



Georgia Highlands College
Outcomes Assessment Handbook
Unit Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes
2016

Office of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation and Research



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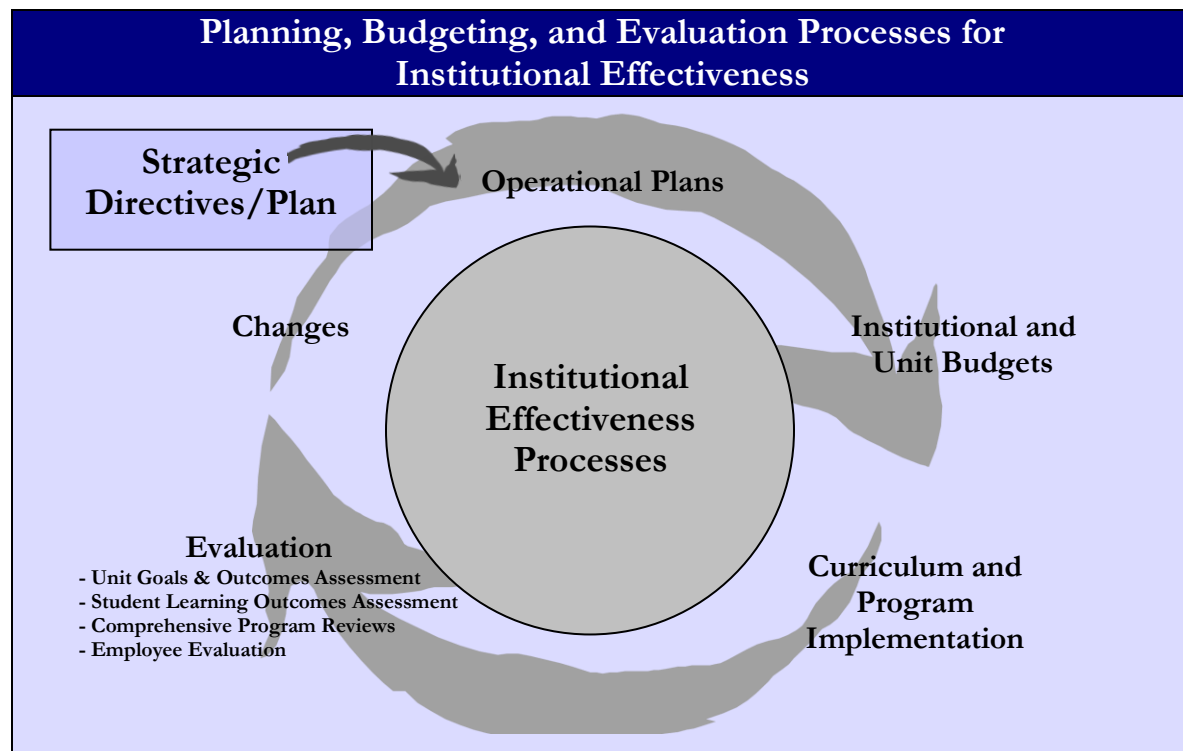
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Introduction

Georgia Highlands College affirms its commitment to monitor its effectiveness; what is more specifically referred to as “institutional effectiveness.” The entire concept of effectiveness begins with the mission of the College, a formal statement of what the College is about. The *mission of Georgia Highlands College, a state college of the University System of Georgia, is to provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural and physical development of a diverse population through pre- baccalaureate associate degree transfer programs, career associate degree programs, and targeted baccalaureate degree programs that meet the economic development needs of the region.* Moreover, the effectiveness toward achieving its established goals outlined in the College’s Strategic Plan is also part of the ongoing monitoring process.

Assessment occurs in both administrative and academic functional units through a variety of approaches. All contribute to the College’s continuous improvement efforts and institutional effectiveness.

Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, Budget and Assessment Relationship



The Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation Processes for Institutional Effectiveness flowchart shows how the different aspects of the process relate to each other. The strategic directives/plan is a 3-year plan that is designed to help the College fulfill its mission. The unit operational plans are designed to help each unit focus on intended outcomes they would like to accomplish for a given year. This ensures that all units are helping the College achieve its strategic directives, strategic initiatives, mission, and goals. The integrated planning and budgeting process helps the College use available funds to pursue new projects and improvements that are consistent with unit goals, intended outcomes, strategic directives and initiatives.

The College’s institutional assessment and evaluation activities are designed to determine the effectiveness of the College’s programs and services. The results from these activities also

play a key role in the college's planning activities as they are used in the development of future strategic goals.

Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness

Accreditation provides an assessment of an institution's effectiveness in the fulfillment of its mission, its compliance with the requirements of its accrediting association, and its continuing efforts to enhance the quality of student learning and its programs and services. GHC's accrediting association, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), advocates that the accreditation process stimulates evaluation and improvement, while providing a means of continuing accountability to constituents and the public. SACSCOC has developed, implemented and updated accreditation principles as of 2012 and the following apply directly to institutional effectiveness through outcomes assessment.

The following Core Requirement applies:

- 2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. (Quality Enhancement Plan-QEP)

The QEP is based upon a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the learning environment for supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. It is used to outline a course of action for institutional improvement by addressing one or more issues that contribute to institutional quality, with special attention to student learning.

The following Comprehensive Standards apply:

3.3 Institutional Effectiveness

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

- 3.3.1.1. educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
- 3.3.1.2. administrative support services
- 3.3.1.3. academic and student support services
- 3.3.1.4. research within its mission, if appropriate
- 3.3.1.5. community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

3.5 Educational Programs: Undergraduate Programs

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them.

The following Federal Requirement applies:

4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals.

Outcomes Assessment

In order to determine institutional effectiveness and to focus on continuous improvement, the College conducts outcomes assessment in three major processes categorized by Administrative Assessment and Academic Assessment. The three processes are Annual Operational Plans, Student Learning Outcomes, and Comprehensive Program Reviews.

Administrative Assessment:

Annual Operational Plans are a means to assess unit goal achievement through unit outcomes assessment. All functional units of the College are engaged in this process.

