

Shawnee
Community College

**Assessment of
Student Learning
Plan**

Assessment at Shawnee Community College

Shawnee Community College is committed to assessment for continuous improvement of student learning and teaching strategies. The assessment process allows for faculty to explore ways to continually improve student learning, course design, the effectiveness of programs and overall teaching and learning. Assessment provides the means for transformative learning by providing relevant, clear, and timely feedback to students and other stakeholders.

The Assessment of Student Learning Plan provides a comprehensive outline of the college assessment processes and procedures. It provides a framework for continuous improvement of student learning and a commitment to program excellence. This plan reflects the collaborative work of faculty, administrators, and staff. The Student Academic Assessment Committee routinely updates the plan to promote continuous quality improvement of the services the college offers to students (Board Policy 9170).

Our process provides evidence that

- Learning objectives are observable and measurable;
- Curriculum alignment provides the opportunity for students to achieve these outcomes because the curriculum is driven by intended learning outcomes and assessment evidence;
- A variety of instructional strategies is utilized to promote student engagement and contribute to student learning;
- Successful program completion provides students with the requisite skills for goal completion.

This Assessment Plan will evolve with updates as we learn and improve our practices. Shawnee Community College views assessment as an ongoing, interactive process used to modify programs, as necessary, and to promote continuous quality improvement of the services the college offers to students.

Philosophy of Student Learning Assessment

Assessment of Student Learning at Shawnee Community College is a vital resource in establishing plans in each of the education programs within the college, identifying where the strengths and weaknesses are located in each academic discipline, and recommending alternatives to continually improve student learning. Shawnee Community College utilizes the assessment of student learning as one of the tools to improve student learning and program quality.

“Shawnee Community College’s mission is to serve the needs of the students and our diverse community by providing quality higher education, community education, training, and services that are accessible, affordable, and promote life-long learning.”

Shawnee Community College is dedicated to providing quality, cost-effective, comprehensive programs to all individuals within the district and the region who can benefit from such activities. The college strives for continuous improvement through the evaluation of programs, institutional effectiveness, and through assessment of student academic achievement. Academic assessment provides systematic, routine processes that allow the faculty and students to determine the degree that students are achieving the stated student learning objectives.

Assessment is a method for faculty to collect and analyze data to determine if instruction is effective, and student learning is taking place. The purpose of assessment is to provide faculty and students with information and insights needed to improve student learning, teaching strategies, and curriculum. Overall, assessment is a process of self-reflection with an outlook towards improvement.

Faculty provide continuous feedback to students to help students improve their learning strategies and study habits so that they can become more independent, successful learners. The conversations between and among faculty, students, and other stakeholders provide an excellent way to share best practices.

Student Academic Assessment Committee Review Process

The Student Academic Assessment Committee's (SAAC) mission is to promote excellence in teaching and student learning through reviewing and updating the Assessment of Student Learning Plan for Faculty and ensuring institutional data is relevant to and aligned with the core competencies.

The SAAC is spearheaded by a majority of the faculty members and also comprised of staff and administration personnel from all areas of the college. This committee is responsible for overseeing all items on the Assessment Timeline, ensuring all deadlines are met in the assessment process, and verifying that the Assessment of Student Learning Handbook for Faculty remains current (See Appendix A).

