

LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE/CUNY
Outcomes Assessment – Periodic Program Review Guidelines
[Updated October 2013]

During the 2001-02 academic year, an Outcomes Assessment Plan was approved by the College's governance bodies. Guidelines for the CUNY-mandated Periodic Program Review (PPR) process have been revised to reflect this Outcomes Assessment Plan.

OVERVIEW OF THE OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN

LaGuardia's outcomes assessment plan is designed to assess institutional effectiveness in terms of learning and teaching-- and using the resultant data to improve our pedagogies and academic programs. The plan is designed to assess overall student achievement of the College's general education core competencies as well as each major's programmatic competencies. In line with our commitment to the academic, career, and personal growth and development of every student, the assessment system will use a variety of assessment tools to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching. A central feature of the assessment plan is an emphasis on interdisciplinary skills development, in that required core competencies are to be developed and assessed across all disciplines.

Elements of the Plan: Programmatic and Core Competencies.

Students' growth and development throughout their academic careers at the College are assessed by evaluating achievement in two broad categories: Programmatic Competencies and General Education Core Competencies.

Programmatic Competencies. A statement of overall program goals (based on a synthesis of the already existing performance objectives for each course in the program) has been developed by each program. Programs should devise an inquiry assessment project that allows it to make comparisons between student assignments from introductory-level courses and capstone courses (post-45 credits) to help assess student achievement of overall programmatic goals. An ideal way to make these comparisons is to use the ePortfolio as a way for students to demonstrate growth within a program. If the program is interested in student reflection, it may also use the program goal statement as a rubric to reflect upon how and to what extent they have fulfilled the program goals.

Note on Integrated Learning

Integrated Learning: We are moving towards evaluating integration as a LaGuardia competency. This work will be best assessed through ePortfolios

constructed over multiple semesters. If your program currently uses ePortfolios across multiple courses you are an ideal candidate for piloting work in integration. Please let us know if this applies to you.

General Education Core Competencies. The College has established five core competencies: 1) critical literacy (includes written communication, critical thinking, and critical reading, 2) quantitative reasoning, 3) oral communication, 4) research and information literacy, and 5) technological literacy. Each program has identified, through a grid, where in its curriculum these competencies are being addressed and have designated these courses as depositing courses. It is the responsibility of faculty teaching these courses to have students deposit work into the appropriate competency in the ePortfolio Assessment area. Program Directors must inform faculty about their responsibilities in depositing. In order to assess General Education Core Competencies, there must be sufficient work deposited into the ePortfolio Assessment area.

In approving these core competencies as part of the assessment plan, faculty have agreed to develop these competencies within each particular discipline as part of an across-the-curriculum approach. Thus, the assessment plan is designed to infuse the development and assessment of these competencies into all programs (majors), supported by professional development for faculty and organized through the use of electronic portfolios.

Critical Literacy (written communication, critical thinking, and critical reading). A faculty group has devised detailed definitions, standards, and a scoring rubric for this competency. Building upon the development of these competencies in English, ESL, critical thinking, and reading courses, the assessment plan is designed to promote the reinforcement and assessment of these competencies within the disciplines in a minimum of two courses: the required urban studies course and a capstone course.

Urban Studies Course. Every program currently requires an Urban Studies elective. These courses will also be run as *ePortfolio/writing intensive courses* and will include a minimum of one major assignment to be placed in the student's electronic portfolio. The assignment should be designed to develop and assess the critical literacy competency in addition to the Urban Studies course objectives.

Capstone Course. Capstone courses will be run as *writing intensive courses* and will include one major project to be placed in the student's electronic portfolio. The project should be designed to reinforce and assess program competencies and the core competencies of critical literacy and research & information literacy (see Research and Information Literacy, below).

Quantitative Reasoning. Building upon the competencies developed in required

Mathematics courses, this competency promotes the reinforcement and assessment of quantitative reasoning skills (interpreting and using a wide range of data) across the curriculum. A faculty group has devised detailed definitions, standards, and a scoring rubric.

Oral Communication. A faculty group has developed detailed definitions, standards, and a scoring rubric; students will place videos or audio recordings of oral presentations either in their showcase ePortfolios or in the ePortfolio Assessment area. Programs determine where in the major these should be collected. Possibilities include an oral presentation in a course, a mock interview, a teaching demonstration etc.

Research and Information Literacy. Faculty have developed detailed definitions, standards, and a scoring rubric for this competency. The Capstone course in each major is an ideal place to capture a project that can be assessed for Research and Information literacy; however, other courses are equally acceptable.

Technological Literacy. This competency is demonstrated by the development of the electronic student portfolio itself.

As part of the Periodic Program Review process (described in detail below), a sampling of artifacts will be reviewed each year by a faculty group (consisting of faculty both from the program and outside the program) for the purpose of assessing overall student achievement of the College's core competencies. The results of these readings and other outcomes assessment data will be used by PPR Teams to generate recommendations for programmatic improvement.

