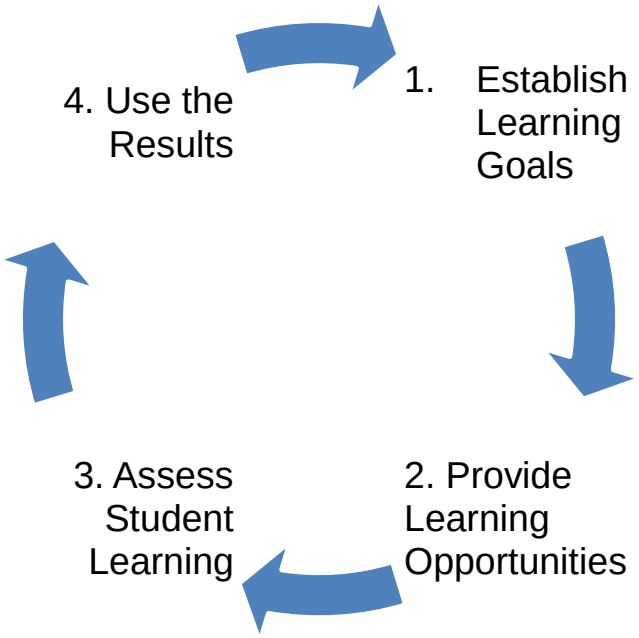
Guide to Assessment of Student Learning

at

Point Park University

A Cycle of Continuous Improvement of Student Learning



August 2010, updated May 2016

This *Guide to Assessment of Student Learning at Point Park University* describes assessment practices and processes for our university at the classroom, course, program, and core curriculum levels. Publication Date: Fall 2010, revised annually. The Guide is available electronically on Center for Teaching Excellence's Blackboard site and in hard copy in the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Some of the materials included in this guide were developed by the Student Learning Assessment Committee (SLAC), an ad hoc committee formed in December of 2008 to ensure that academic assessment and accountability are institutional priorities at Point Park University. Specifically, SLAC designed processes and tools for ongoing assessment of student learning and contributed to a culture of assessment by communicating assessment information to the University community

Faculty Assembly approved a motion to form the Core Outcomes Assessment Committee (COAC), effective in Fall 2012. This committee replaced the SLAC committee.
Regular committee duties include the following:

- Conduct annual assessment of core curriculum:

    1. Develop a plan for the assessment of one core outcome per year using two direct or one direct and one indirect measure
    2. Conduct assessment
    3. Analyze results
    4. Present a report and recommendations for improvement to Faculty Assembly

- Review analysis of NSSE data related to core and provide report and recommendations for improvement of student learning to appropriate committees of Faculty Assembly.

- Recommend other direct measures of assessment to be employed on a two-three year cycle, such as ACCUPLACER, CLA, Benchmark indicators, etc.

- Provide a follow-up report for each annual assessment that summarizes improvements made based on assessment results.

- Participate in periodic review and proposed revision of the core curriculum.

COAC members will also help evaluate curriculum, create assessment plans, and conduct assessments of the new Core, which launched in 2014-2015.

2016-2017 COAC Faculty Members
Elise D'Haene, COPA
Tatyana Dumova, School of Communication
April Friges, School of Communication
Margi Gilfillan, School of Business
Ruben Graciani, COPA
Teresa Gregory, School of Business
Jess McCort, Arts and Sciences
Jehnie Reis, Arts and Sciences
Ed Scott, School of Business
Ed Traversari, School of Business

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Point Park University adopted the following definition of assessment in 2008:

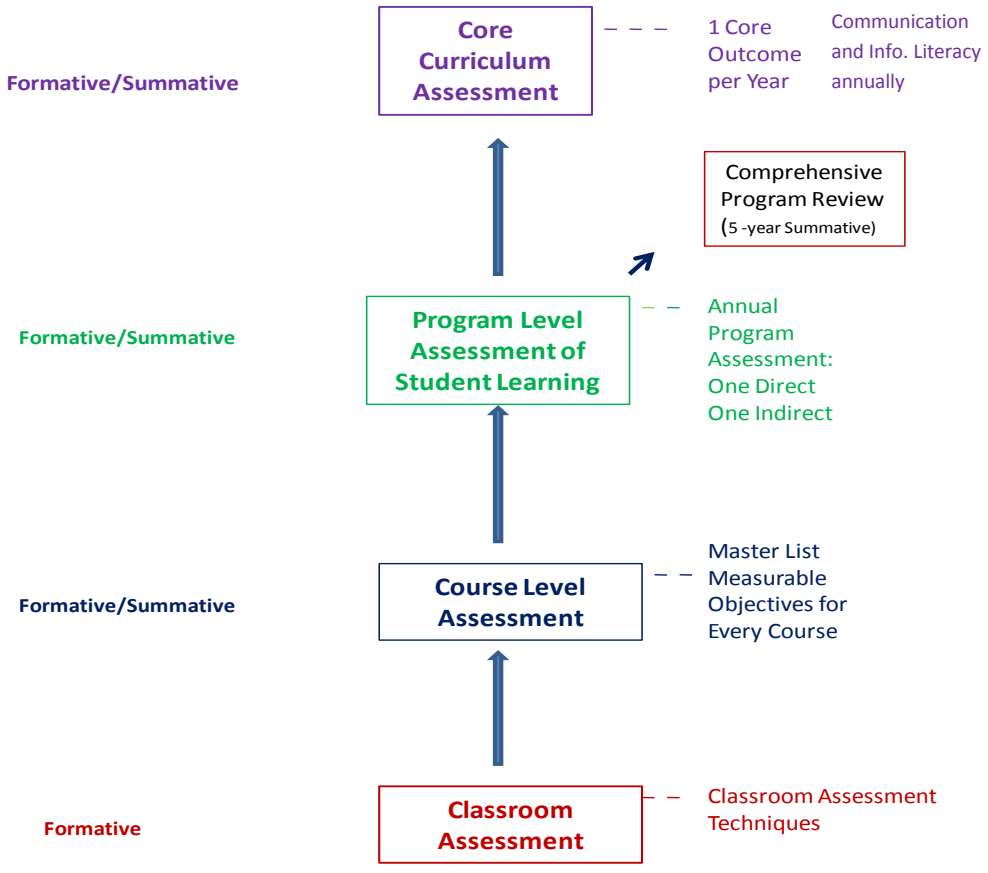
Assessment is the ongoing process of:

- Establishing clear, measurable objectives (expected outcomes) of student learning
- Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve outcomes
- Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations
- Using the resulting information to understand and to improve student learning.

(Linda Suskie, 2004)

The diagram below visually represents Point Park's use of assessment of student learning in all levels of undergraduate education.

Point Park University Levels of Assessment



Annual Undergraduate Program Assessment at Point Park University

What is assessment? Assessment is an on-going process of establishing clear and measurable learning objectives, ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those objectives, gathering pertinent data that measures student learning, and using that data to make improvements to learning process (Suskie).

What is a program? A program implies any structured educational activity with specific objectives and outcomes. Programs include those that prepare students for degrees and certifications, as well as prepare a group of selected students, such as Honors or Writing Program students.

What is program assessment? Program assessment "helps determine whether students can integrate learning from individual courses into a coherent whole. It is interested in the cumulative effects of the education process" (Palomba and Banta). Whereas classroom assessment focuses on gauging learning for individual students, program assessment gauges the learning of a group of students. The outcomes information in program assessment is used to improve courses, programs, and services. Each program should have at least 5 measurable program objectives. Each year one objective is assessed.

Who should be involved in program assessment? Numerous constituencies should be involved, including faculty, department chairs, program directors, appropriate administrators, advisory boards, and, of course, students.

What are essential components of program assessment?

- Clear, Measurable and Meaningful Goals/Objectives/Outcomes
- Indirect Assessment Measures:
    - Program Review Data: enrollment/graduation rates, advisory group recommendations, career placement stats, graduate school placement rates
    - Focus Group Info: interviews with students, faculty, employers
    - NSSE or SSI scores (Student Perception Surveys)
    - Number of student hours spent in community services, collaborative learning activities, active learning, pertinent extra-curricular activities
    - Student self-reflection essays
- Direct Assessment Measures:
    - Portfolios of student work scored by a rubric
    - Capstone projects, theses, exhibits, performances scored by a rubric
    - Pre-Post tests
    - Student Publications/Conference Presentations
    - Field experience rating sheets
    - Course-embedded test questions
    - Research papers scored by rubric

How to Write Program Objectives

1. In order to write assessable program goals/objectives, first answer the following:

- What do ideal students completing your program know? (Content)
- What can they do? (Skills)
- What do they care about? (Values)

2. Review the following materials and sort information into one of three categories-- **Content, Skills, or Values**: documents that describe your program (brochures, catalog, handbook, website, accreditation reports, national association goals), all master syllabi for program courses, and specific instructional materials.

3. After reviewing the above materials, brainstorm about the following:

- What is to be learned? Content, Skills, Values
- What level of learning is expected? Criteria/Standards for Achievement
- What is the context in which learning takes place? Application/Environment

4. After brainstorming, answer the following:

- What will graduates be able to know and do?
- What should students know and do at certain points of the program?
- What skills, capabilities, and values should students gain from the program?

5. Review your answers to the above and draft a set of program objectives. Use Bloom's Taxonomy Guide to locate the level of a learning activity. Use the verbs on the guide to begin your objective statements. Use the information below as a template and examples.

Remember to consider the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (See the CTE's Blackboard site):

Highest	Evaluation
	Synthesis
	Analysis
	Application
	Comprehension
Lowest	Memory/Knowledge

Complete the following statement: *All graduates of the program will be able to* (follow with a specific, measurable verb).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Examples of program objectives:

- Identify and outline the main theoretical perspectives of behavioral psychology (Psychology, Low Level)
- Use information technologies as they influence the structure and processes of organizations and economies, and as they influence the roles and techniques of management (MBA, Mid Level)
- Synthesize elements of design and drama in order to construct scenery appropriate for a production (Theater, High Level)

7. Revise your objectives by asking the following: How will we measure this objective? If you can't answer the question, then revise the objective for wording or delete it in its entirety.

Undergraduate Program Assessment Plan Form

(Academic Year) Program Assessment Plan for: _____

DUE BY SEPTEMBER 15 OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR TO Department Chair and/or Program Director and Assessment Coordinator, Lindsay Onufer (lonufer@pointpark.edu)

List program objective to be assessed this year:

What questions would you like answered by completing this assessment?/How will you use this assessment data?

List the two measures for assessing the objective: (Possible to have two direct methods)

Direct (concrete evidence of actual student learning):

Indirect (imply that learning has occurred):

Statement about method of Direct Assessment:

- Describe the method of assessment: Portfolio, embedded test questions, capstone courses or projects, etc.
- If appropriate, which capstone course will be used for the assessment?
- How many full-time and adjunct faculty members will participate in the assessment? If there is only one section of the course, then please indicate additional faculty members who will participate in assessing the student papers, tests, etc?
- What assessment tools will be used? (attach tools if required, ie. rubric, actual test questions)
- Will there be any standard for achievement? (For example, 75 % of students should "meet expectations" in all rubric criteria.)