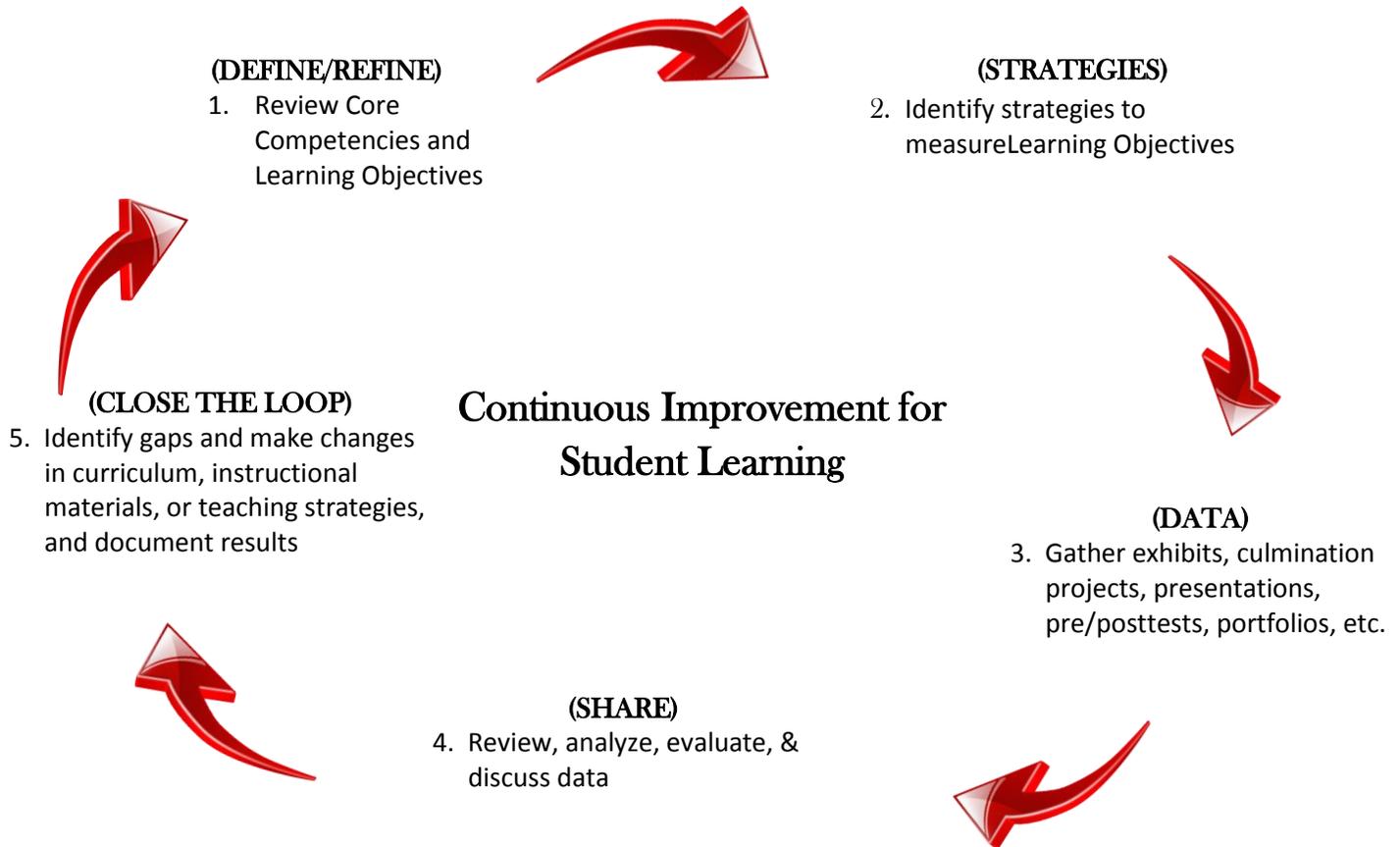
Student Academic Assessment Committee

The Student Academic Assessment Committee coordinates its work with the Vice-President of Instructional Services. The functions include:

1. Development and monitoring of the Student Academic Assessment Plan
2. Review student outcome data
3. Assist in identifying program improvement needs
4. Assist in evaluating the assessment plan (Board Policy 4220)

Assessment Process

Assessment is an ongoing process where student learning performance is evaluated to ensure student learning outcomes are achieved on a continuous basis. The five steps of the Assessment Process at Shawnee Community College are: (1) Institutionally identify Core Competencies for SCC students to achieve for continued learning, (2) Outline and implement measurement processes to determine achievement of identified Core Competencies through course objectives and institutional data gathering tools, (3) Collect data utilizing the varied implemented techniques, (4) Analyze findings, reflect, and share discoveries throughout programs, divisions, and institutionally to recognize overlapping, discrepancies, and/or achievements, (5) Based on analysis, design and implement strategies for improvement of student learning or application of recognized success across additional areas of the institution.



