



MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
MAKE YOUR MOVE

**Assessment
Handbook**

2022-2023

Preface

This assessment handbook was designed by the Montgomery College Office of Assessment and is intended to provide a guide for all faculty and staff involved in the assessment process at Montgomery College. The Office of Assessment supports the College's mission and vision in the area of assessment and evaluation by:

- Providing leadership, guidance, and data support for the College's assessment of administrative areas and assessment of student learning outcomes for programs and general education
- Coordinating a comprehensive system of program reviews for academic areas
- Collecting, analyzing, and distributing reports and information to the College about assessment results
- Consulting with administrative areas, disciplines, and academic programs on assessment and evaluation projects

It should be noted that this handbook is not a legal document. In any case where there may be a conflict or discrepancy between this handbook and any official document, the official document prevails.

This handbook is updated annually by the Office of Assessment. Faculty and staff should always confirm that they are viewing the most recent version available to ensure that all information (to include schedules, reports, due dates, etc.) contained herein is accurate and up-to-date and reflects the current assessment process and requirements at the College.

Feedback on the handbook is welcomed by the Office of Assessment and can be electronically submitted via an online form by clicking on the following link: [Handbook Feedback Form](#)

Getting Started: How to Use this Handbook

This handbook is intended to assist faculty and staff with the assessment process at Montgomery College and to make the process as efficient, effective, and user-friendly as possible. To facilitate the different needs that might exist between faculty/staff members who are working on assessment (i.e., new members who may be unfamiliar with the process, experienced members who may only need to access a particular section, stakeholders who may be looking for general information, etc.), the handbook has been broken down into manageable segments. *Users may access any particular area that suits their needs by accessing the “bookmarks” function. The document can also be read aloud with immersible reader.*

Various forms and documents that are discussed throughout this handbook are located in the Assessment Repository in Blackboard, which requires users to have an MC User ID and password for access. MC users can click [HERE](#) for instructions on how to join this MC Blackboard Community site.

Finally, this handbook will act as a continuous work in progress. As new assessment software is introduced at the College, and for other changes that might arise, every effort will be made to update and supplement this document with the most up-to-date information and links to additional resources.

***A Quick Note for Faculty/Staff**

Section 2 and Section 3 are specifically aimed at assessment practitioners within the College. Section 2 provides an overview for the types of assessment at MC and the assessment cycle/scheduling.

Section 3 is meant to provide a hands-on approach to assessment with information that is focused on each area or type of assessment. There are also practical examples that may be especially helpful for faculty/staff that are looking for guidance on their specific assessment activities. Be sure to look for the blue “[Assessment in Practice](#)” examples that are provided in many areas of Section 3.

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SECTION 1: FRAMING CONCEPTS

Overview & Purpose

Why We do Assessment & Why Grades Alone are not Enough

Why do Assessment?

Simply stated, “Student learning improvement is at the heart of assessment.”¹ Within the realm of higher education and Outcomes Assessment (OA), the goal of improving student learning is meant to drive the assessment process and is thought to promote student achievement, higher retention rates, and increased rates of completion. There are also essential questions within this process that are expected to be continuously re-examined as fundamental building blocks to enhance student performance: “What *should* students be learning?” and “What are students *actually* learning?”² This concept of aligning curriculum outcomes (*what students “should” be learning*) with activities that effectively measure student progress (*what students are “actually” learning*), represents the underlying principle that guides assessment practices today. In addition, outcomes assessment has also become an important measure of institutional compliance for specific requirements of accreditation relating to Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) standards for assessment and student learning.

Why Grades Alone are not Enough

Many faculty members confuse the assessment of learning outcomes with the grading of individual student assignments. Often, the question that arises is, “Aren’t we already assessing our students by issuing a grade in the course?” While this may be one way of evaluating individual student learning for one person in a specific course for any given semester, it does not provide an ability to gauge learning in the context of common skillsets that are expected to be achieved through a particular curriculum, program, or at an institutional level. There are also unique factors of classroom grading that may not apply directly to learning objectives, since “Grades can include letter grades, percentages and even a simple pass/fail... [as well as] participation, attendance, classroom behavior and even effort.”³ Finally, outcomes assessment also embodies a crucial “extended action” or “analysis” component that is known as “closing the loop.” This important step involves analyzing and implementing action to improve student learning. In order to accomplish this, there is an expectation that results garnered from the assessment process will then be interpreted and utilized to initiate positive, measurable change for improvement for future students within the classroom, discipline, program, or curriculum that is involved in the assessment process.

¹ Garfalo & L’Huillier, 2015, p. 153.

² Ibid.

³ Concordia University, 2013, n.p.

The Holistic Nature of Assessment

First, Let's Define What We Mean by the Term "Holistic":

- *ho·lis·tic /hō 'listik/*: characterized by comprehension of the parts of something as intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole⁴

MC's Integrated Assessment Process

All assessment activities at MC are interconnected and reflect multiple ways in which student performance is measured. Changes that are implemented as a result of these assessment functions serve as building blocks for *student success across the entire College*. Student performance at one level may affect student performance across many areas, thereby potentially impacting not only the individual student, but also the broader view of MC's performance as an institution. For this reason, assessment takes place at different *levels* within the College, as well as *across* different academic curriculums, special programs, and administrative areas. This process not only acknowledges those areas where students are thriving at the College, but also reveals important opportunities for change and/or innovation in areas where student success strategies might need to be enhanced.

The MC assessment process integrates assessment activities so that all assessment functions are streamlined into one continuous cycle. This integration allows for crucial *connections* to be made between different assessment processes so that student performance can be measured and considered *in a variety of contexts* (i.e., beyond the individual classroom). One way to do this is to examine student performance collectively across *all sections of a particular course*. For instance, General Education competencies are assessed through an approved *Signature assignment* that is administered by faculty every semester in all sections of the same course. By examining and scoring a collection of these signature assignments during any given time period, a broad snapshot of student performance in these competencies can be obtained. This exercise can then be extended to the collective examination of Signature assignments *across all Gen Ed disciplines*. In this way, student performance in Gen Ed competencies can then be considered on a collegewide (or institutional) scale.

Another approach to measuring student performance is to assess students across a specific curriculum of study (i.e., a certificate or degree program), also known as "*program assessment*." Faculty members within a program determine which assignments (or other measurable instruments) they will use to reflect student performance in their program during a specific assessment time period. And finally, at a *macro* level, the College Area Review (CAR) examines a discipline or program across the *entire College*.

While each process might be conducted *separately* throughout the College, they all build upon one another to influence student performance *collectively*, across different areas of student engagement. Through this multifaceted approach, we can address the needs of students both individually, and *holistically (as a whole)*, thereby positively impacting students from multiple vantage points to maximize student success collegewide.

⁴ Google Dictionary. (2021). Definition of *Holistic* from: https://www.google.com/search?q=holistic&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS891US898&oq=holistic&aqs=chrome.0.69i59j0i20i263i433j0i67i395j0i67

Basic Terminology

Explanation of Basic Assessment Terms Used at MC*

**For a full list of terms, please see the Glossary at the end of this handbook*

Assessment:

Assessment systematically examines patterns of student learning across courses and programs and uses this information to improve educational practices.⁵ The goal of assessment is to improve student learning and to ensure that students receive a high-quality educational experience.

- **Assessment for accountability:**

The assessment of some unit, such as a department, program or the entire institution, which is used to satisfy some group of external stakeholders. Stakeholders might include accreditation agencies, state government, or trustees.⁶

- **Assessment for improvement:**

Assessment activities that are designed to feed the results directly, and ideally, immediately, back into revising the course, program or institution with the goal of improving student learning.⁷

Discipline:

A specific academic area of study that offers courses at MC.

General Education (Gen Ed) Competencies & Proficiencies:

Skillsets that are considered to be fundamental to any undergraduate student's academic curriculum; these skillsets are usually initiated through a General Education Program and continuously improved upon as the student increases course levels within any academic major or curriculum; ideally, these skillsets should reach a level of proficiency upon graduation. These core competencies include the following (Click on any competency below to view the individual rubrics and descriptions (via the Office of Assessment web page):

- [Arts and Aesthetic Awareness](#)
- [Critical Analysis](#)
- [Effective Communication, Writing](#)
- [Information Literacy](#)
- [Integrative Learning](#)
- [Effective Communication, Oral Communication](#)
- [Personal, Social and Civic Responsibility](#)
- [Quantitative Reasoning](#)
- [Scientific Reasoning](#)
- [Technological Competency](#)

⁵ Carnegie Mellon University. (2022a). Adapted from: <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/grading-assessment.html>

⁶ Carnegie Mellon University. (2022b). Adapted from: <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/glossary.html>

⁷ Ibid.

Office of Assessment:

Oversees and organizes collegewide assessment activities; supports and maintains assessment committees that assist, evaluate, and provide feedback for assessment processes; provides training on assessment techniques, assists faculty/staff with assessment planning, and ensures that MC's assessment practices meet accreditation standards.

Program:

- Academic:

Any discipline that offers a certificate or degree.

- Administrative:

Any area of the college that offers a special curriculum and/or service for students.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's):

Learning outcomes can be defined as the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities that an instructor intends for students to learn or develop.⁸ Both course-level and program-level outcomes are determined by faculty in the discipline as part of the curriculum process where course outcomes are aligned to support program outcomes, which are aligned with the college mission and goals. Part of the assessment process is gathering and reflecting on data on student achievement of benchmarks set for these outcomes in order to adjust instruction or benchmarks or both.

- Course level outcomes:

The focus is on what a student will be able to do as a result of being in the course. Good SLO's define and structure a student's learning in the course by clearly articulating the expectations of successful completion of a course. SLO's enhance student learning in multi-section courses by ensuring that students are expected to master the same content, skills, and attitudes, while allowing instructors to tailor instruction.

- Program level outcomes:

These are broader than course-level outcomes and they should indicate the expectations for a student who has completed the series of courses in the program curriculum. They often reflect the knowledge, skills and competencies that are mastered and reinforced by taking these courses.

⁸Yale University. (2021). Adapted from: <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/IntendedLearningOutcomes>

A Few Words on the Subject of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Merriam Webster defines the word “outcome” as:

- *out-come* \ 'aʊt-,kəm: “Something that follows as a result or consequence.”⁹

What does the word outcome mean in the context of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment?

Outcomes are *specific, measurable statements* that indicate *what students are expected to learn* as a result of completing a course of study, assignment, or learning activity.

Assessment practices measure student achievement and evidence of learning by examining student performance based on these outcomes.

How are outcomes created?

Outcomes are usually developed by the faculty who are teaching or overseeing a particular course of study, assignment, or learning activity. As experts in their field, these faculty determine the most relevant skills, knowledge, or abilities that a student should acquire as a result of completing that particular educational experience.

*For detailed guidance on outcome creation, please access the 1-hour course through your Workday account titled “Writing Great Learning Outcomes.”

Approval of outcomes

Once outcomes have been created, they must then be approved by the Collegewide Curriculum Committee. In the case of new or significant changes to a program, approval may also be required by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). Once approved, course or program outcomes must be:

- Listed in every instructor’s syllabus who is teaching the course (course-level SLOs)
- Listed in every program advising guide for any certificate or degree program (program-level SLOs)
- Listed in the Montgomery College Catalog (both course & program-level SLOs)

Why are outcomes so important?

Outcomes represent the fundamental building blocks of any learning experience and should be the primary focus of instruction:

- They represent the “end goals” of the subject matter being taught.
- They reflect the main components of knowledge that students will study and/or apply.
- They constitute the basis for the overall construction of the course, activity, or assignment.
- They promote consistency across similar levels of learning and can serve as readiness indicators for more advanced levels of study.

⁹ Merriam Webster. (2022). Definition of *Outcome* from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/outcome>

Where can I find Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for a course that I'm teaching, or SLOs for a certificate/degree program?

The primary source for SLOs is the Montgomery College Catalog:

<https://catalog.montgomerycollege.edu/>

- Course outcomes are listed in the catalog for every course offered at MC.
- Program outcomes are listed in the catalog for all programs that award a degree or certificate.

Other SLO Resources:

- Current Program Advising Guides
- Program outcomes are listed in the program advising guides listed on the MC Program Advising site at: <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/academics/program-advising/advising-guides.html>
- Any department Chair or Discipline Coordinator can provide faculty members with resources for course and/or program outcomes.
- Fellow faculty members can share current syllabi that list the outcomes for that particular course.

Governance of the Process

Internal and External Assessment Roles & Accountability

The assessment of educational effectiveness is part of the culture of improvement at Montgomery College. The ultimate accountability for assessment and reporting lies with the area dean or program administrator of the area being assessed, but both internal and external entities govern the obligation and the process for assessment best-practices.

Internal:

Within the college, [The Office of Assessment](#) supports and archives all assessment reporting. The Office of Assessment maintains the schedule of reporting based on the MC Assessment Cycle and provides training and support for all assessment activities, including the gathering of data and assistance with assessment reports. The Assessment Document Repository on Blackboard is a central location for this manual, for forms and templates, and for accessing approved reports.

Specific committees at MC such as the College Area Review Committee (CARC), the Collegewide Assessment Team (CAT) and the General Education Standing Committee (GESC) review assessment reports and provide feedback and recommendations for further development or clarifications. Learn more about the roles of these committees on the [Assessment Repository](#). (**Please sign in to MyMC to activate this link.*)

The area dean or program administrator assigns and supports the process of assessment and reporting for programs for which they are responsible. That person establishes a lead and recruits members for the assessment report workgroup and supports the workgroup. These workgroups can include faculty, staff, department chairs, administrators and/or contractors, depending on the type of report. The program area dean or program administrator submits the applicable assessment report for comment and approval. Levels of comment and approval vary based on the type of report. The final approved report should be communicated to all stakeholders by the dean or program administrator, or their designee.

Like many other industries, all employees may be asked to participate in gathering and reflecting upon data and crafting meaningful planned actions in order to improve or to further the college mission. Course instructors participate in the data gathering process and use MC's approved data gathering system to input student performance results based on their program's assessment plans. *Assessment and data gathering are specifically mentioned in both AAUP and SEIC contracts as one of the activities closely related to the essential duty of effective teaching and learning.*

External:

The assessment of educational effectiveness is mentioned throughout the [Middle States Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation](#), and Standard V is titled Educational Effectiveness Assessment. That standard calls for clearly stated educational goals, organized and systematic assessments, consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness is also required.

Periodic assessment, reflection and reporting are also required for compliance with some state laws, federal financial aid regulations, and may be required for external accreditation in some programs.

SECTION 2: The Assessment Process at MC

Types of Assessment at Montgomery College

General Education Outcomes Assessment

General Education is often referred to as “Gen Ed” for short. Gen Ed Outcomes Assessment is the process that examines student acquisition of General Education competencies across all courses that are certified as General Education. Gen Ed course competencies data are gathered by area according to the course assessment plan and reported in both the Year-3 Integrated Report and the College Area Review (CAR).

These courses are designated as Foundation courses (ENGF, MATF) or Distribution courses (ARTD, BSSD, HUMD, NSDL, NSNL). General Education courses can also be designated as a General Education Institutional Requirement (GEIR), or General Education Elective (GEEL). The General Education Program (encompassing all Gen Ed courses) also undergoes assessment as a collegewide special academic program.

Program Outcomes Assessment

Program Outcomes Assessment refers to the process that examines student attainment of an academic program’s expected student learning outcomes (SLO’s) for the purpose of discovering what is working well and where improvements can be made to increase student learning and success. Program data are gathered according to the program’s assessment plan and reported in both the Year-3 Integrated Report and the CAR.

Administrative Assessment & Special Programs

This category includes administrative areas or special programs such as the Learning Centers, WDCE, or the MC Library. Administrative assessment examines an area’s success with achieving outcomes and institutional priorities. For a complete list of these programs, see the detailed description of Administrative Review in Section 4.

College Area Review (CAR)

The CAR is a report that is completed every 6 years and examines the current alignment and relevance of an MC program, discipline, or academic area (*see terms*); it also examines each program, discipline, or academic area’s success with retaining and/or matriculating students and its overall contributions to collegewide goals.

The CAR is conducted as a macro-level, holistic, self-examination; it is intended to promote the understanding that every discipline, program, or academic area acts as an interconnected part to the college as a whole, thereby playing an integral role in the success of the college mission and strategic goals.

Program Viability Review

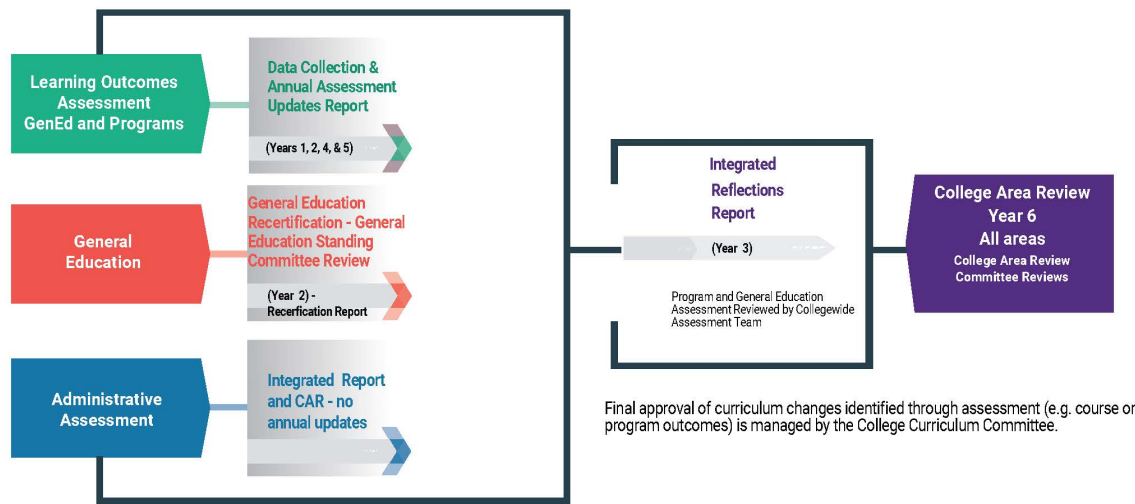
If program enrollments or completion rates fall below college standards, a Program Viability Report may be initiated. The Program Viability Report is intended to support the continuation of programs facing challenges and to determine the best of course of action moving forward.

The Assessment Cycle

Introduction to the Ongoing Assessment Process

The assessment process at Montgomery College is an ongoing process that is intended to assess student attainment of outcomes/goals associated with disciplines, general education, or academic/administrative programs for the purpose of discovering *what is working well and where improvements can be made* to increase student learning. The current assessment process at Montgomery College is shown as a graphic below, followed by an overview for each area:

ONGOING ASSESSMENT (6-YEAR CYCLE)



The General Education Program

Courses certified under the General Education Program (Foundation or Distribution courses, courses designated as Institutional Requirements, or General Education Electives), follow a 6-year assessment cycle. Every three years, faculty teaching general education courses assess (and reassess) the attainment of general education competencies through approved “signature assignments” according to the assessment plan approved within their general education certification process by the General Education Standing Committee (GESC). These assessment data are then evaluated by discipline faculty who discuss the data results, create planned actions for improvement, and summarize this information in a reflections report. This report is then reviewed by the Collegewide Assessment Team (CAT) and feedback is provided to faculty members.

All disciplines with general education courses are required to recertify these courses every 6 years. The assessment of Gen Ed competencies plays an important role in the Gen Ed re-certification process, which

is necessary to maintain the transferability status of Gen Ed courses. Gen Ed courses allow students to explore and integrate learning across all courses in the Gen Ed program, as well as engage in high impact practices on and off campus, thereby supporting student success both inside and outside the classroom.

Certificate and Degree Programs

All certificate and degree programs at Montgomery College are also required to assess (and reassess) the attainment of each program's learning outcomes every three years as part of a larger six-year assessment cycle. This process is known as "Program Assessment." Results from these assessment activities, and subsequent planned actions for improvement, are then reviewed by the Collegewide Assessment Team (CAT), where feedback is provided to faculty by CAT committee members.

Certificate and degree programs are also required to perform a more comprehensive evaluative process at the collegewide level, known as the "College Area Review" (CAR). Once completed, this report is then reviewed by the College Area Review Committee (CARC), where recommendations for academic improvements are approved. These macro-level recommendations are then implemented during the next six-year review cycle and yearly status updates of these recommendations are required. Based on the information gained from these assessments, program faculty initiate changes that *support student-focused improvement and/or innovation within their program* in an effort to increase student success and to ensure that the institutional goals and strategic initiatives of the college are being fulfilled.