SAMPLE

(2015-2016) Program Assessment Plan for:
Undergraduate Criminal Justice

DUE BY SEPTEMBER 15 OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR TO Department Chair and/or Program Director and Assessment Coordinator, Lindsay Onufer (lonufer@pointpark.edu)

List program objective to be assessed this year:
The objective to be assessed this year is: "Speak and write effectively." Specifically, we will be examining the effectiveness of the students' writing.

What questions would you like answered by completing this assessment?/How will you use this assessment data?
We would like to know if the students are developing their written communications skills in a way that shows professionalism, clarity, flexible application, attention to detail, and understanding of the writing process (including multiple revisions). The assessment data will be used to make any necessary adjustments to the teaching methods applied to strengthen the students' writing abilities.

List the two measures for assessing the objective: (Possible to have two direct methods)
Direct (concrete evidence of actual student learning):
Student writing samples will be collected from two courses, CRMJ 220 (Professional Communications) and CRMJ 290 (History of Organized Crime). By using courses in the 200 range, we hope to assess students who have some depth of university experience. The student names will be redacted and the work will be assessed by faculty members in the context of previously agreed-upon rubrics.

Indirect (imply that learning has occurred):
Students in both courses will fill out a brief survey that will be designed to gain insight into their perspective on their own writing process and outcomes.

Statement about method of Direct Assessment:

- Describe the method of assessment: Portfolio, embedded test questions, capstone courses or projects, etc.

The method would be best described as a Portfolio approach, focusing on student writing samples and applying a rubric to assess the quality of the writing samples. The examined writing samples will be final writing projects for the respective courses.

- If appropriate, which capstone course will be used for the assessment?

For this assessment, it is unlikely that a capstone course will be used.

- How many full-time and adjunct faculty members will participate in the assessment? If there is only one section of the course, then please indicate additional faculty members who will participate in assessing the student papers, tests, etc?

One full-time faculty member and two adjunct faculty members will be involved in the assessment of two courses, one course taught by a full-time faculty member and one course that is team-taught by two faculty members. Additionally, the Program Liaison will direct the assessment and other faculty members have volunteered to assist as needed.

- What assessment tools will be used? (attach tools if required, ie. rubric, actual test questions)

The tool for direct assessment will be a rubric to be agreed upon by the participating faculty and staff. A sample rubric is attached with these materials, though another may be chosen by the time of the assessment. The tool for indirect assessment is a survey to be presented to the students. A draft of the survey is included with these materials, although it too may be adjusted by the time of dissemination.

- Will there be any standard for achievement? (For example, 75 % of students should "meet expectations" in all rubric criteria.)

The target for achievement will be 75% of students.

SAMPLE Continued

Pennsylvania Writing Assessment Scoring Guide

	4	3	2	1
Focus	Sharp, distinct controlling point made about a single topic with evident awareness of task.	Apparent point made about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task	No apparent point but evidence of a specific topic	Minimal evidence of a topic
Content	Substantial, specific, and/or illustrative content demonstrating sophisticated ideas.	Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation	Limited content with inadequate elaboration or explanation	Superficial and/or minimal content
Organization	Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions	Functional arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with some evidence of transitions	Confused or inconsistent arrangement of content with or without attempts at transition	Minimal control of content arrangement
Style	Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience	Generic use of variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience	Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone	Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures
Conventions	Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence formation	Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation	Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation	Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation

SAMPLE Continued

Undergraduate Criminal Justice Student Writing Survey, 2015-2016

I believe that my writing skills have improved as a result of this course.

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly Agree

I believe that I have developed a better understanding of the writing process.

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly Agree

I believe that I can apply my writing skills to my future profession.

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly Agree

Point Park University Undergraduate Program Assessment Plan Checklist

Put a check next to the items that are clearly and specifically addressed in the assessment plan. Items without a check will need to be created or revised.

_____ 1. The program objective is measurable and specific (uses Bloom's Taxonomy).

_____ 2. The plan includes two assessment measures, and at least one measure is a direct assessment measure.

_____ 3. Both assessment measures are valid and meaningful; they will provide useful information regarding student learning and achievement of the objective.

_____ 4. The plan includes the assignment(s) and target courses/populations for the assessments. The plan indicates that artifacts will be selected from more than one course in the program.

_____ 5. The plan indicates that a majority of full- and part-time faculty appropriate to the assessment will participate. If the plan includes course-embedded assessment, then it indicates that a majority of full-and part-time faculty teaching selected courses will participate. If a capstone course will be assessed, then all sections of that course are included.

_____ 6. **The plan includes an explanation/ attachment of the specific assessment tools to be used. (For example, attach a list of multiple choice questions, rubric, and/or student self-reflection question.) The question, rubric, etc. have a sound and workable design.**

_____7. The plan includes an acceptable level of student achievement (ie. 75% of students will answer 80% of the test questions correctly). If no level of achievement is included, then the plan explains the rationale for this decision.

If you need assistance in creating or revising a plan, then please feel free to contact:
Lindsay Onufer, Assessment Coordinator: 412-392-4773 or lonufer@pointpark.edu.

Undergraduate Program Assessment Results Form

DUE BY APRIL 15 OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR to Department Chair and Assessment Coordinator, Lindsay Onufer

Specific Program Objective Assessed	

Number of faculty that participated	
Number of faculty that could have participated	
Number of students participating	

Results

	Direct Measure	**Indirect (or second Direct) Measure**
Results: Summarize results of the assessment activities (include attachments if applicable)		
List Strengths and Weaknesses of student learning uncovered during this assessment in order to determine if the objective is achieved.		
Action(s) to be taken by the faculty for improvement of learning. What is the expected date of follow up for these actions?		
Possible Financial Resources needed		
Closing the Loop: Did measures taken for improvement of student learning work? How did results differ? **To be completed 1 year after initial assessment*		

Submitted/prepared by:_____

SAMPLE

2015-2016 Undergraduate Program Assessment Results for: BA Criminal Justice

DUE BY APRIL 15 OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR to Department Chair and Assessment Coordinator, Lindsay Onufer

Specific Program Objective Assessed	The specific objective addressed is: "Speak and write effectively." Specifically, we examined the effectiveness of the students' writing. The original Program Assessment Plan included CRMJ 220 (Professional Communications) and CRMJ 290 (History of Organized Crime). It was necessary to modify this plan, applying artifacts and surveys from two sections of CRMJ 220.

Number of faculty that participated	2
Number of faculty that could have participated	3
Number of students participating	29 Direct / 23 Indirect

Results

	Direct Measure	**Indirect (or second Direct) Measure**
Results: Summarize results of the assessment activities (include attachments if applicable)	Two faculty members applied a standard rubric to examine 29 writing artifacts from 29 students, representing two classes (17/12). The average total assessment for both classes was 17.05 out of a possible 20. In the area of Focus, the average score was 3.9 out of 4, which may reflect the generally focused nature of the assignments – writing police reports. The Content score averaged at 3.35. Organization averaged at 3.5. Style averaged at 3.15. Conventions averaged at 3.	A total of 23 students participated in the survey, indicating that a total of 6 students between the two classes were not present on the day the survey was conducted. Four (4) Strongly Agreed and 19 Agreed that their writing had improved as a result of the course. Twelve (12) Strongly agreed and 10 Agreed that they had developed a better understanding of the writing process; one (1) was Unsure. Fourteen (14) Strongly Agreed and 9 Agreed that they believe they can apply their writing skills to their future profession.
List Strengths and Weaknesses of student learning uncovered during this assessment in order to determine if the objective is achieved.	Not surprisingly, distinct patterns emerged through these assessments. The students appeared to have an overall satisfaction with their progress and the prospects of future applications of their writing. The level of Focus was generally high, as the purpose of each assignment was clear and	Organization ratings were generally relatively high, which may be due in part to the narrative nature of the reports. Some reports were a bit disjointed, but most flowed logically. Both Style and Convention tended to be ranked lower due to issues with word choice, grammar, and mechanics.

	simple – documentation of an event. Most students stuck well to their tasks. The quality and detail of Content varied, but was generally acceptable. Some important details were left out in certain reports.	However, most of these errors were relatively minor. Since fundamental writing skills are developed over many years, these skills are beyond the scope of one class. However, we will endeavor to address as many writing issues as possible in the scope of CRMJ 220.
Action(s) to be taken by the faculty for improvement of learning **What is the expected date of follow up for these actions?**	There was a notable difference in the quality of writing from one class versus the other. We would like to model future sections of CRMJ 220 after the more successful section, including standardized event reporting as the basis for all reports, both hand-written and typed assignments, and greater attention to details. Furthermore, we will provide additional materials to assist students in the revision and editing processes, and will suggest that they enroll in the Writing Studio course that is offered at Point Park University.	These modifications will be made in the standard syllabus, instructional materials, and in classroom implementation. Additionally, instructors of Professional Communications classes will require a writing diagnostic from each student at the beginning of every course. This will help them to ascertain areas that need improvement. These adjustments will be made by the next time CRMJ 220 runs, which will be Fall of 2016.
Possible Financial Resources needed	No financial resources appear to be necessary	
Closing the Loop: Did measures taken for improvement of student learning work? How did results differ? **To be completed 1 year after initial assessment*		

Submitted/prepared by: Sean Elliot Martin

Steps for Conducting Undergraduate Program Assessment

1. Prepare for the Assessment Session.

   Point Person should do the following:
   - Collect the artifacts (papers, tests, etc).
   - Copy assessment tools. If using a rubric, then make sure that there are sufficient rubrics for evaluators. If there are 10 papers and 4 evaluators, then make 40 copies of the rubric.
   - Schedule a time and place for assessment. Provide ample time for the activity.

2. Conduct the Assessment.
   - At the assessment session, the point person should review the process of assessment that will be followed. If a rubric will be used, then a "norming" or calibration exercise should be completed before the assessment. (See samples: "Process for Evaluating Student Artifacts" and "The Evaluation Process").
   - Complete the assessment in an organized manner. Decide upon sequence of assessment exercise. The more organized the session, the faster the session will be!
   - Evaluate the quality of the Assessment Exercise: what improvements can be made to the process? Should the rubric be revised?

3. Tabulate Results. There are different types of assessment results:
   - Qualitative – open-ended, such as survey questions or reflection essays
   - Ordered/Ranked – results can be put in a meaningful order, ie ranked. Medians can be calculated.
   - Scaled – results are numerical; means can be calculated

   Follow an appropriate documentation and storage format for the type of results. For example, tally all of the scores for each of the rubric performance standards and find the mean score for each standard. Creating Excel spreadsheets can help with this exercise! Remember to save all tabulations in either hard copy or electronically or BOTH. (**Please contact Lindsay Onufer for help with tabulating and/or summarizing results.**)

4. Summarize Results. Tallies, tables, graphs, and averages can be used to summarize assessment results.

5. Interpret Results.
   Faculty must be the only ones to interpret results. Some items for consideration:
   - Is the achievement level acceptable? Why or why not?
   - Where did students do the best?
   - Where did students do the poorest?
   - Should any test questions be changed?