Define/Refine

The core competencies were identified after conversations with faculty and students, and during advisory council meetings with area employers of SCC graduates. The core competencies represent the qualities that are needed for students to succeed after leaving SCC whether they complete a degree or certificate for employment, complete

an AA/AS degree for transfer to a four-year institution or obtain continuing education credit. It is evident that while faculty members strive for collaboration across academic divisions in regard to student academic assessment, the core competencies for SCC students must align with the institutional goals. (See Strategic Plan) Core competencies are evaluated yearly for relevancy. Learning Objectives are evaluated semi-annually as established by the Assessment Committee in the Assessment Timeline. Bloom's Taxonomy is often used to check for measurable objectives for each course. All course objectives must be written in measurable terms to attain core competencies. Listed below are the core competencies:

Academic Core Competencies

Competency #1- Communication Skills:

Oral Communication

- Demonstrates a mastery of Standard English
- Listens actively and conveys clear thoughts and ideas

Written Communication

- Communicates and ideas on paper, using proper form

Reading

- Demonstrates comprehension of written material by recalling, summarizing and synthesizing

Competency # 2- Employability:

Interpersonal Skills

- Works effectively in groups
- Displays responsible and mature behaviors when present with diverse views and opinions.

Professionalism

- Demonstrates appropriate behaviors applicable to the workplace

Technological Skills

- Demonstrates the ability to use technology effectively in a specific program of study.

Competency #3- Problem Solving:

- Demonstrates such higher reasoning skills as troubleshooting and critical thinking
- Demonstrates math skills appropriate to a specific program of study.

Strategies

A variety of strategies are utilized throughout the college. This provides a broad range of evidence upon which to base interpretations. Assessment strategies are matched to each course according to what is taught and what will provide the best feedback. Many forms of assessment occur including both formative and summative.

Data

Current student performance is evaluated through the collection of some or all of the following artifacts (as appropriate for each class) each semester (fall and spring): pre-test grade, post-test grade, final exam grade, culmination projects, and final course grade. This information is collected on the Course Data Analysis Spreadsheet, department compilation data (Math/Science), and NCLEX data (Nursing). The following questions are answered on the Course Data Analysis Spreadsheet by the instructor, discussed in division meetings, and reviewed during Program analysis: (1) Based on the data, describe how students' learning outcomes met the objectives? (2) What did the collected data tell you about the students' learning in this course? (3) List one or two things you may do differently in the future to further strengthen student learning outcomes (See Appendix B). The Faculty Success Rates Data Sheet, now called The Course Completion Data Sheet provides valuable data each semester for each course. Attrition rates, completion rates, and success rates are calculated.

Share

Each instructor uses the Course Data Analysis Spreadsheet to record grades for pre-tests, post-tests, culmination projects, final exams, and/or final grades. The instructor then reviews the information and answers the three reflective questions at the bottom of the spreadsheet to determine if learning outcomes were achieved for each course, how the data collected reflects student learning, and what the instructor may do differently in the future to strengthen student learning outcomes.

This information is shared and reviewed during department meetings with fellow colleagues. The Director of Institutional Research oversees the process of Program Review. During these advisory meetings, a comprehensive review of the data is conducted. The college strives for continuous improvement through the evaluation of programs, assessment sharing, and valuable input contributed by stakeholders to improve the success of student learning.

Close the Loop

Once the Director of Institutional Research and the Assessment Committee have carefully analyzed the information provided on the Course Data Analysis Spreadsheets and other forms of data, recommendations will be made when needed. These suggestions for improvement of student learning will more than likely first be addressed during department meetings. Next, the Vice President of Instruction and the appropriate

Divisional Chair will discuss the information. Then, the data is reviewed in a Program Review meeting with the divisional chair, the Vice President of Instruction, and other members of the faculty and staff at the Curriculum and Instruction committee. All parties will meet to discuss ways to address any issues found to enhance student learning.

