

AA13

Assessment and Evaluation of Learning

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Responsible Authority:	Dean, Academic Development
Executive Sponsor:	Senior Vice President, Academic
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PURPOSE

To state the process for assessment and evaluation used by the College to provide students timely and specific feedback as they work towards the achievement of their learning outcomes.

The College is accountable for the assessment and evaluation of students' performance through the application of standards that guide assessment, evaluation and progression. It informs students of their current level of achievement in a course or program.

A process of formal evaluation also enables the College to make decisions regarding students' progress through a course or program.

SCOPE

All courses where assessment and evaluation of learning take place

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Academic Administrator	Program Chair, Course Chair or Academic Manager
Assessment	The process of gathering data to determine a learner's progression in a learning process and provide feedback
Authentic Assessment	Assessments designed to replicate real-world and/or industry tasks or skills that learners will experience in the workplace/field
Course Learning Requirement (CLR)	Clear statements of the required learning that are to be achieved to successfully complete the course; may also be called course learning outcomes
Evaluation	A formal measurement of how a learner has demonstrated their achievement of the course learning requirements

Feedback	Information provided to learners to improve their learning or for professors to identify learning gaps or areas for improvement in their teaching methods
Final assessment week	The final week of the term
Grade	The judgement of a learner's demonstration of learning based on a numerical and/or alphabetical scale
Marks	The numbers or points that contribute to a grade in a single evaluation
Rubric	One example of many grading tools to promote consistent application of expectations and to measure achievement against consistent criteria

POLICY

1. Assessment and Evaluation

- 1.1 Learners are evaluated using a variety of assessments designed with the principles of flexibility, inclusion, and accessibility to best support learner variability and success.
- 1.2 Evaluations are designed to provide learners the opportunity to demonstrate evidence, based on identified success criteria, that they have achieved one or more of the course learning requirements established for the course.
- 1.3 Learning in a given course is evaluated in that course, excluding deferred or retroactive accommodations.
- 1.4 For each school, Academic Administrators, in consultation with their professors, establish a process to identify learners at risk for retention and/or progression concerns through evaluation of learner performance at least twice a term. This process requires at a minimum the submission of identified learner names at the mid-term point, and the submission of cumulative course grades for all learners at the end of each term. Specific mechanisms for the assessment and evaluation of learner performance are published in all course outlines.
- 1.5 Evaluation of learning is done using assessment tools that align with the achievement of the course learning requirements at different levels. All potential marks are awarded within the assessment tool.
- 1.6 Evaluation results are formally documented and accessible to the learner within the Learning Management System and ACSIS.
- 1.7 Learners are to have more than one opportunity to provide evidence of their achievement of the course learning requirements. Where possible, several different types of evaluations will be used to account for learner variability, and these are spaced out evenly throughout the course. To that end, no single component of a course evaluation or category of course evaluation counts for more than 40% of the final grade. In the case of a course or evaluation that uses a Pass/Fail grading scheme, the 40% weighting requirement may not be applicable. However, learners should still be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate evidence of achievement of each course learning requirement, and every attempt should be made to design Pass/Fail assessments in alignment

with this policy. Typically, multiple categories of evaluation are used, subject to exception in the case of applied learning courses, such as labs, or if mandated by regulatory bodies, and with approval by the Academic Administrator.

- 1.8 Meaningful feedback is integral to learning, therefore, at least 20% of the evaluations in the course should be assigned, evaluated, and returned by the midpoint of the course. If evaluation and feedback cannot be provided before this date, this must be clearly indicated in the Course Section Information.
- 1.9 Learners are provided meaningful feedback designed to improve learning within ten working days. Exception to this timeline are to be approved by the Academic Administrator in advance of issuing the evaluation to learners and communicated to them accordingly.
- 1.10 The intent of mid-term break is to provide a mental health break for learners, therefore large-scale evaluations in the week immediately following a mid-term break that would impose a significant workload on learners over the break week should be avoided. Smaller assessments that guide learning or larger assessments that are assigned early in the term are preferable as they allow for ongoing opportunities for feedback and for learners to plan their workload around mid-term break.
- 1.11 The overall achievement demonstrated by course evaluations is translated into a final grade using the College Grading System.
- 1.12 The final grade is validated by the Academic Administrator responsible for the course. Barring exceptional circumstances, the professor must be consulted when the Academic Administrator is considering changing the final grade of a learner.
- 1.13 Learners have the right to request a review of a grade (Policy AA37 Review of a Final Grade) and appeal evaluation decisions (Policy AA19 Academic Appeal).
- 1.14 For courses of a general interest nature and of a short duration, a formal evaluation may not be required.

2. Course Outlines and Evaluation

2.1 Course outlines will include:

- course learning requirements that are to be achieved in order to successfully complete the course;
- the evaluation methods to be used to evaluate learner performance, such as, projects, written tests, assignments, performance tests, and the linkage of each to the specific course learning requirements;
- the criteria and method for determining the final grade designation; and
- conditions for granting supplemental privileges if applicable.

2.2 Any change made to the evaluation procedures after learners have received course outlines must be made in consultation with the learners in the class, and approved by the Academic Administrator before it can be implemented. Learners, the Program Coordinator, and the course and program Academic Administrators are notified in writing of any such changes.