Administrative & Special Programs

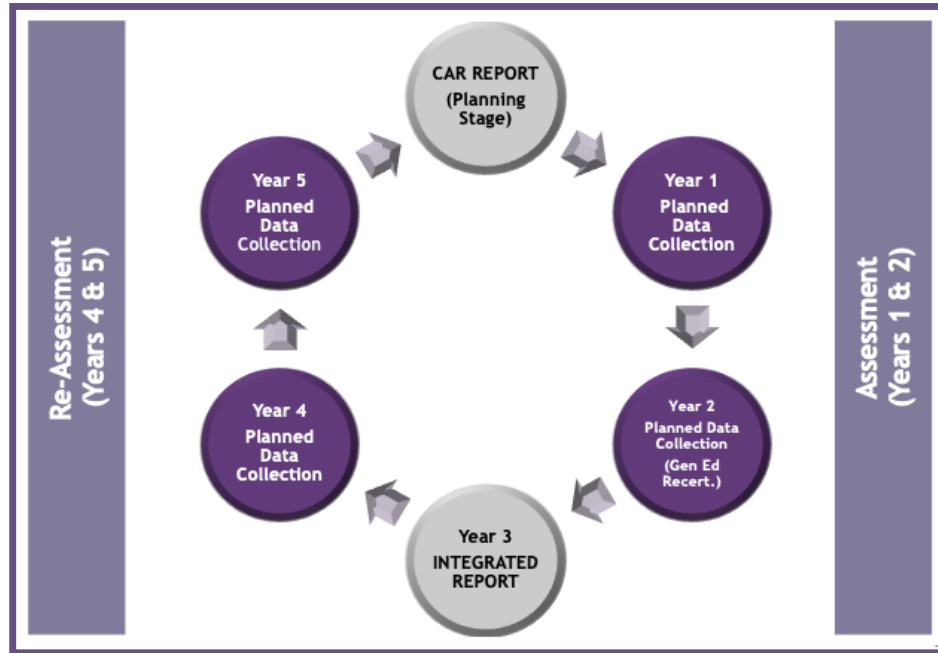
Administrative & special programs also collect data and assess program goals on a 6-year cycle. However, because these programs operate differently than academic programs or general education courses, their cycle activities are slightly modified from the others. Administrative programs are required to assess the attainment of program goals and complete an update on their assessment activities in Year 3 of the cycle. This report is then reviewed by the Office of Assessment and feedback is provided to the program.

These programs are also required to complete a College Area Review (CAR) in Year 6 (similar to their academic counterparts). This report is then reviewed by the College Area Review Committee (CARC). Any recommendations that have been approved are then implemented during the next six-year review cycle and status updates of these recommendations are required. Based on the information gained from these assessments, changes are initiated that support student-focused improvement and/or innovation within their program to support student success and to ensure that the institutional goals and strategic initiatives of the college are being fulfilled.

6-Year Cycle Steps

Below is a circular representation of the Montgomery College Assessment cycle and a description of the steps involved during each year the cycle is implemented:

Circular Model/Steps in the 6-Year Assessment cycle



- **Initial Planning (As a new program/discipline)**
 - Define learning outcomes or goals
 - Create an assessment plan and data collection plan as a new course/program or as part of the College Area Review (CAR) process
- **Assessment: Collect and Analyze Data (Years 1 & 2)**
 - Assess student attainment of learning outcomes/competencies (academic programs)
 - Assess attainment of program goals (administrative and special programs)
 - Complete and submit an annual data collection update (only academic programs and general education courses)
 - **Complete Gen Ed recertification** in Year 2 (Gen Ed courses only)
- **Analyze/Discuss Data Results & Create Planned Actions for Improvement (Year 3)**
 - Complete the Year- 3 Integrated Report (All)
- **Implement Action Plans/Collect Data for Reassessment (Years 4 & 5)**
 - Reassess student attainment of learning outcomes/competencies (academic programs)
 - Reassess attainment of program goals (administrative and special programs)
 - Complete and submit an annual data collection update (only academic programs and general education courses)


- **College Area Review (CAR)/Planning (Year 6)** (Beginning and End of the 6-year cycle; the CAR integrates with planning in Year 6 for all established courses & programs)
 - Review results from assessment/reassessment and make necessary changes based on assessment data
 - Planning - During the CAR process, review and revise program outcomes, design assessment plan for the next 6-year cycle
 - Review entire program to develop strategic recommendations for the next six years
 - Complete and submit the CAR report with above information
- **Repeat Cycle Rotation: Implement any Changes and Recommendations from the College Area Review (CAR) and Proceed through the Cycle Again**

Assessment Schedule & Required Activities

All disciplines, programs, and administrative areas have been placed in designated groups within a collegewide combined schedule that integrates all corresponding assessment activities across a 6-year period. Assessment activities within the schedule represents a discipline, program, or administrative area’s corresponding assessment obligations (i.e., depending on whether a discipline has a Gen Ed course, a degree program, etc.).

Below is a linear representation of the cycle with the corresponding due dates for any required activities:

Linear View of the Assessment Cycle at Montgomery College

Cycle Initiation: Start/Restart	Data Collection	Data Collection	Integrated Report	Data Collection	Data Collection
	Year 1 (Assessment) Planned Data Collection (Gen Ed and/or Program Data) Interim Data Collection Report	Year 2 (Assessment) Planned Data Collection (Gen Ed and/or Program data) Interim Data Collection Report *General Education Recertification	Year 3 Integrated Report *(Gen Ed and/or **Program) *includes CAR updates **includes program awards/enrollment data	Year 4 (Reassessment) Planned Data Collection (Gen Ed and/or Program data) Interim Data Collection Report	Year 5 (Reassessment) Planned Data Collection (Gen Ed and/or Program data) Interim Data Collection Report
	Due on Oct. 1 of the following year	Due on Aug. 1 of the following year	Due on Aug. 1 of the following year	Due on Oct. 1 of the following year	Due on Aug. 1 of the following year

A copy of the combined schedule is listed in *Appendix A* - this schedule, and more detailed discipline schedules, can also be accessed in the Assessment Repository located within MC’s Blackboard Community site ([Instructions on how to join the Assessment Repository can be accessed HERE.](#)) Within the Repository, click on the folder titled “The Assessment Cycle & Schedule of Disciplines” on the main menu to your left,

***All applicable assessment activities within a discipline, program, or area’s identified group are required to be completed in a timely manner in accordance with the established schedule and due dates.**

Data Collection and the Assessment Schedule

Data Collection Defined

Listed below are definitions for data collection terms listed in the circular & linear cycle:

- Planned data collection:
Planned data collection refers to the process of scoring and recording results of any required assessment activities that are applicable to that course, discipline, or program according to their own assessment plan on record. The data being “collected” are the actual results of how students performed for that assessment period respective to the type of assessment that was administered (i.e., the signature assignment for Gen Ed, outcomes assessment for a program, etc.).
- Data collection plan:
A discipline or program’s data collection plan represents the layout for examining and scoring their respective assessment results for student performance. Each plan should be created by the faculty of the respective discipline or program performing assessment, in consultation with/approval from the Office of Assessment. Each plan should correspond with that discipline or program’s first assessment period in the cycle during years 1 & 2, and also with their reassessment period in the cycle during years 4 & 5.

Any changes to the plan are intended to be made during the Integrated Report in Year-3 as a result of planned actions, or while completing the College Area Review (CAR) in year 6 (to be implemented as they exit the CAR and enter the new 6-year cycle).

A general/editable template for planning data collection activities can be accessed in the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled “Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates” and then click on “Assessment Planning Tools.”)

Detailed Descriptions of Yearly Activities

Please see the following pages for a detailed overview of yearly activities associated with the 6-year assessment cycle at Montgomery College:

(Note: activities that are listed correspond to specific types of assessment that may or may not be applicable to a given discipline/program – if you are not sure which assessment activities your discipline should be completing, please contact the Office of Assessment at outcomes@montgomerycollege.edu).

Assessment Schedule Yearly Activities (Detailed)

<p>Year 1 (Assessment)</p> <p>Planned Data Collection (Gen Ed and/or Program data)</p> <p>Interim Data Collection Report</p> <p>Due: August 1st of the following year</p>	<p><u>What to do:</u></p> <p>Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (General Education and/or Program)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning of Semester – Plan what you are going to assess during the academic year ○ End of Fall and Spring Semesters – Report on what you have done: <p><u>Drop Down Menus – Fast and Easy</u></p> <p><i>Any Planned Data Collection for Year 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic year in which the report is being completed • The types of assessment that were completed (i.e. Gen Education and/or program outcomes assessment) • All the courses where data collection occurred • All the campuses where data collection took place • Which semesters (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) that data collection took place • The number of students that were assessed <p><i>Other Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of planned actions • Implementation of CAR recommendations • Other? _____ <p><i>A primary contact person for the report</i></p>
<p>Year 2 (Assessment)</p> <p>Planned Data Collection (Gen Ed and/or Program data)</p> <p>Interim Data Collection Report</p> <p>General Education Recertification</p> <p>Due: August 1st of the following year</p>	<p><u>What to do:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Education Recertification (if applicable) – General Education Committee will provide instructions 2. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (General Education and/or Program) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning of Semester – Plan what you are going to assess during the academic year ○ End of Fall and Spring Semesters – Report on what you have done: <p><u>Drop Down Menus – Fast and Easy</u></p> <p><i>Any Planned Data Collection for Year 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic year in which the report is being completed • The types of assessment that were completed (i.e. Gen Education and/or program outcomes assessment) • All the courses where data collection occurred • All the campuses where data collection took place • Which semesters (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) that data collection took place • The number of students that were assessed <p><i>Other Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of planned actions • Implementation of CAR recommendations • Other? _____ <p><i>A primary contact person for the report</i></p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Year 3</p> <p>The Integrated Report</p> <p>*(Gen Ed and/or **Program)</p> <p>*includes CAR updates **includes program awards/enrollment data</p> <p>Due: Oct 1st of the following year</p>	<p><u>What to do:</u></p> <p>Integrated General Education and/or Program Outcomes 3-Year Reflection Reports:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. General overview of data collection activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic year in which the report is being completed • All the courses where data collection occurred • All the campuses where data collection took place • Which semesters (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) that data collection took place • The overall number of students that were assessed (in total for the last two years) b. Summary of results for each competency within each Gen Ed course and/or each outcome for Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing results within and across competencies and/or outcomes and comparing them with previous assessment results c. Planned actions to improve student performance/success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some actions may be continued (if applicable) but new, specific, measurable actions will also be required for any areas of weakness or to support increasing performance levels d. Discussion of how planned actions are related to discipline and/or program goals, and to the goals of MC on a larger scale e. Program Viability Updates (enrollment/awards – Programs only) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned actions to address program viability issues (if applicable) f. CAR (Collegewide Area Review) Recommendation Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been done to accomplish these recommendations over the past 2 years? g. A primary contact person for the report
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<p style="text-align: center;">Year 4 (Reassessment)</p> <p>Planned Data Collection (Gen Ed and/or Program data)</p> <p>Interim Data Collection Report</p> <p>Due: August 1st of the following year</p>	<p><u>What to do:</u></p> <p>Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (General Education and/or Program)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning of Semester – Plan what you are going to assess during the academic year ○ End of Fall and Spring Semesters – Report on what you have done: <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Drop Down Menus – Fast and Easy</u></p> <p><i>Any Planned Data Collection for Year 4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic year in which the report is being completed • The types of assessment that were completed (i.e. Gen Education and/or program outcomes assessment) • All the courses where data collection occurred • All the campuses where data collection took place • Which semesters (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) that data collection took place • The number of students that were assessed <p><i>Other Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of planned actions • Implementation of CAR recommendations • Other? _____ <p><i>A primary contact person for the report</i></p>
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<p>Year 5 (Reassessment)</p> <p>Planned Data Collection (Gen Ed and/or Program data)</p> <p>Interim Data Collection Report</p> <p>Due: August 1st of the following year</p>	<p><u>What to do:</u></p> <p>Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (General Education and/or Program)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Beginning of Semester – Plan what you are going to assess during the academic year o End of Fall and Spring Semesters – Report on what you have done: <p><u>Drop Down Menus – Fast and Easy</u></p> <p><i>Any Planned Data Collection for Year 5</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic year in which the report is being completed • The types of assessment that were completed (i.e. Gen Education and/or program outcomes assessment) • All the courses where data collection occurred • All the campuses where data collection took place • Which semesters (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) that data collection took place • The number of students that were assessed <p><i>Other Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of planned actions • Implementation of CAR recommendations • Other? _____ <p><i>A primary contact person for the report</i></p>
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<p>CAR (Planning Stage)</p> <p>Due: Oct 1st of the following year</p>	<p><u>What to do:</u></p> <p>The College Area Review (CAR)</p> <p>**The CAR Report represents the planning stage for initiating each 5-year integrated assessment cycle.</p> <p>This report provides an overview of the current alignment and relevance of a program’s curriculum and success with retaining and matriculating students. Disciplines who do not have a certificate or degree program are also required to complete a modified version of the CAR Report. Similarly, a modified “Administrative Review” is completed to review an administrative area’s success with achieving outcomes and institutional priorities.</p> <p>Depending on the program, discipline, or administrative unit, this collegewide report will consist of some (or all) of the following components (as may be applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>General Information on the degree program, discipline, or administrative unit</i> • <i>Overview and mission</i> • <i>Discussion of curriculum, outcomes, institutional priorities, and alignment with professional standards</i> • <i>Last Accreditation report (if applicable)</i> • <i>Advisory Board (if applicable)</i> • <i>Size and scope of the program, discipline, or area completing the review</i> • <i>Assessment plan & results</i> • <i>Outcomes and assessment (summary of changes for improvement, etc.)</i> • <i>Student feedback (if applicable)</i> • <i>Educational/Career growth opportunities</i> • <i>External Reviewer (optional or required for programs)</i> • <i>SOAR analysis</i> • <i>Updates on previous CAR recommendations</i> • <i>New Recommendations for moving forward</i>
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The MC Assessment Repository: Resources & Access

The Assessment Repository

The Assessment Repository serves as a comprehensive assessment site that stores documents and reports pertaining to the Montgomery College assessment process and provides up-to-date resources for assessment activities that are being performed at the college.

The Repository represents a central location for faculty and staff to easily access assessment materials for the purpose of promoting optimal collaboration, organization, and efficiency during assessment functions.

Repository Access

The Assessment Repository is open to any faculty or staff member who is involved in official assessment activities at the College. The Repository acts as a Blackboard Community within the MC Blackboard platform and requires users to be signed into MyMC before accessing the site.

For instructions on gaining first-time access to the site, please click on the following link: [Instructions for Enrolling in the Assessment Repository](#)

Assessment Repository on Blackboard/Academic Folder View

The screenshot displays the Blackboard interface for the Assessment Repository. At the top, there are navigation links for "My Blackboard", "Courses", and "Community". Below this, the page title is "Assessment Repository" and the current view is "Academic Discipline Folders".

On the left side, there is a navigation menu for the "Assessment Repository" with the following items:

- Home Page
- Academic Discipline Folders
- The Assessment Cycle & Schedule of Disciplines
- Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates
- Administrative and Special Programs
- Assessment Terminology and Types of Assessment at MC
- The Office of Assessment at MC
- Committees Involved in the Assessment Process
- Other Useful Resources
- Tools
- Need Help? Have Questions?

The main content area, titled "Academic Discipline Folders", contains a list of folders:

- NOTE: For individual languages (except ASLP, please go to the "World Languages" folder)**
- ACCT - Accounting**
- ANTH - Anthropology**
- AOSC - Meteorology**
- ARCH - Architectural Technology**
- ARTT - Art**

SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT IN PRACTICE

General Education Assessment

Introduction & Overview

General Education (Gen Ed) Outcomes Assessment is the process that examines student acquisition of general education competencies and proficiencies across certified general education courses. The General Education Program is also assessed collegewide as a special academic program.

Who participates in General Education Outcomes Assessment?

Only those disciplines with certified general education courses are required to perform assessment for general education competencies, as indicated below:

- Every course that is certified as a general education course must report outcomes assessment data and plans for improvement as part of the assessment process at Montgomery College and for course recertification by the General Education Standing Committee (GESC).
- Any faculty member who teaches one or more sections of any general education course is required to participate in assessing general education competencies.

[*Click Here for a Current List of Gen Ed Certified Courses](#)

Organizing & Completing Assessment Activities

In academic areas, assessment is intended to be a faculty-driven process. Each area at the College, however, differs on how they choose to organize and complete their assessment functions. Department activities are often dependent on several factors: the size of the discipline and the number of courses offered, the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty, and the leadership styles of the area's Coordinators, Chairs, and Dean.

Below is the most common approach that disciplines use when completing assessment activities:

- In many areas, program coordinators or course coordinators act as the leads for general education assessment activities and will often form faculty workgroups to organize and complete reports for any major assessment activities for their discipline. Depending on the Dean and the makeup of the discipline, these workgroups and the discipline leads will either be determined by the Dean or the Dean's designee (Chair, coordinator, etc.).
- The discipline lead(s) for general education assessment will be responsible for the following activities:
 - Submit assessment plan to determine student achievement levels based on the signature assignments and submit the completed form to the General Education Standing Committee (GESC) for approval as part of the certification or re-certification process.
 - Consult with general education faculty to formulate a data collection plan for scoring and uploading results for all general education courses during years 1, 2, 4, & 5 of their respective assessment cycle.
 - Submit the completed data collection plan(s) for all general education courses to the Office of Assessment for review, feedback, and approval.
 - Organize and oversee the data collection process.

- Organize a workgroup or meetings with faculty from the applicable courses to discuss and reflect on the data indicating student achievement on specified competencies. Discussion from this meeting will inform the Year-3 General Education Integrated Reflection Report and the CAR Report.
- In conjunction with all workgroups, prepare and submit all required reports, to include:
 - General Education Recertification forms (Year 2)
 - Annual Data Collection/Assessment updates (Years 1, 2, 4 & 5)
 - Year-3 Integrated Report for General Education
 - Year-6 General Education Reflection Report (incorporated into the CAR report)
- Regardless of the organizational approach used, the following apply:
 - The Chairs are responsible for providing support and guidance for faculty members (as needed) throughout the assessment process and may, in conjunction with faculty members, assist with assessment activities (when applicable).
 - The Deans are responsible for ensuring that any assessment requirements for their areas are completed and submitted by the required due dates

Assessment Requirements for Certification & Recertification of Gen Ed Courses

Initial Certification

Any course that is newly certified as a general education course is required to submit a general education assessment plan and data collection plan to the Collegewide Assessment Team for review following satisfactory completion of the certification process through the General Education Standing Committee (GESC)*

Recertification

Any discipline with a general education certified course will complete *recertification* for that course when the discipline enters Year 2 of the discipline's 6-Year assessment cycle. This process is intended to confirm high impact educational practices in support of general education competencies and proficiencies.

- After GESC approval, the program coordinator or course coordinator is required to submit any changes to the previous general education assessment plan or data collection plan to the Collegewide Assessment Team for review. *
- Any approved changes to the signature assignment or data collection plan as a result of the recertification process should be communicated to all faculty teaching the general education course and implemented into the discipline's assessment activities immediately following the approval process.

For information on designing your assessment and data collection plan, please see section "Designing Your Gen Ed Assessment Plan and Data Collection Plan" on page 21.

*To access the required forms for creating or revising a general education assessment plan or data collection plan, please access the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates" and then click on "Assessment Planning Tools.")

The Signature Assignment

During the general education certification process for any course, the discipline faculty that teach the course will be required to create, and submit for approval, a “*signature assignment*.”

- Signature assignments provide an important opportunity for students to demonstrate their attainment of certain competencies, proficiencies, or skillsets acquired through a particular course or program curriculum.
- The common features of a discipline’s signature assignment also create an important instrument that program administrators and faculty use to help assess the progress of students across all sections of that particular course. These results can also be aggregated with other Gen Ed course results to evaluate student performance in Gen Ed competencies across an entire program, or across the institution as a whole.

Disciplines are required to administer signature assignments consistently and regularly in ALL of their general education courses, EVERY semester. The assignment administered to students should be in accordance with the most up-to-date certification/recertification of that particular general education course.

Creating Your General Education Assessment Plan

Your Assessment Instrument

Assessment instruments represent the tools that will be used to collect data that reflect student performance. These may take many forms and depend on the discipline, course material, and the competencies or outcomes being measured. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: written exams, oral exams, practical exams/exercises, papers, course assignments, lab exercises, capstone projects, high impact practices, etc.

For general education assessment, the **approved signature assignment** for your general education course will act as the assessment instrument for measuring student performance. An important aspect of choosing an assessment instrument is ensuring that the instrument that is chosen is a **valid** instrument, meaning that it will actually **measure what you intend to measure** for any specific competency.

- **Questions to consider when choosing an assessment instrument:**
 - Does the assignment or exercise truly reflect student performance for the specific outcome or competency you want to collect data for?
 - How can it be measured? (Scale? Correct/incorrect answer? Rubric with defined parameters? etc.).

Benchmarking

Benchmarking refers to the process by which a discipline or program sets a standard of measurement (or benchmark) for evaluating or comparing student performance during and after the assessment and reassessment process. For instance, what percentage of students is expected to attain proficiency in a given competency, or possibly exceed expectations? What percentage of students may fall below standards of success?

Please see the quick tips below regarding benchmarking:

Where should we start?

- Benchmarks should reflect a combination of the high academic standards of your discipline, tempered with a realistic expectation of success among your students. A discipline's faculty may want 100% of their students to place in the "advanced" performance level for quantitative analysis, but while this unrealistic benchmark *might* be possible for some programs, it would realistically be an unprecedented event for most. Setting your initial benchmarks is like forming a hypothesis about student performance based on the information you have - your assessment will test that hypothesis and let you know how your students are *actually performing*.