In addition to ongoing, annual assessment, the Director of Institutional Research facilitates regular program reviews and ensures this process is completed in a timely fashion. The Program Review Process is designed to examine the need, quality, and cost of individual programs. SCC follows the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) requirements to review programs every five years. The review encompasses all instructional, student services, and academic programs. The results of the review are used in campus planning initiatives, quality improvement efforts, and budget allocation decisions. The program review process is a collaborative process relying primarily on faculty and is tied to long-range planning. Also included in the academic program reviews is a section on assessment of student learning. The following areas are reviewed: program objectives, labor market need, enrollment/completion, cost effectiveness, quality factors, and improvements needed. At the program level, goals, objectives, and action plans are clearly stated on the institution's continuous quality improvement (CQI) worksheets. Data is collected annually by each program or department and reported on the CQI worksheet. This information is then entered in the WEAVE data repository. Supporting documentation and evidence is also included. The data is used to assist in evaluating program and course changes needed in upcoming semesters.

Each semester, the institution requires 100% participation on the completion of student surveys for each course. The end-of-semester Course/Instructor Evaluation results are collected by the Management Information System (MIS) Department, and the results are disseminated to the Vice President of Instructional Services. Once reviewed, the evaluations are shared with instructors, and course changes are made as deemed necessary to ensure the highest level of student learning is achieved.

Maintaining Rigor and Quality Instruction

In order to insure the consistency of course offerings among full-time and part-time faculty as well as delivery methods, the establishment of checks-and-balances is in place. Course syllabi are approved and disseminated to adjunct faculty. Artifacts are collected and reviewed to determine course rigor and quality by each division lead instructor (See Appendix C for a cross-division sampling).

Adjunct positions may be established by the College President. It shall be the responsibility of the President to insure that all candidates recommended for employment meet the qualifications established by the Board of Trustees and by statutes for the positions recommended. A transcript audit review of all adjunct

applicants will be conducted by the Vice-President of Instructional Services, Dean of Instructional Services, and the Department Chair to assure academic qualifications are met for instructional personnel. In addition prospective applicants are required to participate in an interview with the appropriate Division Chair and upon recommendation, the lead instructor for the specific field of study (Board Policy 6110). Each division has established faculty qualifications per course in accordance with HLC guidelines and fulfillment of ICCB recommendations.

Assessment of Student Learning—Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Assessment is a type of action research to help us gather indicators that will be useful for improving student learning through our curriculum and teaching strategies. It focuses on student learning and what the student will be able to do and not so much on what we are going to teach. The following Q & As will attempt to provide answers to some frequently asked questions that may further understanding of the assessment process.

1. Q. Why do we assess student learning?

- a. Assessment must be meaningful. To do assessment for the goal of doing assessment and writing a report would be a waste of time. Link your assessment practices to compelling, powerful, and consequential processes such as department review or program validation. You can link it to curriculum revisions, distance learning, retention, service learning, and improving student learning and teaching strategies.

There is considerable evidence that assessment drives student learning and curriculum. Most importantly, our assessment tools tell our students what we consider to be important and make clear our expectations or what the student will do to be successful in the course or program. They will learn what we guide them to learn through our assessments. By using appropriate assessment techniques, we can encourage our students to raise the bar. Think of assessment of learning as the “learning process” where our students and we receive significant feedback to improve learning.

It is not always the assessments, but the changes they lead to, that are important. Change and innovation take courage, but they are also at the heart of the teaching profession.

2. Q. I already give tests and grades. Isn't that assessment?

- a. Not really. Tests and quizzes are an evaluation of learned material. Assessment involves a sample of behavior from your student that can be observed and judged on the basis of specific criteria developed and assessed in multiple modes and contexts, the learning process. For example, a project, presentation, a number of writing assignments, labs, and more. Traditional testing methods are limited measures of student learning and of limited value for guiding student learning. We cannot say that 73% of our students are

getting As and Bs, so we must be doing okay. A letter grade itself does not give enough information about the learning that is occurring. Reflection is a vital component of revealing opportunities for improvement.