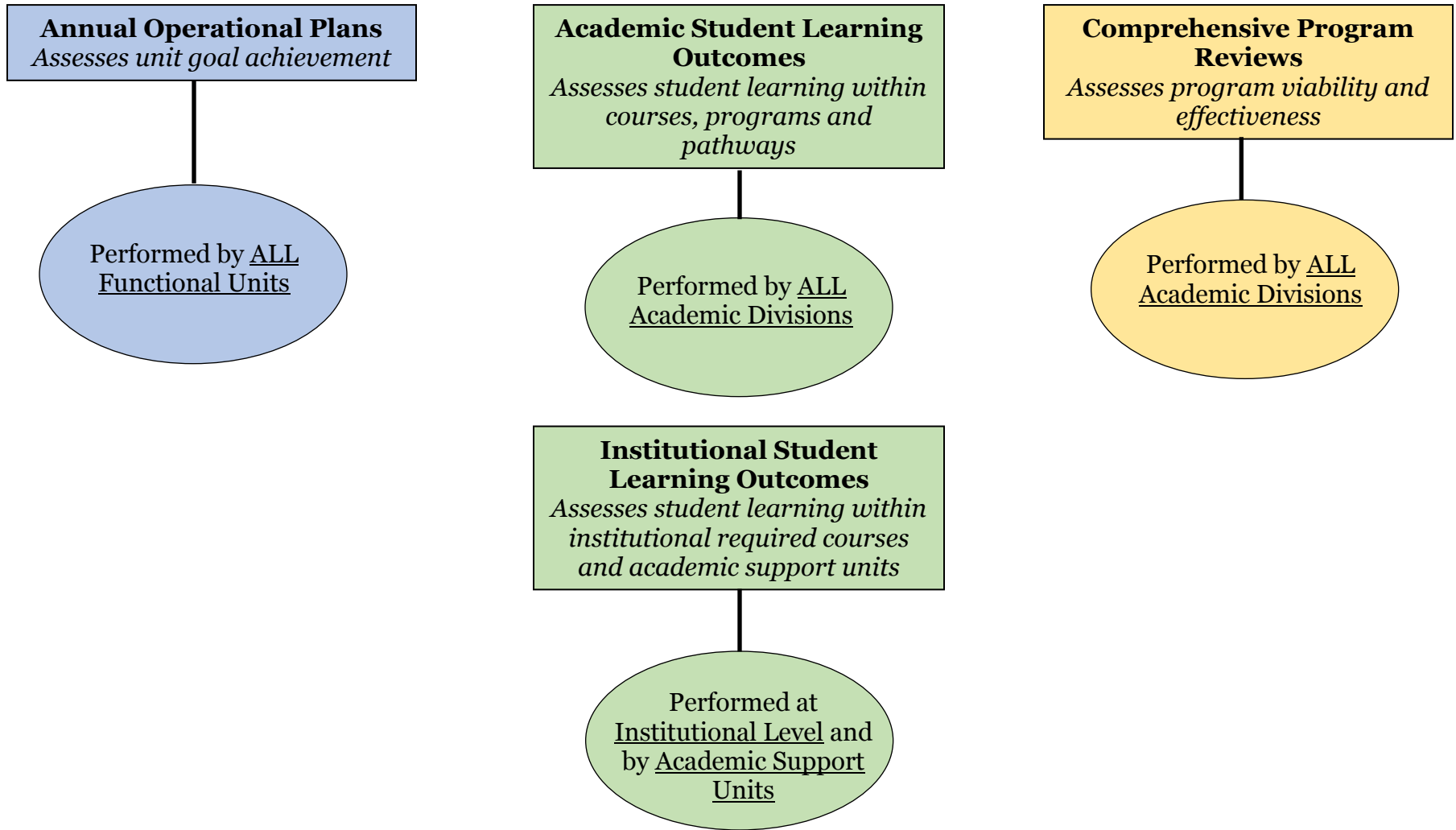
Student Learning Outcomes are a means to assess student learning. Institutional Student Learning Outcomes are assessed within specific institutional required courses and by specific academic support units.

Academic Assessment:

Student Learning Outcomes are a means to assess student learning. Academic Student Learning Outcomes are assessed within courses and academic programs and are performed by all academic divisions of the College.

Comprehensive Program Reviews (CPR) are a means (standardized and required by USG) to assess program viability and effectiveness. CPRs for career programs are performed by the appropriate academic division. All academic divisions, with the exception of the Division of Health Sciences which teaches no core curriculum classes, perform assessment for the A.A./A.S.–Core Curriculum CPR.

Georgia Highlands College
Outcomes Assessment Diagram



Administrative Annual Operational Planning

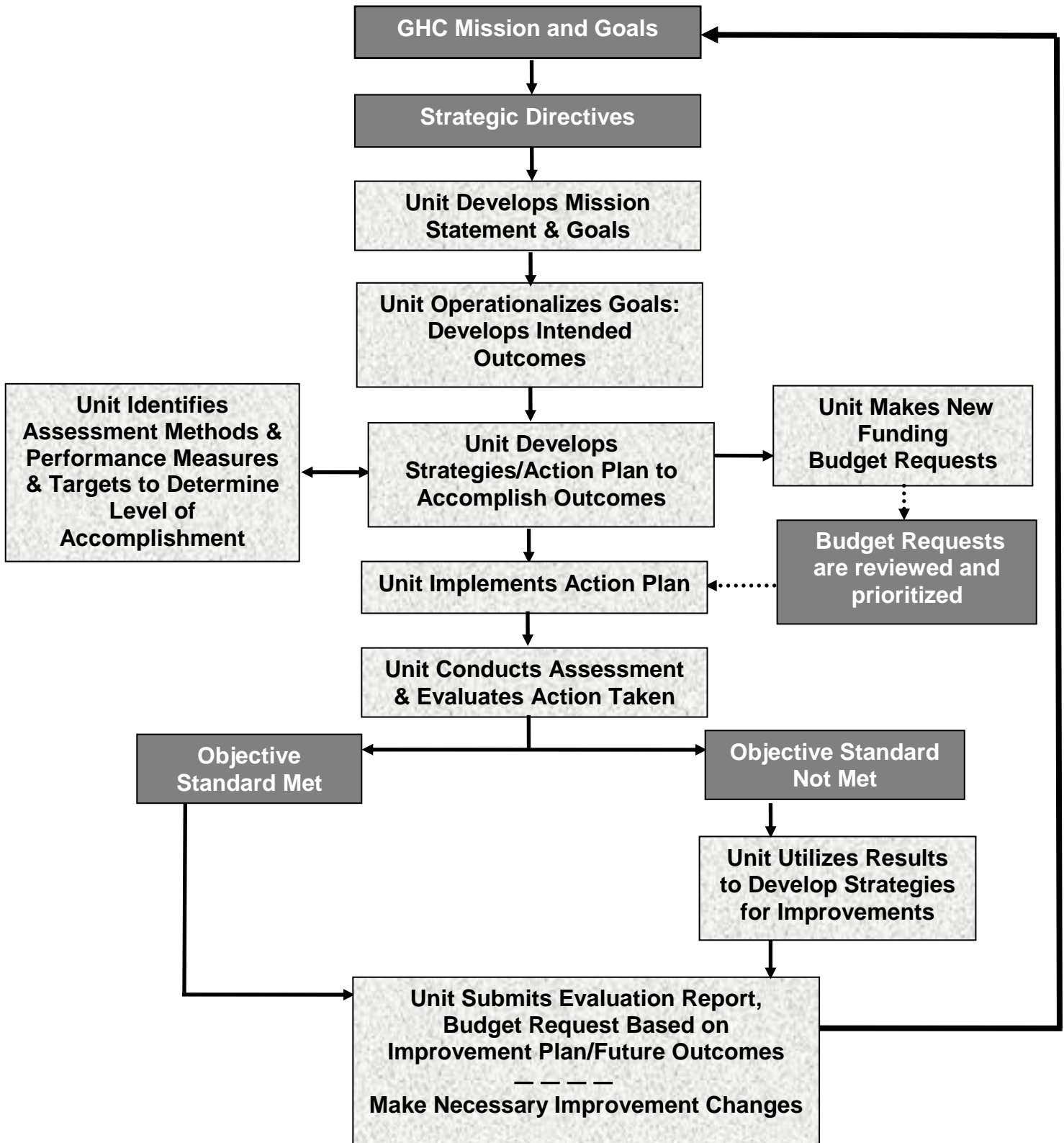
GHC has a formal planning process which utilizes the college mission and goals, identified community needs, and available resources as the basis for developing a workable plan of action. A central focus of the college planning process is to provide opportunities for input and comment by all members of the college community. Planning begins with development of the institutional vision that supports the institution's mission. Strategic directives, strategies, and performance measures are then identified. These strategic directives and strategies for achieving the initiatives guide the development of unit operational plans. To assist the college in achieving its mission and goals, each unit at the college links its operations and expectations (intended outcomes) to the college mission and strategic directives through Unit Mission Statements and Annual Unit Operational Plans. Moreover, the process is linked to budgeting process through an annual "new funding request" procedure.