Should all of our benchmarks be the same across all competencies?

- If students in your discipline knowingly struggle with writing skills, then the expected benchmarks that your discipline sets across the "advanced" and "proficient" levels of this competency might not be as high as some expected percentages in your other competencies. On the other hand, if your students normally exceed with oral presentations, then the oral communication benchmark might be set a little higher. Benchmarks should blend the academic rigor of your course with expected student performance levels.

We want our discipline to look good...

- Purposely setting benchmarks low in an effort to make the results look good only hurts your students in the end – don't try to manipulate the results beforehand. The purpose of assessment is to discover how students are actually performing; an important part of this is finding out where the strengths and weaknesses of that performance may be in order to act on those results to improve some areas to better support student learning, reify areas that really shine, and let your students show how successful they can be.

Who sets the benchmarks?

- Faculty who are teaching the courses to be assessed know their students the best - a discussion should be initiated around benchmarks that reflect both desired and expected levels of student performance. It's also important to remember that benchmarks are not set in stone and can be revised (through a planned action within the assessment reporting process or during the Gen Ed recertification process).

For the General Education program, rubrics have already been established that describe the criteria that will be measured during the assessment process. It is your discipline's responsibility to determine the student performance benchmarks that will apply to *your Gen Ed course*.

These benchmarks should reflect the level of your students at the College (i.e., is this an introductory course or an upper-level course?). You may also want to keep in mind that MC is a 2-year institution, not a 4-year institution when considering levels of performance in a particular competency (a graduating student at MC obtaining an associate degree may not necessarily be expected to have mastered a given skillset that would be expected of a graduating student from a 4-year institution with a bachelor's degree.)

After reviewing the criteria for the Gen Ed rubric for your course, your discipline will want to consider the following questions:

- What does it mean for our students to perform at the "advanced" level? At the "proficient" level? Etc.
- What do we think will be the percentage of students in our Gen Ed course that meet each of these levels of performance?
- Now, decide on a percentage range of performance that identifies these criteria.

Please see "[Assessment in Practice](#)" (next page) for an example of General Education benchmarking.

Assessment in Practice

Practical Example: Benchmarking for your General Education Assessment Plan

Example Benchmarks for the Zoology discipline for General Education Assessment

General Education Competency	The Best Aligned Course Outcome for the General Education Competency	Benchmark Expectation (%) (See Rubric)			
		Advanced	Proficient	Novice	Not Evident
Technological Competency (Required)	<i>Students will be able to prepare keys and cladograms using appropriate software or online tools</i>	25%	55%	15%	5%
Critical Analysis and Reasoning (Required)	<i>Students will be able to formulate a testable hypothesis, gather and analyze data to support that hypothesis, and assess the degree to which their scientific work supports their hypothesis</i>	10%	55%	25%	10%
Written Communication	<i>Students will be able to communicate scientific information through effective formal and informal writing and speaking in a format used by practicing scientists</i>	20%	60%	10%	10%
Oral Communication	<i>Students will be able to communicate scientific information through effective formal and informal writing and speaking in a format used by practicing scientists</i>	25%	65%	5%	5%
Information Literacy	<i>Students will be able to access the primary literature, identify relevant works for a particular topic, and evaluate the scientific content of these works</i>	10%	50%	25%	10%
Scientific Reasoning	<i>Students will be able to apply fundamental mathematical tools (statistics, calculus) and physical principles (physics, chemistry) to the analysis of relevant biological situations</i>	10%	55%	25%	10%
Quantitative Reasoning	<i>Students will be able to employ fundamental quantitative and statistical principles to present and critique scientific findings</i>	5%	40%	40%	15%
Arts and Aesthetic Awareness	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Personal, Social, and Civic Responsibilities	<i>Students will be able to take appropriate steps towards conservation of endemic and endangered animal species</i>	25%	60%	10%	5%
Integrative Learning (Required)	<i>Function effectively as an individual, and as a member or leader in diverse teams, and in multidisciplinary settings</i>	10%	60%	20%	10%

Evidence Gathering

Evidence gathering for general education courses at MC encompasses two main activities: the gathering (or collection) of general education student performance “data.” The results derived from these data are reported in both the discipline’s **Year-3 Integrated Reflections Report** and **College Area Review (CAR) Report**.

Creating Your Data Collection Plan

Collection of Signature Assignment Data

While the signature assignment itself should be administered to students *every semester*, the process of gathering (or collecting) general education “data” refers to the actual collection of student signature assignments to be “scored” in accordance with a given discipline’s general education assessment plan. This collection of student performance across each competency takes place during years 1-2 and years 4-5 of a discipline’s defined assessment cycle and follows the data collection plan created by that discipline. Once the data are collected, the act of “scoring” or evaluating student performance takes place, to be uploaded to the MC assessment system for analysis (see “*Scoring & Uploading Your Collected Data*” - next section.)

Since faculty are the experts for their specific courses and requirements, it is up to the discipline coordinator and faculty members teaching the general education course to determine the plan for collecting data within years 1-2 & 4-5 of their designated assessment schedule. The Data Collection Plan should be created with careful consideration of the following for each general education course.

When creating your data collection plan, you should:

- Examine when and how each general education course is offered (semesters, times, campuses, modality, etc.) in order to capture a diverse and rich sample of student performance for each course across different settings.
- Ensure that data collection encompasses an appropriate number of course sections and that the number of students per section is suitable for an assessment sample (see *sampling below*.)
- Take into consideration the faculty members who may be teaching multiple sections of a given course and weigh any potential effects that might be created from additional time requirements/duties regarding scoring responsibilities.
- Guarantee that the appropriate data will be collected, scored, and available for analysis/discussion in order to meet the requirements and deadlines for completing the Year-3 General Education Reflection Report and the 6-Year Reflection Report (incorporated into the CAR).

How much data do we need to collect?

**In addition to the information below, please also refer to the data chart in Appendix C for guidance on how much data may be appropriate for your discipline/program.*

The amount of data to collect depends on the size and number of sections and students associated with each general education course. Some [common data collection questions/answers have been provided below for guidance](#); however, when in doubt, please contact the Office of Assessment for assistance in determining the appropriate amount of data for your discipline.

- 1) Question: For years 1-2 and 4-5 of the assessment cycle titled “Data Collection,” do we have to collect/score data each year during these 2-year periods?

Quick Answer: *No. Although data are required to be collected/scored for each general education course during each of these 2-year periods, determining when to actually do the scoring during these periods is decided by the individual discipline. The requirement is that the appropriate data are collected and assessed before each reporting period (before Year 3 & again before year 6) when data analysis and the writing of reflections take place. Flexibility is provided to disciplines within these 2-year periods to determine the most useful schedule to meet this requirement. ***However**, if your discipline happens to have a very small number of general education course offerings and the enrollment numbers within these sections are very small, data collection/scoring may be required each year. For example, if your discipline's general education course is only offered during one semester each year and has less than 30 students enrolled, you would want to collect/score all students during both years of each 2-year data collection cycle to ensure that you have an adequate amount of student work to assess for your reflection reports in Years 3 & 6.

- 2) Question: My discipline has planned to collect/score general education data during years 1 and 4 of the cycle - do we need to collect/score all students in all sections of our general education courses during years 1 & 4?

Quick Answer: It depends on the number of sections and students in the general education course for which collection/scoring is taking place. For instance, if your discipline only offers 2 sections of a general education course with approximately 25 students per section during your planned collection year, then you may need to assess all students within both courses. On the other hand, if you have 28 sections of a general education course being offered during your collection year with approximately 25 students per section, your discipline could actually collect a "sample" of student work from across all 28 sections (*please see "sampling" below*).

- 3) Question: My discipline has a large number of general education courses that are required to be assessed and it would be difficult to plan for all collection/scoring of our courses to occur within the same year. Can we spread out the collection/scoring for these courses across the 2-year data collection period?

Quick Answer:

Yes, you can spread the data collection/scoring activities of your general education courses across each 2-year data collection period if that works better for your discipline. Using Zoology, with 6 general education courses as an example, the faculty might find it beneficial to collect/score data from ZOO 100 & 102 during the fall semester of year 1, and to also collect/score data from ZOO 201 during the spring semester of year 1. For the smaller courses of ZOO 240, 250 & 260, they may plan to collect/score these courses all during the fall semester of year 2. This way, they accomplish the data collection/scoring for all 6 general education courses for the 2-year period but have planned the collection schedule to work best for faculty members and/or their course offerings. After their analysis of their findings in Year 3, they would repeat the collection/scoring process (reassess) during years 4 & 5.

- 4) Question: Can our data collection plan be revised, and if so, when can this be done?

Quick Answer: *Yes (*but they should not be revised during a 2-year collection period without first obtaining approval from the Office of Assessment). Data plans are intended to reflect the most effective way to collect data for the individual discipline and should be updated when necessary. There are 3 ways that data collection plans can be changed: 1) as an intended action that is incorporated into a discipline's Year-3 Reflection Report or CAR Report; 2) as part of the general education recertification process; or 3) with consultation/approval from the Office of Assessment.

Sampling

When assessing student performance across all sections of an entire course, the ability to collect and score a large sample of student work for that course (instead of scoring every individual student) can represent a useful and welcome alternative. The option of sampling is usually reserved for disciplines with a large number of general education students to ensure that there are enough data points (individual examples of student work) in the sample being collected in order to more accurately reflect the performance of the student population in that course.

If your discipline is interested in the option of sampling for general education assessment, please contact the Office of Assessment for more information.

Assessment in Practice

Faculty from the Zoology discipline are completing their data collection plan. The discipline has 2 general education courses that need to be assessed. Please see the example below for their approach to collecting/scoring data during their data collection years of the assessment cycle. For a copy of the editable data collection planning sheet, please visit the resources in the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard (click on "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates" on the main menu to your left in the Repository.)

Note: This example is a basic representation for 2 general education courses. Programs that are assessing both program outcomes and general education courses, as well as disciplines with large numbers of general education courses, may require more planning.

Practical Example: General Education Data Collection Plan

Assessment Cycle Planning Sheet (Example)															
Zoology (code 777)				CAR (Planning Stage)		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3 Integrated Report		Year 4		Year 5	
Type of Outcome or Competency	List competency	List Gen Ed Course(s)	What will be collected?	Writing Report	Writing Report	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Findings Discussed	Report Submitted	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection
Gen Ed	Critical Analysis & Reasoning	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X						X			
Gen Ed	Technological Competency	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X						X			
Gen Ed	Information Literacy	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X						X			
Gen Ed	Scientific & Quant. Reasoning	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X						X			
Gen Ed	Integrative Learning	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X						X			
Gen Ed	Critical Analysis & Reasoning	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment						X						X
Gen Ed	Technological Competency	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment						X						X
Gen Ed	Information Literacy	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment						X						X
Gen Ed	Scientific & Quant. Reasoning	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment						X						X
Gen Ed	Integrative Learning	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment						X						X

***Important Note:** Disciplines who have general education courses are required to provide quick updates on their general education data collection and assessment activities each year by completing the Interim Data Collection Update/Annual Report (see the section on "Reporting and Planning for the Future" for more detail.) These quick reports are due by August 1st each year during Years 1-2 and 4-5 within a discipline's defined 6-year assessment cycle.

Your Comprehensive General Education Assessment Plan

Once your discipline has completed the steps above (determining your assessment instrument, benchmarking measures, and data collection plan), you can document this information in an official General Assessment Plan format (see example below). **The information above (collectively) comprises your comprehensive "General Education Assessment Plan."**

* For a copy of the editable General Education Assessment Plan template, please visit the resources in the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard (click on "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates" on the main menu to your left in the Repository.)

General Education Assessment Plan	Benchmark Expectation (Percent in each category – should total 100%)				When Do You Plan to Collect Data?	
	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Novice</i>	<i>Not Evident</i>	<i>Semester</i>	<i>Year</i>
General Education Competencies						
Technological Competency (Required)						
Critical Analysis and Reasoning (Required)						
Integrative Learning (Required)						
Written Communication						
Oral Communication						
Information Literacy						
Scientific Reasoning						
Arts and Aesthetic Awareness						
Personal, Social, and Civic Responsibilities						

Data Scoring & Analysis

Scoring & Uploading Your Collected Data

Before You Score...

Before any scoring takes place, it is *strongly recommended* that all participants in the scoring process meet to discuss how to interpret and evaluate the data and to know what is expected of them. There are often differences of opinion regarding what values to assign for a student's work and it is imperative that all faculty members are in agreement to ensure consistency in scoring to produce the useful data. It is suggested that at least one piece of student work is scored together and discussed as a group before further scoring takes place to promote inter-rater reliability.

Scoring the Signature Assignment

Depending on the size of the discipline and the number of general education course sections, a group of faculty representatives from the discipline may be organized to complete the final scoring and uploading of assessment data.

Scoring (or rating) the performance of general education students is an important evaluation process to determine how well students are attaining *general education competencies*. This process not only reflects student performance at the course or discipline levels, but also reflects student performance across the entire college for the General Education Program (when these results are also evaluated collectively).

The scoring process for a general education course involves the use of a predetermined rubric to assess the levels of general education competencies that are demonstrated by students on the individual signature assignments completed for a particular course. The scoring criteria and benchmarks for student performance that are utilized during this process were previously determined by the discipline and approved by the General Education Standing Committee (GESC) when the discipline completed the general education certification/recertification process (*see benchmarking above for more information.*)

While scoring and grading can be interrelated, there are important differences between these two functions. All participants involved in the scoring process should be made aware these differences to ensure that the scoring process produces the most accurate data results possible for both the discipline and the general education program as a whole. For an explanation of how "grading" and "scoring" differ, please see "*Why Grades are not Enough*" on page 1 (recommended reading for all faculty involved in assessment activities).

Uploading the Data

- Once scoring is complete for a given data set, designated faculty members will enter the results into the MC assessment system to be stored for immediate and/or future analysis.
- Collectively, these data provide an important holistic view of student performance on Gen Ed competencies across the entire course curriculum.
- Statistical analysis will be performed on the data by the Office of Assessment and/or lead faculty members, resulting in aggregated results that are NOT identified with any instructors. These results should then be provided to all faculty members teaching the general education course for analysis (*Please see next section "Data Analysis: Making Sense of the Results" for more information.*)

Data Analysis: Making Sense of the Results

For many of us, the idea of combing through data sets can be a little overwhelming and many ask for guidance on what it means to “analyze the data.” First, it’s important to remember the basic purpose of data collection in assessment activities: to get an idea of how something is performing. As an educational institution, we are interested in learning whether our students, a course, a program, or the College as a whole, is achieving certain learning outcomes or goals. You already know the information you’re collecting to gauge performance (see “*Your Assessment Instrument*” above), and the benchmarks that represent the levels of that performance (see “*Benchmarks*” above), so now it’s time to look at what the data are telling you about that performance.

As you and your colleagues go through the data, be sure to make detailed notes (percentages, etc.) to aid in the discussion of how your students are performing. This will also help provide information for several areas of your reflection report (your reflection summary and planned actions for improvement).

Examining the data:

Step 1:

Take a look at the performance results from a broad level: overall, what do the benchmark results look like? How did your students (or the course, program, etc.) perform as a whole? Was the overall benchmark of proficiency met in each of the categories/competencies? By how much? Are there any red flags that stand out with the overall results?

Step 2:

Now begin looking at the performance results within each specific area, competency, or outcome that was measured. Is there a specific area where performance excelled? Is there an area that indicated unsatisfactory results/where students appear to be struggling?

Step 3:

Next, compare the results from this performance assessment to the prior performance assessment. What changes are present? Did a category/competency show signs of improvement? Are there any indications of weakness or decline in a particular category/competency?

Step 4:

Finally, based on the data summary provided to you, examine the data according to demographic information and any specific information that you might have requested for your summary (i.e. male v. female, full-time students v. part-time students, online v. face-to-face, etc.). Try to discover any obvious performance divisions, as well as nuances in the data (meaningful differences that might be subtle, but important). For instance, try to determine if there are any performance gaps that need to be addressed, and/or where performance may be exceeding expectations.

Step 5:

Compile your notes and share/discuss the results with colleagues. This analysis will provide the basis for any upcoming assessment report summary and for the planned actions that your group will create to address performance levels to aid in student success. Everyone teaching the course that was assessed should be informed of how students performed and be involved in any discussions for future planned actions relating to assessment.

** Instructors of general education courses may be asked to reflect on student performance on general education competencies across all class assignments and activities for that course as a whole in a Faculty Feedback Survey to assist the General Education Standing Committee with their general education program assessment.

Summary Reflections & Planned Actions for Improvement

What is a Summary Reflection?

Faculty discussions of student data, and the notes that were taken in step 5 of the last portion of this document are used to complete an important part of the Year 3 summary report and the CAR report. Capturing this collaborative thinking is what makes assessment valuable and effective. These reflections will be revisited in year 3 and year 6, when there is new data to compare and when it is time to reflect on the effectiveness of changes to instructional practices that were recommended as part of the previous summary.

Courses certified under the General Education Program (Foundation or Distribution courses, courses designated as Institutional Requirements, or General Education Electives), follow a similar 6-year assessment cycle. Every three years, faculty that teach general education courses are required to reflect on student achievement data for each Gen Ed certified course. By reflecting on student achievement of Gen Ed competencies, faculty can determine effectiveness and sustainability of educational strategies and determine what changes should be made moving forward.

The reflection report includes the number of students assessed, the semester(s) that data was collected, a summary of the data including percentages and demographic results, and a comparison of results to previous data collection periods. This summary is repeated for each general education competency.

The last portion of the summary report asks you to reflect on planned actions from your most recent report (3 years ago) and determine if those recommendations should continue or be updated. After reflection and discussion, planned actions should be added based on the most recent data.





This report is then reviewed by the Collegewide Assessment Team (CAT) and feedback is provided to faculty members.

Creating Planned Actions for Improvement

Planned actions are actions created by faculty members to address any weaknesses or gaps that have been identified in student performance. These actions should be specific, measurable, and clearly defined. They should also be timely (promptly executed) within a reasonable time frame (i.e., starting next semester, etc.).

Please Remember that...

..specific and measurable actions are much easier to benchmark for future assessments. The Collegewide Assessment Team will review planned actions and make suggestions for revision if necessary.

	VAGUE / GENERALIZED		SPECIFIC / MEASURABLE
	"We plan to explore options that might increase student performance in quantitative reasoning."		"Faculty will develop and implement in-class exercises designed to increase student performance in quantitative reasoning."
	"Faculty will help students during the semester with improving their communication skills."		"The course BIOL 101 will include a module designed to improve communication skills in the area of scientific research."

Please see the brief following examples of planned actions in "[Assessment in Practice](#)" (next page).

Assessment in Practice

Zoology faculty have analyzed the results from their general education signature assignments and have discovered that their students are excelling in many of the competencies but seem to be struggling in the areas of information literacy and quantitative reasoning.

Practical Example:

The discipline faculty have developed planned actions that they believe will support student improvement in these areas. Please see the examples below:

Planned Action #1

Faculty will develop four quick interactive exercises in the classroom that aid students in improving their quantitative reasoning skills. These exercises will be administered by all faculty beginning next semester. Two exercises will be administered to students before the midterm exam and two exercises will be administered after the midterm exam. This will help faculty assess how effective the exercises may be over the course of the semester in order to adjust the timing (if necessary) to align with specific content.

Planned Action #2

In consultation with librarians, faculty will create a library research guide for Zoology courses that students can access online. These guides will provide information and resources to aid students in developing information literacy skills and students will be required to complete the plagiarism tutorial each semester.

Possible 3rd Planned action

Faculty will set up a 1-hour session in the classroom for librarians to present information to students about conducting research online.