6. List Actions for Improvement.
   Faculty should make a list of action items to improve student learning.

7. Share Results. Fill out the Program Assessment Results form (DUE APRIL 15) and send it to all department faculty, the Department Chair and the Assessment Coordinator.

Point Park University Assessment Tool Kit

The **Assessment Tool Kit** includes both direct and indirect assessment tools that can be used in the completion of annual program assessment. Direct assessment tools provide measures for concrete evidence that students are learning; indirect tools provide the means to gather students' perceptions about their learning.

DIRECT ASSESSMENT TOOLS

1. Rubric
2. Pre/Post Test
3. Embedded Multiple Choice Questions
4. Portfolio Information and Bibliography

INDIRECT ASSESSMENT TOOLS

1. Student Self Reflections
2. Focus Groups and Small Group Instructional Diagnosis
3. Course to Program Mapping Tools
4. SSI Data: Go to http://www.pointpark.edu/About/AdminDepts/InstitutionalResearch/StudentSatisfactionInventory
5. 2015 NSSE Mean Comparison Data: Go to http://www.pointpark.edu/About/AdminDepts/AcademicAndStudent/Assessment

The entire tool kit as well as complete information regarding Assessment of Student Learning at Point Park is housed on the the Center for Teaching Excellence's Blackboard site.

Rubrics – The Basics

The Center for Teaching Excellence offers asynchronous online and in-person trainings in developing rubrics and other assessment tools. Contact Alison Sahner to enroll in a training.

What is a rubric?

Rubrics are scoring scales used to assess student performance on assignments by defining criteria faculty will use to evaluate student work. Rubrics are not assessments in themselves; they are tools of assessment. There are numerous types of rubrics, ranging from simple checklists to more complex numerical grading rubrics. However, there are two basic types of assessment rubrics:

1. Holistic Rubric: a single score based upon an overall impression of a product or performance. Use these for a quick snapshot of overall achievement. These rubrics are particularly useful for diagnostic assessment.
2. Analytic Rubric: articulates levels of performance for EACH criterion being assessed. Use analytic, or trait assessing, rubrics for more detailed feedback, including strengths and weaknesses. These rubrics are particularly useful for summative assessment.

Which assignments are suited for rubrics? Writings/Papers, Projects, Performances, Interviews, Demonstrations, Oral Reports, Portfolios.

Why use rubrics?

- Help students understand instructor expectations
- Improve communication between students and instructor – provides detailed, individualized feedback
- Reduce arguments about grades
- Save time in grading process
- Diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses
- Establish consistent standards and easily tabulated results for course and program assessment

What are the steps of rubric development?

1. Determine measurable learning outcomes of the assignment.
2. Define criteria that support the learning outcomes.
3. Determine the number of performance levels for each criterion.
4. Define each criterion according to different levels of performance.
5. Get feedback on rubric from colleagues by completing a calibration exercise, and revise rubric.
6. Always re-evaluate a rubric after use.

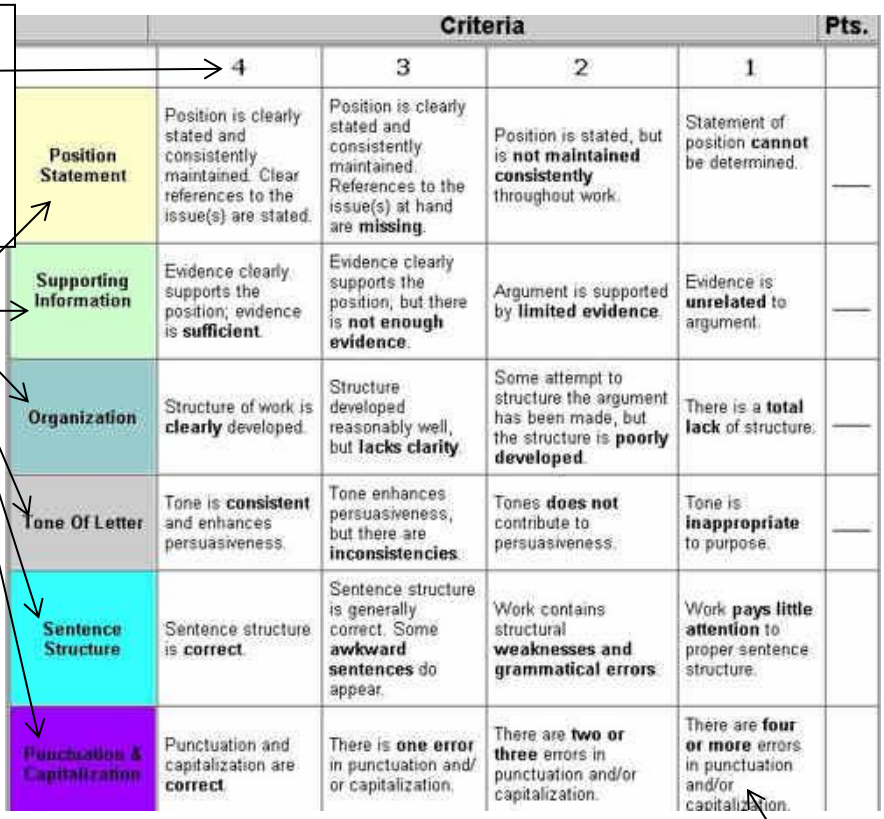
Parts of a Rubric

Outcome: The student will compose a persuasive letter.

1. Outcome description

2. Scales of Achievement
Note: You may use descriptors like "proficient," letter grades, or point values

3. Performance Criteria



	Criteria				Pts.
	4	3	2	1	
Position Statement	Position is clearly stated and consistently maintained. Clear references to the issue(s) are stated.	Position is clearly stated and consistently maintained. References to the issue(s) at hand are **missing**.	Position is stated, but is **not maintained consistently** throughout work.	Statement of position **cannot** be determined.	____
Supporting Information	Evidence clearly supports the position; evidence is **sufficient**.	Evidence clearly supports the position, but there is **not enough evidence**.	Argument is supported by **limited evidence**.	Evidence is **unrelated** to argument.	____
Organization	Structure of work is **clearly** developed.	Structure developed reasonably well, but **lacks clarity**	Some attempt to structure the argument has been made, but the structure is **poorly developed**.	There is a **total lack** of structure.	____
Tone Of Letter	Tone is **consistent** and enhances persuasiveness.	Tone enhances persuasiveness, but there are **inconsistencies**.	Tones **does not** contribute to persuasiveness.	Tone is **inappropriate** to purpose.	____
Sentence Structure	Sentence structure is **correct**.	Sentence structure is generally correct. Some **awkward sentences** do appear.	Work contains structural **weaknesses and grammatical errors**.	Work **pays little attention** to proper sentence structure.	
Punctuation & Capitalization	Punctuation and capitalization are **correct**.	There is **one error** in punctuation and/ or capitalization.	There are **two or three** errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.	There are **four or more** errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.	

Detailed description of each level of achievement

Pre- and Post-Tests

Pre- and post-tests measure student learning improvement that occurs as the result of completing a course or a program by comparing what the student knew before the course or program to what the student knew after. This type of test offers a value-added perspective of measuring student learning in a course or a program, which is particularly useful for developmental courses in that standards-based tests or benchmarks may not be appropriate for measuring students in these courses. This method is also useful in programs that have few students so that comparisons with standards or norms may not be appropriate.

How to write a pre- and post-test

Each test question should be matched to a Course Objectives or Program Objective. For example, if your course objective is "Upon successful completion of this course, students will identify and make use of effective time-management skills," then questions should have students apply appropriate time management skills to various situations. The questions could be multiple-choice, true/false, and/or short answer. Try to write 3-5 questions for an objective.

Guidelines for writing pre- and post-tests:

- Tests assess Course Objectives or Program Objectives
- **Both tests must have the SAME items/questions**
- Multiple choice questions have 4-5 answer options
- Avoid use of negative questions (questions using the word "not" or "except")

Analysis of pre- and post-tests

Compare pre- and post-test results for each student. Faculty should work together to determine their expectations for improvement. What percent increase is acceptable? What was expected? What would be considered exceptional? Oftentimes this is done after the first assessment and refined with a subsequent data collection effort. When establishing performance standards it is important to set reasonable goals. Expectations should be set high enough to challenge students to do their best work.

The pre-test helps establish what students as a group already know, and helps identify students who may need additional assistance. The post-test measures learning gained as a result of completing the course or program, and may highlight where faculty can revise/improve student learning opportunities.

Analyze post-test data by reviewing each test question. Group trend analysis can be conducted by looking for patterns: Which question did most students get correct? Which is most often incorrectly answered? Look for patterns in the corresponding outcomes/objectives, too. Are students performing better in some areas than others? From this information, instructors may want to alter content of the course to improve identified weaknesses or use the information about student strengths as evidence of effective practices.

Embedded Assessment: Multiple Choice Tests

A Definition of Embedded Assessment for Test Questions:

Embedded assessment on multiple choice tests allows faculty to measure specific course learning outcomes by incorporating assessment items into an existing unit test, mid-term exam, or final exam. Faculty who are teaching a particular course, choose one learning objective and design a series of questions that will directly measure the objective. For example, in PSYC 150, one learning objective is "List and illustrate the types of memory including encoding, storage, and retrieval." In order to complete an embedded assessment for a multiple choice test, a group of Psychology faculty members teaching PSYC 150 will write at least 5 multiple choice questions about memory types and include the exact questions on an exam that will be offered to their PSYC150 students.

The Purpose of Embedded Assessment:

Embedded assessment allows a group of faculty members teaching a course to determine whether or not students are fulfilling the course's learning outcomes. In many cases, this knowledge will enable a faculty member to confirm that his or her pedagogical approach is effective in giving students the opportunity to meet course learning outcomes. When data indicate that students are not meeting a course outcome, a faculty member may want to reflect on how he or she might alter pedagogical approaches to provide more opportunity for students to master the course outcome. (This type of course assessment can also be used for program assessment, if the course learning outcome can be directly tied to a program objective.)

Steps in Designing Embedded Test Questions

1. Discipline faculty members choose one course learning objective for a particular course that they want to assess.
2. Faculty members prepare at least 5 multiple choice questions that will parse the learning objective into meaningful components necessary to illustrate student achievement.
3. Faculty teaching the specific course administer the agreed upon questions in an agreed upon exam. The questions MUST BE the SAME for tests.

Analyzing and Using Results

1. After the test has been administered, one person should collect all student responses for the embedded test questions, so that responses can be tallied for a summative analysis. Look for strengths and weaknesses in student learning. Which question had the largest number of correct responses? The lowest?
2. Faculty involved in the assessment will review the tallied responses and consider results in terms of improvement of student learning. This is an opportunity to share best practices with your colleagues.
3. It is important for faculty to consider not only the results from students but also the possibility that questions need to be revised in order to get at the true assessment of learning for that outcome. Scrutinize any question that more than half of the students answered incorrectly.
4. Finally, this type of assessment can be used over many semesters as a way to measure progress and change. It is imperative that faculty discuss options for improving student learning of the course outcome

Portfolios for Program Assessment

Students create and collect information for program portfolios over the course of their years at the University; therefore, portfolios present direct evidence of student learning in one package. The culminating portfolio should provide evidence that students have achieved all of the program objectives. Portfolios can also include indirect evidence of student learning through tools such as student reflection. Students need to have specific guidance and instruction on completing the portfolio at the very beginning of their program, and they must develop and update their portfolios throughout their program's progression. Faculty need to ensure that individual courses will include assignments to be included in the portfolio (course to program mapping is essential) and also need to develop a meaningful rubric to assess portfolios in relation to achievement of program objectives. Portfolio assessment requires that faculty examine student learning holistically and progressively.