PART II: THE PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

How to Conduct Your PPR Self-Study

The outcomes assessment process outlined above is implemented as part of a program's Periodic Program Review (PPR). PPRs are mandated by CUNY to be conducted on a regular basis. For the PPR process, each program conducts a self-study, with student learning outcomes as a primary focus – along with a review of major issues and concerns (e.g., enrollment, retention, facilities). The Self-Study report is submitted to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; a site visit by external evaluators to review the Self-Study report also occurs (see Timeline below). The Periodic Program Review involves a 5-year time period which incorporates a planning year, an active review year, and three years of implementation. The report should be no more than 20 pages and may include relevant appendices. Programs are eligible for up to \$5000.00 during the review year to support PPR projects, pending budget approval. This includes a \$500.00 stipend payable to an external reviewer.

In regard to student learning outcomes, the following two key questions should guide your self-study:

1. What competencies/knowledge do we want students in the program to graduate with (includes core and programmatic competencies)?
2. How do we know students in the program are graduating with those competencies and knowledge sets?

In order to prepare for the PPR, we request that program directors and program self-study teams attend a seminar (four meetings) over the academic year prior to their active self-study. At these meetings we will review the processes and procedures for PPR's as well as provide contextual, program specific information for how to conduct a robust inquiry assessment project. In the fall semester, meetings will be held that combine all PPR teams in an effort to foster community among faculty participating in PPR. In the spring semester, meetings will be with individual program teams

In general, the timeline is as follows (with exact dates to be worked out, particularly if coordinating the PPR with mandated, external accreditations):

1. Planning Year:

- ✓ October, November (Team Meetings 1 and 2)
- ✓ April, May (Team Meetings 3 and 4)
- ✓ March 30th Written identification of Program Issues
- ✓ April 30th Final questions for Institutional Research
- ✓ June 1st Written plan for an inquiry assessment project.

2. Active Review Year:

- ✓ Dec. 1 First Draft of PPR
- ✓ April 1 Semi-Final Draft of PPR, report to external reviewer

- ✓ May 1 Final PPR approved by your department chairperson
- ✓ June 1 response to report by external reviewer

3. Implementation Year A

- ✓ Oct. 15th Response to AA with a formal implementation plan
- ✓ Nov 15th Update Strategic Plan website with PPR implementation steps
- ✓ Feb 1st Post mid-year updates and final PPR implementation updates to Strategic Plan
- ✓ May 23rd Post end of year updates and implementation updates to Strategic Plan

Requirements for the final two implantation years will be agreed upon in conjunction with Academic Affairs. For more specific information please see the Periodic Program Review Timeline and Policies documents.

As you prepare to write the report, please note the following for structure and guidelines.

The report should include the following sections:

Section I. Issues

In the Spring prior to review year, the department chairperson, program coordinator, and appropriate faculty meet with representatives of Academic Affairs to identify concerns and issues currently facing the program that will be addressed or investigated as part of the PPR. For example, are there known particular problems, such as low enrollment? Or are there issues with facilities, staffing, etc. Academic Affairs would like a write-up of these issues by March 30th of the Preparatory Year.

Section II. Key Data Elements

Program data will be provided by the Office of Institutional Research in September of your review year, on:

- Enrollment trends
- Retention
- Graduation
- Transfer
- Placement
- Pass rates in gateway/key courses
- Full-time/part-time faculty ratio

In collaboration with Academic Affairs each program will outline other data that might be useful in conducting a PPR. These questions must go to IR by April 30th in the Preparatory year.

Section III. Educational Goals of the Program (i.e., What competencies/knowledge do we want students in the program to graduate with?)

Evaluate the overall strengths/weaknesses of your program in terms of appropriateness of the curriculum, currency of the curriculum, and effectiveness in developing overall programmatic competencies as well as the general education core competencies:

A. Programmatic Competencies. A statement of overall programmatic competencies (based on a synthesis of the already existing performance objectives for each course in the major-area requirements of the program) should be clearly stated in the form of a mission statement. What are the expected outcomes for student learning, that is, competencies and knowledge sets, in the program?

1. Map the general statement of expected competencies onto the curriculum. In other words, are the overall goals of your program reflected in the curriculum? Any lack of congruency should result in either a revision of the overall goal statement and/or the curriculum itself.
2. Provide evidence that your curriculum is current with career and industry expectations, and/or national practices in the discipline. Examples of evidence include review by outside experts; review by site visit experts; point-by-point comparison to national and/or industry standards.

B. General Education Core Competencies. All five core competencies are goals for student learning in each program. If you have not done so already, specify where and how each core competency is being reinforced across the curriculum in your program.

C. Transferability, Placement, and Advisement. Evaluate the transferability of your program. How well do the courses in the program transfer? Identify any transfer issues/problems. Conduct an environmental scan and evaluate job placement for students in your program. Describe and evaluate how transfer and career development are promoted within the program, as well as how advisement is conducted.