Sharing Results & Tracking Improvement

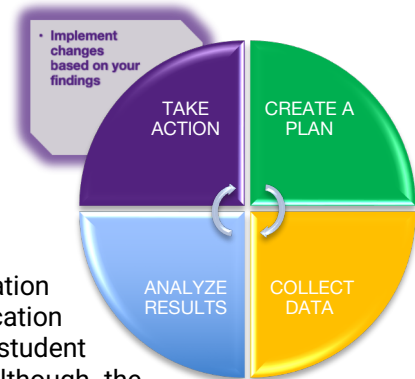
The Important Concept of "Closing the Loop"

While some faculty may associate the assessment process with data collection and writing reports, these activities represent only half of the process of assessing student learning. One of the most important aspects of assessment is the expectation that **results garnered from the process will then be interpreted and utilized to initiate positive, measurable change for improvement.**

This critical, final step of analyzing and implementing action to improve student learning, is known as **"closing the loop"** of the assessment/reassessment cycle. Closing the Loop takes place at MC as part of

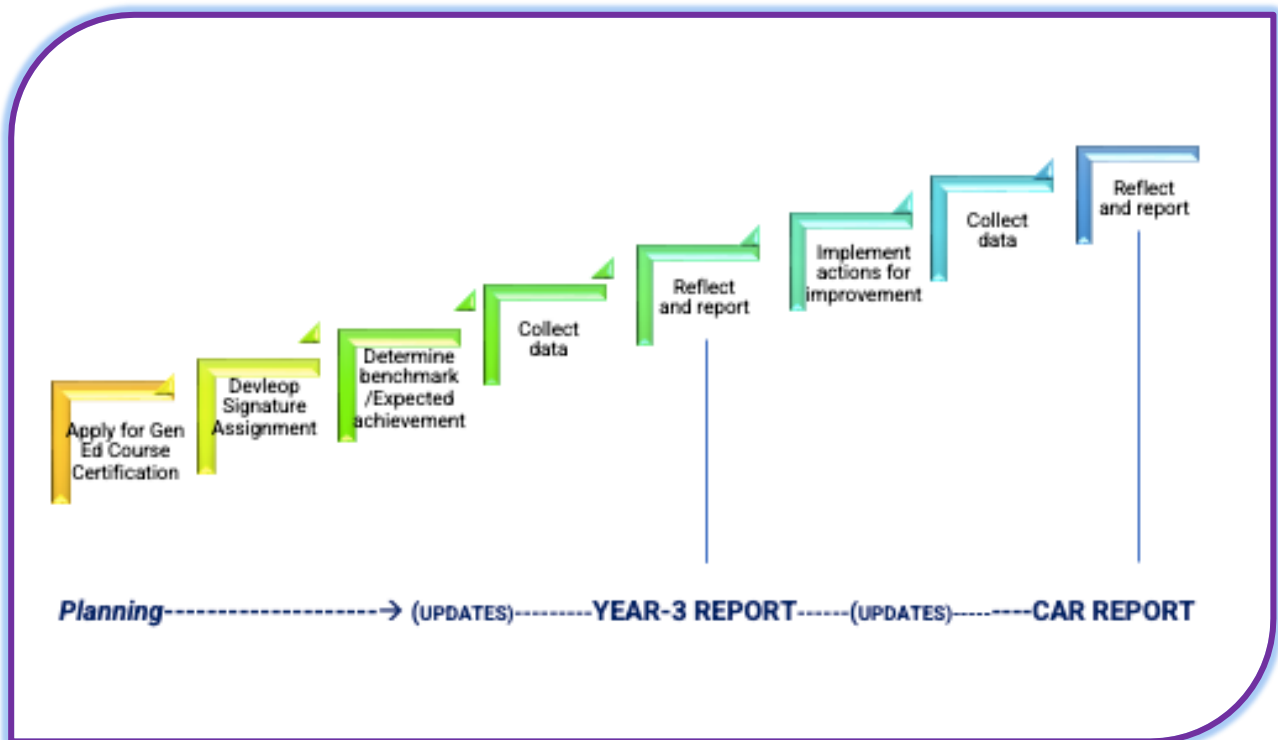
the Year-3 Integrated Report and as part of the College Area Review (CAR). These positive, measurable changes are represented in assessment reports as “**planned actions**” or “**recommendations**.” These actions are formulated through discussion by faculty and administrators and are intended to be “action plans” for immediate implementation (respectively). Feedback on proposed actions is then provided by assessment committees and administrative leaders.

The final step in “Closing the Loop” is to **review the results (data collected) after these actions have been implemented to determine what impact they have had on student success**, thus initiating the assessment cycle (or loop) once again for improvement.



Reporting for General Education Assessment

The reporting requirements for the assessment of general education courses consist of annual updates by a discipline for its general education assessment activities, and a report every three years that analyzes student performance across the discipline’s general education courses. Although the assessment of general education competencies and the recertification of general education courses are interdependent, the individual reports discussed below are completed on an ongoing basis over the 6-year cycle. Subsequently, the activity and content of the reports contribute to recertification standards, but the reports themselves are completed independent of the recertification process itself. Assessment reports are evaluated by the Collegewide Assessment Team and also reviewed by the College Area Review Committee as part of a discipline’s CAR report in Year 6.



Assessment reports for general education consist of:

- a. **Interim Data Collection & Assessment Updates**
- b. **Year-3 Integrated General Education Reflection Report**
- c. **Year-6 General Education Reflection Report (as part of the discipline's CAR report)**

***For detailed descriptions of information required for each report, please refer to the individual report sections below. To view a template of each report, please visit the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates.")**

a. Interim Data Collection & Assessment Updates (AKA "Annual Assessment Report")
Due Date: August 1st

Any discipline that has certified general education courses or has a degree/certificate program is required to complete an annual assessment update report at the end of years 1, 2, 4, and 5 in the assessment cycle (This report is not completed in Year 3 or Year 6). These reports are due by August 1st at the end of the assessment reporting year for that specific discipline or program. These quick updates (usually under 5 minutes to complete) provide information on whether the discipline or program has collected student learning outcomes data and provides information on any other assessment activities that the discipline or program may have worked on during the previous year.

This report is intended to act as a useful tool for faculty when they engage in their Year-3 Reflection report and their College Area Review report. The information recorded in these reports is ideally "pulled forward" and can assist discipline/program faculty by providing information and context for the assessment activities that have taken place over the past 3-year or 6-year period. These reports also provide important information on assessment activities across the College for the Office of Assessment.

What Questions make up the Interim Data Collection/Assessment Update?

NOTE: most questions on this report provide a drop-down menu for quick answer selection.

To complete the update report, you will need the information listed below. NOTE: the information listed in blue relates to collected data – if no data collection took place, the blue bullet points will not apply.

- The **academic assessment year** for which the current report is being completed (i.e., 2021-2022, 2022-2023, etc.).
 - Remember that you are providing an update on the activities that took place over *the past year* (For instance, if the report is due by August 1st, 2022, then the reporting year would be 2021-2022).
- The **name of your discipline and/or program**.
 - An individual report should be completed for each discipline and/or individual program unless prior approval has been granted to combine reports (data collection and other assessment activities may vary between programs in the same area and the information provided needs to be accurate and complete for each individual program.)
- **Your discipline/program's cycle year** for the report (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, etc.).
 - This is the year of the cycle that your discipline/program was completing when the reported activities took place (within the overall 6-year assessment cycle). For instance, Year 1 is the year immediately following the CAR report; Year 4 is the year immediately following the Year-3 Reflection Report, etc. (See the combined schedule

in *Appendix A* for your place in the cycle.)

- The **type of update report to complete**. Reports can include updates on Gen Ed assessment, program outcomes assessment, or both (depending on whether your discipline has Gen Ed courses and/or a degree or certificate program).
- If your discipline has both Gen Ed courses *and* a degree/certificate, update reports for both Gen Ed assessment and program updates for each program are required by August 1st, but each report can be done separately, at different times (if desired).
- **Whether your discipline/program collected data** during this reporting period.
 - Remember that this report is just an update on your assessment activities – your data collection plan may not have your discipline/program scheduled for data collection (scoring of data) during the reporting year that you’re completing. If not, indicate that no data collection took place for this particular question, and move on to the other questions on the update report (you will be guided past the additional data collection questions.)
- ***General data collection information** (*only if data collection took place).
 - **Total number of students assessed** (overall number of students across all sections of the course/program where data collection/scoring took place). For example, you might indicate that 60 students in total were assessed if you collected data/scored students across 2 sections of a particular course with 30 students in each section, etc.
 - **The semester(s) when data collection took place** (All that may apply: Fall, Spring, Summer, etc.).
 - **The campuses/forms of instruction where data collection took place** (All that may apply: i.e., structured remote (Rockville), DL web fully online, face-to-face Germantown, etc.).
 - **Individual courses where data collection took place** (i.e., COMM 108, etc.).
- **Information on any other assessment activities**
 - This question provides different ways for a discipline/program to indicate what assessment activities they have been engaged in over the past year
 - Several options are presented, and you can choose any (or all) that may apply:
 - *Implementation of previous planned actions*
 - *Implementation of CAR recommendations*
 - *Other (specify/briefly explain)*
 - This is an opportunity for your discipline/program to note any other assessment activities that faculty have been working on in the previous year. These noted actions can also be used later to help complete the Integrated Reflection Report in Year 3 or the CAR Report in year 6.
- **A primary contact for the report**
 - First line contact for the Office of Assessment regarding the report that was submitted. This name does not act as a substitute for the number of people that provided input for the report – this is simply a person to reach out to, if necessary, to initiate contact.

b. Year-3 General Education Integrated Reflection Report

(For disciplines with certified General Education courses)

Due Date: October 1st

The Year-3 General Education Integrated Reflection Report is completed during Year 3 of a discipline's assessment cycle and is due by October 1st of the following year. A separate Year-3 Program Assessment Reflection Report is also required to be completed if a discipline has a degree or certificate program.

What types of questions make up the Year-3 General Education Integrated Reflection Report?

To complete this report, you will need to provide the information listed below. *NOTE: the **information in blue relates to collected data** – if data collection did not take place, the blue bullet points will not apply. It is highly recommended that you complete your answers in a word document beforehand – you will be able to copy and paste your answers into the report, where applicable.

- a. The **academic assessment year** for which the current report is being completed (i.e., 2020-21, etc.).
- b. The **name of your discipline** (choose from a drop-down menu.)
- c. **Did data collection for General Education take place over the last two years?** (Yes/No).
 - a. If no, the report will skip to question 4. **If yes, you will need the following information:**
 - **Number of total students, courses & campuses, and type of instruction where data collection took place**
 - **A summary of assessment results for each Gen Ed competency in each Gen Ed course where data collection took place.**
 - **Describe what you have learned about your students, based on the current results of your general education assessment.**
- d. **Updates on the status of previous planned actions for improvement (from your last reflections report).**
 - a. **If data collection took place, you will also need the following information:**
 - **Current planned actions for improvement:**
 - **Indicate when newly created planned actions above will be implemented and how all faculty will be notified.**
 - **Discuss how your Gen Ed assessment activities (planned data collection, data results, new planned actions, etc.) relate to your discipline's goals & MC's strategic goals.**
- e. **Upload a completed CAR Recommendations Update Form.** A copy of the form can be accessed on the [Assessment Repository](#) site in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates.")
- f. **Enter a primary contact for the report**
 - First line contact for the Office of Assessment regarding the report that was submitted. This name does not act as a substitute for the number of people that provided input for the report – this is simply a person to reach out to, if necessary, to initiate contact.
- g. **List all individuals who participated in the completion of the report.**

c. Year-6 General Education Reflection Report

Due Date: October 1st (Incorporated into the CAR Report)

For the Year-6 General Education Reflection Report, disciplines will complete a reflection form which requires the information below (For a copy of the form, please access the [Assessment Repository](#) on Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates."))

This form should be attached to the discipline's CAR report regarding their discussion of student learning outcomes assessment.

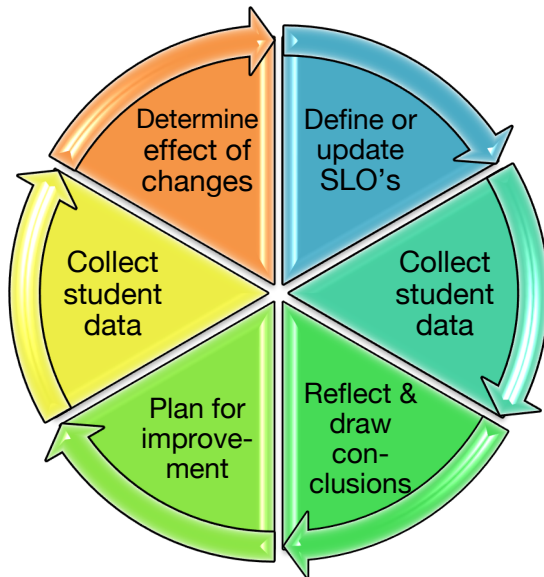
What types of assessment questions make up the Year-6 General Education Reflection Report?

- **Complete a Summary Reflection for each competency in each general education course where data collection took place** (See "What is a Summary Reflection" above.)
- **Discuss updates on past planned actions for improvement from your latest reflections report.**
- **Based on the last 2-year general education assessment period, discuss what your discipline has learned about your students.**
- **Indicate whether your discipline will be continuing any successful planned actions from the previous assessment and list/explain all new planned actions for improvement pertaining to the data results of student performance for this reflection** (see "Creating Planned Actions for Improvement" above.)
- **Indicate when the newly created planned actions above will be implemented and how all faculty will be notified.**
- **List all of the individuals who participated in the discussion for the reflection report and provide a contact person for the report.**

Academic Program Outcomes Assessment

Introduction & Overview

Program outcomes assessment includes the important steps of defining and then collecting evidence about program learning outcomes of a program. This process leads to improvement or validation of student-focused best practices. Program faculty reflect on the evidence collected and draw conclusions about the meaning of the evidence, develop a plan to improve student performance, and then continue to collect evidence to determine the effect of the changes.



Faculty involved in assessment need to be made fully aware of all aspects of the data gathering and outcomes assessment reflection plan prior to the start of the semester in order to plan their course(s) without any mid-semester adjustments needed to accommodate the assessment process.

Who participates in Program Outcomes Assessment?

College programs, whether they are academic or administrative, are required to perform assessment of their program outcomes, goals or initiatives.

- Every academic program that leads to a certificate or degree must report student learning outcomes data and plans for improvement and/or growth to support student success and completion.
- Special programs and academic areas that do not award a degree or certificate are also responsible for submitting a program outcomes assessment as part of both the Year-3 Integrated Report and the CAR
 - *Special Programs* are programs designed to support student success and learning that further the mission and vision of the college.

A faculty-based workgroup is convened to complete the reflection document. The makeup of this faculty workgroup is determined by the Dean and Chair and can include staff or administrator(s) if deemed necessary.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

The first step in the assessment process is to identify, clarify, and in some cases to create new program outcomes that are specific and measurable. Current program outcomes can be found in the MC Catalog. If clarification or updates are needed, this should be addressed through the curriculum process prior to the CAR, during year 5 of the assessment cycle.

For each measurement (outcome), program faculty will set satisfactory performance criteria. In some cases, faculty will need to establish rubrics that describe acceptable student performance. Program faculty will determine a benchmark, (an expected level of outcome achievement) that will be used to verify the level of achievement for a specific outcome.

Organizing & Completing Assessment Activities

Assessment at MC is intended to be a faculty-driven process. Academic and special programs can choose to organize and complete their assessment functions based on several factors: the size of the discipline and the number of courses offered, the ration of full-time to part-time faculty, and the leadership styles of the program's Coordinator(s), Chair(s) and Dean.

Below is the most common approach that programs use when completing the yearly reports in the program assessment cycle.

- In many areas it is the program coordinator or the Chair's designee who will act as the lead for program outcomes assessment activities and will often form a faculty workgroup to gather and analyze data and complete reports for their program. Depending on the Dean and the makeup of the program's discipline, these workgroups and the discipline leads will either be determined by the dean or the Dean's designee (Chair, coordinator, etc.)
- The program leads for outcomes assessment will be responsible for the following activities
 - Submit curriculum mapping, program assessment plans, and capstone course assignments/rubrics designed to determine student achievement levels and submit the completed form(s) every 6 years as part of the CAR (*or as part of a curriculum action*).
 - Consult with program faculty to formulate a data collection plan to score and upload assessment results during years 1, 2, 4 & 5 of their respective assessment cycle.
 - Submit the completed data collection plan(s) for all programs to the Collegewide Assessment Team for review, feedback, and approval.
 - Organize and oversee the data collection process.
 - Set up regular meetings every semester to discuss progress and assessment results. Discussion from these meetings will inform the Year-3 Integrated Report and the CAR Report.
 - In conjunction with all workgroups, prepare and submit all required reports, to include:
 - Annual Data Collection / Assessment updates
 - Year-3 Integrated report
 - Year-6 Program Outcomes Assessment (incorporated into the CAR report)
- Regardless of the program's approach to assessment, the following applies:
 - The Chairs are responsible for providing support and guidance for faculty members (as needed) throughout the assessment process and may, in conjunction with faculty members, assist with the assessment activities (when applicable).

- The Deans are responsible for ensuring that any assessment requirements for their areas are completed and submitted by the required due dates.

Curriculum Mapping: Choosing Courses that Best Support your Outcomes

By mapping required course outcomes to program outcomes, noting which topics are introduced, reinforced, and applied throughout the curriculum, faculty will begin to see what knowledge, skills and attitudes are currently taught. This information will be the basis for a discussion among faculty as they work to define what they want the program to achieve.

List Course Name and Number (BIOL 110)	Program Learning Outcomes							
	Learning Outcome 1:		Learning Outcome 2:		Learning Outcome 3:		Learning Outcome 4:	
	Level	Assessment	Level	Assessment	Level	Assessment	Level	Assessment
BIOL 101	I	P	I	E	I	PO	I	O
BIOL 295	M	P	R	E	M	PO	R	O

Choosing appropriate course(s) in the program curriculum (where students are expected to demonstrate their achievement of the most advanced levels of program outcomes), provides a way to measure student performance for program expectations. A method of assessment that can provide measurement of acceptable performance for a student majoring in the program will provide evidence that can be collated, reported, and discussed by faculty as part of the Program Outcomes Assessment report (See: *Capstone Assignments, next section*).

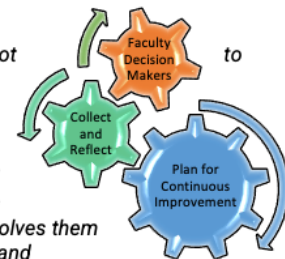
The goal of the MC assessment process is to produce evidence that the faculty and administration will find credible, enlightening, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. By gathering direct evidence of success and in students' learning a program can see and react to trends by making adjustments and improvements.

By gathering student outcome achievement data regularly and merging it with demographic data like gender, age, race, and even their success-rate or completion of prior coursework, the faculty workgroup will gather important insights that can help to identify an area of concern. The next step is to determine and implement strategies for addressing these concerns.

For more information on curriculum mapping, please visit the [Assessment Repository](#) resources in Blackboard.

FROM THE AALHE's 9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

"The point of assessment is not gather data and return 'results'; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers (faculty) that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement."¹



Goals, Student Insight, Data

Valuable data points are available once assessment scoring takes place. By linking student scores to M numbers, numerical data are generated that not only include information on student performance, but also demographic information. This information can help the workgroup consider the implications of possible outside factors on scores and should lead to strategies and plans to improve specific outcomes for specific groups of students.

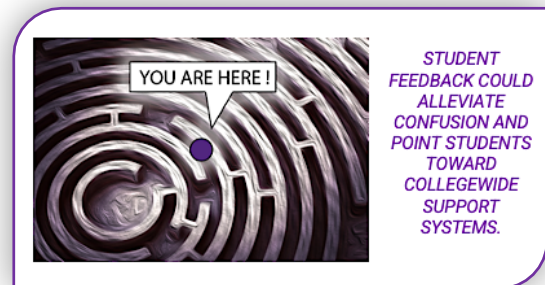
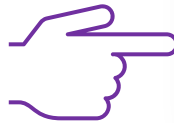
Special programs and academic areas that do not award a degree or certificate can enter scores and access integrated data for courses, special projects, and/or enrollment trends. These Programs are expected to reflect on the relationship between program goals and student success data, and to make recommendations for improvement during the Program Assessment portion of the CAR.

Student Feedback

The College Area Review (CAR) requires a channel for student feedback to be considered by faculty as part of that review. Some type of student survey or feedback mechanism should be part of your assessment planning. Polling students on attitudes and challenges related to collegewide support and achievement like academic planning (SAP), program advising, transfer plans, financial aid and program improvements could lead to necessary, and sometimes simple changes in policy or strategy that help a student navigate, improve instruction, enrollment and/or graduation rates.

A survey or feedback channel is also a source for the topics covered in the Year 3 Integrated Report:

- *Discuss how your Program Outcomes assessment activities (planned data collection, data results, any new proposed actions, etc.) will relate to EACH of the following goals:*
- *Improvement/achievement of your discipline/program goals*
Achievement of MC's 2025 goals
- *Briefly discuss the actions that your program will take to improve retention, enrollment,*



Creating Your Program Outcomes Assessment Plan

Your Assessment Instrument

Assessment instruments are the tools that will be used to collect data that reflect student performance. These may take many forms and depend on the discipline, course material, and the competencies or outcomes being measured. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: written exams, oral exams, practical exams/exercises, papers, course assignments, lab exercises, capstone projects, high impact practices, etc.

Questions to consider when choosing an assessment instrument:

- Does the assignment or exercise truly reflect student performance for the specific outcome you want to collect data for? (Validity)
- How can it be measured? (Scoring Scale? Correct/incorrect answer? Rubric with defined parameters? etc.).

The key to a successful implementation of a Program Outcomes Assessment Plan is clear and timely communication with all participants. This could include faculty (FT & PT) who will be teaching the program's capstone course(s) and the courses that support it, or staff and administrators in a special program. The Program Assessment Plan determines "what" will be assessed and benchmarks that indicate the degree of success achieved by students.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking refers to the process by which a discipline or program sets a standard of measurement (or benchmark) for evaluating or comparing student performance during and after the assessment and reassessment process. For instance, what percentage of students is expected to attain expected outcomes, or exceed expectations? What percentage of students may fall below standards of success? Please see the quick tips below regarding benchmarking:

Where should we start?