An important component of planning is the assessment of process, program and service intended outcomes. Data collection and analysis are extremely important in this process and in defining projected societal needs and modifying organizational priorities.

Faculty and staff develop unit plans which include the following components: College Goal, Unit Goals, Intended Outcomes, Method of Outcome Assessment and Performance Targets. All staff and appropriate faculty are involved with this process. Unit level plans are approved at the appropriate organizational level. In April, Units submit proposed operational plans for the upcoming academic year to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) for approval. The approval process is designed to insure that the college is making every effort to respond to all of the anticipated opportunities and challenges that are projected to be in the college's future. Operational plans which require new funding are submitted to the IEC along with a New Funding Request rationale. Unit leaders present and discuss individual plans and funding requests with the IEC. The IEC approves unit operational plans, priorities budget requests and submits a prioritized list of requests to the President's Executive Cabinet. In March and April of each year, units submit completed operational plans for that year to include Assessment Results (an evaluation of the action taken) and Use of Results.

Annually, the completed Operational Plan is evaluated and an evaluation report is published. Intended Outcomes are listed with a rating (Outcome Met, Outcome Partially Met, Outcome Not Met, Ongoing) is assigned. The IEC reviews the Operational Plan and the Office of Strategic Planning, Assessment and Accreditation then publishes the entire Operational Plan into the Annual Report of Institutional Effectiveness. The results of the Operational Plan Evaluation are used to make adjustments to programs and services and to the intended outcomes for upcoming Annual Operational Planning.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING MODEL For Continuous Improvement



GHC Operational Planning Units

Administrative Units

- Accounting Services
- Admissions
- Athletics (including SLOs)
- Auxiliary Services
- Budgeting
- Campus Safety
- Financial Aid
- Information Technology
- New Student and Retention Programs (including SLOs)
- Offices of Campus Deans
- Office of the President
- Office of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation and Research
- Office of VP for Academic Affairs
- Office of VP for Advancement
- Office of VP for Finance & Administration
- Office of VP for Human Resources
- Office of VP for Information Technology
- Office of VP for Student Affairs
- Plant Operations
- Procurement
- Registrar
- Student Life (including SLOs)
- Student Support Services

Educational Units

- Academic Advising (including SLOs)
- E-Learning Division
- Health Sciences Division
- Humanities Division
- Library Services (including SLOs)
- Mathematics Division
- Natural Sciences & Physical Education Division
- Social Sciences, Business & Education Division
- Testing Services
- Tutorial Center (including SLOs)

Operational Planning Cycle

MARCH	Develop Unit Operational Plans with associated New Funding Requests; Present both to Cabinet during annual budget hearings
APRIL	Develop Unit Operational Plans (without associated New Funding Requests) and submit through Electronic Assessment Reporting System; IEC Reviews Submitted Plans
APRIL-MAY	President's Cabinet reviews and approves New Funding Requests
JUNE-JULY	VPFA & PAAR Offices announce Operational Planning New Funding Budgets; Unit Operational Plans-Begin Action
AUGUST	Conduct Action
SEPT	Conduct Action
OCT	Conduct Action
NOV	Conduct Action
DEC	Conduct Action
JAN	Continue Action
FEB	Conduct Action; Develop Unit Operational Plans with associated New Funding Requests; Present both to Cabinet during annual budget hearings
MARCH	Final Electronic Reporting Phase-Units assess performance by evaluating action toward intended outcome fulfillment; complete "use of results" and submit report
APRIL-MAY	IE Committee reviews completed Operational Plans and responds to units; Develop New Unit Operational Plans and submit through Electronic Assessment Reporting System

Administrative and Academic Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes provide direction and focus for all teaching and learning activity. A Student Learning Outcome is a result, a final product of the teaching and learning process.

Georgia Highlands College's student learning assessment philosophy and practice respects students and employees, measures student learning using assessment standards and best practices, and encompasses a broad-based participation and leadership in assessment planning and implementation.