The following is a select bibliography on Using Portfolios for Assessing Student Learning:

Cambridge, D., Cambridge, B.L., and Yancey K., Eds. *Electronic Portfolios 2.0: Emerging findings and Shared Questions.* Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2008. Print.

Chris, William G., Ed. "Direct Measures: Portfolios." *Assessing Media Education: A Resource Handbook For Educators and Administrators.* Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum, 2006. 421-438. Print.

Chen, Helen, L. and Tracy Penny Light. *Electronic Portfolios and Student Success: Effectiveness, Efficiency, And Learning.* Washington D.C.: AAC&U, 2010. Print.

Huba, Mary E. and Jann E. Freed. "Using Portfolios to Promote, Support, and Evaluate Learning." *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2000. Print.

Lombardi, Judy."To Portfolio or Not to Portfolio: Helpful or Hyped?" *College Teaching* Winter 2008: 7-10. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 14 July 2010.

Secolsky, Charles and Ellen Wentland. "Differential Effect of Topic: Implications for Portfolio Assessment." *Assessment Update* 22.1(2010): 1-2+. Print.

Suskie, Linda. "Assembling Assessment Information into Portfolios." *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009. 202-213. Print.

Student Self-Reflections

Student self-reflections help students learn by metacognition (thinking about one's thinking processes) and synthesis. Reflection balances quantitative information with qualitative information. Qualitative assessments provide fresh insight to the learning process. Faculty members get a first-hand account of how students learn; this information may help faculty to re-think and re-design classroom instruction and activities.

Chapter 8 of Angelo and Cross' *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (available in the library and the CTE) provides numerous examples of student self-reflections, including Self Assessment of Ways of Learning (#36), Productive Study Time Logs (#37), Process Analysis (#39) Diagnostic Learning Logs (#40), and numerous types of journals.

In addition, the following three types of Student Self-Self Reflections may be used at the class, course, and/or program levels of assessment: Before-and-After Reflections, Self-Ratings, and Questions and Prompts.

Before-and-After Reflection

Ask students to reflect at both the **beginning and end of a course or unit** and compare their responses in order to assess their growth and development. Example:

Initial Definition of Leadership Later Definition of Leadership

Initial Definition of Poetry Later Definition of Poetry

This type of assessment requires THEMATIC ANALYSIS: synthesizing results into categories, and looking for common themes, patterns, and relationships.

Self-Ratings

Students rate themselves on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes using a scale. These can be given as exit surveys for a course or a program. Surveys list questions pertaining to specific Course Learning Outcomes or Program Objectives. Students respond to this question about specific outcomes or objectives: "Was this outcome or objective met for you?" Students choose one of the following responses.

Strongly Agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly Disagree.

This type of assessment is easily tallied for analysis.

Examples of Prompts for Self-Reflection on an Assignment, Course, or Program

1. What was the one most useful thing you learned in this assignment, course or program?
2. What suggestions would you give other students on ways to get the most out of this assignment, course, or program?
3. In what area did you improve the most?
4. List three ways you think you have developed or grown as a result of this assignment, course, or program?
5. What did you learn about writing, research, (or any other skill) from this assignment, course, or program?
6. What problems did you encounter in this assignment, course, or program?
7. What assignment of this course or program was your best work and why?

Faculty can choose one or more of these prompts for student self-reflection. Faculty should create some type of rules for categorizing so that analysis will be consistent. Faculty should review all results in order to assure consistent categorization before completing the final analysis of results.

(Most of the information comes from Linda Suskie's *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide , 2004*)

Focus Groups and Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID): Methods of Indirect Assessment

What are Focus Groups?

Focus groups are small groups (usually about 6-10 members) who meet for approximately sixty minutes in order to discuss a specific topic under the guidance of trained moderator. A focus group provides a method of indirect assessment for Program Assessment. Small programs can use one focus group to gather qualitative data.

Focus groups are versatile in that they can be used to gather information before, during or after a program of study is completed. For example, students who are about to graduate from a particular program can discuss answers to specific questions regarding their perceptions of student learning throughout the program and as they enter the workforce.

They are flexible because the can be organized rather quickly and produce faster results than other methods, such surveys and questionnaires. They are also inexpensive.

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) identify four types of applications for focus groups:

1. Exploratory Data Gathering: used before a program is implemented.
2. Refining Ongoing Programs and Services: used to adapt programs to better suit student needs or to develop progress reports on a program.
3. Evaluating Completed Programs: used to assess what worked and what did not work and why.
4. Validating Results of other Research Methods: used to confirm or expand on direct assessment results.

What is Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID)?

An SGID is a class discussion led by a facilitator other than the instructor (ideally, the facilitator should be someone from outside of the instructor's department), who poses questions about the course to small student groups, similar to a focus group. SGID preserves student anonymity like a survey, but allows for detailed feedback like a one-on-one appointment would.

SGID facilitators begin by dividing the class into groups of 3-4. Each group must answer several questions, usually about what they like most and least about the course and what they would change to improve it. *Groups must arrive at a consensus in order for their responses to be recorded*, which eliminates outlier answers.

The facilitator then communicates a report of recorded responses (those for which student groups have reached a consensus) to the faculty member, who then makes course improvements based upon the report.

SGID results should only be used for formative assessment purposes and only communicated to the instructor and class.

What are the key components of a successful Focus Group?

The Organizer

The Organizer sets the dates, times, locations, and procures refreshments for the focus groups. The Organizer contacts all parties involved in the focus group and is present before and during the actual discussion in order to greet participants, handle refreshments, operate recording equipment, etc.

The Moderator

The Moderator guides the discussion by asking questions (which the moderator and others have designed prior to the session) and facilitating group interaction through use of probing techniques. Moderators welcome participants, review the purpose of the study, and present a set of ground rules for participation and confidentiality.

The Participants

Participants are recruited from the particular target audience that will help to achieve the specific purpose of the focus group. If a department wanted to assess its completed program, then the participants could include students about to graduate from a program or students currently enrolled in a capstone course. Participants may be referred to by their first name and are reminded that comments shared during the focus group should remain confidential.

The Questions

Focus Group questions should generate as much discussion as possible; therefore, questions should begin with the following types of phrases: “How do you feel about …,” “What is your opinion of …,” or “Please describe ….” Questions should be written by faculty and administration in the program area and should be linked to a particular program objective that is to be measured for the year.

Organizer's Checklist

____ Do you have participant contact information?

____ Did you schedule room, time, and any equipment needed?

____ Did you send out meeting time to participants?

____ Did you confirm attendance at the session?

____ Did you make arrangements for refreshments?

____ Did you coordinate note taking and/or recording activities with the moderator?

____ Did you and the moderator work with each other to collate responses and distribute this information to the appropriate constituencies for interpretation?

____ Did you send a thank you note to the participants for completing the focus group session?

Moderator's Guidelines

1. Work with faculty and administration in order to determine what type of focus group is needed.

2. Once the type of group is identified, then work with the appropriate constituencies in order to create approximately 7-10 open-ended questions that will gather information that will achieve the purpose of conducting the specific type of focus group.
    - Open-ended questions begin with "How do you feel about…?" "Please describe …?" Avoid questions that have potential yes/no answers or simple numerical responses. For example, instead of asking "How long do you typically wait before seeing an advisor?" you could ask "How do you feel about the length of time you wait before seeing an advisor?" Or get at more specific answers, "Which is more important to you: shorter waiting time or extended hours?"
    - Visual aids may help participants to provide more information.

3. Draft a Welcome Statement (approximately 5 minutes in length) that will explain the purpose of the study and a list of ground rules for participation. Remember to include the following information:
    - Welcome participants and introduce yourself and the organizer.
    - Explain purpose of study and why participants were chosen
    - Explain that answers will be kept confidential—results will not include student names—and explain any recording system, etc.
    - Outline basic rules: all people should speak up one at a time; moderator may break in or ask a follow-up question in order to assure clarity; participants may respond to each other's comments, etc.
    - Explain procedures for rest room use, refreshments, etc.

4. Review methods for probing, keeping people on track and having everyone participate. For example, probes include questions such as "Is there anything else?" "What do you mean by…?" If someone is monopolizing the discussion, interrupt at an appropriate time and say "That is an interesting point. I would like to know what others in the group think about that." You may want to write a few notes under your copy of the questions so that you remember to get at some of the important points.

5. Have a concluding statement prepared and ask if anyone has anything else they would like to say. Thank everyone for their participation and again explain how the information will be used.

6. Use the tape from a recording device and notes in order to prepare a written report of responses. This report should be objective: do not incorporate your own interpretations.

7. Distribute focus group data to the appropriate constituencies. Arrange a time when that group can meet in order to analyze the results. When analyzing results, highlight major themes, note strengths and weaknesses, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, REVIEW INFORMATION IN ORDER TO DESIGN WAYS OF IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING.

Materials prepared by D. Maldonado, 2008 Source Information: Much of this content is found in *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. 2nd ed. Jossey-Bass.

Focus Groups: Moderator Do's and Don'ts

MODERATOR DO's

- Follow the discussion outline and activities, as designed, in a consistent manner from group to group; use the same key questions in each session.
- Use a neutral, yet comfortable and inviting tone of voice and facial expressions.
- Ask questions to clarify participants' points and increase understanding of each point made by participants.
- Ensure that each participant contributes throughout the conversation.
- Give people time to think by using pauses whenever needed. Be comfortable with silences.
- Be respectful of all points of view and instruct those in the group to do the same. *(Reminder: this is neither a debate nor an attempt to reach consensus on any issue.)*
- Use plain language! Avoid the jargon used by the college within the "inner circle."
- Keep the discussion moving to stay within the specified time frame.
- **End the focus group discussion on time!**

MODERATOR DON'TS

- Don't try to guide the participants to your own conclusions.
- Don't share your own opinion or experiences.
- Don't dominate the conversation.
- Don't criticize or ridicule anyone's comments or allow anyone in the group to do so.
- Don't challenge the accuracy of participants' knowledge or views.
- Don't translate jargon or slang terms. *(If someone asks what a term means, ask the individual using the term to explain what he or she means.)*
- Don't interpret participants' comments for the group.
- Don't give answers to participants' questions.

Participant Consent Form

The faculty and staff of Point Park University are committed to doing all we can to help students achieve their academic goals. The purpose of conducting student focus groups is to learn about your experiences at this college and to hear your thoughts about what we are doing well and what we need to improve to help you and other students stay in college to achieve your goals.

Participation in this focus group is entirely voluntary. If you have any questions about this study, please contact [contact person's name].