- Benchmarks should reflect a combination of the high academic standards of your discipline, tempered with a realistic expectation of success among your students. A discipline's faculty may want 100% of their students to place in the "advanced" performance level for quantitative analysis, but while this unrealistic benchmark *might* be possible for some programs, it would realistically be an unprecedented event for most. Setting your initial benchmarks is like forming a hypothesis about student performance based on the information you have - your assessment will test that hypothesis and let you know how your students are *actually performing*.

Should all of our benchmarks be the same across all competencies?

- If students in your discipline knowingly struggle with writing skills, then the expected benchmarks that your discipline sets across the "advanced" and "proficient" levels of this competency might not be as high as some expected percentages in your other competencies. On the other hand, if your students normally exceed with oral presentations, then the oral communication benchmark might be set a little higher. Benchmarks should blend the academic rigor of your course with expected student performance levels.

We want our discipline to look good...

- Purposely setting benchmarks **low** in an effort to make the results look good only hurts your students in the end – *don't try to manipulate the results beforehand*. The purpose of assessment is to discover how students **are actually performing**; an important part of this is finding out where the strengths and weaknesses of that performance may be in order to act on those results to improve some areas to better support student learning, reformat areas that really shine, and let your students show how successful they can be.

Who sets the benchmarks?

- Faculty who are teaching the courses to be assessed know their students the best - a discussion should be initiated around benchmarks that reflect both desired and expected levels of student performance.

Evidence Gathering

Evidence gathering for academic programs at MC consists of scoring and student performance levels on program outcomes. The results derived from these data are reported in both the **Year-3 Integrated Reflections Report** and the **College Area Review (CAR) Report**.

Creating your Data Collection Plan

The process of gathering (or collecting) program outcomes “data” refers to the actual collection of student assignments or projects to be “scored” in accordance with your discipline’s program outcomes assessment plan. This collection of student performance across each competency takes place during years 1-2 and years 4-5 of your discipline’s assessment cycle and follows the data collection plan created by your discipline. Once the data are collected, the act of “scoring” or evaluating student performance takes place, to be uploaded to the MC assessment system for analysis (see “Scoring & Uploading your Collected Data” – next section.)

For example, certain disciplines might only collect data on an annual basis and might only score a random sample of the student assessments because of the *sheer numbers of students in their program*. But smaller disciplines/programs with fewer students in their key program courses might collect data every semester, or every time a capstone course is run, to ensure that scoring is sufficient to be reflected upon and to determine possible plans for improvement.

Since faculty are the experts for their specific courses and requirements, it is up to the discipline coordinator and faculty members teaching in the discipline to determine the plan for collecting data withing years 1-2 and 4-5 of their designated assessment schedule. The Data Collection Plan should be created with careful consideration of the following:

When creating your data collection plan, you should:

- Examine when and how the assessment instrument is assigned (semesters, campuses, modality, etc.) in order to capture a diverse and rich sample of student performance for each program outcome across different settings if possible.
- Ensure that data collection encompasses an appropriate number of course sections and that the number of students per section is suitable for an assessment sample (see *sampling below*.)
- Take into consideration the faculty members who may be teaching multiple sections of a given course and weigh any potential effects that might be created from additional time requirements/duties regarding scoring responsibilities.
- Guarantee that the appropriate data will be collected, scored, and available for analysis/discussion in order to meet the requirements and deadlines for completing the Year-3 Program Outcomes Assessment Reflection Report and the 6-Year Reflection Report (*incorporated into the CAR*).

How much data do we need to collect?

**In addition to the information below, please also refer to the data chart in Appendix C for guidance on how much data may be appropriate for your program.*

The amount of data to collect depends on the size and number of sections and students completing the program. Some [common data collection questions/answers](#) have been provided

below for guidance; however, when in doubt, please contact the Office of Assessment for assistance in determining the appropriate amount of data for your discipline.

- 5) Question: For years 1-2 and 4-5 of the assessment cycle titled “Data Collection,” do we have to collect/score data each year during these 2-year periods?
Quick Answer: *No. Although data are required to be collected/scored during each of these 2-year periods, determining when to actually do the scoring during these periods is decided by the individual discipline. The requirement is that the appropriate data are collected and assessed prior to each reporting period (before Year 3 & again before year 6) when data analysis and the writing of reflections take place.

Flexibility is provided to disciplines within these 2-year periods to determine the most useful schedule to meet this requirement. ***However**, if your discipline happens to have a small number of course sections and the enrollment numbers within these sections are small, data collection/scoring may be required each year. For example, if your discipline’s upper-level course(s) where the assessment instrument is scored are only offered during one semester each year and they have less than 30 students enrolled, you would want to collect/score all students during both years of each 2-year data collection cycle to ensure that you have an adequate amount of student work to assess for your reflection reports in Years 3 & 6.

- 6) Question: My discipline has planned to collect/score outcome assessment data during years 1 and 4 of the cycle - do we need to collect/score all students in all sections of our general education courses during years 1 & 4?

Quick Answer: It depends on the number of sections and students enrolled in the course(s) for which collection/scoring is taking place. For instance, if your discipline only offers 2 sections of a course with approximately 25 students per section during your planned collection year, then you may need to assess all students within both sections. On the other hand, if 15 sections of the course(s) where the assessment instrument is scored are offered during your collection year with approximately 25 students per section, your discipline could actually collect a “sample” of student work from across all 15 sections (*please see “sampling” below.*)

- 7) Question: Can our data collection plan be revised, and if so, when can this be done?

Quick Answer: *Yes (*but they should not be revised during a 2-year collection period without first obtaining approval from the Office of Assessment). Data plans are intended to reflect the most effective way to collect data for the individual discipline and should be updated when necessary. There are 3 ways that data collection plans can be changed: 1) as an intended action that is incorporated into a discipline’s Year-3 Reflection Report or CAR Report; 2) as part of the general education recertification process; or 3) with consultation/approval from the Office of Assessment.

For an example of a program outcomes data collection plan, see “[Assessment in Practice](#)” (below).

Assessment in Practice

Practical Example: Program Outcomes Data Collection Plan

Here is an example of a data collection plan for a program with 5 program outcomes. Notice that the plan calls for gathering data from two separate courses (*assessment instruments*) to determine the levels of success on program outcomes (*if your program also has Gen Ed courses, you will need to incorporate data collection for both program and Gen Ed – see Appendix B for an example.*)

Assessment Cycle Planning Sheet (Example)															
Zoology (Code 777)				CAR (Planning Stage)		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
				Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Program Outcome or General Education Competency?	List the outcome or competency	Course	What will be collected?	Writing Report	Writing Report	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Findings Discussed	Report Submitted	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection
Program Outcome 1	Connect & describe the concepts that make up the structure and function of all living things through the principles of genetics, cellular biology, and physiology	ZOOL 230	ZOOL 230 Signature Assignment				X	X						X	X
Program Outcome 1	Same as above	ZOOL 245	Exam			X							X		
Program Outcome 3	Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of life through the principles of evolution	ZOOL 250	Exam			X							X		
Program Outcome 3	Same as above	ZOOL 245	Exam			X							X		
Program Outcome 2	Make connections between organisms, their habitats, and systems through the principles of biology	ZOOL 250	Lab Project			X							X		
Program Outcome 4	Identify, think through, and solve a problem using quantitative reasoning and critical thinking skills	ZOOL 230	ZOOL 230					X							X
Program Outcome 5	Develop a sense of competence in the field of study through research experiences and written and oral communication of findings	ZOOL 255	Research Paper						X						X
Program Outcome 5	Same as above	ZOOL 260	Capstone Project			X			X			X			X

***Important Note:** Certificate and degree programs are required to provide quick updates on their program outcomes data collection and assessment activities each year by completing the Interim Data Collection Update/Annual Report (see the section on “*Reporting and Planning for the Future*” for more detail). These quick reports are due by August 1st each year during Years 1-2 and 4-5 within a discipline’s defined 6-year assessment cycle.

*An editable copy of this worksheet can be accessed through the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled “*Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates.*”)

Your Comprehensive Program Assessment Plan

The Program Assessment Plan form provided can be filled in with the program name, discipline name, contact information and Dean. Each outcome is listed down the left-hand side, exactly as it is published in the catalog. The form provides examples of how to fill out these four columns of information:

- **Methods of Assessment:** What will the assessment instrument be? What will you use to assess the students? *Example: An essay paper, a project, an oral presentation, a portfolio.*
- **Assessment Course:** In what class or event will information be gathered to assess this outcome? *Example: TVRA 260 Video Production Portfolio*
- **Assessment Scoring:** What score or level of performance is considered to be acceptable for a student majoring in the program?
 - *Example: An acceptable level is for students to earn 85 out of 100 points on the project.*
- **Benchmark or Expected Level of Outcome Achievement:** What percentage of your students do you expect to meet the criteria of success for this outcome?
 - *Example: We want at least 75% of the students to receive 85 points on the project.*

The illustration below represents an example of how outcomes, methods of assessment, scoring and benchmarks are reflected in a program assessment plan.

ASSESSMENT PLAN				
Student Learning Outcome	*Methods of Assessment	Assessment Course	Assessment Scoring	Benchmark or Expected Level of Outcome Achievement
Official program learning outcomes as listed in the Montgomery College Catalog	What will the assessment instrument be? What will you use to assess the students?	In what class or event will information be gathered to assess this outcome?	What score or level of performance is considered to be acceptable for a student majoring in the program?	What percentage of your students do you expect to meet the criteria of success for this outcome?
<i>Example: Students will be able to apply principles of evidence-based medicine to determine clinical diagnoses</i>	<i>Example: An essay paper</i>	<i>Example: CYBER 101 or 2nd Annual Juried Art Show</i>	<i>Example: An acceptable level is for students to earn 85 out of 100 points on the project</i>	<i>Example: We want at least 75% of the students to receive 85 points on the project</i>
Students will be able to Successfully record video and audio in studio and on location with various professional cameras, microphones, lights and recording devices.	Evaluation of video portfolio.	TVRA 236 Radio Station Operation or TVRA 260 Video Production Portfolio	An acceptable level is for students to earn “Proficient” on the “Technical Skills” section of the Digital Media Portfolio Rubric.	We want at least 80% of the students to meet expectations and 10% of the students to exceed expectations on the “Technical Skills” section of the Digital Media Portfolio Rubric.

Data Scoring and Analysis

Scoring & Uploading Your Collected Data

Before You Score...

Before any scoring takes place, it is *strongly recommended* that all participants in the scoring process meet to discuss how to interpret and evaluate the data and to know what is expected of them. There are often differences of opinion regarding what values to assign for a student’s work and it is imperative that all faculty members are in agreement to ensure consistency in scoring to produce the useful data. It is suggested that at least one piece of student work is scored together and discussed as a group before further scoring takes place to promote inter-rater reliability.

Scoring Student Work for Assessment

Depending on the size of the discipline and the number of certificate and/or degree programs, a group of faculty representatives from the discipline (versus every individual instructor) may be organized to complete the final scoring and uploading of program assessment data.

Scoring (or rating) the performance of students in your program is an important evaluation process to determine how well students are successfully attaining program outcomes. The scoring process for program outcomes involves the use of predetermined measures to assess the performance level demonstrated by students on designated assignments/exercises/etc. The scoring criteria and benchmarks for student performance that are utilized during this process are determined by faculty who teach in the program and can be found in the Program Assessment Plan (see “*Benchmarking*” above for more information.)

While scoring and grading can be interrelated, there are important differences between these two functions. All participants involved in the scoring process should be made aware of these differences to ensure that the scoring process produces the most accurate and useful data results possible. For an explanation of how “grading” and “scoring” differ, please see “*Why Grades are not Enough*” on page 1 (recommended reading for all faculty involved in assessment activities).

Uploading the Data

- Once scoring is complete for a given data set, designated faculty members will enter the results into the designated area specified by the Office of Assessment to be stored for immediate and/or future analysis.
- Collectively, these data provide an important holistic view of student performance on program learning outcomes across the discipline.
- Statistical analysis will be performed on the data by the Office of Assessment and/or lead faculty members, resulting in aggregated results that are NOT identified with any instructors. These results should then be provided to all faculty members teaching in the program for analysis and reflection. (Please see next section “*Data Analysis: Making Sense of the Results*” for more information.)

Data Analysis: Making Sense of the Results

Examining the data:

Step 1:

Take a look at the performance results from a broad level: overall, what do the benchmark results look like? How did your students (or the course, program, etc.) perform as a whole? Was the overall benchmark of proficiency met for each of the outcomes? By how much? Are there any red flags that stand out with the overall results? If a test was used, did students perform better on certain test items than others?

Step 2:

Now begin looking at the performance results within each specific area, competency, or outcome that was measured. Is there a specific area where performance excelled? Is there an area that indicated unsatisfactory results/where students appear to be struggling?

Step 3:

Next, compare the results from this performance assessment to the prior performance assessment. What changes are present? Did a category/competency show signs of improvement? Are there any indications of weakness or decline in a particular category/competency?

Step 4:

Finally, based on the data summary provided to you, examine the data according to demographic information and any specific information that you might have requested for your summary (i.e. male v. female, full-time students v. part-time students, online v. face-to-face, etc.). Try to discover any obvious performance divisions, as well as nuances in the data (meaningful differences that might be subtle, but important). For instance, try to determine if there are any performance gaps that need to be addressed, and/or where performance may be exceeding expectations.

Step 5:

Compile your notes and share/discuss the results with colleagues. This analysis will provide the basis for any upcoming assessment report summary and for the planned actions that your group will create to address performance levels to aid in student success.

Everyone teaching the course that was assessed should be informed of how students performed and be involved in any discussions for future planned actions relating to assessment.

This communication should include:

- the purpose in assessing learning outcomes
- the learning outcomes that are being assessed
- the common assessment instrument to be administered
- when the assessment is to be administered during the semester
- what students should be told about the assessment and its purpose
- the common rubric or answer key to be used in scoring the assessment
- how to enter scores into the scoring spreadsheet that will be provided
- the fact that assessment results will never be reported in a way that could reflect on the performance of an individual faculty member or student
- and of course, the results and specific actions that the discipline/program plans to implement for improvement.

Some departments have prepared and distributed a memorandum to all faculty who will be participating in the assessment that provides information on the items listed above. An example of such a memorandum is included in *Appendix D: Memo: Assessment Data Collection - Beginning of semester "Heads up"*

Summary Reflections & Planned Actions for Improvement

What is a Summary Reflection?





College programs, whether they are academic or administrative, are required to perform assessment of their program outcomes, goals, or initiatives as they relate to the MC mission and strategic plan. To document the important faculty discussions and planned actions that come from analysis of the data collected, the program workgroup submits a Summary Reflection form (see *step 5 of "Examining the Data", page 42.*) These notes and results are used to complete this important part of the Year 3 summary report and the CAR report. Capturing this collaborative thinking is what makes assessment valuable and effective. Summary reflections are revisited in year 3 (*by October 1*) and year 6 (*by October 1*) when there is new data to compare and when it is time to reflect on the effectiveness of changes to instructional practices that were recommended as part of the previous summary.

This part of "Program Assessment" gives faculty and others involved a voice in the evaluation and analysis of the data and the ability to suggest or support new recommendations based on the analysis of data. Collegewide initiatives and goals should be part of this reflection. The reflection report includes the number of students assessed, the semester(s) that data was collected, a summary of the data including percentages and demographic results, and a comparison of results to previous data collection periods.

This summary is repeated for each program outcome. The last portion of the summary report asks you to reflect on planned actions from your most recent report (3 years ago) and determine if those recommendations should continue or be updated. There is an opportunity to add planned actions based on the most recent data. This report is then reviewed by the Collegewide Assessment Team (CAT) and feedback is provided to faculty members.

Creating Planned Actions for Improvement

Planned actions are actions created by faculty members to address any weaknesses or gaps that have been identified in student performance. These actions should be specific, measurable, and clearly defined. They should also be timely (promptly executed) within a reasonable time frame (i.e., starting next semester, etc.).

	VAGUE / GENERALIZED		SPECIFIC / MEASURABLE
	"We plan to explore options that might increase student performance on lab reports."		"Faculty will develop and implement in-class exercises designed to increase student performance on lab reports."
	"Faculty will help students during the semester with improving their communication skills."		"The course ARTT 140 will include a module designed to improve communication skills in the area of arts management."

Please see the examples below for "[Assessment in Practice](#)."

Assessment in Practice

Zoology faculty have analyzed the results from their capstone assignment(s) data and have discovered that their students are excelling in many of the outcomes but seem to be struggling on the fourth outcome – "...communicate scientific information through effective formal and informal writing".

Practical Example:

The discipline faculty have developed planned actions that they believe will support student improvement in these areas. Please see the examples below:

Planned Action #1

Faculty will develop four quick interactive exercises in the classroom that aid students in improving their scientific writing skills. These exercises will be administered by all faculty beginning next semester. Two exercises will be administered to students before the midterm exam and two exercises will be administered after the midterm exam. This will help faculty assess how effective the exercises may be over the course of the semester in order to adjust the timing (if necessary) to align with specific content.

Planned Action #2

In consultation with librarians, faculty will create a library research guide for Zoology courses that students can access online. These guides will provide information and resources to aid students in developing scientific vocabulary and targeted research skills.

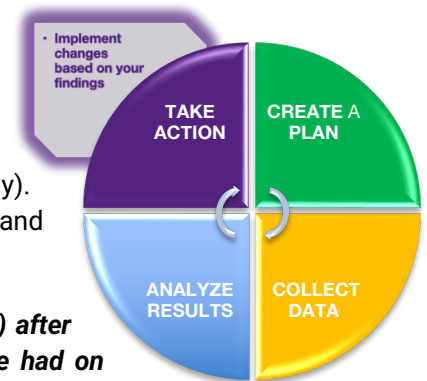
Possible 3rd Planned action

Faculty will set up a 1-hour session in the classroom for librarians to present information to students about conducting research online.

Sharing Results & Tracking Improvement

The Important Concept of “Closing the Loop”

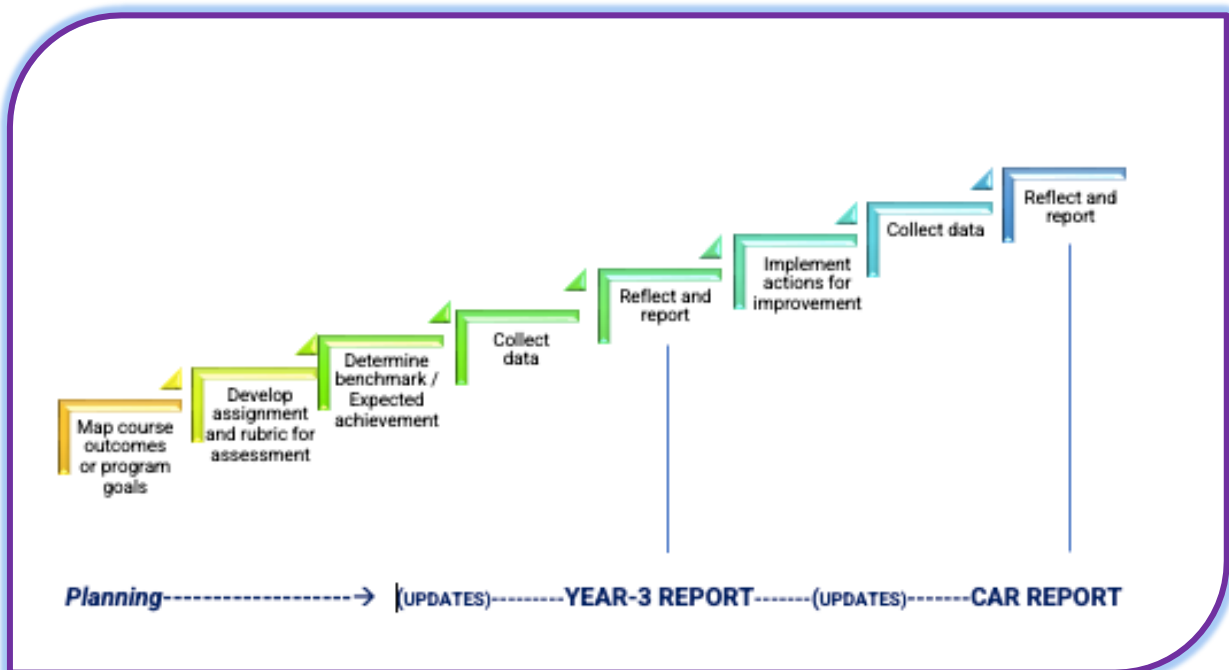
While some faculty may associate the assessment process with data collection and writing reports, these activities represent only half of the process of assessing student learning. One of the most important aspects of assessment is the expectation that **results garnered from the process will then be interpreted and utilized to initiate positive, measurable change for improvement.** This critical, final step of analyzing and implementing action to improve student learning, is known as **“closing the loop”** of the assessment/reassessment cycle. Closing the Loop takes place at MC as part of the Year-3 Integrated Report and as part of the College Area Review (CAR). These positive, measurable changes are represented in assessment reports as **“planned actions” or “recommendations.”** These actions are formulated through discussion by faculty and administrators and are intended to be “action plans” for immediate implementation (respectively). Feedback on proposed actions is then provided by assessment committees and administrative leaders.