Purposes

The purposes of assessing student learning at Georgia Highlands College are:

- To measure how effective the College is achieving its mission and goals
- To document for various constituencies that learning has occurred
- To provide information that can be used to improve teaching and learning
- To make appropriate, informed decisions about curriculum, standards, instruction and allocation of resources
- To assist students in achieving their educational goals
- To fulfill a public duty to report the effectiveness of our programs to stakeholders
- To foster higher completion and retention rates
- To enhance utilization of class time by identifying topics with which students need help
- To satisfy requirements by professional organizations and agencies to assess learning and achievement
- To provide data required in Comprehensive Program Reviews
- To fulfill expectations of the Board of Regents/University System of Georgia

Assumptions

- Assessment should arise from GHC's mission and goals
- Student learning is the primary purpose of GHC
- Learning includes knowledge, skills and attitudes
- The purpose of assessment is to improve both teaching and learning
- The process of assessment creates an opportunity for everyone to learn
- Assessment should involve the entire college community
- Assessment is an on-going, interactive, evolving process

Responsibility for Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Administration

The Assistant to the President for Planning, Continuous Improvement and Accreditation has a leadership role in the process of institutional, program/pathway and course level student learning outcomes assessment and is responsible for coordinating the process along with the appointed faculty member serving as the Educational Outcomes Assessment Coordinator.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the appropriate program directors have a leadership role in the process of institutional level outcomes assessment for tutoring, library resources, first year experience and academic advising. The directors and appropriate staff have responsibility for planning, conducting and analyzing institutional level student learning outcomes associated with their area.

The Vice President for Student Affairs and the appropriate program director have a leadership role in the process of institutional level outcomes assessment for student life. The director and appropriate staff have responsibility for planning, conducting and analyzing institutional level student learning outcomes associated with their area.

The Athletic Director has the leadership role in the process of institutional level outcomes assessment for intercollegiate athletics. The directors and appropriate staff have the responsibility for planning, conducting and analyzing institutional level student learning outcomes associated with their area.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Academic Division Deans have a leadership role in the process of core curriculum, program and pathway, and course assessment. They initiate and monitor this assessment from the planning stage through analyzing the results to taking action on the results.

Faculty

All faculty members are involved with program, pathway and course assessment at Georgia Highlands College. The assessment of courses, and ultimately programs and pathways, is entirely in the domain of the faculty. Because faculty teach the courses, faculty are in the best position to know what the course content should be, what students should learn, and how best to determine if they have learned. When faculty design a course assessment, the information obtained from analyzing the results can provide valuable insight into how the course can be strengthened to improve student learning. Emphasis is placed on continuously trying to improve the teaching, the assessment and the learning.

Institutional Effectiveness Committee

The GHC Institutional Effectiveness Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Provide advice and counsel to the Special Assistant to the President for Planning, Continuous Improvement and Accreditation, the Instructional Council, the President's Cabinet and Executive Leadership Team, and the President on institutional effectiveness issues.
- Oversee the institutional research and planning processes for the College and update the strategic plan annually.

- Recommend institutional effectiveness measures to the President and appropriate administrators.
- Assist the President in complying with policies and mandates from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the University System of Georgia, and other accrediting or regulatory bodies in the area of institutional effectiveness.
- Assist the President in the preparation of reports and documents for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the University System of Georgia in the area of institutional effectiveness.
- Provide the President and the Faculty Senate a brief annual report of its activities at the end of the academic year.

The Assessment Process

Institutional, Program, and Course Learning Outcome Assessment

Assessment of learning outcomes is three-tiered:

- Institutional Level (to include student services and academic support services) - Student learning outcomes at the institutional level identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to acquire by the end of involvement and experiences with academic support services and student services (academic advising, athletics, library services, new student & retention programs, student life, and tutoring center).
- Program Level – Divisions and Departments will determine the expected knowledge, skills, and dispositions for students who earned degrees in their programs (each degree and certificate program, transfer degree pathways and general education core curriculum).
- Course Level - Similar to the institutional and program levels, student learning outcomes at the course level identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to acquire by the end of the course.

Definitions

Assessment - “Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education” (Thomas A. Angelo, *AAHE Bulletin*, November 1995, p.7).

- Assessment should focus on improving student learning
- The focus of assessment should not be limited to the classroom, but include the wide range of processes that influence learning

- Assessment is a process embedded within a larger system
- Assessment should focus collective attention and create linkages and enhance coherence within and across the curriculum
- Tension between assessment for improvement and assessment for accountability must be managed

Method of Assessment (Measurement) – A method of assessment is the tool used to collect information to assess the learning outcome.

Student Learning Outcomes - Outcomes are the results of educational activities. These broad learning concepts are assessed through learning objectives which describe specific knowledge, attitudes or skills a student should possess within a larger outcome area. Student Learning Outcomes provide direction and focus for all teaching and learning activity.

Effective statements of student learning outcomes:

- Are student-focused rather than professor-focused.
- Focus on the learning resulting from an activity rather than the activity itself.
- Reflect the institution’s mission and the values it represents.
- Are in alignment at the course, academic program, and institutional levels.
- Focus on important, non-trivial aspects of learning that are credible to the public.
- Focus on skills and abilities central to the discipline and based on professional standards of excellence.
- Are general enough to capture important learning but clear and specific enough to be measurable.
- Focus on aspects of learning that will develop and endure but that can be assessed in some form now.

Source: Huba, M.E., & Freed, J.E. (2000). *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Learning Outcomes Assessment Timeline

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment will be conducted on a cyclical process whereby institutional and course outcomes will be assessed on an annual basis and program outcomes assessed on a rotation of five years with measures conducted annually. Therefore, student learning outcomes assessment activities will occur annually with the following being achieved each assessment year:

1. Create the Assessment **Plan** in late Spring Semester, Summer Term or at the beginning of Fall Semester for the *Current Year*
2. **Measure** for the Student Learning Outcome for the *Current Year*
3. **Act** (make changes) on the Results of the Measurement for the *Prior Year*
4. Check the Effects of the Action/Changes

The following diagram illustrates this process:

	2014-2015 Assessment Year			
2014-2015 PLAN	2014-2015 MEASURE			
	2015-2016 Assessment Year			
2014-2015 ACT	2015-2016 PLAN	2015-2016 MEASURE		
	2016-2017 Assessment Year			
2014 – 2015 Check effects of changes	2015-2016 ACT	2016-2017 PLAN	2016-2017 MEASURE	
	2017-2018 Assessment Year			
	2015 – 2016 Check effects of changes	2016-2017 ACT	2017-2018 PLAN	2017-2018 MEASURE
	2018-2019 Assessment Year			
		2016 – 2017 Check effects of changes	2017-2018 ACT	2018-2019 PLAN

Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan Review, Approval, and Schedule

The following timeline will be used for submission of the assessment plans (institutional, program and course) for the review and approval process:

August	The College appoints the Institutional Effectiveness Committee
August-March	<p>Units conduct assessments and analyze the results of Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans (MEASURE) for the current year. These plans were developed and approved during the previous year. In some cases assessment and analysis may need to extend to the end of Spring Semester.</p> <p>Units implement changes for improvement (ACT) for Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans that were conducted and analyzed (MEASURE) the previous year.</p>
November 1	Unit Leaders submit Assessment Plans-Phase 1 to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee
December-February 15	Institutional Effectiveness Committee will review the Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans submitted. The Committee will consult with appropriate Units on any plans whose plans indicate clarification is needed. After all clarifications are received, the Committee will submit to the Unit Leaders the approved Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans. The Committee will also send the recommendations for revisions that are needed to any of the Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans submitted but not approved.
February 15-March 15	Units resolve issues with non-approved Learning Assessment Outcomes Plans and resubmit to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for approval.
June 1	<p><i>Final Submission due date, unless individual approval to submit The following week.</i> - Institutional, Program, and Course Level Assessment--Units complete Phase II of the appropriate Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans (MEASURE) for the current year.</p> <p>Units submit these to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee Chair.</p>
June-July	The Institutional Effectiveness Committee will review the completed Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans. The Committee will consult with appropriate Unit Leaders on any plans that indicate clarification is needed. After all clarifications are received,

the Committee will either approve the plan or recommend further revision.

Approved Assessment Plans will be submitted to the Planning, Assessment, Accreditation and Research Office (PAAR) for use in the College's Annual Assessment Report.

July/August

The Office of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation and Research will use the results of student learning outcomes assessment to create an annual institutional effectiveness report.

Establishing Student Learning Outcomes

Writing SLOs

Student Learning Outcomes provide direction and focus for all teaching and learning activity. A Student Learning Outcome is a result, a final product of the teaching and learning process.

To create successful Student Learning Outcomes, clearly identify desired competencies by using action verbs. Below is the Bloom's Taxonomy Table with a sample of verbs to clearly identify competency desired.

Competence	Skills Demonstrated
Knowledge <p style="text-align: right;">Sample Verbs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observation and recall of information • knowledge of dates, events, places • knowledge of major ideas • mastery of subject matter <p>define, identify, indicate, know, label, list memorize, name, recall, record, relate, repeat, select, and underline</p>
Comprehension <p style="text-align: right;">Sample Verbs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding information • grasp meaning • translate knowledge into new context • interpret facts, compare, contrast • order, group, infer causes • predict consequences <p>classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, locate, paraphrase, recognize, report, restate, review, suggest, summarize, tell, translate</p>
Application <p style="text-align: right;">Sample Verbs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use information • use methods, concepts, theories in new situations • solve problems using required skills or knowledge <p>apply, compute, construct, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, give examples, illustrate, interpret, investigate, operate, organize, practice, predict, schedule, translate, use.</p>
Analysis <p style="text-align: right;">Sample Verbs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeing patterns • organization of parts • recognition of hidden meanings • identification of components <p>analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, debate, determine, diagram, differentiate, distinguish, examine, experiment, inspect, inventory, question, relate, solve</p>
Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use old ideas to create new ones • generalize from given facts • relate knowledge from several areas • predict, draw conclusions

Sample Verbs	arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, formulate, manage, organize, perform, plan, prepare, produce, propose, set-up
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare and discriminate between ideas • assess value of theories, presentations • make choices based on reasoned argument • verify value of evidence • recognize subjectivity
Sample Verbs	appraise, assess, choose, compare, contrast, decide, estimate, evaluate, grade, judge, measure, rate, revise, score, select, value

Methods of Assessment

The methods of assessment are instruments used to gather data to verify if the learning outcomes are being achieved. It is advisable to have at least two types of methods to gather reliable data during each reporting period. Possible assessments tools are:

- a. Embedded Test Questions are specific exam or quiz questions to measure a specific outcome. It should not be the entire chapter test or final exam. It should be isolated questions to measure the outcome.
- b. Rubric is a set of scoring guidelines that can be used to evaluate students work or performance.
- c. Pre-Test/Post-tests are exams given at the beginning and end of the semester to measure an increase on knowledge on a particular subject and competence. When using this design, factors to consider include the following:
 - i. content reliability and validity are assured,
 - ii. the pre-test is administered before learning starts,
 - iii. the post-test is a parallel form to the pre-test,
 - iv. the post-test is administered at the end of the course or at a pre-determined time, and
 - v. the same procedures are used with both the pretest and post-test.
- d. Portfolio is a compilation of a student's work in a course to showcase skills acquired in the course or program.
- e. Papers/Essays

Performance Measures

This section explains the level of expected performance that includes the measurement of performance and success. To report the standards, there are four elements:

- a. The level of expected performance and success should be realistic, challenging, and obtainable for the course. It is important to keep in mind the content of the course, as well as, teaching methods, course level, and pedagogy of the course. All of these factors influence the expected performance and success of the student.
- b. There must be a clear indication of who will be assessed in the course. If all of the students are being assessed, it must be all of the students taking the course in that reported semester. This includes course taught by adjuncts. If it is a random sample of students being assessed, there should be an explanation of how the random sample number was achieved.

- c. The timeframe of assessment should identify when the assessment method will be administered during the semester.
- d. Clearly identify who is responsible for the collection and interpretation of the assessment data to have a record of data management.

Example 1:

- 1. 70% accuracy on embedded test questions
- 2. All students
- 3. During Exam 1
- 4. Instructor and Math Department

Example 2:

- 1. 90% will meet or exceed the satisfactory standard of performance in the checklist
- 2. All students
- 3. Midterm
- 4. Faculty teaching the course

Electronic SLO Assessment Reporting Form

Complete each section with appropriate information.

- A. Unit/Team Name
- B. Unit Leader
- C. Related College Goal-Select the appropriate goal(s) that will be addressed with the Unit Goal and Intended Outcome
- D. Associated Course
- E. *Student Learning Outcome – Input the Outcome for the course, program, or institutional level. Intended Student Learning Outcomes provide direction and focus for all teaching and learning activity.
- F. *Method of Outcome Assessment – Input the combination of methods of assessment.
- G. *Performance Measure – Input the expected level of achievement.
- H. Summary of Assessment Results
 - 1) To report the data, first indicate if the standards were met according to the following table.

* These components must be approved by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, if changes to approved components are needed these changes must be vetted by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

Outcome Measures	Level of Achievement
Exceeding Outcome	Exceeded baseline by greater than 10%
Meeting Outcome	Baseline measure of success for outcome. Determined by team.
Approaching Outcome	Failed to meet baseline by less than or equal to 10%
Not Meeting Outcome	Failed to meet baseline by greater than 10%

- 2) Clearly explain how the standard statement was achieved or not achieved. Include as much information as possible such as the standard percentage, number of students that obtained the standard, and/or sample of the method of assessment.