Section IV. Student Learning Outcomes (i.e., How do we know students in the program are graduating with the expected competency and knowledge sets?)

This is the key section in your Periodic Program Review. Here is where you can demonstrate your success as a program through student learning outcomes. Your program is responsible for both creating an inquiry assessment project related to your programmatic competencies and for participating in the annual Benchmark Reading Program. Through the combination of these two projects, you will have a robust sense of how students are doing in your program on your program competencies and how your students are doing in General Education competencies.

A. Overall student learning and development. Develop an inquiry assessment project

that makes sense for your program and conduct this assessment. This will be discussed in the preparatory year. This project is how you investigate the information you provide in Section III item 1. One thing that programs do is examine a sampling of student ePortfolios. A faculty team consisting of faculty from your program, along with faculty from the Assessment Committee, should compare portfolio assignments in the intro-level course with those in the capstone course (as well as any other courses deemed appropriate) to assess growth in programmatic as well as the core competencies across a student's entire college career. Also consider when reviewing student work: Do the assignments yield the level of work you wish students to achieve? Does the student work demonstrate mastery of the programmatic competencies that are supposed to be developed in each course and in the program as a whole? Are all the core competencies being covered in your program?

An ideal assessment for a program might use ePortfolios: At LaGuardia each program has identified a minimum of three *portfolio courses*: an introductory or 100-level course; a required urban studies course, and a senior-level (capstone) course. Required ePortfolio assignments in these courses enable the college to take “snapshots” of student development at various points in their academic careers. Student development of ePortfolios within their program allow for a holistic assessment of student learning from their first year to their capstone seminar by looking at the integrative elements of the ePortfolio. However, in programs where it is not possible to include three ePortfolio courses please continue to collect work at identified points in the ePortfolio assessment area.

B. Individual Course Review. Assess the strengths/weaknesses of each course in the program area: success in terms of producing the desired learning outcomes, currency of teaching methods, and congruence with national practices in the discipline. For each course:

1. Review the course proposal. Are the objectives still appropriate? Revise as needed.
2. Collect a random sample of faculty syllabi. Do they match the course proposal? If not, devise a plan to ensure greater congruence between what is officially to be taught and what is actually being taught.
3. Collect outcomes data for each course (e.g., pass rates; grade distribution). Outcomes should also include an analysis of student performance on individual course objectives (to determine which areas may need improvement).

C. Benchmark Readings.

Members of your PPR Team will participate in Benchmark Readings in the Winter during your preparatory year and your active review year. These readings will contain artifacts deposited by students in your major from 2010-present. You will receive a report on performance within your major in April of your active review year. You should include this in your PPR.

Section V. External Review

According to Middle States accreditation guidelines and CUNY, all programs must include an external reader. If your program already reports to an external accrediting body, this is sufficient. If you do not have an external accrediting body, then you must seek an external reader- someone outside of LaGuardia Community College. It is recommended that this reader be an existing CUNY employee. The reader will be responsible for reading your final report and offering feedback and thoughts relating to transfer/employability/and learning competencies. In the fall of your active writing year, please contact a reviewer. Many programs have used reviewers from senior colleges where our students most frequently transfer and where our programs articulate. Invite them to an on-site visit with your program in the Spring semester. Send them a draft of your PPR report by April 1 and request that they respond to your report and recommendations in writing by June 1, 2013.

Section VI. Action Plan

Based on the analyses in the prior sections – along with feedback from Academic Affairs and the external evaluator - formulate specific recommendations and actions you will undertake to strengthen the program, particularly in regard to improving student learning outcomes. These actions should be incorporated into the Strategic Plan work plan for your department for the year following your PPR. Recommendations for actions should be based on specific data and analysis generated by the PPR.

An example follows:

Data Point: An assessment of student development in terms of critical literacy consisted of reviewing 80 student writing projects taken from their ePortfolios, comparing samples of work from intro courses vs. capstone courses. Scoring the work with the critical literacy rubric revealed that scores improved by 1.7 points on the rubric (1-6 scale); however, capstone writing scores averaged 3.2 – less than the desired 4.0 score for graduating students. A review of the nature of writing assignments in the capstone course revealed that the assignments did not require writing of a sufficiently analytical level, meaning that the writing demanded was never at a level that could potentially result in a score of 4 on the rubric.

Recommendation: Review and revise critical literacy assignments in capstone courses in the major.

Action: A team of faculty will devise model critical literacy projects for the capstone course (Sept-Dec); the projects will be incorporated into courses the following spring semester (Mar-June) as pilot. Student work will be deposited in ePortfolios and assessed using the critical literacy rubric (June); successful assignments will be incorporated into all capstone courses in the subsequent semester

We understand that this seems daunting right now! Please be assured that representatives from Academic Affairs (Currently Marisa A. Klages and Bernard Polnariev) are available to assist you in your PPR process and look forward to working with you. Please be in touch whenever you need assistance.

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