3. **Q. How does assessment of learning help faculty?**
 - a. It provides instructors with useful information about their students, including the quality of learners and readiness for learning. Ongoing assessment information the instructors about the pace and progress of student learning in their classroom.

4. **Q. Is this something extra for me to do? Who should be doing assessment?**
 - a. No, it is not extra. You are already assessing. It is those learning opportunities that you have designed in your curriculum where you can give your students on-going feedback so that they can improve learning. Only faculty who guide the learning process can identify the student learning outcomes of that process, what it is they expect to happen to/for the student. It is the faculty who teach in that program, who can interpret the results, and recommend improvements in instruction and curriculum.

5. **Q. How can I assess attitudes and understandings which are simply not quantifiable?**
 - a. It seems a common misunderstanding that assessment requires that everything be reduced to statistical measures. The thrust of assessment is objective results such that anyone will know that the learning goals are being met, but this need not be quantifiable. If the faculty identify as an important result that which is not quantifiable, the process simply asks them to specify some objective means to demonstrate that the results are happening as intended.

6. **Q. Does student assessment information results affect faculty evaluation?**
 - a. No. We are focusing on the classroom level. Assessment is informed by the expertise and professional judgment of the faculty. Faculty in an academic department or program, interpreting the results of an assessment measure, might collectively decide to give more attention to certain outcomes, and might even recommend changes instruction.

7. **Q. Why is the Higher Learning Commission making us assess?**
 - a. Right now, higher education is concerned with two national issues: the learning college and accountability. Most faculty have been engaged in some type of assessment throughout their teaching careers and have found it to be a tool for understanding what their students are learning.

8. **Q. What is the connection among the various levels of assessment?**
 - a. The focus of assessment is student learning. The most significant educational interaction happens between students and faculty in the classroom. The individual class section is part of a course, and courses are parts of programs. These levels reflect different, yet interrelated, facets of a student's education.

9. **Q. How will assessment improve learning?**
 - a. Assessment is a tool; however, it is a tool by which we can communicate with our students about learning with learning opportunities and ongoing feedback. Assessment does not accomplish learning—but it provides information to the student and the faculty who may use it to improve learning.

10. **Q. How many faculty of a given program should participate in the assessment process?**
 - a. All faculty, both full time and adjunct, should participate in assessment. All have a stake in student success and in the success of their respective program or discipline.

11. **Q. What is the purpose of Program Review?**
 - a. In campus statements of mission and goals, we have committed to providing our students with excellence in student learning and preparing to meet the world. Program Review reveals our linkages between programs and the community it serves. Program Review contributes to planning for the future of our programs. Altogether, it promotes campus-wide understanding of the contributions of each program to the mission of the college.

Appendices

Appendix A-Assessment Timeline

Month	Task	Person Responsible
August	Annual program reviews are due to ICCB on August 1st.	Institutional Research
	An assessment update will be given at the fall faculty in-service. Remind faculty about pre-tests.	VP of Instructional Services or Assessment Committee
	Verify that all Course Data Analysis spreadsheets are complete from spring semester	VP of Instructional Services/Divisional Chairs
	Input pre-test results for spring into the folder on the Google drive (complete first two weeks of class).	Instructor
September	At division meetings, discuss the results from the spring semester assessment data and turn in minutes to the VP of Instructional Services.	Faculty
	Give a retention, persistence, and completion report to the VP of Instructional Services based on previous semester collected.	Institutional Research
	Review and analyze retention, persistence, and completion information provided by Institutional Research.	VP of Instructional Services/Faculty/ Divisional Chairs
October	A Professional Development Assessment Workshop will be held on annually to evaluate, analyze, and implement changes.	Assessment Committee/VP of Instructional Services/ Institutional Research
November	Review Core Competencies to ensure relevance and consistency.	Divisional Chairs/VP of Instruction
	Review the master syllabi, ensure that objectives are measurable and relate to Core Competencies, make sure that textbooks are up to date for each course taught, ensure course assessments are aligned with course goals and objectives. Save everything on the Google drive.	Lead Instructor/ Divisional Chairs
December	Complete second phase of Course Data Analysis Spreadsheet (i.e., post-test and final grades) and three reflective questions. Save on the Google drive.	Instructor