I, _____ (Name: please print) understand and agree that:

- The information gathered in this focus group will be summarized and may be used by the college to report on the outcome of the discussion.
- My comments may be audiotaped and/or videotaped for the sole purpose of maintaining an accurate record of the discussion that will be a reference for any reports derived from the discussion.
- While my name may be listed as a focus group participant and my comments may be used in a report derived from the focus group discussion, my comments will not be attributed directly to me. Information derived from this focus group discussion may be used in publications and presentations to further the educational goals of this and other universities.

I agree to participate in this project according to the preceding terms.

_____

Participant's Signature

_____

Address

(_____)_____

Telephone

_____

E-mail Address

_____

Date

Source for Consent Form: Community College Survey of Student Engagement www.ccsse.org

Course to Program Curriculum Mapping

Each program should directly correlate/match course objectives to program objectives in order to ensure that a sufficient number of courses provide student learning necessary to achieve program objectives. This method of indirect assessment is essential for programs' success.

Directions: Complete one table for each course. List program objectives across the top row. List the course learning objectives in the first column. Match the course objectives to the program objectives that are listed in the top row by marking an I, D, or A to indicate level of achievement in the appropriate cell.

"I" signifies that the objective will be introduced in the course.
"D" signifies the objective will be developed.
"A" signifies that the objective will be accomplished.

Program Objectives: [List program objectives in the top row}					
COURSE: [List course objectives in this column]					

Additional Curriculum Mapping resources, training materials, and samples are available on the Center for Teaching Excellence's Blackboard site.

Sample Completed Mapping: Course Objectives to Program Objectives

Program Objectives: Intelligence and National Security	1. Offer clear and concise oral and written reports	2. Apply critical thinking; collect, analyze, and interpret collected information	3. Define domestic and international terrorist organizations; their structure, causation, and financing; and global effect on foreign policy	4. Describe the history and evolution of U.S. intelligence and its effect on national policy	5. Examine tradecraft techniques and the sources and methods of the dark arts
COURSE: INTL 302 National Intelligence Authorities					
Assess the importance of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence				D	
Compare and contrast the 17 Intelligence Community agencies				D	
Explain the purpose of the Intelligence Community				I	
Weigh the importance of estimative language		D			
Write papers supporting their position on assigned articles	A	A			

Sample Completed Mapping: Course to Program Objectives

Program Outcomes: English Courses:	Interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources using a range of theoretical approaches that recognize the variable nature of interpretation.	Identify and describe major genres, movements, and periods in British and American literature from their origins to the present.	Identify and apply syntactic, phonological, morphological, semantic, pragmatic, and historical principles of language.	Write, using a process-based approach, documents that satisfy the demands of a range of purposes and styles, including three or more of the following (individually or in combination): • Argument • Literary analysis • Research • Exposition • Poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction • Meta-cognitive or reflective	The ability to create an original interpretation, perform quality research, and synthesize the original interpretation with the results of the research.
ENGL 147, 148, 149 Writing Studio I-III	I			I	
ENGL 150 English Composition I	I			I	
ENGL 151 English Composition II	I		I	I	I
ENGL 214 Prof. & Bus. Writing			I	D	I
ENGL 218 Technical Writing			I	D	I

Elements of Comprehensive 5-year Undergraduate Program Review

1. **Program overview**
   - Brief description of the program and how it has developed/changed over time

2. **Program's alignment with the University mission and four strategic initiatives**.
   - How do program goals/objectives support the mission
   - How do the program strategic goals reflect and support the University's strategic initiatives:
     1. Academic Excellence
     2. Quality Student Experience
     3. Community Engagement
     4. Managed Growth

3. **Sufficient number and appropriately credentialed faculty deliver the program and remain current in the field. (data for 5 years)**
   - Faculty Student Ratio
   - Full-time/Part-time faculty ratio
   - Review of full-time qualifications as directly related to program courses
   - Review of part-time qualifications as directly related to program courses
   - Scholarship/Publications/Other Professional Development
   - Service to the University
   - Other faculty demographic information

4. **Analysis of assessment of student learning data for the past 5 years.**
   - Summary of 5 years of annual program assessment data including closing the loop activities
   - Does the program achieve all of the program objectives?
   - Strengths and Weaknesses evidence through assessment data
   - Improvements made based on assessment data
   - Future actions for improvement of student learning and effective teaching

5. **Program's enrollment, retention, graduation rates and employment of graduates in the last 5 years.**
   - Enrollment numbers
   - Retention rates
   - Graduation rates
   - Internships/coops
   - Job Placement numbers/positions
   - Other demographic information

6. Program's projected enrollment, retention, graduation rates, and employment of graduates in the next 3 years.

- Enrollment numbers
- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Projected Graduate Employment

7. Discussion of Cost, Budget, and Adequacy of Resources

- Facilities
- Equipment
- Library Resources
- Technology
- Operating Funds
- Faculty Hiring Needs
- Other Hiring needs

8. Internal Review/External Review/ Advisory Board Review

- Feedback from internal review
    1. Strengths
    2. Weaknesses
    3. Opportunities
    4. Threats
    5. Recommendations for Improvements

- Feedback from external reviewer(s) **or** Advisory Board Review:
    1. Strengths
    2. Weaknesses
    3. Opportunities
    4. Threats
    5. Recommendations for Improvements

9. Program Review Recommendations Form

Three specific recommendations to improve the program based on the Program Review.

10. Budget request sheet

One filled out for each of the three recommendations on the Program Review Recommendation form.

Undergraduate Program Review Recommendations

Program: _____

Reviewers: _____

Date Prepared: _____

Based on the Program Review, please provide, in priority order, specific recommendations to improve the program. After reviewing each of the recommendations, the Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and Dean of Faculty will respond to each item or advance items to an appropriate member of the Administration. Note: Should a recommendation be rejected, a rationale will be provided under the column marked "Other/Comments."

On the basis of reviewing the above program, the following priority recommendations are being advanced.

Faculty Recommendation **in priority order**	Sr VP Response:	Other/Comments
1.		
2.		
3.		

Add more rows as needed.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Elements of Comprehensive 5-year Graduate Program
Self Study
(Name of Program, Date Completed)

1. Program overview

- Brief description of the program and how it has developed/changed over time.
- Describe any tracks/areas of concentration.
- Describe how the program provides evidence of building upon the areas of institutional strength.

- Describe the governance structure of the program and how it fits into the university structure.

2. Program's alignment with the University mission and four strategic initiatives.

- How do program goals/objectives, as stated in catalog and program guides, support the mission?
- How do the program strategic goals reflect and support the University's strategic initiatives?
    1. Academic Excellence
    2. High Quality Student Experience
    3. Community Engagement
    4. Managed Growth

3. Program's curriculum

- Describe the process for curriculum review, planning and revision.
- Describe how the goals of the curriculum are aligned with the mission of the program, including academic rigor and professional practices.
- Describe how the courses in the program are mapped to the curriculum.
- Describe the process for assessing the learning objectives of the curriculum.
- What has the program done to remain current and relevant in the state-of-the-art of practice in the discipline/field?
- How does the program look towards future trends in curriculum and market needs?
- How does the curriculum provide an understanding of diversity?

4. Graduate academic culture

- How does the program define graduate-level academic culture?
- How does the program communicate the expectations for students' academic achievement?
- Does the program focus on research and scholarly contribution to the discipline?

- Does the program expect students to explore diverse ideas and think critically about their own values and perspectives?
- Describe how faculty mentor graduate students' research and career development.
- How does the program promote a diverse yet inclusive culture?
- How does the program attract, retain and culturally support international students?
- What are examples of the specific ways in which graduate program faculty currently promote and sustain graduate-level academic culture?
- How are students involved in program feedback?
- How are alumni involved with various aspects of program recruitment, implementation and continuous improvement?
- Describe the role of graduate assistants and how their work contributes to their professional development.

5. Sufficient number and appropriately credentialed faculty deliver the program and remain current in the field. (data for 5 years)

- Faculty Student Ratio
- Full-time/Part-time faculty ratio
- Review of full-time qualifications as directly related to program courses
- Review of part-time qualifications as directly related to program courses

6. Faculty productivity, University service, community service

- Describe faculty productivity in terms of peer reviewed scholarly or practitioner publications and/or presentation
- Describe faculty productivity in terms of invited substantive contributions such as keynotes, visiting scholar/expert, etc.
- Describe faculty professional development
- Describe faculty service to the University
- Describe activities in which faculty engage in community service

7. Analysis of assessment of student learning data for the past 5 years.

- Summary of 5 years of annual program assessment data including closing the loop activities
- Does the program achieve all of the program objectives as stated in catalog/program guide? How/how not?
- How does the program assess student learning, both directly and indirectly?
- Strengths and weaknesses evidenced through assessment data
- Improvement plans based on assessment data for student learning and effective teaching

8. Program's enrollment, retention, graduation rates and employment of graduates in last 5 years.

- Enrollment numbers
- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Internships/coops/practicum
- Job Placement numbers/positions
- Other demographic information
- What strategies are employed to obtain post-graduation information (e.g. employer surveys)?

9. Discussion of Cost, Budget, and Adequacy of Resources

- Facilities
- Equipment
- Library Resources
- Technology
- Operating Funds
- Faculty Hiring Needs
- Other Hiring needs

10. Self Study Summary

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats
- Recommendations for Improvements

Faculty Completing Self Study:

Name	Position	Signature
Name	Position	Signature
Name	Position	Signature
Name	Position	Signature
Name	Position	Signature
Name	Position	Signature

Writing Measurable Course Objectives

A course objective answers the questions "What will the learner 'walk away with'?" and "What will the learner be able to do after the instruction?"

Why should each course have a master list of course objectives?

1. When clearly defined objectives are lacking, there is no sound or consistent basis for selecting or designing instructional materials, content, or methods.
2. If there are no clear objectives, then how can there be any clear accomplishments? Tests are the mileposts along the road of learning and are supposed to tell instructors AND students whether they have been successful in achieving the course objectives. But unless objectives are stated clearly and are fixed in the minds of both parties, tests are at best misleading; at worst, they are irrelevant, unfair, or uninformative.
3. Middle States and PDE require that each course has a master list of course objectives.

What is an effective course objective?

- Describes learning outcome not an activity
- Uses concrete and measurable verbs
- States what the student not the instructor will demonstrate
- Illustrates levels of cognitive skills (difficult to measure affective domain)

What are some common problems with course objectives?

- Verbs are not measurable: What does it mean to appreciate? Understand? Gain familiarity with? Demonstrate knowledge of?
- Often activities rather than outcomes: Be able to choose an art print or photo that illustrates a theme of your choice and explain how it illustrates that theme.
- Often do not indicate appropriate levels of thinking skills: Use Bloom's Taxonomy

THE QUALITIES OF USEFUL OBJECTIVES:

1. They understand a student audience: "The student will be able to…"
2. They state a behavior: What should the student be able to DO?
3. They indicate a degree of the behavior, the level of thinking skill: At what level should the student perform? **USE BLOOM'S TAXONOMY**

Mager, R.F. (1984). *Preparing instructional objectives.* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: David S. Lake.