The final step in “Closing the Loop” is to **review the results (data collected) after these actions have been implemented to determine what impact they have had on student success**, thus initiating the assessment cycle (or loop) once again for improvement.

Reporting for Program Assessment

The reporting requirements for the assessment of programs consist of annual updates during years 1, 2, 4 & 5 for each certificate or degree and/or special program for its assessment activities, and a report every three years that analyzes student performance on program outcomes or goals. Assessment reports are evaluated by the Collegewide Assessment Team and reviewed by the College Area Review Committee and as part of a program’s CAR report in Year 6.



Assessment reports for Program Assessment consist of:

- a. **Annual Update: Interim Data Collection & Assessment Report - (Year 1, 2, 4 & 5)**
- b. **Year-3 Program Assessment Integrated Reflections Report**
- c. **Year-6 Program Assessment Reflection Report (as part of the discipline's CAR report)**

***For detailed descriptions of information required for each report, please refer to the individual report sections below. To view a template of each report, please visit the [Assessment Repository](#) on Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates.")**

a. Annual Update: Interim Data Collection & Assessment Report
Due Date: August 1st

Any discipline that has a degree or certificate program is required to complete an annual assessment update report at the end of years 1, 2, 4, and 5 in the assessment cycle (This report is not completed in Year 3 or Year 6.) These reports are due by August 1st at the end of the assessment reporting year for that specific discipline or program. These quick updates (usually under 5 minutes to complete) provide information on whether the discipline or program has collected student learning outcomes data and provides information on any other assessment activities that the discipline or program may have worked on during the previous year.

This report is intended to act as a useful tool for faculty when they engage in their Year-3 Reflection report and their College Area Review report. The information recorded in these reports is ideally "pulled forward" and can assist discipline/program faculty by providing information and context for the assessment activities that have taken place over the past 3-year or 6-year period. These reports also provide important information on assessment activities across the College for the Office of Assessment.

What Questions make up the Interim Data Collection/Assessment Update?

NOTE: most questions on this report provide a drop-down menu for quick answer selection.

To complete the update report, you will need the information listed below. NOTE: the information listed in blue relates to collected data – if no data collection took place, the blue bullet points will not apply.

- The **academic assessment year** for which the current report is being completed (i.e., 2021-2022, 2022-2023, etc.).
 - Remember that you are providing an update on the activities that took place over *the past year* (For instance, if the report is due by August 1st, 2022, then the reporting year would be 2021-2022.)
- The **name of your discipline and/or program**.
 - An individual report should be completed for each discipline and/or individual program unless prior approval has been granted to combine reports (data collection and other assessment activities may vary between programs in the same area and the information provided needs to be accurate and complete for each individual program.)
- **Your discipline/program's cycle year** for the report (i.e., Year 1, Year 2, etc.).
 - This is the year of the cycle that your discipline/program was completing when the reported activities took place (within the overall 6-year assessment cycle). For instance, Year 1 is the year immediately following the CAR report; Year 4 is the year immediately following the Year-3 Reflection Report, etc. (See the combined schedule in *Appendix A* for your place in the cycle.)

- **The type of update report to complete.** Reports can include updates on Gen Ed assessment, program outcomes assessment, or both (depending on whether your discipline has Gen Ed courses and/or a degree or certificate program).
 - If your discipline has both Gen Ed courses *and* a degree/certificate, update reports for both Gen Ed assessment and program updates for each program are required by August 1st, but each report can be done separately, at different times (if desired).
- **Whether your discipline/program collected data** during this reporting period.
 - Remember that this report is just an update on your assessment activities – your data collection plan may not have your discipline/program scheduled for data collection (scoring of data) during the reporting year that you’re completing. If not, indicate that no data collection took place for this particular question, and move on to the other questions on the update report (you will be guided past the additional data collection questions.)
- ***General data collection information** (*only if data collection took place).
 - **Total number of students assessed** (overall number of students across all sections of the course/program where data collection/scoring took place). For example, you might indicate that 60 students in total were assessed if you collected data/scored students across 2 sections of a particular course with 30 students in each section, etc.
 - **The semester(s) when data collection took place** (All that may apply: Fall, Spring, Summer, etc.).
 - **The campuses/forms of instruction where data collection took place** (All that may apply: i.e., structured remote (Rockville), DL web fully online, face-to-face Germantown, etc.).
 - **Individual courses where data collection took place** (i.e., COMM 108, etc.).
- **Information on any other assessment activities**
 - This question provides different ways for a discipline/program to indicate what assessment activities they have been engaged in over the past year
 - Several options are presented, and you can choose any (or all) that may apply:
 - *Implementation of previous planned actions*
 - *Implementation of CAR recommendations*
 - *Other (specify/briefly explain)*
 - This is an opportunity for your discipline/program to note any other assessment activities that faculty have been working on in the previous year. These noted actions can also be used later to help complete the Integrated Reflection Report in Year 3 or the CAR Report in year 6.
- **A primary contact for the report**
 - The person listed will act as first line contact for the Office of Assessment regarding the report that was submitted. This name does not act as a substitute for the number of people that provided input for the report – this is simply a person to reach out to, if necessary, to initiate contact.

b. Year-3 Program Outcomes Integrated Reflection Report

(For disciplines with certificate or degree programs)

Due Date: October 1st

The Year-3 Program Outcomes Integrated Reflection Report is completed during Year 3 of a program's cycle and is due by October 1st of the following year. A separate Year-3 Gen Ed Reflection Report is also required to be completed if a program has Gen Ed courses.

What types of questions make up the Year-3 Program Assessment Integrated Reflection Report?

To complete this report, you will need to provide the information listed below. *NOTE: the **information in blue relates to collected data** – if data collection did not take place, the blue bullet points will not apply. It is highly recommended that you complete your answers in a word document beforehand – you will be able to copy and paste your answers into the report, where applicable.

- a. The **academic assessment year** for which the current report is being completed (i.e., 2020-21, etc.).
- b. The **name of your program** (choose from a drop-down menu).
- c. **Did data collection on program outcomes take place over the last two years?** (Yes/No).
 - b. If no, the report will skip to question 4. **If yes, you will need the following information:**
 - o **Number of total students, courses & campuses, and type of instruction where data collection took place**
 - **A summary of assessment results for each program outcome where data collection took place.**
 - **Describe what you have learned about your students, based on the current results of your program outcomes assessment**
- d. **Updates on the status of previous planned actions for improvement (from your last reflections report).**
 - a. **If data collection took place, you will also need the following information:**
 - **Current planned actions for improvement:**
 - **Indicate when newly created planned actions above will be implemented and how all faculty will be notified.**
 - **Discuss how your program assessment activities** (planned data collection, data results, new planned actions, etc.) **relate to your program goals & MC's strategic goals.**
 - e. **Enrollment and Program Awards updates** (yes/no questions).
 - b. **Has enrollment in your program decreased by more than 20% over the last 3 years?**
 - c. **Program awards: Has your program awarded at least 15 degrees/certificates in the last 3 years (at least 5 per year)?**
 - d. *Based on the above answers, you might be directed to an additional question if program viability is in question: **Briefly discuss the actions that your program will take to improve retention, enrollment, and/or graduation rates.**
- f. **Upload a completed CAR Recommendations Update Form.**

A copy of the form can be accessed on the [Assessment Repository](#) site in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "Assessment

Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates.")

g. Enter a primary contact for the report

The person listed will act as first line contact for the Office of Assessment regarding the report that was submitted. This name does not act as a substitute for the number of people that provided input for the report – this is simply a person to reach out to, if necessary, to initiate contact.

h. List all individuals who participated in the completion of the report.

c. Year-6 Program Assessment Reflection Report

Due Date: October 1st (Incorporated into the CAR Report)

For the Year-6 Reflection Report, disciplines will complete a reflection form which requires the information below. This form should be attached to the discipline's CAR report regarding their discussion of student learning outcomes assessment. A copy of the form can be accessed on the [Assessment Repository](#) site in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "*Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates.*")

What types of assessment questions make up the Year-6 Program Outcomes Reflection Report?

- **Complete a Summary Reflection that includes each program outcome where data collection took place** (See "What is a Summary Reflection" above.)
- **Discuss and provide updates on past planned actions for improvement from your latest reflections report.**
- **Based on the last 2-year program outcome assessment period, discuss what your discipline has learned about your students.**
- **Indicate whether your discipline will be continuing any successful planned actions from the previous assessment and list/explain all new planned actions for improvement pertaining to the data results of student performance for this reflection** (see "Creating Planned Actions for Improvement" above.)
- **Indicate when the newly created planned actions above will be implemented and how all faculty will be notified.**
- **List all of the individuals who participated in the discussion for the reflection report and provide a contact person for the report.**
- **Enter a primary contact for the report**
 - The person listed will act as first line contact for the Office of Assessment regarding the report that was submitted. This name does not act as a substitute for the number of people that provided input for the report – this is simply a person to reach out to, if necessary, to initiate contact.

Administrative & Special Programs Assessment Introduction & Overview

Assessment of administrative & special programs is the process that examines an area's success with achieving outcomes and institutional priorities. The results of this examination are incorporated into an institutional 6-year review for the area. The purpose of an institutional review for any area is to answer the following questions:

- How are we doing from an over-arching operational college wide perspective?
- Are we an efficient and effective organization?

Who participates in Administrative Assessment?

This category includes administrative areas or special programs such as the Learning Centers, WDCE, or the MC Library.

Organizing & Completing Assessment Activities

Each area at the College differs on how they choose to organize and complete their assessment functions. The organization of assessment activities is often dependent on several factors: the size of the area, the number of services offered, and the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty or staff. The styles of leadership within each area may also be a determining factor.

Below is the most common approach that areas use when completing assessment activities:

- In many areas, it is a coordinator or director who acts as the lead for assessment activities who will often form workgroups to organize and complete reports for any major assessment requirements. Depending on the leader and the makeup of the area, these workgroups and the leads for the workgroups will either be determined by the Dean or Director of that given area, or by their designee (Chair, coordinator, etc.).
- The area lead(s) for assessment will be responsible for the following activities:
 - Submit assessment plans for determining outcome or goal achievement levels
 - Consult with faculty or staff to formulate a data collection plan
 - Submit the Year-3 CAR updates form to the Office of Assessment for review, feedback, and approval.
 - Organize and oversee the data collection process.
 - Organize a workgroup or meetings with faculty or staff to discuss and reflect on the data indicating the levels of achievement on specified outcomes or goals.
 - In conjunction with all workgroups, prepare and submit all required reports, to include:
 - Year-3 CAR Recommendations Update
 - Year-6 College Area Review (CAR) Report
- Regardless of the organizational approach used, the following apply:
 - The area leaders are responsible for providing support and guidance for area faculty or staff (as needed) throughout the assessment process and may play an active role in

assessment activities (when applicable for that area). Deans or Directors are responsible for ensuring that any assessment requirements for their areas are completed and submitted by the required due dates

Examining Goals/Outcomes & Alignment with the College Mission

Administrative areas should consistently review their goals and ensure that these goals are aligned with the current MC strategic themes. During the CAR process, areas are required to list their unit's goals and provide the status of any initiatives taken to support the theme(s), where applicable. Discussion among area members should take place that considers what instruments or methods will be used to assess these initiatives for effectiveness.

Creating Your Assessment Plan

Your Assessment Instrument

Assessment instruments represent the tools that will be used to collect data that reflect a program or area's performance in achieving related outcomes or goals. These may take many forms and depend on the area services, course material, and the goals or outcomes being measured. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Student work samples (where applicable): written exams, oral exams, practical exams/exercises, papers, course assignments, lab exercises, capstone projects, high impact practices, etc.
- Surveys of students and/or staff
- A data set from specific work products that reflect the area's mission or goals.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking refers to the process by which a discipline or program sets a standard of measurement (or benchmark) for evaluating or comparing performance during and after the assessment and reassessment process. For instance, what percentage of students is expected to attain proficiency in a given competency, or possibly exceed expectations? Did performance increase for a specific area after a new system or new technologies were implemented? How many students utilized a particular tool, service, or opportunity? (These are just a few examples of performance measurement – approaches may differ depending on the specific outcomes/goals being measured).

Please see the quick tips below regarding benchmarking:

Where should we start?

- Benchmarks should reflect a combination of the high standards associated with your area or program, tempered with a realistic expectation of performance. For instance, what level of satisfaction is acceptable for users of your service or program? What do you realistically expect to see in the results?
- Setting your initial benchmarks is like forming a hypothesis about the level of performance you expect to see, based on the information you have - your assessment will test that hypothesis and show how that performance actually compares to your expectations.

Should all of our benchmarks be the same across all outcomes or goals?

- Not necessarily. Performance may be expected to vary for different reasons across any administrative area or across multiple outcomes or goals. For instance, if students in an instructional area knowingly struggle with writing skills, then the expected benchmarks that are set for the levels of this outcome might not be as high as the expected levels for other outcomes. For administrative areas, there may be an outcome or goal that is new, or a service that is still being developed - the performance expectation for this service might not be initially as high as the expected benchmark for other, more established services. In contrast, if you know that students perform *very high* in a certain area, or that a service or tool typically *exceeds* expectations, then this specific benchmark might be set at a higher level than the others.

We want our program/area to look good...

- Purposely setting benchmarks **low** in an effort to make the actual results look good only hurts your program/area in the end – *don't try to manipulate the results beforehand*. The purpose of assessment is to **discover the actual level of performance in order to identify strengths and/or weaknesses that can be acted upon** (i.e., improve areas that may need support or innovation and to reformat areas that are really successful).

Who sets the benchmarks?

- Faculty and staff who make up the program or area being assessed set the benchmarks - a benchmark discussion should be initiated that involves input from all applicable program/area personnel which reflects both desired and expected levels of performance. The results of this discussion should act as the basis for the final benchmark levels.

It's also important to remember that benchmarks are not set in stone and can be revised, if necessary, over time (this is usually done as part of the Year 3 CAR recommendation updates or during the CAR process itself). Revisions can also take place by contacting the Office of Assessment.

Please see "[Assessment in Practice](#)" next page for an example of Administrative Assessment benchmarking.

Assessment in Practice

Benchmarking in Administrative Assessment

An administrative area at the College provides support services to students. Staff members in this area are required to perform assessment for the goals associated with the services that they provide. They are trying to determine the benchmarks that they will use to assess the performance outcomes for their services.

- The area members create a rubric for each goal that their area is meant to achieve and the specific outcomes that support that goal based on their goals & outcomes map (see “Examining Goals/Outcomes and Alignment with the College Mission” above.)
 - *For example, one of the goals of this area is to support student academic success – what services demonstrate possible outcomes for this goal?*
- They create a list of services to be assessed that reflect/fulfill these goals & outcomes.
 - *The staff list a tutoring service that is aimed at improving student performance for underperforming students which supports the student success goal above.*
- 3 levels of performance measures are created that will be used to assess the services listed:
 - *Exceeds expectations*
 - *Meets expectations*
 - *Fails to meet expectations*
- They consider the following questions as they discuss the benchmarks for each outcome:
 - What does it mean for the service to “exceed expectations” with respect to the outcome/goal? What does it mean to “fail to meet expectations?” This is the act of determining how to measure these levels.
 - How do we think each service is performing?
 - Now, decide on a percentage range of performance that identifies these criteria.
 - For example, the staff members plan to conduct a survey for underperforming students that have accessed their tutoring service. They will ask if the students’ grades have increased as a result of the tutoring. The staff members expect to find that the service “meets expectations” for 75% of the students that use the service (the student has reached a passing grade), 15% will “exceed expectations” (the student has raised their grade above a passing level), and that 5% will “fail to meet expectations” (the student has shown no improvement.)

Your Administrative Assessment Plan

After completing the activities above, everyone in your area should have discussed the services that reflect the outcomes for your area goals, created performance measures to assess your services, and created benchmarks to reflect these measures. You are now ready to put these pieces together to finalize your administrative assessment plan.

The worksheet below represents an example of how goals, outcomes, instruments, and benchmarks are reflected in an administrative assessment plan template:

Goal <i>Broad statements of what the office/unit wishes to accomplish.</i>	Outcome <i>Related to your goal – what do you wish to assess? What are the intended results of your goal?</i>	Tool or Measure <i>What instrument(s) are you using to measure your success? (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, completion times, counts, etc.)</i>	Benchmark <i>What is the identified/determined minimum result, target, criterion, or value that will represent success for achieving this outcome?</i>
Provide tools for acquiring materials needed for conducting college business <i>(Financial Area)</i>	Increase the number of eligible staff using the P-card	The number of staff using the P-card currently and the number after the initiative	Increase the number by at least five people
Provide a process for students to apply to the college <i>(Admissions)</i>	Reduce the number of steps involved in the admissions process for potential students	Measure of current number of steps and number of steps after revision	Reduce the number of steps by at least four

Next step: After the plan is implemented and data are collected, the data will be analyzed to determine the performance levels for the outcomes. There should be a discussion of these results among area members, which should then prompt the creation of planned actions/next steps to address outcome areas that may need support or improvement.

Once these discussions are completed, this information should be reflected in your area's CAR report in year 6 by submitting the comprehensive table (the plan above and the two additional columns below) in the assessment section of the report:

Results or Findings <i>What did you find from using your assessment measurement? Did it meet your standards of performance or given benchmarks?</i>	Next Steps <i>What are your planned actions based on the results? Using what you found, what will you do next? Craft recommendation(s) for next steps.</i>

To help facilitate the administrative assessment process, a worksheet template has been created to assist with group discussion, unit assessment, or committee goals for completion of the CAR assessment section. A copy of this worksheet has been placed below. If you would like a copy of the editable template for this worksheet, please access the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates.")

Goals and Outcomes

Goals - Goals are just general statements about what an office or area wishes to accomplish and align with the key purpose and function of an area.

Outcomes - Outcomes are the intended results of a plan or action. Through examining outcomes, areas can answer the question: what was the impact of the program or service?

Process Outcomes - During Administrative assessment, areas can develop process outcomes which examine the steps or components of a service or program to improve the experience for users.

Learning Outcomes – Learning outcomes assessment focuses on specific outcomes based on what a student was expected to learn as a result of participating in a program.

Evidence Gathering & Analysis

Evidence gathering for administrative assessment should involve the collection of data that reflects your assessment methods/instruments discussed above for each goal. The results derived from these data are then analyzed and reported in the **College Area Review (CAR) Report in Year 6**.

Data Analysis: Making Sense of the Results

For many of us, the idea of combing through data sets can be a little overwhelming and many ask for guidance on what it means to “analyze the data.” First, it’s important to remember the basic purpose of data collection in assessment activities: to get an idea of how something is performing. As an educational institution, we are interested in learning whether our students, a course, a program, or the College as a whole, is achieving certain learning outcomes or goals. You already know the information you’re collecting to gauge performance (see “*Your Assessment Instrument*” above), and the benchmarks that represent the levels of that performance (see “*Benchmarks*” above), so now it’s time to look at what the data are telling you about that performance.

As you and your colleagues go through the data, be sure to make detailed notes (percentages, etc.) to aid in the discussion of how your students are performing. This will also help provide information for the assessment section of your CAR report and your discussions for recommendations/planned actions for improvement.

Please see the following steps below as a guide for analyzing your results.

Examining the data:

Step 1:

Take a look at the performance *results from a broad level: overall*, what do the benchmark results look like? How did your program or area perform as a whole? Were the overall benchmarks met in each of the goal categories? By how much? Are there any red flags that stand out with the overall results?

Step 2:

Now begin looking at the performance results *within each specific area, outcome, or goal* that was measured. Is there a specific area where performance excelled? Is there an area that indicated unsatisfactory results or where improvement/innovation would be beneficial to meeting your program or area’s goals?

Step 3:

Next, compare the results from this performance assessment to the prior performance assessment. What changes are present? Did attainment of an outcome or goal show signs of improvement? Are there any indications of weakness or decline in meeting a particular outcome or goal?

Step 4:

Finally, based on the data summary provided to you, examine the data according to demographic information and any specific information that you might have requested for your data analysis. Try to discover any obvious performance divisions, as well as nuances in the data (meaningful differences that might be subtle, but important). For instance, try to determine if there are any gaps that need to be addressed, and/or where performance may be exceeding expectations.

Final Step:

Compile your notes and share/discuss the results with colleagues. This analysis will provide the basis for any upcoming assessment reports and for the planned actions that your group will create to address performance levels to aid in student success and for meeting institutional goals. Everyone involved in the area should be informed of the data results and should also be involved in any discussions for future planned actions/recommendations.

Recommendations & Planned Actions for Improvement

Creating Recommendations/Planned Actions for Improvement

Planned actions are actions created by faculty or staff members to address any weaknesses or gaps that have been identified in the attainment of a particular outcome or goal. These actions should be specific, measurable, and clearly defined. They should also be timely (promptly executed) within a reasonable time frame (i.e., starting next semester, etc.).