Month	Task	Person Responsible
January	An assessment update will be given at the spring faculty in-service.	VP of Instructional Services/Assessment Committee
	Send data on January 15th to divisional chairs for program reviews.	Institutional Research
	Input pre-test results for spring into the folder on the Google drive (complete first two weeks of class).	Instructor
	At division meetings, discuss the results of fall semester assessment data and turn in minutes to the VP of Instructional Services.	Faculty
	Review the Course Data Analysis spreadsheets from fall, determine if students met learning goals and objectives, and make recommendations	VP of Instructional Services/ Divisional Chairs
February	Send the WEAVE worksheet for evaluating programs out to all instructional divisions and institutional departments.	VP of Instructional Services/VP of Student Services/CFO
	Submit the WEAVE worksheet to pertinent faculty and staff for data entry and review.	Instructional Divisions & Institutional Departments
	Generate summary reports from the WEAVE repository	VP of Instructional Services/Assessment Co-Chairs/Institutional Research
March	Review the summary report from the WEAVE worksheets.	Instructional Divisions & Institutional Departments
April	Submit budget request forms to your direct supervisor. Each request should be correlated with program goals.	Faculty and Staff
	Give a retention, persistence, and completion report to the VP of Instructional Services based on previous semester collected.	Institutional Research
	Review and analyze retention, persistence, and completion information provided by Institutional Research.	VP of Instructional Services/Faculty/ Divisional Chairs
April	Review the master syllabi, ensure that objectives are measurable and relate to Core Competencies, make sure that textbooks are up to date for each course taught, ensure course assessments are aligned with course goals and objectives. Save everything on the Google drive.	Lead Instructor/ Divisional Chairs

Month	Task	Person Responsible
May	Complete second phase of Course Data Analysis Spreadsheet (i.e., post-test, final grades, culmination project, etc.) and three reflective questions. Save on the Google drive.	Instructor
	Verify that all faculty have turned in post-test information.	Divisional Chairs/VP of Instructional Services
	Review Course Data Analysis spreadsheets from spring, determine if students met learning goals and objectives, and make recommendations.	VP of Instructional Services/Institutional Research
June	Verify that master syllabi have been updated on the Google drive by the lead instructor.	Divisional Chairs
	Provide a completion report to the VP of Instructional Services & President based on students achieving and persisting to graduation.	Institutional Research
	Review the completion report on students achieving and persisting to graduation.	VP of Instructional Services & President

* A monthly assessment report will be provided to the College President and the Board of Trustees.

Appendix B Course Data Analysis Spreadsheet

Semester/Year: Spring 2014

Course:

Instructor:

Student ID	Student Name	Pre-Test	Post-Test	+/-	% Change	Final Exam*	Final Grade
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* This entry can be the culmination of Final project/Comprehensive Exam/Final Exam score(s).

Averages

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Reflection:

1. Based on the data, describe how students' learning outcomes met the objectives.

2. What did the collected data tell you about the students learning in this course?

3. List one or two things you may do differently in the future to further strengthen student learning outcomes.

Appendix C Collection of Artifact Samples Demonstrating Assessment and Supporting Rigor

Each semester, adjunct instructors submit artifacts as outlined by the lead instructor during preliminary meetings concerning the course. Additionally artifacts submitted align with the objectives of the course recorded in the syllabus.

Some examples of possible artifacts are:

Allied Health/Nursing

- Clinical ratings
- Demonstrations completed
- Licensure obtained
- Observations recorded
- Student portfolios

Business, Occupational, and Technical

- Clinical ratings
- Cumulative project tangible out put
- Demonstrations completed
- Employer evaluations
- Financial applications implemented
- Industry accepted professional certifications obtained
- Industry standard documentation preparedness
- Licensure achieved
- Student portfolios

Humanities

- Critique of artistic works (art and music)
- Cumulative project
- Essay prompts
- Journalizing and reflection
- Report in MLA format
- Student portfolios
- Substantive speech recording and evaluation

Math and Science