Some Examples: (*from Joanne. M. Nicoll, Univ. of Pittsburgh)*

Understand the interrelationship of culture and human biology.
How do you measure understand?
Assess the interrelationship of culture and human biology.
Participate in laboratory exercises including the use of microscopes.
Activity rather than learning outcome
Use a microscope to identify non-virulent bacteria.

MASTER SYLLABUS: COURSE OBJECTIVES Template

COURSE NUMBER: **COURSE TITLE:**

SEMESTER CREDITS: **LECTURE & WORKSHOP HOURS:**

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon successful completion of the course, a student will be able to:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

LISTED TOPICS:

Sample MASTER SYLLABUS

COURSE NUMBER: UNIV 101 **COURSE TITLE:** City-University Life

SEMESTER CREDITS: 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces students to the kinds of communities that people construct for themselves (e.g. social, political, artistic, etc.) and the values and dynamics that define such communities (e.g. cooperation, civility, tolerance, responsibility, etc.). The notion of what it means to be a responsible member of the "community" will actively be explored and discussed by engagement and analysis of multiple communities: the classroom community, the Point Park University community, and the Pittsburgh community. Students will also examine the responsibilities they have to their personal academic development.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon successful completion of the course, a student will be able to:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define community and community values and dynamics.
2. Illustrate how community engagement builds leadership, organizational skills, and awareness of cultural and social values.
3. Identify campus resources and support services and describe how these services function to aid students and the campus community.
4. Explain how the University mission statement and Core Curriculum relate to the education of Point Park students.
5. Describe and analyze aspects of Pittsburgh's historical growth into an urban community.
6. Analyze problems and develop solutions independently and within a group.
7. Locate, evaluate, and use information effectively.

Classroom Assessment Techniques

What is classroom assessment? Classroom assessment is both a teaching approach and a set of techniques. The approach is that the more you know about what and how students are learning, the better you can plan learning activities The techniques are mostly simple, non-graded, anonymous, in-class activities that give both you and your students useful feedback on the teaching-learning process. The ultimate source regarding classroom assessment is:

> Angelo, T.A. & Cross, P.K. (1993). *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. **(Available in the Center for Teaching Excellence.)**

What are Classroom Assessment Techniques? Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) are
Simple, formative assessment tools for collecting data on student learning in order to improve it. CATs help teachers to continually ask these three questions:

1. What are the essential skills and knowledge that I am trying to teach?
2. How can I find out whether students are learning them?
3. How can I help students learn better?

How do I use Classroom Assessment Techniques?

1. PLAN: Pick a class and a class learning outcome that you know is challenging and choose a CAT to assess the learning.
2. IMPLEMENT: Explain the CAT to the class and have the class complete the assessment technique.
3. REVIEW: Review results (either in class or after class). Where are learning challenges?
4. RESPOND: Close the feedback loop by rethinking instructional methods, adding further explanation or example, etc.

Why should I use CATs? For faculty, more frequent use of CATs can:

1. Provide short-term feedback about the day-to-day learning and teaching process at a time when it is still possible to make mid-course corrections.
2. Provide useful information about student learning with a much lower investment of time compared to tests, papers, and other traditional means of learning assessment.
3. Help to foster good rapport with students and increase the efficacy of teaching and learning.
4. Encourage the view that teaching is a formative process that evolves over time with feedback.

For students, more frequent use of CATs can:

- Help them become better monitors of their own learning.
- Help break down feelings of anonymity, especially in larger courses.
- Point out the need to alter study skills.
- Provide concrete evidence that the instructor cares about learning.

(This information comes from Angelo and Cross and *The National Teaching and Learning Forum* website.)

SAMPLE CATs (Angelo and Cross)

Name:	*Description:*	*What to do with the data:*	*Time required:*
Minute paper	During the last few minutes of the class period, ask students to answer on a half-sheet of paper: "What is the most important point you learned today?"; and, "What point remains least clear to you?". The purpose is to elicit data about students' comprehension of a particular class session.	Review responses and note any useful comments. During the next class periods emphasize the issues illuminated by your students' comments.	Prep: Low In class: Low Analysis: Low
Muddiest Point	Similar to One-Minute Paper but only ask students to describe what they didn't understand and what they think might help.	Same as One-Minute Paper. If many had the same problem, try another approach.	Pre:Low In class: Low
Directed paraphrasing	Ask students to write a layman's "translation" of something they have just learned -- geared to a specified individual or audience -- to assess their ability to comprehend and transfer concepts.	Categorize student responses according to characteristics you feel are important. Analyze the responses both within and across categories, noting ways you could address student needs.	Prep: Low In class: Med Analysis: Med
One-sentence summary	Students summarize knowledge of a topic by constructing a single sentence that answers the questions "Who does what to whom, when, where, how, and why?" The purpose is to require students to select only the defining features of an idea.	Evaluate the quality of each summary quickly and holistically. Note whether students have identified the essential concepts of the class topic and their interrelationships. Share your observations with your students.	Prep: Low In class: Med Analysis: Med
Application cards	After teaching about an important theory, principle, or procedure, ask students to write down at least one real-world application for what they have just learned to determine how well they can transfer their learning.	Quickly read once through the applications and categorize them according to their quality. Pick out a broad range of examples and present them to the class.	Prep: Low In class: Low Analysis: Med
Student-generated test questions	Allow students to write test questions and model answers for specified topics, in a format consistent with course exams. This will give students the opportunity to evaluate the course topics, reflect on what they understand, and what are good test items.	Make a rough tally of the questions your students propose and the topics that they cover. Evaluate the questions ; use the good ones as prompts for discussion and possibly on upcoming exam.	Prep: Med In class: High Analysis: High (may be homework)

Name:	***Description:***	***What to do with the data:***	***Time required:***
Pro and Con Grid	Assess how well students analyze two sides of an issue. Focus on a decision, dilemma, or issue that has implications in your discipline. Create a prompt that will elicit thoughtful pros and cons from the students. Students create a parallel list of words, phrases, or sentences.	Begin by listing the pros and cons generated by students and doing a simple frequency count. Compare that list to yours. Did the students exclude key points or provide extraneous information? Identify other patterns. Provide feedback to the class.	Preparation: Low In class: Low Analysis: Low
Concept Map	Assess how well students see the "big picture" by having them draw or diagram the connections they make among concepts. Students could sketch the "geography" around democracy or racism before instruction and the re-map after instruction.	Before beginning instruction of a concept or theory, have students create a concept map in order discover their preconceptions. After instruction, have them re-do a concept map and compare the results to assess changes/learning.	Prep: Med In Class: Medium Analysis: Med to High
Invented Dialogue	Assess student's creativity in adapting information and expanding beyond basic knowledge by having them write dialogues between historical figures or controversies.	Suggest topics, issues or people for dialogues. Have students use actual quotes from primary sources to create the dialogue. Or, have them invent conversations based on the context and character of the people. Count number of important points made, rate the quality of reasoning, integration of material, and creativity.	Prep: Med to High In Class: High Analysis: High

Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers includes 50 different CATs for use in every course level. Samples from many disciplines, including Psychology, Mathematics, Political Science, Criminal Justice, and Accounting appear in the handbook. In addition, techniques for assessing critical thinking, problem solving, application, and self-awareness are included. (**Available in the Point Park Library)**

Additional CAT resources and electronic trainings are available on the Center for Teaching Excellence's Blackboard site.

Student Engagement Techniques (SETs)

Elizabeth F. Barkley in *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty* (2010) defines student engagement as "a process and a product that is experienced on a continuum and results from the synergistic interaction between motivation and active learning."

- Engagement is individually referenced.
- Engagement is a multidirectional partnership.
- Engagement results from a systemic, integrated approach to teaching.
- Efforts to increase engagement can be supported through assessment.

Barkley's handbook is divided into three parts: conceptual framework for student engagement, tips and strategies for student engagement, and student engagement techniques (SETs). The handbook contains 50 field-tested learning activities, SETs, that promote active learning. Below are a few sample SETs. ***Barkley's book is available in the Point Park University library.***

EXAMPLES OF SETS

QUOTES • Mode=Collaborative • Activity=Discussing • Time=Single Session • SET Type=Knowledge/ Recall • Moderate Online Transferability=use discussion board for students to post comments on a quote assigned to them	Description Students select a slip of paper from a container filled with quotes from an assigned reading. They are given a few minutes to think about what they want to say in response to their quote, and then read the quote and make comments. This is an effective strategy for ensuring equitable participation and critical analysis of reading.	Examples • Intro to Shakespeare, quotes from one play: students must identify who said it and dramatic context and then relationship to play's theme. • Principles of Advertising, slogans from advertising campaigns: students identify product, and analyze slogan's effectiveness
Academic Controversy • Mode=Collaborative • Activity=Reading, Discussing • Time=Single Session • SET Type=Analysis/ Critical Thinking • High Online Transfer=Student A writes 3 pro arguments and sends to B. B adds 3 cons and sends to instructor. Instructor sends to another peer pair for evaluation.	Description Student partners review material on a controversial topic with two opposing sides (A and B) and brainstorm arguments to support their position. They then split up and move to around the room talking to students on same side (A's with A's) coming up with more arguments. In quads, pairs present their arguments and then switch sides and argue the opposite.	Example Art History, Who owns the past? Museums around the world are pressured to return artifacts that were bequeathed to them by private donors or bought at intl. auctions. Source countries say they were "stolen" and belong to them. Who should get them?

WebQuests • Mode=Collaborative • Activity=Reading, Writing, Presenting • Time= Multiple Sessions • SET Type=Synthesis/ Creative Thinking • Moderate Online Transfer= Groups have their own threaded discussion areas for a highly structured WebQuest	Description Using instructor-specified Web sites, teams investigate an open-ended question through a group process that replicates real-world challenges. Identify roles students will play and the steps they will follow to complete the activity. Go to San Diego State Univ's WebQuest portal for sample tasks: http://webquest.org/index.php. Create a rubric to evaluate components of WebQuest.	Example Organic Chemistry, Organic Chemistry in the News. Instructor gives students a faux memo from local newspaper editor that state she is being bombarded by questions about 4 topics: pipeline for natural gas, local water supply man-made organic chemicals and chemical warfare. Assigns each student to research topic, write an editorial and then prepare lab experiment that could be used to test findings. Students assigned to one of 4 topic groups and are assigned role of Report, Editor, Lab Tech and Graphic Designer. Each group is given a list of 6-8 web sites to begin investigation.
Think Again! • Mode=Individual • Activity=Problem Solving • Time=Single Session • SET Type=Problem Solving/Critical Analysis • High Online Transfer=Present false claim and have students explain why it is wrong. Have students post answers on discussion board.	Description Present a common misconception in the discipline and take an informal poll, asking students to agree or disagree with the info. Then tell students it is untrue and ask them to prove it is untrue.	Example Algebra. Students are presented with the following: "The maximum speed of a sailboat occurs when the boat is sailing in the same direction as the wind." 80% of student agreed; instructor tells them it is incorrect. Students now will explain why sailboats can go faster when they sail across the wind using vector algebra. The should use diagrams in their explanation.

Point Park University Core Curriculum Assessment Process

In 2013-2014, the Faculty Assembly and Board of Trustees passed a new Core Curriculum consisting of three Fundamental courses, ten Foundation courses spanning eight themes, and one Capstone course. The Core Curriculum includes five learning outcomes:

1. Communication – Employ written and oral communication skills in order to convey clear and organized information to target audiences for specific purposes.