Sharing Results & Tracking Improvement

The Important Concept of "Closing the Loop"

While some may associate the assessment process with data collection and writing reports, these activities represent only half of the process of assessing student learning. One of the most important aspects of assessment is the expectation that **results garnered from the process will then be interpreted and utilized to initiate positive, measurable change for improvement**. This critical, final step of analyzing and implementing action to improve student learning, is known as **"closing the loop"** of the assessment/reassessment cycle. Closing the Loop is reflected in the Year-3 Recommendations Updates and as part of the College Area Review (CAR). These positive, measurable changes are represented in assessment reports as **"planned actions" or "recommendations."** These actions are formulated through discussion by faculty, staff, and administrators and are intended to be "action plans" for immediate implementation (respectively). Feedback on proposed actions is then provided by assessment committees and administrative leaders.

The final step in "Closing the Loop" is to **review the results (data collected) after these actions have been implemented to determine what impact they have had on student success**, thus initiating the assessment cycle (or loop) once again for improvement.



Reporting for Administrative Assessment & Special Programs

The reporting requirements for the assessment of administrative and special programs consist of providing CAR recommendation updates in Year 3 and completing the CAR report in Year 6. CAR recommendation updates are reviewed by the Office of Assessment and the CAR report is reviewed by the College Area Review Committee. Therefore, assessment reporting requirements consist of:

- **Year-3 CAR Recommendation Updates**
 - **Due Date: October 1st** (at the end of the 3rd year in the area or program's designated cycle)
- **Year-6 College Area Review (CAR) Report**
 - **Due Date: October 1st** (at the end of the 6th year in the area or program's designated cycle)

***For a copy of the CAR Recommendation Update Form for Year 3, please access the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard (Once in the Repository, click on the folder on the main menu to your left titled "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits, & Templates.") For more information on the requirements for the CAR report, please see the section in the handbook titled "The College Area Review."**

The College Area Review (CAR)

Introduction & Overview

The College Area Review or “CAR” process is used to enhance the quality of a discipline/program, special unit, or administrative area and provides information for institutional decision making and improvements. This periodic and systematic review is one of the primary assessment activities at Montgomery College. College Area Review is completed every 6 years as part of an integrated assessment cycle and is assigned to the Office of Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs. As a result of the review findings, actionable recommendations are approved, and implementation is expected within the six-year review cycle.

Who participates in the CAR Process and why is it important?

All academic areas (credit and non-credit), student affairs, and administrative units complete the college area review process.

The College Area Review provides essential information for college planning, establishing priorities for resource allocation and budgeting, as well as identifying recommendations for institutional effectiveness and continuous improvements. The review process offers an opportunity to consider and identify actions necessary to meet the needs of students, employers, and the community.

Organizing & Completing CAR Activities

Each area at the College differs on how they choose to organize and complete their assessment functions. The organization of assessment activities is often dependent on several factors: the size of the area, the number of services offered, and the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty or staff. The styles of leadership within each area may also be a determining factor.

Below is the most common approach that areas use when completing assessment activities:

- In many areas, it is a coordinator, chair or director who acts as the lead for assessment activities who will often form workgroups to organize and complete reports for any major assessment requirements. Depending on the leader and the makeup of the area, these workgroups and the leads for the workgroups will either be determined by the dean or director of that given area, or by their designee (chair, coordinator, etc.).
- Regardless of the organizational approach used, the following apply:
 - The area leaders are responsible for providing support and guidance for area faculty or staff (as needed) throughout the assessment process and may play an active role in assessment activities (when applicable for that area).
 - Deans or directors are responsible for ensuring that any assessment requirements for their areas are completed and submitted by the required due dates. This includes:
 - Submission of all completed CAR reports to the Provost for review and approval
 - Submission of all approved, completed CAR reports to the Office of Assessment by the designated due date

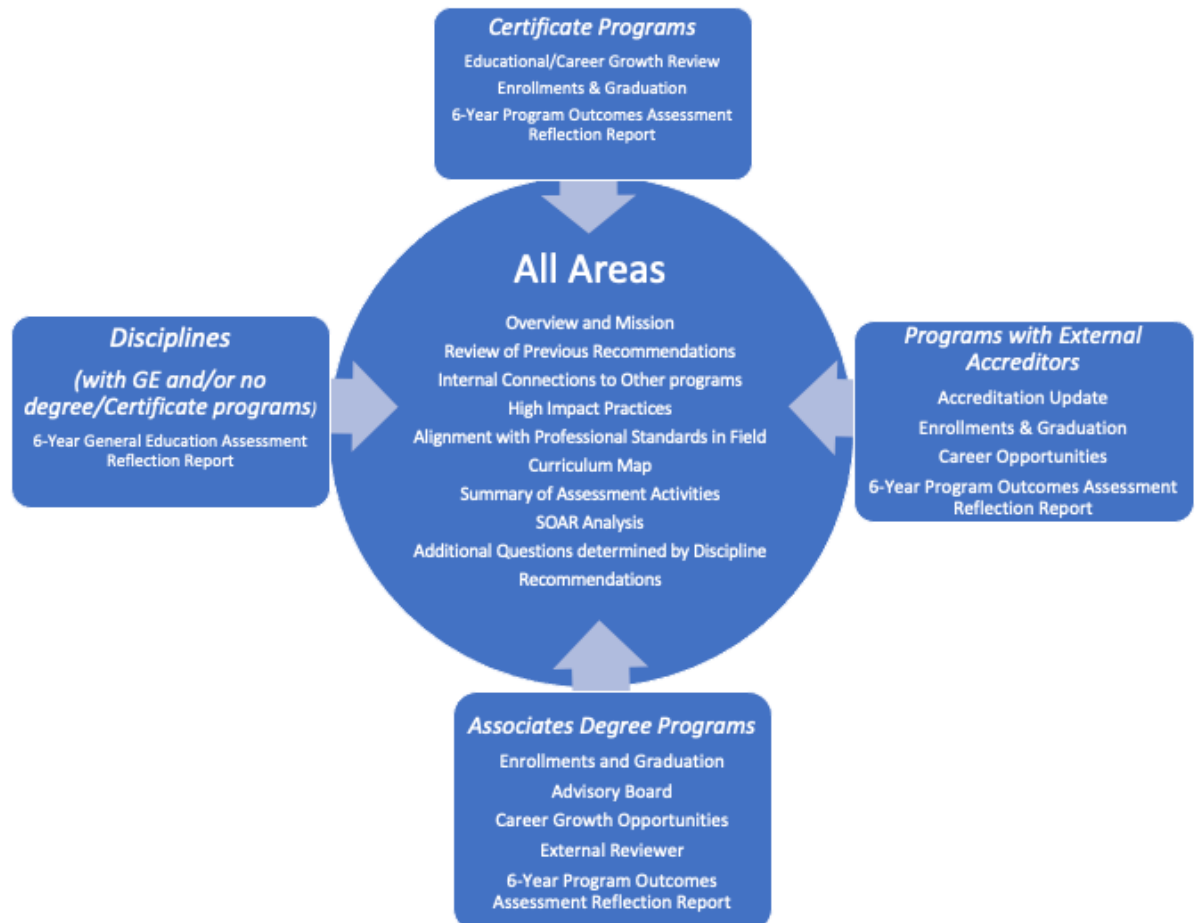
College Area Review Content

Content Formats for the CAR Report

Everyone completing the College Area Review process at Montgomery College is required to address questions that evaluate how well their area is achieving the fundamental institutional and area goals that support the College mission. However, it is recognized that there are essential differences that exist between the structure, operation, and obligations of academic and administrative areas (e.g., disciplines with courses, programs that offer awards [certificates/degrees], administrative services, etc.).

Because of this, the format for the CAR report has been tailored to accommodate the different requirements for each area by including only those sections and corresponding questions that are applicable to the discipline, program, or administrative area's make-up (e.g., if your discipline does not award a degree or certificate, questions pertaining to these topics would not be a part of that discipline's CAR format.) Please see the diagram below for a visual representation of these differences:

College Area Review Content by Program Type or Discipline



Academic Review

For academic areas, this review examines the following (as applicable): the curriculum, teaching methodologies, assessment activities, articulation agreements, advisory committees, enrollments and awards, transfer summaries, discipline cost, industry projections, and the strengths and opportunities of each discipline/program. During this process, academic areas also conduct benchmarking analysis and degree programs solicit input from an external peer review. Once completed, the report is then reviewed by the College Area Review Committee (CARC) where recommendations for academic improvements are approved. These recommendations are then implemented during the next six-year review cycle and status updates of pending recommendations are required.

Administrative Review

The purpose of the administrative review is to evaluate and assess if our administrative areas are effective, contribute to student learning, and align with the overall mission of the organization. The administrative review provides an opportunity to examine all non-academic areas using multiple measures by reviewing unit functions and services, by assessing and benchmarking services, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and examining unit resources and planning. As a result of the review findings, actionable recommendations are approved, implementation is expected within the six-year review cycle, and status updates of pending recommendations are required.

Individual Report Templates

Below, you will find a list of the 5 CAR report formats:

- **Disciplines Only** (no certificate or degree program)
- **Programs with External Accreditors**
- **Certificate Programs**
- **Degree Programs**
- **Administrative & Special Programs**

For detailed information on the content that should be provided to complete your individual CAR process, please visit the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard and click on the main menu to the left for “Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits and Templates” to access the CAR Resources folder. Once in the folder, choose the format that applies to your discipline, program, or administrative area for a complete report template.

Support & Timeline for CAR Activities

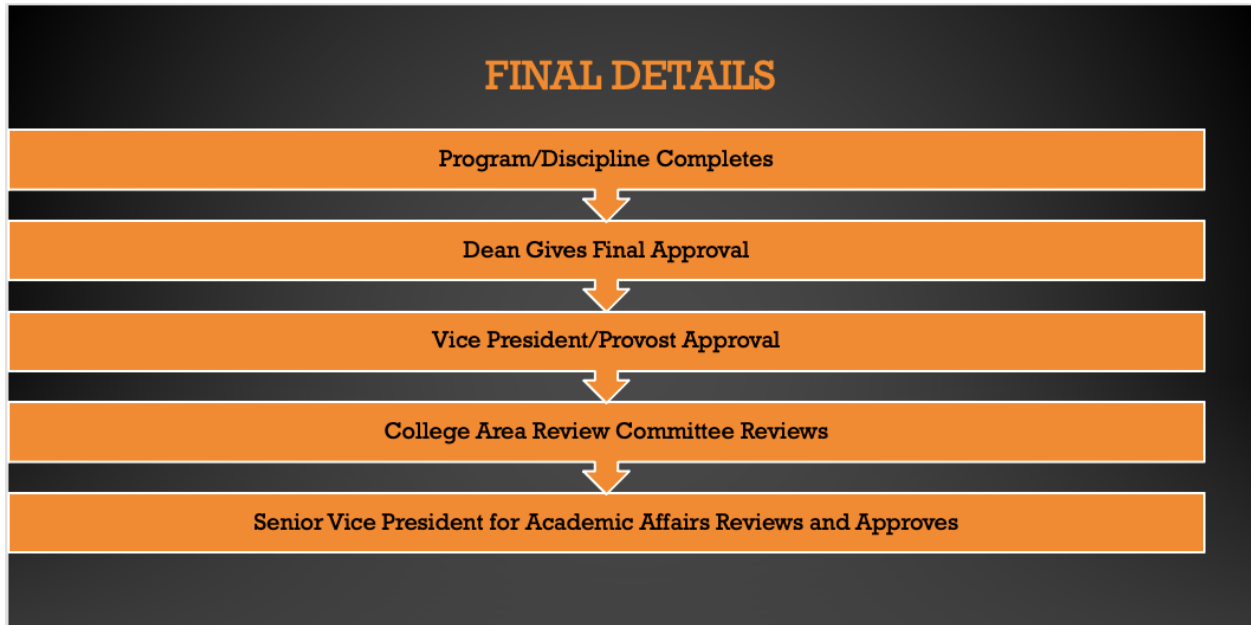
The Office of Assessment is eager to support faculty and staff as they complete the CAR process. This support may take the form of workshops, discipline group meetings, or one-on-one discussions with anyone that might need assistance with CAR-related topics (e.g., report forms, data, analysis, content, resources, etc.). Whenever feasible, assistance will be given in order to make the process as useful, efficient, and user-friendly as possible.

CAR Workshops

Each semester, the Office of Assessment provides workshops for anyone completing the process that may need assistance. The topics of the workshops are determined on a semester-by-semester basis and either reflect requests for specific content by faculty or staff, or for topics that appear to need more clarification or guidance, based on previous reports and/or feedback. Information on how to access these workshops are communicated to the specific areas completing the CAR process each semester and are also advertised in the Fall & Spring editions of the Assessment News Brief (available via email and also on the Assessment Repository site in Blackboard).

The CAR Process

Below is a representation of the stages that take place during the CAR process.



Timeline

To assist faculty & staff with planning CAR activities, a potential timeline has been created for guidance on how to schedule reasonable workloads during the process and to allow time for valuable discussion and reflection that is necessary for quality content. A timeline is only meant to provide suggestions for planning and is *not required* for CAR participants.

Submission and Review of the Completed CAR Report

Once a CAR report is completed, the report should be sent to the following bodies in the order listed below:

- The **Dean or Director** of the area (for review and an approval signature).
- The **Provost** of the area (for review and an approval/signature).
- The **Office of Assessment** for presentation and review at the next convened meeting by the College Area Review Committee (CARC).
- The Office of Assessment submits the final review to the **Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs** for review and approval.

Program Viability Review

Introduction & Overview

As part of the academic program review process, programs may be identified for a **Viability Review** at the request of the dean, vice president/provost, the College Area Review Committee (CARC), or the senior vice president for academic affairs

Who participates in a Program Viability Review?

Triggers for program viability review include both quantitative (e.g., enrollment and awards) and qualitative (e.g., relevance of field) metrics. Within the 6-year assessment cycle, certain programs may fall below specific benchmarks set for institutional performance within these categories. When this happens, the program may be identified to complete the viability process.

The Program Viability Process

This review can occur at the end of regular academic program review cycle or during other designated times. The report (see form below) is completed by the program and is submitted in the same way that the CAR report is submitted: via the Dean for review/approval, the Provost for review/approval, and to the Office of Assessment for presentation and review by the College Area Review Committee (CARC). Usually, this Review is initiated and runs in conjunction with a program's CAR process and is submitted as an attachment to the CAR report itself.

Program Viability Report Form

Below are the typical questions that make up the viability report form. For a copy of the most current viability report template, please visit the [Assessment Repository](#) in Blackboard and click on the main menu to the left for "Assessment Resources, Forms, Toolkits and Templates."

Program Profile

1. (Enrollment) Number of students actively seeking completion of program or certificate in this current academic year.
2. (Awards) Graduation numbers from the last 5 years.
3. Number of credits to complete program.
4. Four-year schools where the program has articulations (if, applicable).
5. Economic and employment projections for program (Brief description; Can use previous EMSI report).

Program Uniqueness

1. What is the uniqueness of this program? What does this program offer that others do not?

Community Connection

1. How does this program address community needs and contribute to the local economy?

Additional Questions

2. What can the program do to increase graduations? Please be specific with planned actions and potential timelines.
3. Could elements of this program be combined with another program? Please explain.
4. Impact on Courses if program is discontinued
 - a. Program course
 - b. Other programs that use the course
 - c. Impact on program if course is eliminated

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Combined Assessment Cycle Schedule

Appendix B: Example: Combined Data Collection Plan for Program Outcomes & Gen Ed

Appendix C: Data Sampling Chart

Appendix D: GENERIC Memo: Student Assessment Data Collection Instructions

Appendix A

General Education, Program Assessment, and CAR Schedule (9/2021)



		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biology • Chemistry • English • Emerg Prep Mgmt • Fire Science • Health Inform. Mgmt • Medical Sonog. • Nursing • Phys. Therapy Asst. • Physics (Science) • Rad. Tech • Surg. Tech 	CAR	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates General Education Recertification Form	Integrated Report	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	CAR
Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architectural Technology • American Sign Language • Automotive Tech • Building Trades Technology • Construction Management • Geography • GHUM • Landscape Technology • Physical Science • World Languages 	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	CAR	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates General Education Recertification Form	Integrated Report	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates
Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting • Business Admin • Computer Applications • Computer Gaming and Simulation • Computer Science • Cybersecurity • Economics • Engineering Science • Ethnic Social Studies • History • Hospitality • International Studies • Learning Communities • Macklin Bus Institute • Management • Network/WirelessTech • Nutrition • Paralegal Studies • Political Science • SA: Access, Success, Engagement • SA: FA/SCHOL/EOC 	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	CAR	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates General Education Recertification Form	Integrated Report	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates
Group 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Broadcast Media • Communication Studies • Dance • ELAP • Film • Graphic Design • Interior Design • Honors Program • Learning Centers • Linguistics • Mathematics • Performing Arts • Photography • Scholars Programs • SA: ACES • SA: Student Affairs Programs and Initiatives • SA: Ascend 	Integrated Report	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	CAR	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates General Education Recertification Form	Integrated Report
Group 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astronomy • Behavioral Health • Geology • Gudelsky Institute • Health • Humanities Institute • MC Arts Institute • Meteorology • WDCE 	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates General Education Recertification Form	Integrated Report	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	CAR	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates General Education Recertification Form
Group 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthropology • Criminal Justice • Education • General Education • General Studies • Music • Philosophy • Psychology • Sociology • Women's Studies 	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates General Education Recertification Form	Integrated Report	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates	CAR	Planned Data Collection/ Assessment Updates

Appendix B

Example of Combined Data Collection Plan for Program Outcomes & Gen Ed

Assessment Cycle Planning Sheet (Example)															
Zoology (code 777)				CAR (Planning Stage)		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3 Integrated Report		Year 4		Year 5	
				Writing Report	Writing Report	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Findings Discussed	Report Submitted	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection	Planned Data Collection
Program Outcome or General Education Competency*	List the outcome or competency	Course	What will be collected?	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Gen Ed	Critical Analysis & Reasoning	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X								X	
Gen Ed	Technological Competency	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X								X	
Gen Ed	Information Literacy	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X								X	
Gen Ed	Scientific & Quant. Reasoning	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X								X	
Gen Ed	Integrative Learning	ZOOL 100	Signature Assignment			X								X	
Gen Ed	Critical Analysis & Reasoning	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment					X							X
Gen Ed	Technological Competency	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment					X							X
Gen Ed	Information Literacy	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment					X							X
Gen Ed	Scientific & Quant. Reasoning	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment					X							X
Gen Ed	Integrative Learning	ZOOL 230	Signature Assignment					X							X
Program Outcome 1	Connect & describe the concepts that make up the structure and function of all living things through the principles of genetics, cellular biology, and physiology	ZOOL 230	ZOOL 230 Signature Assignment					X							X
Program Outcome 1	Same as above	ZOOL 245	Exam				X							X	
Program Outcome 3	Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of life through the principles of evolution	ZOOL 250	Exam				X							X	
Program Outcome 3	Same as above	ZOOL 245	Exam				X							X	
Program Outcome 2	Make connections between organisms, their habitats, and systems through the principles of biology	ZOOL 250	Lab Project				X							X	
Program Outcome 4	Identify, think through, and solve a problem using quantitative reasoning and critical thinking skills	ZOOL 230	ZOOL 230 Signature Assignment					X							X
Program Outcome 5	Develop a sense of competence in the field of study through research experiences and written and oral communication of findings	ZOOL 255	Research Paper						X						X
Program Outcome 5	Same as above	ZOOL 260	Capstone Project						X						X

Appendix C Data Sampling Chart

Recommendation: when determining your sample size, be sure to oversample by an appropriate number (increase the sample size) to replace any potential samples that might be unusable for the final performance results (i.e., student did not complete assignment, or stopped attending class).

Population = N Sample Size = n

General Sample Sizes for Populations between 10 – 3,000 (95% confidence level)

Pop. (N)	Sample Size (n)	Pop. (N)	Sample Size (n)	Pop. (N)	Sample Size (n)
N	n	N	n	N	n
10	10	300	169	780	258
20	19	320	175	800	260
30	28	340	181	820	262
40	36	360	186	840	264
50	44	380	191	860	266
60	52	400	196	880	268
70	59	420	201	900	269
80	66	440	205	920	271
90	73	460	210	940	273
100	80	480	214	960	275
110	86	500	217	980	276
120	92	520	221	1000	278
130	97	540	225	1100	285
140	103	560	228	1200	291
150	108	580	231	1300	297
160	113	600	234	1400	302
170	118	620	221	1500	306
180	123	640	240	1600	310
190	127	660	243	1700	314
200	132	680	246	1800	317
220	140	700	248	1900	320
240	148	720	251	2000	322
260	155	740	253	2500	333
280	162	760	255	3000	341

Source: MC Office of Assessment (2022); numbers calculated using surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm

*To obtain a specific sample size not listed above, you can utilize the Sample Size Calculator at surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm or contact the Office of Assessment for assistance.

Appendix D
(Example Template) Memo:
Assessment Data Collection - Beginning of Semester “Heads Up”

Memo: Assessment Data Collection - Beginning of semester “Heads up”

DATE / Semester / YEAR

Dear MC Faculty member,

Montgomery College is committed to Outcomes Assessment as a student success tool. This semester, all sections of **EDUC 256 XXXX** will complete at least one common capstone assignment that will be scored for collection of student achievement data. This packet introduces the process and includes tips on how to carry out the assessment instrument developed by our department.