*Example 1: **Not Meeting Outcome*** - Five questions relating to outcome one were given on a 10 question exam at the end of the fall semester 2006. 48% of the test items relating to outcome one were answered correctly.

*Example 2: **Approaching Outcome*** -27 % increased from the pretest score to post test.

*Example 3: **Approaching Outcome*** –Based on Items 1, 2, 4, and 6 of the literature checklist, 87% the student met or exceeded the satisfactory standard of performance.

*Example 4: **Exceeding Outcome*** - 82% accuracy based on essays and papers. There was a random sample of 65% of students submitting the papers of the end of the semester by selecting every fourth student on the roster after the drop date.

I. Use of Results: Improvement Statement Based on Learning Outcome Assessment Results - **Describe how the results will be used to improve learning.** Please see table below.

- 1) This can be achieved by addressing how there should be more consistency within multiple sections, revision of learning outcomes, exploration of different assessment and/or teaching methods.
- 2) An alternative way to report the results could be addressing the improvement statement by referring to the standards level.

Outcome Measures	Suggested Improvements (addressed in Use of Results)
Exceeding Outcome	Explain what was done to exceed standard and how that will be used to improve student learning in other areas/courses.
Meeting Outcome	Explain what can be done to maintain or increase this level of success.
Approaching Outcome	Provide information or speculation of why the standard was close but not successful and what can be done to be successful in the future.
Not Meeting Outcome	Provide information or speculation of why the standard was not close to being successful. Provide specifics on how the assessment can be improved in the future.

Example 1: Reevaluate embedded questions to see if they assess the outcomes and if they are too difficult. Review in-class and out-of-class assignments to ensure enough practice of concepts is assigned. (*Not Meeting Outcome*)

Example 2: The assessments are very close to the expected student learning outcomes, the faculty is well satisfied with the results with minor adjustments in evaluating the questions and instructions to improve the results of the pre- and post-test. Evaluate the various ways to improve lab format and instructions. (*Approaching Outcome*)

Example 3: Continue to use the library research orientation session, but request that library instructor emphasize journal research sources more and provide a follow-up assignment for clarification. (*Meeting Outcome*)

Example 4: Continue stressing importance of analysis and interpretation of historical information. If there is a desire to add or alter a teaching method, it should be mentioned. (*Exceeding Outcome*)

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT -- INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Student learning outcomes at the institutional level identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to acquire by the end of involvement and experiences with appropriate academic support and student affairs units. Each of these units will determine the intended student learning outcomes for students who utilize their services, activities, or educational events.

The Institutional Level units include the following:

1. Academic Advising
2. Athletics
3. Library Services
4. New Student and Retention Programs
5. Student Life
6. Tutoring Center

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT -- PROGRAM LEVEL

Divisions and Departments will determine the expected knowledge, skills, and dispositions for students who earned degrees in their programs (each degree and certificate program, general education and program pathway). Separate student learning outcomes and program outcomes will need to be developed for individual academic programs/pathways. Program/pathway faculty will examine how their students perform in relation to established outcomes and objectives.

To assess program learning outcomes use the following suggested methods of assessment:

- Secondary analyses of course papers. The instructor will read student papers in order to assign a grade. If expected course-level student outcomes, the assignment, and grading criteria are aligned, then this reading also will provide a measure of student learning outcome attainment in the course. Faculty committees can also read these same papers to assess the attainment of discipline or program-level student learning outcomes. In most cases, this second reading should be done by other than the instructor or by others along with the instructor, as the purpose for the assessment is different. Scoring rubrics for the papers, based on the relevant student learning outcomes can be developed in advance or as the papers are being read.

- Secondary analyses of course projects. Products other than papers can also be assessed for attainment of discipline or program-level student learning outcomes. For example, if students are required to give oral presentations, other faculty and even area professionals can be invited to these presentations and can serve as outside evaluators.
- Capstone courses. Capstone courses provide a wonderful occasion for obtaining data on student learning. This is simply because the capstone course is the place where students are most likely to exhibit their cumulative understanding and competence in the discipline. Indeed, the purpose of many capstones courses is just that - providing an opportunity for students to “put it together”. Products of capstone courses should be, by their very nature, places where students demonstrate understandings and abilities articulated in the program or department student learning outcomes.
- Student portfolios. Having students collect all or some of the work they have done in a major will provide a much richer and well-rounded view of student learning than single documents can provide. These portfolios become valuable for programmatic assessment, but they are valuable for the student as well.
- Examinations. Many course-level student learning outcomes can be assessed by examinations given within the course. In some cases these student learning outcomes will be identical to those at the programmatic level and, thus, the exam questions will cover both. Exam questions can also be written to cover broader discipline or programmatic student learning outcomes without losing their validity for course grading. In departments without a capstone courses, it might be possible to write a coordinated set of exam questions that provide a fuller picture when administered across courses.
- Standardized and certification exams. In some disciplines, national standardized or certification exams exist that might be useful. However, it is important to note that these exams will be useful only so far as they reflect the department’s student learning outcomes. If, for example, an important goal is to prepare students for entry into a profession that requires passing a certification exam, then students’ performance on such an exam is very relevant. If, on the other hand, a national standardized test does not embody the discipline or department’s particular goals, its results will be irrelevant to the discipline or department.
- Exit interviews or surveys. Students’ self-assessment of their learning can be valuable for the student and for the program. Feedback should be anonymously given if at all possible.
- Surveys of alumni. Alumni have the added perspective of the workplace or further education. It is a perspective well worth tapping.
- Surveys of employers. If the program is preparing students for a particular set of jobs, it might be worthwhile to survey employers regarding the students’ on-the-job performance. However, it is important to survey those who would have first-hand knowledge of particular students rather than relying on general opinions or stereotypes.

- Transfer student's performance. One indicator of success in General Education is the academic attainment of transfer students. Setting up a follow-up system for first year GPA may provide useable and useful outcomes measurements.
- Internship evaluations. If the department has a number of students who are doing relevant internships or other work-based learning, standard evaluations by sponsors may provide data on attainment of student learning outcomes. In addition, when departments exercise control over the content of internships, those settings themselves can serve as capstone experiences where students can demonstrate their learning.

