

Academic Assessment Glossary

Assessment: the systematic analysis of student learning outcomes in an ongoing commitment to improve student learning and educational quality. Assessment is a formalized systemic process that directs the gathering and analysis of information so informed decision-making can occur to improve student learning and educational quality.

Assessment Methods: the tool with which the learning outcome is measured. For example: course exams, nationally normed standardized test, portfolio, or capstone course. There must be a logical link between the assessment method and the learning outcome. Ask yourself, “What would I do with the information if I had it?” If you cannot answer that question without due difficulty, then the information may be useless.

Assessment Tool: often interchanged with “assessment methods”. Used to assess student learning outcomes. Examples include: rubrics and exams. The tool is only as strong as its ability to distinguish among levels of student performance.

Common Assessment: is the assessment of student learning within a particular course. Common Assessment is the assessment of course competencies/outcomes/outcomes/outcomes utilizing a common tool across all sections and modalities.

Curriculum Map: core curriculum that gives students the opportunity to develop competence in program-level student learning outcomes. The map lists the outcomes in the first column and the required courses in subsequent columns. The grid that results, allows faculty to indicate which courses in the curriculum support the achievement of specific outcomes. Competence should be developed in these courses and be documented regardless of what semester the student took the course and who taught the course. Curriculum mapping provides the opportunity to ensure alignment in the curriculum.

	Program Course 1	Program Course 2	Program Course 3	Program Course 4	Program Course 5	Program Course 6
Outcome 1	X			X		
Outcome 2		X		X		
Outcome 3			X		X	X
Outcome 4	X				X	X

Content Outline: The content outline establishes the scope of the materials to be covered, lists all major topics and the sequence of the instruction when applicable. A content outline must reflect this information so an instructor teaching the course for the first time will have a comprehensive guideline for covering the course content. In writing the Content Outline

- use traditional outline form, containing Roman numerals, alphabetic subheading and Arabic subheadings
- keep subtopics to a minimum

- place details more specific than 4 subtopics in a daily lesson plan
- include only content documentation
- do not include activities, field trips, guest lectures, or teaching methods
- reflect objectives specified for the course. Do not use the textbook to reflect the Course Outline.

Course Competencies: are an outcome of the course objectives. Competencies should contain measurable behaviors like: describe, operate, compare, draw, analyze. Avoid non-measurable terms like: understand, know and appreciate. Ask yourself, “How will I know that the students really ‘get’ it? What will these things look like, and how will the students demonstrate their understanding, knowledge or appreciation? Each course objective follows the stem statement of “At the conclusion of the course the student will be able to...”

Course Objectives: describes the knowledge and/or skills to be learned and should not be confused with course competencies. Each course objective follows the stem statement of: “The course will provide information which should enable the student to...” Begin writing your objectives with a few minor concepts in mind and develop them into several more specific objectives. These objectives will address the needs of the students within the confines of the course content. The number of objectives included in the Course Outline of Record should be appropriate to the course content. Generally, 10 – 15 concepts are manageable. Objectives need to reflect the course outline.

Direct Measures (of student learning): Demonstration of learning through direct examination of student work such as projects or specialized tests of knowledge and/or skills.

Four-Column Model: Tool used for program level assessment in CTE programs.

General Education Assessment: assessment of student learning within the core program classes meeting the College’s gen ed requirements for a degree. The gen ed areas are assessed for whether students are achieving the learning outcomes as stated in the College catalogue. Because the gen ed requirement is an institutional requirement across disciplines, assessment occurs on a broader scale than course or program assessment. At WITCC, Gen Ed Assessment is done through implementation of institutionally developed surveys, collection of student products, and interpretation of these student products using rubrics to gather numerical data for analysis and interpretation. Once analyzed, all involved faculty review the data to determine whether changes based on the data are to be made, either at program level or course level.

Indirect Measures (of student learning): These may include surveys, interviews, and course evaluations.

Learning outcomes: what the graduate should be able to do once they have completed the program. These may be exactly the same as program outcomes or may be narrowed or broadened as needed by the program to measure learning. If different from the program

outcomes, the learning outcomes should be directly tied to the program outcomes. These are also referred to as course competencies.

Program Assessment: assessment of student learning within a particular program leading to a degree or certificate. Program assessment sees whether students are achieving the learning outcomes developed by that program and is done through various tools chosen by that program. Program assessment is not the evaluation of student achievement of course objectives, but rather of student's overall achievement of the broad goals of the program (e.g. employment, mastery of certain skills, successful transfer, etc.).

Program outcomes: what the graduate should be able to do once they have completed the program. These should be broad and reflect industry standards. What the students should be able to do "out there" after successfully completing the program. Outcomes should start with an action verb.

Rubric: a guide that lists and explains the expectations for an assignment, activity, project, test, etc., as well as the criteria used for grading or scoring the item. A rubric may be used as a learning tool, helping students understand the content and skills required, and as a communication tool, providing ongoing feedback.

Technical assessment: is another term for common assessment. As a NACEP accredited institution all courses offered through concurrent enrollment are required to have , at minimum , one common assessment in the course. Assessment for CTE courses is also used to track technical skill attainment for Perkins reporting purposes.