3. Course Section Information and Evaluation:

3.1 Course Section Information documents should be posted to Brightspace by the first day of class and will include:

- A weekly schedule that details how the course learning requirements are met,
- An evaluation breakdown that identifies when each assessment and/or evaluation occurs, their weight, and the course learning requirement it achieves,
- Expectations for assessment and/or evaluation submissions and late policies, in alignment with College policies and departmental procedures.

4. Final Assessment Week

4.1 Final assessment week is the final week of the term.

4.2 In exceptional circumstances, professors may complete the teaching of subject material that was previously introduced during final assessment week. This material is also evaluated in final assessment week.

4.3 All courses in a program level are delivered for the scheduled duration of the level.

4.4 An overall assessment plan is developed for final assessment week and scheduled so as to ensure a reasonable workload for learners to support their academic success.

PROCEDURE

	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
1.	Evaluation of Learning	
1.1	Review annually the process for the evaluation of learner performance for the School.	Dean
1.2	Ensure the specific mechanisms for the assessment and evaluation of learner performance are published in the course outlines under their responsibility.	Academic Administrator
1.3	Facilitate the development of a balanced evaluation plan for each level of a program.	Academic Administrator or designate/Professors
1.4	Design assessments and evaluations that support learner variability and success.	Professors
1.5	Identify due dates for all evaluations on the Learning Management System Calendar.	Professors

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| 1.6 | Evaluate learning using marking schemes or other tools linked to specific course learning requirements identified in course outlines. | Professors |
| 1.7 | Provide learners with the results of each evaluation along with meaningful feedback in a course within ten working days. Exceptions to this timeline are to be approved by the Academic Administrator in advance of issuing the evaluation to students, and communicated to students accordingly. | Professors |
| 1.8 | In conjunction with professors, develop a formal process to review the overall performance of learners in a program and submit to the Dean for approval. The process will require, at a minimum, the submission of identified learners at risk of failing at the mid-term point, and the submission of cumulative course grades for all learners at the end of term. | Academic Administrator or designate |
| 1.9 | Twice during a term, formally review the overall performance of full-time learners in a program of study based on the approved process and take appropriate action. | Academic Administrator or designate |
| 1.10 | Implement a process to oversee the activities planned for the learners during final assessment week. Scheduling of those activities may involve the Registrar's Office Scheduler. | Academic Administrator |
| 1.11 | At the end of the course, translate the evaluation results into a grade using the College Grading System. | Professors |
| 1.12 | Submit the final grades on time to the Academic Administrator for validation using the Grade Reporting Form. | Professors |
| 1.13 | Submit the final grades on time to the Registrar's Office using the Grade Reporting Form. | Academic Administrator |

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1: Assessment and Evaluation: Effective Practices

RELATED POLICIES

- AA14 Grading System
- AA19 Academic Appeal
- AA26 Course Outlines and Course Section Information
- AA37 Review of a Final Grade
- AA39 Progression and Graduation Requirements

RELATED MATERIALS

None

Appendix 1: Assessment and Evaluation: Effective Practices

Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluation is a formal measurement of how a learner has demonstrated their achievement of learning outcomes (Svinicki, 2005). Assessment is the process of gathering data to determine a learner's progression in a learning process and provide feedback (The Glossary of Educational Reform, 2014). While assessment can include evaluation components, it encompasses the entire learning process. It involves gauging what learners know before, during, and after teaching and learning have occurred. Effective assessment strategies should include diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment types.

Assessment Types

Diagnostic assessments are used at the beginning of a lesson, unit, or course to determine what learners already know (Queen's University, 2020). They diagnose what learners know and do not know about an upcoming topic. This will provide feedback on what, and how, to teach it. An effective way to implement a diagnostic assessment is a zero-grade poll or quiz that learners can participate in.

Formative assessments gauge where the learner is at during the learning process. They are a wide variety of low-stake assessments that form student learning and inform the instructor about the effectiveness of their teaching (The Glossary of Educational Reform, 2014). It takes place cyclically during the learning process so learners still have time to adjust their performance, and instructors can adjust their teaching to address any learning gaps.

Summative assessments are formal, high-stake evaluations that measure student learning at the end of the learning process (lesson, unit, course, etc.), using a grading tool (such as a rubric), and a numerical and/or alphabetical scale (The Glossary of Educational Reform, 2014).

Authentic Assessment

Learners are motivated when they can connect their learning to real world situations (Mirriam & Bierema, 2013). Authentic assessments are evaluations designed to replicate real-world/industry tasks that learners will experience in their workplace (Taras, 2005). Authentic assessments reflecting the skills required of graduates in the field. Summative assessments should be designed with an emphasis on real-life/industry tasks that learners will accomplish in the workplace.

Learner Variability

Learners are incredibly diverse and bring with them a myriad of experiences, identities, and learning needs (CAST, 2018). When designing assessments, professors should support the diversity of learner variability, proactively anticipate barriers that learners may face to their learning, and attempt to design assessments that remove these barriers (Moore, 2020). Learners should be evaluated using a variety of assessments designed with the principles of flexibility, inclusion, and accessibility to best support learner variability and student success. This can be achieved through the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework that supports multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression into course design (CAST, 2018).

See <http://www.algonquincollege.com/lts> for more information on effective practices and professional development opportunities on assessment and evaluation.

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