Core Curriculum Outcomes Assessment

The Core Curriculum (general education) program learning outcomes tie directly into the academic program and course level outcomes. This process of academic assessment is a team-managed process that assesses area-specific Student Learning Outcomes on an annual basis. The assessment results are quantified and will indicate if the performance targets (benchmarks for success) have been met. Action plans developed and implemented AND improved assessment results are evidence of a process of continuous quality improvement that supports the mission of the College. The Core Curriculum program outcomes and associated course assessment are as follows:

AA/AS – Core Curriculum Assessment

Area A – Essential Skills – Teams: English II and Math II & III

- (A1) **Students will express ideas logically and clearly in standard written English as appropriate for audience and purpose.**
- (A2) **Students will analyze and critically interpret the content, style point-of-view, and perspectives of factual or creative works using suitable terminology.**
- Courses in which outcomes will be assessed:
ENGL 1101, 1102
- (A3) **Students will interpret and apply mathematical information, concepts, and principles embedded in verbal, numerical, graphic, or symbolic representations**
- Courses in which outcome will be assessed:
MATH 1001, 1111, 1113

Area B – Institutional Options – Teams: Communication

- (B1) **Through oral or written communication, students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize information and articulate knowledge on issues relating to culture, society, creative expression, or the human experience.**
- Courses in which outcome will be assessed:
COMM 1100, 1110, 1210

AREA C – Humanities/Fine Arts – Teams: English III, Humanities, and Social Science I

- (C1) **Students will articulate how various forms of thought and expression reflect individual, social, or cultural values and perspectives.**
- Courses in which outcome will be assessed:

ENGL 2111, 2112, 2121, 2122, 2131, 2132, 2133	RELI 1116
ARTS 1113	SPAN 1001
MUSC 1100	THEA 1100
PHIL 2010	

AREA D – Science, Math, and Technology – Teams: Natural Science I & II and MATH III & IV

- **(D1) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of one scientific discipline, along with the application of those concepts through experimentation and observation.**
- Courses in which outcome will be assessed:

ASTR 1010K	GEOL 1121K
BIOL 1010K, 2107K, 2154K	PHSC 1011K
CHEM 1151K, 1211K	PHYS 1111K, 2211K
- **(D2) Students will use appropriate models and quantitative methods to analyze data, explore relationships among variables, and find missing information.**
- Courses we will assess to measure this outcome:
 - MATH 1113, 2200, 2040, 2261

Area E – Social Sciences – Teams: Social Science I, II & III

- **(E1) Students will analyze, from multiple perspectives, the ways that historical, economic, political, social, or cultural relationships develop**
- Courses in which outcome will be assessed:
 - POLS 1101
 - HIST 1111, 1112, 1121, 1122, 2111, 2112
 - PSYC 1101
 - RELI 1116
 - SOCI 1101

Core Overlay Requirements

Goal I (US Perspectives) – Teams: Social Science I & II and English III

- **(CO1) Students will demonstrate an understanding of U.S. society, culture, government, economics, or institutions through contemporary and historical perspectives.**
- Courses in which outcomes will be assessed:
 - HIST 2111, 2112
 - POLS 1101
 - ENGL 2131, 2132, 2133

Goal II (Global Perspectives) – Teams: Social Science I

- **(CO2) Students will demonstrate understanding of political, social, cultural, economic, or institutional aspects of nations outside the U.S.**
- Courses in which outcomes will be assessed:
 - HIST 1111, 1112, 1121, 1122, 2111, 2112

Goal III (Critical Thinking) – Teams: Communication and English II & III

- **(CO3) Students will identify, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information to support ideas or arguments or solve problems.**
- Courses in which outcomes will be assessed:
 - COMM 1100
 - ENGL 1101, 1102, 2111, 2112, 2121, 2122, 2131, 2132

A crosswalk matrix has been created to indicate connections to the Core Curriculum program, the assessment of these general education student learning outcomes, and the institutional level areas. The institutional level areas and the academic divisions have identified the coursework and the outcomes they provide instruction for and at what level it is provided (introduced, reinforced, emphasized).

Georgia Highlands College
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
A.A. and A. S. –Core Curriculum

Core Curriculum (general education) Outcomes	English	Communications	Humanities	Mathematics	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
Students will articulate how various forms of thought and expression reflect individual, social, or cultural values and perspectives.	X					
Students will analyze and critically interpret the content, style point-of-view, and perspectives of factual or creative works using suitable terminology.	X					
Students will interpret and apply mathematical information, concepts, and principles embedded in verbal, numerical, graphic, or symbolic representations				X		
Through oral or written communication, students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize information and articulate knowledge on issues relating to culture, society, creative expression, or the human experience.		X				
Students will articulate how various forms of thought and expression reflect individual, social, or cultural values and perspectives. contemporary and historical perspectives.			X			

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of one scientific discipline, along with the application of those concepts through experimentation and observation.					X	
Students will use appropriate models and quantitative methods to analyze data, explore relationships among variables, and find missing information.				X		
Students will analyze, from multiple perspectives, the ways that historical, economic, political, social, or cultural relationships develop						X
Students will demonstrate an understanding of U.S. society, culture, government, economics, or institutions through contemporary and historical perspectives.	X					X
Students will demonstrate understanding of political, social, cultural, economic, or institutional aspects of nations outside the U.S.						X
Students will identify, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information to support ideas or arguments or solve problems.	X	X				

Comprehensive Program Reviews

The Comprehensive Program Review template was developed as a summative reporting vehicle for academic program review. This reporting vehicle is for use by University System of Georgia (USG) institutions and the system office in order to ensure adherence to Board of Regents Policy 3.6.3 Comprehensive Program Review and to enable consistency in executive level reporting to the Board of Regents, the system as a whole, and external constituents. The Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs requested a task force be formed with representatives from the institutional sectors to design and recommend a reporting template to be used by all USG institutions. The subcommittee on Comprehensive Program Review began its work on July 6, 2015 and completed its charge on June 1, 2016. The taskforce membership was comprised of a cross-section of vice presidents for academic affairs and institutional research personnel, comprehensive program review committee membership reflected the varied sectors of the university system and perspectives concerning academic program assessment. The goal of the reporting vehicle was to provide both standardization of reporting along with institutional flexibility and consideration of such factors as mission, program variability, level of degree and major, student and institutional inputs and outcomes, and academic unit composition.

Consistent with academic program reviews, the new reporting vehicle is a succinct representation of the institution's demonstration that it has assessed an academic program and made decisions about its future within a culture of evidence. Academic program reviews will be used for continuous improvement and the adjustment of programs within an institution's mission, strategic plan, and sector within the university system.

The CPR Reporting Vehicle can be accessed through the Office of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation and Research webpage under Assessment-CPR.

