Academic Assessment and APR Glossary

Last revised 10.20.16 (shaded terms indicate proposed definitions)

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| **COCC Assessment**  |
| Assessment | “The act of making a judgment about something: the act of assessing something.” (Mirriam-Webster dictionary)Assessment is a systematic process of gathering and interpreting information to learn how well a unit of the College is performing in order to improve that performance and ultimately, support student success and community engagement. |
| Institution-wide assessment | Assessment activity across all divisions of COCC, including instruction, student services, information technology, and other administrative units. |
| **Instructional Assessment** |
| Instructional Assessment (assessment of student learning outcomes) | Instructional assessment is focused on evaluation of the achievement of student learning outcomes at the course and program levels for the purpose of improving student learning. It is a systematic process conducted regularly that includes the following cycle: defining learning outcomes, measuring or gathering evidence of student achievement of the outcomes, analysis of the measurements, and “closing the loop” (the implementation of an improvement, a final measurement and analysis to evaluate impacts, and documentation of the assessment). |
| Assessment tasks | Assessment tasks are the things students are asked to do (projects, assignments, tests, skills performance) to show their level of achievement of student learning outcomes. |
| Benchmark (this is optional and can be used if helpful) | A target threshold of performance used for considering a student learning outcome as “met” when assessed. Measurements below the benchmark are considered “not met”. For example, the nursing department may set a benchmark of a score of greater than or equal to 90% on the RN boards to indicate a student has met program-level outcomes. |
| COG, or “course outcomes guide” | A tool used at COCC to organize and communicate important components of course-level learning. Student Learning outcomes are listed alongside assessment tasks (what students can do to demonstrate achievement of outcomes), process skills (skills that are essential to achieving the outcome), and themes/concepts/issues (key words, themes, critical problems). |
| Closing the Loop | This expression refers to the final steps in the cycle of assessment, which are frequently omitted when the term “assessment” is used to mean “measurement”. Implementing an action to improve learning, collecting more data to determine the impact, and documenting the assessment are all steps associated with “closing the loop”. |
| POG, or “program outcomes guide” | A tool used at COCC to organize and communicate important components of program-level learning. Student Learning outcomes are listed alongside assessment tasks (what students can do to demonstrate achievement of outcomes), process skills (skills that are essential to achieving the outcome), and themes/concepts/issues (key words, themes, critical problems). |
| Program | An academic program is any institutionally established combination of courses and/or requirements leading to a degree or certificate. (Academic Affairs, Fall, 2014) |
| SLOs or student learning outcomes | Student learning outcomes indicate the expectation of skills, competencies, practices, aptitudes, and/or knowledge that, due to active participation in a program, degree, or course, a student will be able to demonstrate by means of a chosen assessment task. (Academic Affairs, Fall, 2013) |
| Types of SLO assessment measures | **Direct assessment**: *Direct assessment measures* are those that demonstrate that students have learned specific skills or concepts through products or performances. Can be qualitative or quantitative, and use local or external criteria.* Pre and posttests
* Course-embedded assessment (e.g., homework assignment; essays, locally developed tests)
* Comprehensive exams
* National Major Field Achievement Tests
* Certification exams, licensure exams
* Portfolio evaluation
* Case studies
* Reflective journals
* Capstone projects
* Internal/external juried review of performances and exhibitions
* Internship and clinical evaluation
* External examiners/peer review
* Grading with criteria or rubrics

**Indirect assessment**: *Indirect assessment measures* are reported rates or perceptions that student learning has taken place and that outcomes have been met.* Departmental survey
* Exit interviews
* Alumni survey
* Employer survey
* Student survey
* Graduate survey
* Focus groups
* Job placement statistics
* Graduation and retention rates
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| **General Education/Related Instruction** |
| General Education | A set of courses that introduces the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge and essential skills for all transfer degree graduates. COCC's general education courses are categorized into nine general education groups (GEGs)and meet defined learning outcomes for each group. GEGs are divided into two categories: Discipline Studies and Foundational Requirements(COCC definition proposed 9/2016) |
| General Education Group (GEG) | One of the nine groups identified by outcomes and criteria that make up COCC’s general education. The GEGs fall into one of two general education categories: Foundational Requirements (writing, information literacy, oral communication, mathematics, and health/wellness/fitness) or Discipline Studies (cultural literacy, arts and letters, social science, science or computer science). |
| Discipline Studies | One of two general education categories at COCC. Discipline Studies includes the following general education groups: cultural literacy, arts and letters, social science, science/math/computer science. |
| Foundational Requirements | One of two general education categories at COCC. Foundational Requirements includes the following general education groups: writing and information literacy, oral communication, mathematics, health/wellness/fitness.  |
| Related Instruction (RI) | A set of courses that provides critical skills to all graduates of applied programs and that supports the learning in the program area. All CTE programs of 36 or more credits have related instruction requirements in which students meet outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations. Additional RI areas such as safety, industrial safety, and environmental awareness may be included by programs if appropriate. These outcomes align with and support program outcomes. (COCC definition proposed 9/2016)“Programs of study for which applied or specialized associate degrees are granted, or programs of an academic year or more in length for which certificates are granted, must contain a recognizable body of instruction in program-related areas of 1) communication, 2) computation, and 3) human relations. Additional topics which should be covered as appropriate include safety, industrial safety, and environmental awareness.” (CCWD Community College Handbook)2.C.9 “... Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.” |
| **Academic Program Review**  |
| Academic Program Review (APR) | A system of periodic self-evaluation of an academic discipline in order to improve and strengthen the discipline.  |
| Discipline | A unit of instruction that reflects a branch of knowledge or in the case of Career and Technical Education, joins one or more related programs. COCC defines disciplines to provide meaningful evaluation in academic program review. Disciplines are coded using the TOPs codes in Banner on courses and programs. |
| Discipline Lead | The person responsible for facilitating the academic program review process. In the case of CTE disciplines, this person will likely be the program director. In transfer disciplines, the discipline lead may be the department chair or an experienced faculty member from within the discipline.  |
| **Other academic terms** |
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| Adult Basic Skills | The department which houses the programs English Language Learning (ELL) and Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education (ABE/ASE). |
| Focus | A focus is an area of concentration within the program (e.g. psychology or geology). (Academic Affairs, Fall, 2014) |
| Academic Program Stages | There are five defined stages for Academic Programs:* **Current**: Program is approved in the current Catalog, available to students to declare as an educational goal (available as an option on the application and open to selection for a change of program).
* **Suspended**: The state allows COCC to suspend a previously approved program and either reinstate or delete it within three years. A suspended program is not published in Catalogs, is not available for students to declare as an educational goal, but can be awarded to previously declared students within the catalog year policy. (Suspended and Sunset are set up and behave identifically in Banner.)
* **Sunset**: Program has been deleted but was available in a catalog within the last two years (according to catalog year policy). Students can no longer declare as an educational goal but declared students can be awarded the program. (Suspended and Sunset are set up and behave identifically in Banner.)
* **Historical**: Program has been deleted more than two years ago. Students cannot declare as an educational goal, and can no longer be awarded the program except by petition exception. Program is available in Banner for future transcript requests.
* **Error/Not used**: This stage is used to denote errors in program set-up that are deemed not worth the request to IT to “sharp knife” them out, or for programs that were set up in the past but do not fit our current definition of programs and was never intended to be awarded. An example of the latter category is “pre-nursing”.
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Want to suggest other terms to include? Send them to Vickery!