2. Information Literacy – Locate, evaluate and use information effectively, ethically, and legally from a variety of traditional and digital formats.

3. Problem Solving – Analyze problems and develop independent solutions

4. Global / Cultural Literacy – Analyze issues within their political, economic, socio-cultural, historical, and environmental contexts.

5. Creativity / Aesthetics – Recognize, define, analyze and interpret a variety of aesthetic expressions and/or demonstrate originality and inventiveness

Assessment of Core Curriculum (COAC – Approved March 2014): Starting in Fall 2014, Point Park University required all first-time, full -time freshmen to take three new Fundamentals courses: UNIV 101, ENGL 101, and COMM 101. Each of these courses will follow a course level assessment process in order to make improvements to these courses before the new core is required by all students.

UNIV 101, City-University Life:

- Direct Assessment: Pre/Post Test
- Formative Midterm Assessment
- Indirect Assessments: Student Surveys, Faculty Surveys

ENGL 101, College Composition:

- Direct Assessment: Portfolio Assessment scored by common rubric (Director of Composition)
- Indirect Assessment: Student Reflection, Faculty Surveys

COMM 101, Oral Communication and Presentation:

- Direct Assessment: Pre/Post Test
- Formative Midterm Assessment
- Indirect Assessments: Student Surveys, Faculty Surveys

The Information Literacy Core outcome was assessed in UNIV 101 and ENGL 101 using assignments and rubrics designed internally by faculty and library staff. Written and Oral Communication as well as Information Literacy outcomes will be assessed annually.

Beginning in Fall 2016, the University will assess Foundation (theme) courses and the core outcomes of Problem Solving, Global Cultural Literacy and Creativity/Aesthetics. Each core outcome will be assessed using a common rubric. The schedule for outcomes assessment follows:

2015-2016 Problem Solving Outcome

2016-2017 Global Cultural Literacy Outcome

2017-2018 Creativity/Aesthetics Outcome

Annual Communication and Information Literacy Outcomes

Assessment of the Core will be coordinated and reviewed annually by the Core Outcomes Assessment Committee (COAC) with assistance from the Assessment Coordinator. COAC and Fundamentals Faculty Coordinators will recommend improvements based on assessment results, and the Center for Teaching Excellence will offer appropriate professional development sessions/materials to assist with improvement in instruction and student learning. NSSE (administered in odd-numbered years) and SSI (administered in even-numbered years) will also be used as indirect measures of core outcomes where appropriate.

Throughout 2016-2017, faculty will revise and compose curriculum proposals for required senior Capstone courses. Capstone course proposals for new courses, or courses which have been revised to change course descriptions or objectives, must pass through COAC, the Curriculum Committee, and Faculty Assembly for approval. Core Capstone courses must map to at least 3 of the Core outcomes. Assessment of Capstone courses will begin in 2017-2018.

In order to view Core Curriculum Assessment results including NSSE data, or information on creating or revising Capstone courses, go to the Center for Teaching Excellence's Blackboard page.

Curriculum Committee February. 2014
Faculty Assembly March. 2014

Information Literacy Rubric

Information Literacy – Locate, evaluate and use information effectively, ethically, and legally from a variety of traditional and digital formats.

Performance Criteria	Achieve 3	Develop 2	Introduce 1	Deficient 0
Locate: Scope & Relevance	**All** sources relate to and are appropriate to the topic, thesis and scope of the writing.	**Most** sources relate to and are appropriate to the topic, thesis and scope of the writing.	**Few** sources relate to and are appropriate to the topic, thesis and scope of the writing	
Evaluate: Credibility & Authority	**All** sources are written by authorities and sponsored by reputable publishers and/or agencies.	**Most** sources are written by authorities and sponsored by reputable publishers and/or agencies.	**Some** sources written by authorities and sponsored by reputable publishers and/or agencies.	
Use Information Effectively	Source information is effectively organized and synthesized to fully achieve an intended, specific purpose.	Source information is organized but not adequately synthesized; therefore, the intended purpose is not fully achieved.	The information is fragmented or not fully integrated; therefore, the intended purpose is unclear.	
Use Information Ethically and Legally (Format and Citation)	Write employs correctly all of the following information use strategies (citations and references; paraphrasing, summary, or quoting) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published information.	Writer employs correctly two to three of the following information use strategies (citations and references; paraphrasing, summary, or quoting) and demonstrates some understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published information	Writer employs correctly one of the following information use strategies (citations and references; paraphrasing, summary, or quoting) and demonstrates little understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published information	

Artifact Number _____ **Assessor Initials** _____

Developed and approved by COAC, April 2015

Written Communication Rubric

Written Communication – Students will employ written communication skills in order to convey clear and organized information to target audiences for specific purposes.

Performance Criteria	Achieve 3	Develop 2	Introduce 1	Deficient 0
Audience	The writer consistently and effectively addresses an audience. Tone, format, and documentation are appropriate for the audience.	The writer addresses an audience. Tone, format, and documentation are, for the most part, appropriate for the audience.	The writer recognizes an audience, but tone, format, and/or documentation are not appropriate for the audience.	
Purpose	Writer presents an easily identifiable, focused, and thought-provoking controlling idea or thesis.	Writer presents an identifiable and focused controlling idea or thesis.	Writer presents a vague or unfocused controlling idea or thesis; controlling idea or thesis is difficulty to identify.	
Organization	The document develops coherently and logically from one section or paragraph to the next; organization effectively supports the controlling idea; headings or paragraph transitions signal where the document is going.	The document develops logically from one section or paragraph to the next; for the most part, organization supports the controlling idea.	At times the document develops logically; organization may not support the controlling idea.	
Clarity	Sentence structure is grammatically correct and displays sophistication and variety; transitions add to the logical development of the controlling idea.	For the most part, sentences are well-constructed, grammatically correct, and transitions are sound, although the sequence of ideas may occasionally be awkward.	Some sentences have structure and grammatical problems and transitions are sometimes unclear and awkward.	

Artifact Number _____ **Assessor Initials** _____

Developed and approved by COAC, April 2015

Oral Communication Rubric

Oral Communication – Students will employ oral communication skills in order to convey clear and organized information to target audiences for specific purposes.

Performance Criteria	Achieve 3	Develop 2	Introduce 1	Deficient 0
Organization: specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within body, transitions	Organizational pattern is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern is intermittently observable within the presentation.	
Delivery: posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness	Delivery techniques make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident. Language is appropriate and enhances the effectiveness of the presentation.	Delivery techniques make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable. Language is appropriate and supports the effectiveness of the presentation.	Delivery techniques make the presentation understandable, and the speaker appears tentative. Language use partially supports the effectiveness of the presentation.	
Supporting Materials: explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities	A variety of types of supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	
Central Message: Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported)	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	

Artifact Number _____ **Assessor Initials** _____

Problem Solving Rubric

Problem Solving – Analyze problems and develop independent solutions

Performance Criteria	Achieve 3	Develop 2	Introduce 1	Deficient 0
Define and Understand the Problem	Shows clear understanding of the problem and identifies all specific facts or underlying issues that influence the approach to the problem.	Shows adequate understanding of the problem and identifies some specific factors or underlying issues that influence the approach to the problem.	Shows little understanding of the problem and identifies no specific factors or underlying issues that influence the approach to the problem.	
Devise a Plan or Strategy to Solve the Problem	Proposes a clear and concise plan of action to solve the problem and includes evidence that alternative strategies have been considered.	Proposes an adequate plan of action to solve the problem along with some evidence that alternative strategies have been considered.	Proposes a marginal plan without much thought to the specific factors of the problem and very little evidence that alternative strategies have been considered.	
Collect and Analyze Information	Effectively collects information from multiple sources and analyzes the information in-depth. Analysis of solution contains thorough, deep, and insightful explanation. Includes all of the following: considers history of problem, review logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, implementation, and weighs impact of solution.	Adequately collects information from multiple sources and performs basic analyses. Analysis of solution is sufficient, containing thorough explanation. Includes a few of the following: considers history of problem, review logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, implementation, and weighs impact of solution.	Partially collects information from one or two sources and performs very basic analyses. Analysis of information is brief, lacks depth, and includes only a few of the following: considers history of problem, review logic/reasoning, examines feasibility of solution, weighs impact of solution, and examines implementation of the solution in a manner that addresses the problem statement but ignores relevant contextual factors.	
Evaluate Outcomes	Provides a logical interpretation of the findings and clearly solves the problem with thorough, specific considerations for further work needs and alternative solutions.	Provides an adequate interpretation of the findings and solves the problem with some consideration for further work needs or alternative solutions.	Provides a partial interpretation of the findings and solutions with little consideration for further work needs or alterative solutions.	

Artifact Number _____ **Assessor Initials** _____

Developed and approved by COAC, April 2015

Creating Capstone Courses

Definition of a Capstone (per the approved 2014 Core Curriculum Proposal):

The approved core framework includes a 3 credit "Capstone" course, to be taken after the student has completed the core courses detailed above. The recommendation of the ad hoc Core Review Committee is that this Capstone should provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate how the skills that they have developed through the core can be applied to their specific major. Specific details and course objectives would be developed by faculty within each major, but could include a research project, thesis, public performance or presentation, etc.

All courses in this category must have objectives that can be "mapped" to at least 3 of the 5 Core Outcomes.

Department Chairs met on May 11, 2016 to further discuss and clarify the definition of Capstone courses. Chairs decided the following:

- A Capstone course must produces artifacts which can be used to conduct Program and Core assessment.
- Internships and practicums can be Capstone courses, as long as they produce assessable artifacts which demonstrate achievement of learning objectives.
- In the instance of a dual degree, students must complete Capstones for both programs.
- Students do not need to present Capstone work in a public forum.
- Students may not take Capstone courses which are not in their major, but Schools or multiple Departments may create a common Capstone course with multiple majors in mind. For example, the School of Business could create a common Capstone for all majors within their School, but a SAEM major could not take the English Program Capstone in lieu of completing one in their own major.
- Faculty cannot develop "catch-all" Capstones that are not major-specific.

In instances when faculty create new Capstone courses or revise existing Capstone courses so as to update the course description and/or objectives, the proposal must be approved through COAC, the Curriculum Committee, and Faculty Assembly. In instances when faculty add a curriculum map to existing courses, but do not change the course description or objectives, the curriculum map should go to COAC.

Capstone Course Proposal Template

CORE CAPSTONE COURSE PROPOSAL

Submit to COAC one week before the regular committee meeting. Each proposal should include the course description sheet, mapping grid, and assessment plan.

Purpose:

To add <course name and number> to the core curriculum as part of <theme or themes>.

Description of the Proposal:

If a NEW COURSE: New course title and number

If a REVISION: Revised course title and number

Course Description:

Course Objectives (use Bloom's taxonomy):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Etc.

Course objectives must map to at least 3 Core Outcomes.