Using a *(TYPE of Assignment used to measure e.g., Portfolio, research paper)*, *(your program e.g., EDUC)* faculty will measure student effectiveness in three/four areas: *(list outcomes)*. All Faculty (PT & FT) who teach **EDUC 256** will instruct students to complete this assignment during the last 3 weeks in the semester. *(Assignment and rubric included in this packet)*

Faculty will grade the assignment and score the students’ work using the rubric provided. Scoring results are to be posted through MC’s current assessment data gathering software. The Office of Assessment offers instructions and videos to show the steps for submission of these scores. Once submitted, these scores are not tied to any one section. They provide an overview of student achievement and because they are tied to student M numbers, that overview includes important demographic and academic history data.

Student scores must be submitted no later than the last day of the semester for faculty. Your program coordinator or department chair or the Office of Assessment will answer questions you may have (assessment@montgomerycollege.edu). These individuals are available to answer any questions or help with problems about the assignment or the rubric.

Please note that the grade you give to students for this assignment may be different from the rubric score you submitted to the Outcomes Assessment Team. Also note that you are free to share as much or as little of the rubric as you wish with your students before or after their participation in this project.

A faculty workgroup will be reflecting on the scores and their relationship to variables such as gender, age, total credits completed at the college, and if the students have completed ENGL 101 and/or ENGL 102. The findings will be discussed and plans for improvement will be reported during the next professional week meetings and the results will be shared with all participating instructors. To be a member of this workgroup, please reach out to the program coordinator or department chair.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of and compliance to MC’s assessment program. The assessment of student learning outcomes is an important part of our commitment as faculty and part of MC’s Middle States Accreditation.

Sincerely,

Name, Title, Program name

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Acronym Guide

Acronym	Full Name
AAUP	American Association of University Professors
ARTD	Arts Distribution (Gen Ed)
BSSD	Behavioral and Social Sciences Distribution (Gen Ed)
CARC	College Area Review Committee
CAP	Campus/Curriculum Advisory Person
CAR	College Area Review
CAT	Collegewide Assessment Team
CCC	Collegewide Curriculum Committee
ENGF	English Foundation (Gen Ed)
GEEL	General Education Elective (Gen Ed)
GEIR	General Education Institutional Requirement (Gen Ed)
GEN ED	General Education [Program]
GESC	General Education Standing Committee
HUMD	Humanities Distribution (Gen Ed)
MATF	Mathematics Foundation (Gen Ed)
MC	Montgomery College
MSCHE	Middle States Commission on Higher Education
MHEC	Maryland Higher Education Commission
NSLD	Natural Sciences Distribution with Lab (Gen Ed)
NSND	Natural Sciences Distribution without Lab (Gen Ed)
OA	Outcomes Assessment
OIRE	Office of Institutional Effectiveness
SAP	Student Advising Plan
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
SVPA	Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
SLO	Student Learning Outcome

Glossary of Terms

Academic Area

A group of closely related programs, disciplines, and courses that carry a common discipline designator.

Academic Assessment Year

A designated timeframe for assessment activities that begins in August of the Fall academic semester and runs through October 1st of the following year (due dates for major reports overlap with the beginning of the next assessment timeframe to provide extra time for discussion/completion).

Example: the 2021-2022 Academic Assessment Year runs from August 1, 2021 – October 1, 2022.

Academic program

Any course of study that results in a certificate or degree.

Examples: Biotechnology AAS, Communication Studies AA, Nursing AS, Audio and Production Certificate, etc.

Administrative program

Any administrative area or department that provides services to the College, including instructional or special opportunities for students or employees, that falls outside the realm of regular academic curriculums.

Examples: Student Services, The Assessment Center, WDCE, or the MC Library.

Administrative and Special Programs Assessment

The process that examines an administrative or special program's success with achieving outcomes and institutional priorities. The results of this examination are incorporated into an institutional 6-year review for the program and includes recommendations for change/improvement.

Analysis of data

A detailed examination of the assessment data that has been collected to look for patterns and to determine essential features that might point out areas to celebrate or areas of concern.

Assessment (and Reassessment)

Assessment

The process of systematically examining patterns of student learning across courses and programs and then using this information to improve educational practices¹⁰ (i.e., Years 1-3 of the assessment cycle).

Reassessment

Examines the same patterns above, but with a comparative analysis of pre- and post-performance results within a given cycle period (i.e., comparing results from years 1-3 with new data from years 4-5 as part of the CAR report in Year 6).

Assessment Cycle

An ongoing process of identification, evaluation, reflection, and improvement for defined standards of performance. An assessment cycle generally consists of the following activities:

- *Planning* - identify and define outcomes/goals and standards of performance
- *Data Collection & Analysis*- collect data that reflect this performance and analyze results

¹⁰ Carnegie Mellon University. (2022a). Adapted from: <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/grading-assessment.html>

- *Implementation of Actions for Improvement* – implement specific, measurable actions that will contribute to the success of the identified goals/outcomes
- *Reflection & Revision* – determine whether the implemented actions have had the desired impact and make any necessary revisions to the original plan to support further improvement
- *Repeat the Cycle*

Assessment Cycle Year

Any year between 1-6 of the 6-year assessment cycle that identifies a discipline's/program's place within the cycle and the required activities that should be performed by that discipline/program; each cycle year aligns with a specific Academic Assessment Year.

**Also see: Assessment Group Designation and Academic Assessment Year*

Assessment for Accountability

The assessment of some unit, such as a department, program, or the entire institution, which is used to satisfy some group of external stakeholders. Stakeholders might include accreditation agencies, state government, or trustees.¹¹

Assessment for Improvement

Assessment activities that are designed to feed the results directly, and ideally, immediately, back into revising the course, program or institution with the goal of improving student learning.¹²

Assessment Group Designation

A group number that corresponds to a discipline's/program's assigned placement in the assessment cycle and determines what activities are required for that discipline/program for the assessment year in question.

Assessment Instrument

An artifact or activity that will be used to collect data that reflects student performance or levels of goal/outcome attainment. These may take many forms and depend on the type of assessment being conducted.

Examples: exams, surveys, practical exercises, papers, lab exercises, capstone projects, high impact practices, observation/demonstration checklists, portfolios, etc.

Assessment Plan

A formal document that includes details of *what* is being assessed (outcomes, competencies, goals, etc.), *how* it is being assessed (instruments, performance benchmarks, etc.), *where* it's being assessed (where are data being collected), and *when* the assessment will take place.

**Templates of assessment plans can be found in the Assessment Repository in Blackboard – see "Assessment Repository" above or consult the specific assessment section in the Handbook for more information.*

Assessment Repository

A comprehensive assessment site on Blackboard that stores documents and reports pertaining to the Montgomery College assessment process and provides up-to-date resources for assessment activities that are being performed at the college; a central location for faculty and staff to easily access assessment materials for the purpose of promoting optimal collaboration, organization, and efficiency during assessment functions.

**This is a Blackboard Community site that requires an MC ID to gain access. For Instructions on how to join this Blackboard Community, click [HERE](#).*

¹¹ Carnegie Mellon University. (2022b). Adapted from:

<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/glossary.html>

¹² Ibid.

Assessment Tools

The collection of plans, instruments, performance criteria, and tasks that make up the assessment process for evaluating student performance or goal/outcome attainment.

Benchmarking

Determination of a standard measurement for evaluating or comparing student performance on assessment instruments.

Capstone course

The course where students reach the highest level of proficiency in program outcome criteria. This course presents an opportunity to assess all or most of the program outcomes.

Capstone assignment/rubric

A method of assessment that allows students to demonstrate the successful acquisition of program outcomes. Predetermined rubric(s) help to gather and report this information using the college assessment software. This assignment could take many forms including an exam, a research paper, an oral presentation, or an industry-based project.

CAR Recommendations

The culmination of the College Area Review is a set of recommendations for improvement or direction for the program(s) being reviewed. These recommendations are linked to the Academic Affairs goals.

Closing the Loop

A term that applies to the comprehensive fulfillment of all stages of an assessment cycle, with particular emphasis on closing out the last step of the cycle, where actions are implemented for improvement as a result of assessment findings.

Campus/Curriculum Advisory Person (CAP)

A member of the Collegewide Curriculum Committee (CCC) that assists faculty members on each campus with specific tasks regarding curriculum proposals and general education certification/recertification (assistance with forms, the overall process, answers questions, etc.).

College Area Review (CAR)

A comprehensive, ongoing process of self-evaluation for all academic areas (credit and non-credit), student affairs, and administrative units that takes place over a 6-year cycle. The CAR is an analytical review process that engages faculty, staff, and administrators. Evaluation methods utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to inform decision-making, resulting in implementable recommendations for institutional improvement. An official report that documents this process is completed every 6 years.

College Area Review (CAR) Report

A report that documents the results of any discipline, program, or administrative area's self-evaluation during the 6-year College Area Review (CAR) process. Approved recommendations and comments from the Dean, Provost, College Area Review Committee (CARC), and the Vice President of Academic Affairs compose the final elements of the report and progressive updates on all recommendations in the report are required during the subsequent 6-year period.

College Area Review Committee (CARC)

A collegewide committee that examines report findings and recommendations including key data metrics, with consideration for how best to use College resources to support student success and institutional effectiveness. This committee is charged with the following duties:

- Review academic areas (including degree programs, disciplines, and special programs), student affairs, and administrative unit reports and make substantive comments on recommendations
- Define the program viability process and identify key indicators
- Recommend programs for the academic program viability review based on selected key indicators
- Participate in the viability review process and make recommendations to the senior vice president for academic affairs

Collegewide Assessment Team (CAT)

A collegewide committee that identifies needs and develops recommendations regarding collegewide assessment of student learning in order to strengthen the college and enhance its accountability. This committee is charged with the following duties:

- Review individual programs' assessment plans and reflections and recommend ways for improvement
- Review General Education assessment reflections and recommend ways for improvement
- Review guidelines and templates/forms for assessment plans and reports.
- Make recommendations for improving the assessment processes at the college

Collegewide Curriculum Committee (CCC)

A collegewide committee that is to review, evaluate, and update the curriculum; to oversee initiation, design, development, modification, and discontinuance of courses and programs offered by Montgomery College; and to inform the units of the College administrators responsible for implementation and the College community with respect to modifications in the curriculum.

Combined Assessment Schedule

A comprehensive schedule that provides a timetable of required assessment activities for all areas at the College which corresponds to a 6-year integrated assessment cycle. Assigned groups for all disciplines, programs, and administrative areas are reflected on the schedule, and the schedule aligns with the respective calendar years in which the activities are expected to be completed.

Course level outcomes

Each course should have clearly defined, student-friendly outcomes that align with program outcomes and reflect a progression of skills and knowledge that build on each other. Course outcomes should reflect the appropriate level of cognitive skill and competency based on that progression of skills. *(Student-friendly does not mean avoiding all terminology or academic language but consider that student learn more when they can assess their own learning, so clear outcomes written in terms they can understand will increase their ability to achieve those outcomes.)*

Curriculum mapping

Determining the alignment of course outcomes to program outcomes by indicating the course(s) where the knowledge, skills and attitudes reflected in program outcomes is either introduced (I) or reinforced (R) or mastered (M) and what method of assessment is currently being administered.

Data

The results of assessments that are reported and collated by the college software data collection and reporting system.

Data Collection

Systematically scoring and recording assessment results into the college software system.

Data collection plan (Assessment cycle planning sheet)

The timing and scope of assessment data collection based on size and complexity of a course or program. The data collection plan form for Gen Ed and Programs includes a schedule for collection and reporting based on the 6-year cycle and denotes when data collection will take place for Gen Ed courses and for program outcomes.

Demographic data

Once the basic scoring takes place, the reporting system links student scores to their M numbers and generates a report of student success levels that includes gender, race and other demographics that could help target planned improvements to support specific groups of students.

Direct assessment

Measures of learning that are based on student performance or demonstrates the learning itself. *Examples: Scoring performance on tests, term papers, or the execution of lab skills¹³*

Discipline

Generally, the name given to a set of courses which are identified by a particular four-letter prefix in the College catalog. The meaning is similar to "subject" in secondary school. *Examples: ENGLish, NURSing, BIOLogy, etc.*

External Peer Reviewer

An outside faculty evaluator who has expertise in the particular academic area under review. The academic area is solicited for suggestions as to possible names of peer reviewers, with final approval from the Dean. The peer reviewer conducts a one-to-two-day visit of the College. After this objective review by the peer reviewer, the reviewer is expected to provide a written report that becomes a part of that area's CAR report and is forwarded to the College Area Review Committee (CARC) as a part of the final review package (after approval from the area's Dean and Provost).

Faculty Workgroup or Workgroup

An ad hoc faculty committee that reviews the data, evaluates the academic area, and completes the College Area Review Reports. The members, appointed by the lead Dean along with input from the faculty chairperson of the academic area, are faculty who teach in the area being reviewed.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. The general goal of formative assessment is to collect detailed information that can be used to improve instruction and student learning *while it's happening*. What makes an assessment "formative" is not the design of a test, technique, or self-evaluation, per se, but the way it is used—i.e., to inform in-process teaching and learning modifications. *Examples: Questions posed in class during the learning process to determine what specific concepts or skills they may be having trouble with; specific, detailed and constructive feedback on student work, etc.¹⁴.*

¹³ Ibid., 70.

¹⁴ The Glossary of Education Reform (2014a). Adapted from: <https://www.edglossary.org/formative-assessment/>

General Education Assessment

The process that examines student acquisition of General Education competencies across all courses that are certified in the General Education Program.

General Education Competencies and Proficiencies

Skillsets that are considered to be fundamental to any undergraduate student's academic curriculum; these skillsets are usually initiated through a General Education Program and continuously improved upon as the student increases course levels within any academic major or curriculum; ideally, these skillsets should reach a level of proficiency upon graduation.

**See page 3 of the Handbook for specific criteria*

General Education Program (Gen Ed)

A program that is designed to introduce students to the knowledge, skills, and values that are essential to the study of academic disciplines, encourage the pursuit of life-long learning, and to foster the development of educated members of the community and the world. The program requires students to take a central group of foundation and distribution courses in English, mathematics, arts, behavioral and social sciences, humanities, and science, and have the option to take additional courses in health and communications.

General Education Certification/Recertification

The process of ensuring that any course that is either applying for General Education status for the first time, or any course that is reapplying for General Education status (existing certified courses), meet the standards of the General Education Program at Montgomery College and the State of Maryland. This process takes place every time a discipline enters its designated 2nd year in the assessment cycle.

General Education Standing Committee (GESC)

A collegewide committee that guides the General Education course (re)certification process and makes recommendations for course (re)certifications to the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Goals (Area or Institutional)

Area Goals

The end results or achievements that any discipline, program, or administrative area is trying to accomplish. These should reflect, and be directly supportive of, Montgomery College's institutional and strategic goals.

Institutional Goals

Clearly defined performance and behavioral expectations that support the achievement of the institution's mission.

Holistic Assessment Process

Organized assessment activities that are ideally faculty and staff driven, and that reflect an interconnected, comprehensive process to evaluate and improve student performance and goal achievement across and between, all levels of learning and all College services.

Indirect Assessment

Assessments that use perceptions, reflections, or secondary evidence to make inferences about student learning.¹⁵

Examples: surveys, self-assessments, etc.

¹⁵ Ibid., 70.

Institutional Effectiveness

The ongoing assessment of how well an institution is meeting its mission and institutional goals.

Institutional level Outcomes

The collective knowledge, skills, and competencies that every student is expected to attain upon completion of their educational experience.

Integrated Assessment Cycle (see also: Combined Assessment Schedule)

A sequence of assessment functions that are combined within a given time period to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and an understanding of how assessment functions are interconnected and interdependent for improving student learning and institutional effectiveness.

Interim Yearly Update Report (or Annual Update)

A brief report completed at the end of years 1, 2, 4, and 5 (respectively) of the 6-year assessment cycle for disciplines that have general education courses and/or a degree or certificate program. This report provides information on the previous year's assessment activities (i.e., data collection, etc.). The report is due by August 1st of the respective assessment year in which it is being completed.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

MSCHE is a regional accreditation agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education and oversees accreditation activities for institutions of higher education. MSCHE is the agency that conducts Montgomery College's accreditation process.

Office of Assessment

The office that oversees and organizes collegewide assessment activities; supports and maintains assessment committees that assist, evaluate, and provide feedback for assessment processes; provides training on assessment techniques, assists faculty/staff with assessment planning, and ensures that MC's assessment practices meet accreditation standards.

Outcome

*Something that follows as a result or consequence.*¹⁶

**See also: Student Learning Outcome (SLO), Course Outcome, or Program Outcome*

Planned Actions for Improvement

Clearly defined statements that indicate specific and measurable changes for improvement that address any weaknesses or gaps in performance or services. Upon approval, these changes should be expeditiously implemented.

Planned Data Collection

The organized process of collecting, scoring, and recording results of any required assessment activities that are applicable to any course, discipline, or program within their assigned assessment cycle schedule.

**See also: Data Collection Plan*

Program

Any course of study that leads to a certificate or degree.

**See also: Administrative Program or Special Program*

¹⁶ Amended from: Merriam Webster (2022). Definition of *Outcome* from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/outcome>

Program Learning Outcomes (or Program level Outcomes) (PLOs)

Outcomes that reflect the broader knowledge, skills and attitudes that are reinforced and mastered through the courses in the program. PLOs indicate the expectations for a student who has completed the series of courses indicated by the program curriculum.

***For more information, access the ELITE Course: "Writing Great Learning Outcomes" – (1.5 hours to complete)*

Program Viability

The program viability review process will ensure that all programs effectively use the College's instructional resources, support the College's mission, and serve the needs of students and the College community. As part of the academic program review process, programs will be identified for a viability review at the request of the dean, vice president/ provost, the College Area Review Committee (CARC), or the senior vice president for academic affairs. The review can occur at the end of regular academic program review cycle or during other designated times. Triggers for program viability review include both quantitative and qualitative data metrics.

Reliability

The extent to which the results really measure what they are supposed to measure. This can be achieved through consistent adherence to planned scoring and data gathering by all involved, a clearly defined rubric, and an appropriate sample size.

Rubric

A clearly defined set of criteria for scoring student work that includes descriptions of various levels of performance success such as "Advanced", "Proficient", "Novice" and "Not Evident", or something like this: "Mastery", "Proficient" and/or "Inadequate progress".

A rubric for assessing a program or a college area should include the program outcomes or area goals as well as these measures of performance.

Sampling

Selecting and analyzing a predetermined number of subjects (or data sets) from a larger population that will be representative of the population being studied.

Scoring data

Evaluating performance levels based on preset criteria (such as benchmarks).

Signature Assignment

Each General Education course should have one assignment, or a combination of assignments, that are administered near the end of the course or program that measures student performance for each applicable General Education competency.

Special Program

Any area at the College that offers specific academic instruction or experiential and learning opportunities that support or enhance a student's academic curriculum. Examples: General Education Program, Scholars' Programs, Paul Peck Humanities Institute, etc.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Clearly defined, measurable student-friendly achievement goals that reflect a progression of skills and knowledge that build on each other that include unit outcomes, course outcomes and program outcomes. All outcomes should reflect the appropriate level of cognitive skill and competency based on that progression of skills.

Summary Reflection

The summary reflection report is required for both Gen Ed and Program assessment. After discussion and analysis of the data collected for the current period and comparison to the data collected and the planned actions of the previous reporting period, the faculty workgroup should capture the collaborative thinking of the group and submit the summary reflection to the office of assessment. *(This form is available on the assessment repository on Bb)* The summary reflection report includes the number of students assessed, the semester(s) that data was collected, a summary of the data including percentages and demographic results, and a comparison of results to previous data collection periods as well as planned actions for future improvements or innovations.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period—typically at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year. They are generally evaluative, rather than diagnostic—i.e., they are more appropriately used to determine learning progress and achievement, evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs, measure progress toward improvement goals, or make course-placement decisions, among other possible applications.¹⁷ *Examples: midterm/final exams, capstone projects, culminating presentations or portfolios, etc.*

Validity (In assessment)

The extent to which an assessment instrument is actually measuring the skills, knowledge or competencies that it is intended to measure.

Example: assessment instruments such as exams, projects, etc.

Year-3 Integrated Reflection Report

An assessment report that is completed in the third year of the assessment cycle by any discipline that has certified general education courses, any discipline that has a certificate or degree program, and certain special programs. Disciplines and programs are asked to report on integrated assessment activities over the previous two years, to include information on the following: data collection activities, a reflective discussion of student performance based on data results, actions for improvement, updates for College Area Review (CAR) recommendations, and program enrollment/graduation information.

**For more information on this report, please see the handbook sections on "General Education Assessment" or "Program Assessment."*

Year-6 Reflection Report

An assessment report that is completed in the sixth year of the assessment cycle by any discipline that has certified general education courses, any discipline that has a certificate or degree program, and certain special programs. This reflection is attached as part of the College Area Review (CAR) report and includes a discussion of student performance based on data results and actions for improvement.

**For more information on this report, please see the handbook sections on "General Education Assessment" or "Program Assessment."*

¹⁷ The Glossary of Education Reform (2014b). Adapted from: <https://www.edglossary.org/summative-assessment/>

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