Reinforcement of these skills in classes across the curriculum will only strength a student's mastery of the content.

CONCLUSION

Institutional effectiveness at Nash Community College takes on a variety of forms: three-year program/service reviews, annual assessment of learning/service outcomes, and annual assessment of general education student learning outcomes. In addition to the activities that take place at the unit level, the entire College engages in ongoing strategic planning as well as assessment of student achievement measures including the NCCCS Performance Measures and National Student Clearinghouse completion rates. Assessment is the responsibility of all areas of the institution. Rather than an afterthought, improving our service delivery, administrative operations, and learning experience for students should be at the top of our priority list. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is always available to work with departments collectively or with individuals who have questions about the process.

“Effective institutions demonstrate a commitment to principles of continuous improvements, based on a systematic and documented process of assessing institutional performance with respect to mission in all aspects of the institution.”

*-- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges,
2018*

APPENDIX A

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
<i>Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory</i>	<i>Construct meaning from instructional messages</i>	<i>Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation</i>	<i>Break material into parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose</i>	<i>Make judgments based on criteria and standards</i>	<i>Put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure</i>
Define	Associate	Administer	Analyze	Appraise	Adapt
Describe	Categorize	Apply	Appraise	Argue	Assemble
Identify	Classify	Articulate	Attribute	Assess	Build
Label	Compare	Calculate	Categorize	Check	Collaborate
List	Differentiate	Compute	Conclude	Consider	Compose
Locate	Discuss	Convert	Contrast	Convince	Construct
Match	Exemplify	Demonstrate	Correlate	Critique	Create
Memorize	Explain	Discover	Criticize	Debate	Design
Name	Illustrate	Examine	Deduce	Defend	Develop
Recall	Infer	Execute	Differentiate	Discriminate	Devise
Recite	Interpret	Implement	Distinguish	Evaluate	Express
Recognize	Map	Measure	Dissect	Grade	Facilitate
Retrieve	Match	Modify	Estimate	Judge	Generate
State	Observe	Practice	Evaluate	Justify	Hypothesize
Tell	Paraphrase	Produce	Order	Persuade	Integrate
	Predict	Report	Organize	Rank	Invent
	Report	Show	Prioritize	Recommend	Plan
	Restate	Solve	Question	Summarize	Prepare
	Summarize	Teach	Test	Support	Produce
		Transfer		Test	Simulate
		Use		Weigh	Validate

APPENDIX B

American Association of Higher Education Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

1. **The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.** Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only what we choose to assess but also how we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.
2. **Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.** Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.
3. **Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.** Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations—these derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.
4. **Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.** Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about

student experience along the way-about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

5. **Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.** Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, “one-shot” assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the progress of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.
6. **Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.** Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment’s questions can’t be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/ae, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus, understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.
7. **Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.** Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return “results”; it is a process that starts with the

questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

8. **Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.** Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.
9. **Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.** There is compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation-to ourselves, our students, and society-is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

Hutchings, P., Ewell, P., & Banta, T. (2012, May). *AAHE principles of good practice: Aging nicely*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

APPENDIX C

Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education Foundational Statement #1: What is Assessment in Higher Education? (Adopted January 2020)

Assessment is the process of collecting and analyzing information to determine if progress is being made toward a desired end. While this broad definition is applicable to a range of goals and organizational contexts, AALHE focuses on the assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness within the context of higher education.

Student learning outcomes assessment is a process in which members of the higher education community identify what students should be able to do by the end of an educational unit and determine the degree to which they meet these goals. It also requires us to consider how to use the information systematically gathered on student performance to improve the teaching/learning process.

Institutional effectiveness assessment focuses on the extent to which an institution is making progress towards its mission and vision. When engaged in this process, members of the higher education community use the information collected to inform action taken for improvement.

The aim of student learning assessment and institutional effectiveness assessment is the ongoing enhancement of quality. AALHE supports these efforts in quality improvement by promoting assessment not just “of learning” but more importantly “for learning.”

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