COURSE: XXXX 123 COURSE TITLE: ABCD		Global / Cultural Literacy Analyze issues within their political, economic, socio-cultural, historical, and environmental contexts.	Communication Employ written and oral communication skills in order to convey clear and organized information to target audiences for specific purposes..	Information Literacy Find, evaluate, and use information effectively, ethically, and legally from a variety of formats, both traditional and technological.	Problem Solving Analyze problems and develop independent solutions.	Creativity / Aesthetics Recognize, define, analyze and interpret a variety of aesthetic expressions and/or demonstrate originality and inventiveness
COURSE OBJECTIVES	Course objective (mark which item it applies to)					
	Course objective (mark which item it applies to)					
	Course objective (mark					

	which item it applies to)					
	Course objective (mark which item it applies to)					
	Course objective (mark which item it applies to)					

<u>Course Assessment Plan</u>: (Contact the CTE for assistance with assessment plans)

Explain how the above course objectives will be measured in the course. (For example, multiple choice exam, essay, oral presentation, etc.)

<u>Core Outcomes Assessment Plan</u>:

List possible assignments that will be used to assess the core outcomes linked to this course.

Point Park University Assessment Glossary

Alignment
The degree to which the components of a program (program objectives, course objectives, assessments, instructional activities, resources) work together to achieve the desired student learning objectives. To achieve curricular alignment, faculty begin by examining program and course objectives, then select resources and design instructional activities and assessments which help students achieve those objectives (see Backwards Design).

Analytic Rubric
Analytic rubrics articulate levels of performance for EACH criterion being assessed. Use analytic, also known as trait assessing, rubrics for more detailed feedback, including strengths and weaknesses. These rubrics are particularly useful for summative assessment. (See Rubric)

Assessment
The ongoing process of:

- Establishing clear, measurable objectives (expected outcomes) of student learning
- Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve outcomes
- Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations
- Using the resulting information to understand and to improve student learning.

(Linda Suskie 2004)

Backwards Design
"Designing with the end in mind." Backwards design involves identifying desired student learning objectives, determining how achievement of those objectives could be proven and assessed, then designing curriculum that provides learning opportunities to help students meet those learning objectives. Backwards design helps ensure alignment (see Alignment) between student learning objectives, assessments, curriculum, and learning activities.

Bloom's Taxonomy
Bloom's Taxonomy is a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. Bloom identified six levels within the cognitive domain. Six levels are arranged in order of increasing complexity (1=low, 6=high):

1. **Knowledge**: Recalling or remembering information without necessarily understanding , such as describing, listing, identifying, and labeling.
2. **Comprehension**: Understanding learned material and includes behaviors such as explaining, discussing, and interpreting.
3. **Application**: The ability to put ideas and concepts to work in solving problems. It includes behaviors such as demonstrating, showing, and making use of information.
4. **Analysis**: Breaking down information into its component parts to see interrelationships and ideas. Related behaviors include differentiating, comparing, and categorizing.
5. **Synthesis**: The ability to put parts together to form something original. It involves using creativity to compose or design something new.
6. **Evaluation**: Judging the value of evidence based on definite criteria. Behaviors related to evaluation include: concluding, criticizing, prioritizing, and recommending. (Bloom, 1956) See

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)
CATs are a collection of tools faculty can use to get feedback on how well they are achieving their goals. CATs reinforce student learning in three ways: by focusing student attention on the most important elements of the course; by providing additional practice in valuable learning and thinking skills; and by training students to become more self-aware, self assessing, independent learners. An impressive collection of CATs is available in Angelo and Cross' *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, available in the CTE.

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum has been designed to provide each student with the opportunity to function as a problem solver, an effective researcher and an excellent communicator. The core curriculum builds the foundation of a Point Park education through courses that:

- Allow students to integrate knowledge and insights from diverse fields.
- Emphasize the development of critical thinking and written and oral communication skills.
- Emphasize interactive learning: students are encouraged to think independently and to seek creative solutions to intellectual, ethical, and practical challenges.

Thus, the core curriculum serves not only to promote understanding among an increasingly diverse student body but also prepares students to participate responsibly in a democratic society.

The Core consists of:

Fundamentals (9 credits):
UNIV 101: The City-University Life
ENGL 101: College Composition
COMM 101: Oral Communication and Presentation

Foundations(30 credits):
Explore the World Choice 1
Explore the World Choice 2
Investigate Science Choice
Investigate Mathematics Choice
Interpret Creative Works
Understand People Choice 1
Understand People Choice 2
Succeed in Business Choice
Appreciate and Apply the Arts Choice
Discover Technology Choice

Capstone (3 credits)
A Capstone course is a 3-credit Core course which provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate how the skills that they have developed through the core can be applied to their specific major. Specific details and course objectives would be developed by faculty within each major, but could include a

research project, thesis, public performance or presentation, etc. Capstone courses must map to at least three Core Outcomes.

***Core Curriculum Outcomes**:*
Point Park University has five Core Curriculum Outcomes:

1. Communication – Employ written and oral communication skills in order to convey clear and organized information to target audiences for specific purposes.
2. Information Literacy – Locate, evaluate and use information effectively, ethically, and legally from a variety of traditional and digital formats.
3. Problem Solving – Analyze problems and develop independent solutions.
4. Global / Cultural Literacy – Analyze issues within their political, economic, socio-cultural, historical, and environmental contexts.
5. Creativity / Aesthetics – Recognize, define, analyze and interpret a variety of aesthetic expressions and/or demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

Course-Embedded Assessment
Course-embedded assessment is a means of gathering information about student learning that is built into and a natural part of the teaching-learning process. This involves taking a second look at materials generated in the classroom. In addition to providing a basis for grading students, these materials allow faculty to evaluate their approaches to instruction and course design based on student learning.

Course Objectives
There is a master list of course objectives for each course taught at the University. Course objectives describe student learning outcomes for the course. The objectives are written using concrete and measurable verbs that illustrate levels of cognitive skills: See Bloom's Taxonomy. The objectives state what the student, **not the instructor**, will demonstrate.

Curriculum Mapping
The process by which faculty develop matrices which demonstrate the connection and relationship between student learning outcomes and courses within a program (adapted from Lowe and Stitt-Bergh). Curriculum mapping identifies *coherence* of an academic program or general education curriculum.

Direct Assessment
Direct Assessment gathers evidence about student learning based on student performance that demonstrates the learning itself; can be value added, related to standards, or quantitative, embedded or not, using local or external criteria. Examples are written assignments, classroom, assignments, presentations, test results, projects, logs, portfolios, and direct observations. (See Indirect Assessment)

Field Experience Rating Sheet
Field experience involves the direct observation of teaching, participation in teaching, or teaching itself that is related to teacher education programs. A field experience rating sheet is a type of rubric used to assess students' field work.

Focus Group
This group consists of participants who might contribute useful information related to student learning, either through surveys or interviews. Examples of possible focus groups include: 1) current students; 2) graduating students; 3) alumni; 4) current and perspective employers; 5) supervisors of students in field experience courses.

Formative Assessment
This type of assessment gathers information about student learning--during the progression of a course or program and usually repeatedly--to improve the learning of those students. An example: reading the first lab reports of a class to assess whether some or all students in the group need a lesson on how to make them succinct and informative.

Holistic Rubric
A holistic rubric assesses a product or performance in a single score based upon an overall impression of a product or performance. Use these for a quick snapshot of overall achievement. These rubrics are particularly useful for diagnostic assessment.

Indirect Assessment
Indirect assessment acquires evidence about how students feel about learning and their learning environment rather than actual demonstrations of outcome achievement. Examples include: surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and reflective essays.

Information Literacy
Locate, evaluate and use information effectively, ethically, and legally from a variety of traditional and digital formats.

Measurable Course or Program Objective
An objective is measurable when it answers the question, "What will the learner be able to know or do after completing a course or program?" Measurable objectives start with a verb from Bloom's Taxonomy.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) obtains, on an annual basis, information from hundreds of four-year colleges and universities nationwide about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results are an example of indirect assessment.

Pre-Post Tests
Pre- and post-tests measure student learning received during a course or a program as a result of comparing what the student knew before the course or program and then after. This type of test offers a value-added perspective of measuring student learning in a course or a program.

Program Assessment
Program assessment "helps determine whether students can integrate learning from individual courses into a coherent whole. It is interested in the cumulative effects of the education process" (Palomba and Banta). Program assessment measures the learning of a group of students. The outcomes information in program assessment is used to improve courses, programs, and services. Each program should have at least 5 measurable program objectives. Each year one objective is assessed.

Program Review (Comprehensive Program Review)
Program review is a process that occurs on a five to six year basis, whereby the Program Review Committee (PRC) reviews all academic programs for the following: current enrollment, enrollment trends, ratio of full-time faculty to adjuncts, facilities, ancillary support available for each program. The

committee will prepare a report for the Faculty Assembly highlighting each reviewed program's strengths and weaknesses and will propose appropriate recommendations. The Faculty Assembly will respond to the committee's report by the next Faculty Assembly meeting. A final report will then be submitted to the Dean of that program's school.

Qualitative Assessment
This type of assessment seeks descriptively rich data from a small, purposeful sample with meaning and understanding as its end goals (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The focus of the research is on quality.

Quantitative Assessment
This type of assessment focuses on quantity. These data are represented numerically and can be subjected to statistical analysis.

Rubric
Specific sets of criteria that clearly define for both student and teacher what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performances look like. Criteria define descriptors of ability at each level of performance and assign values to each level. Levels referred to are proficiency levels which describe a continuum from excellent to unacceptable product. (See Holistic Rubric and Analytic Rubric)

Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID)
An SGID is a class discussion led by a facilitator other than the instructor (ideally, the facilitator should be someone from outside of the instructor's department), who poses questions about the course to small student groups, similar to a focus group. SGID preserves student anonymity like a survey, but allows for detailed feedback like a one-on-one appointment would. SGIDs offer instructors valuable formative assessment data.

Student Engagement Techniques (SETs)
SETs are learning activities that one or more college teachers have found effective in engaging students. SETs promote active learning and foster student motivation. SETs are included in Elizabeth F. Barkley's *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty.* **Available in Point Park Library.**

Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)
The SSI is an indirect assessment tool used to improve the quality of student life and learning. It measures student satisfaction and priorities**, showing how satisfied students are as well as what issues are important to them.**

Student Self-Reflection
Student self-reflections help students learn by metacognition (thinking about one's thinking processes) and synthesis. Students rate in an essay or rating scale their knowledge, skills and attitudes. This can provide useful qualitative, indirect evidence of student learning.

Summative Assessment
Summative assessment occurs at the conclusion of a unit/units of instruction or an activity/ plan to determine or judge student skills and knowledge or effectiveness of a plan or activity.

Triangulation
A process of combining methodologies to strengthen the reliability of a design approach, Triangulation, when applied to alternative assessment, refers to the collection and comparison of data or information from three different sources.

Value-Added Assessment
This measures the increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or undergraduate education. It can either focus on the individual student (how much better a student can write, for example, at the end rather than at the beginning) or on a cohort of students (whether senior papers demonstrate more sophisticated writing skills-in the aggregate- than freshmen papers). It requires a baseline measurement for comparison.

(Updated 5/16 by. L. Onufer)