Schedule for GHC Comprehensive Program Reviews

- 2012-2013 – Dental Hygiene A.S., led by the Academic Dean of the Health Sciences Division and the Program Director for Dental Hygiene (coupled with external review)
- 2013-2014 – Human Services A.S., led by the Academic Dean of the Social Sciences, Business, and Education Division and the Program Director for Human Services
- 2014-2015 – Nursing B.S.N., led by the Academic Dean of the Health Sciences Division (coupled with external review)
- 2015-2016 - Nursing A.S.N., led by the Academic Dean of the Health Sciences Division/Program Director for Nursing (coupled with external review)

**Begin Use New Reporting Vehicle Forward:*

- 2016-2017 - Associate of Arts/Associate of Sciences-CORE CURRICULUM, led by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and all Academic Deans –and conducted by an Ad Hoc faculty committee.
- 2017-2018 – Dental Hygiene A.S., led by the Academic Dean of the Health Sciences Division and the Program Director for Dental Hygiene
- 2018-2019 – Human Services A.S., led by the Academic Dean of the Social Sciences, Business, and Education Division and the Program Director for Human Services

2019-2020 – Nursing B.S.N., led by the Academic Dean of the Health Sciences Division

2020-2021- Nursing A.S.N., led by the Academic Dean of the Health Sciences Division/Program Director for Nursing

2021-2022 - Associate of Arts/Associate of Sciences-CORE CURRICULUM, led by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and all Academic Deans—and conducted by an Ad Hoc faculty committee.

2021-2022 – Business Administration-Healthcare Management B.B.A., led by Academic Dean of the Social Sciences and Business Division

2021-2022 – Business Administration-Logistics and Supply Chain Management B.B.A., led by Academic Dean of the Social Sciences and Business Division

Transfer Program Pathway Assessment

In addition to assessing outcomes in the Core Curriculum, GHC assesses learning outcomes and program outcomes in Transfer Degree Pathways as well.

The following is the template to follow for submitting Pathway Assessment information (Phases 1 and 2).

Pathway/Area F Outcomes Assessment Template

PHASE 1

Name of Academic Program (Degree and Pathway):

Contact Person: Academic Dean or Assigned Faculty
Email address

Assessment Cycle: (Ex. 2016-17 Academic Year)

Delivery Method(s) and Location(s): (Ex. all classes are face-to face and offered at Floyd and Cartersville)

College Goal: Effect quality teaching and learning that are focused on academic achievement and personal and professional growth.

Pathway Outcomes:

Ex. 1. Engage in historical inquiry, research, and analysis.

Ex. 2. Demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

Student Learning Outcomes: (these are specific to Area F/Pathway)

Ex. 1. Student will demonstrate knowledge and application of the introductory principles of cellular biology, genetics, ecology, organismal biology and evolution.

Ex. 2. Students will apply knowledge of American constitutional law to criminal scenarios.

Method of Outcome Assessment: (must address each pathway outcome and each student learning outcome-where the assessment takes place)

Performance Measure: (must address each pathway outcome and each student learning outcome)

PHASE 2

Summary of Data Collected (Performance Results):

Use of Results (to make and effect changes to improve student learning):

For each Transfer Degree Pathway, a matrix has been developed. The matrix identifies the courses within which a given outcome is assessed and whether the material/concept is introduced, reinforced and/or emphasized in the coursework. The matrix template can be seen below.

Pathway Student Learning Outcomes Matrix

Learning Outcome- Students will:	Course Number Course Title	Course Number Course Title	Course Number Course Title	Course Number Course Title

I=Introduce; R=Reinforce; E=Emphasize

All pathway crosswalk matrices are published as a supplement to this handbook.

LEARNING OUTCOME COURSE ASSESSMENT LEVEL

Similar to the institutional and program levels, student learning outcomes at the course level identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to acquire by the end

of the course. Some of the learning outcomes should be connected to those for the degree program and/or pathway while others may be very specific to the course such as learning a set of techniques for conducting an experiment.

It is important to distinguish between a course and a class. A course consists of all the classes (sections) being taught; for example, PHED 1010, BUSA 2106, and MATH 1111. A class is one section of a course. This is about course assessment, not class assessment.

Course Grades versus Course Assessment

Course grades do not provide the same insight that a course assessment does. “The assignment of a grade to an individual student provides a summary measure about the student’s performance in the class and, perhaps, tells something about the standards of the teacher. It does not usually convey direct information about which of the course’s goals and objectives for learning have been met or how well they have been met by the student” (Palomba & Banta, *Assessment Essentials*, 1999).

- Grades give a global evaluation but do not provide sufficiently detailed information about which outcomes students are mastering well and which are giving them trouble.
- Course grades alone don’t stimulate faculty discussions about how to improve student learning of particular course outcomes.
- Grades sometimes are based on more than mastery of course content; for example, participation, attendance, bonus points.
- Grading standards often vary widely among different instructors and do not indicate the same degree of mastery of course outcomes.
- Grade inflation (easy tests, generous grading, extra-credit bonuses) sometimes presents a misleading indicator of student mastery of course outcomes.

Grades as Part of Course Assessment

Grades on individual tests, assignments, and projects may be incorporated into the assessment process if they contribute to the focus of course assessment. The focus of course assessment is to determine how well students enrolled in a particular course are learning the content that faculty who teach the course agree that students should learn.

Benefits of Course Assessment

Course assessment benefits students when it leads to improved learning of the course content; the faculty benefit as well. The course assessment process provides one of the few opportunities for faculty to discuss course content with each other and, based on the results of an assessment determine how they can improve student learning in the course. Assessment benefits include the opportunity to:

- Revise the course outcomes to include more higher-order thinking and greater intellectual rigor
- Obtain more consistency in large multi-section courses
- Reduce grade inflation by linking test and course grades to mastery of all outcomes

- Increase contact with adjunct faculty
- Explore active learning strategies and other teaching methods
- Explore other ways of assessing outcomes
- Explore technological enhancements (labs, equipment, CD tutorial, etc.), using the assessment evidence to support a request for increased funding
- Conduct a retreat or workshop for instructors

Moreover, course assessment results will likely be used by a committee assessing a program. “Course-based assessment should be seen as one of many valuable approaches to achieving programmatic assessment, not as an alternative to it” (Palomba & Banta, *Assessment Essentials*, 1999).

Process

The course assessment process is ongoing. Divisions are assessing a portion of its courses each year. Each course will be assessed formally through this process every three years.

A. Planning the Course Assessment (Beginning of the Semester)

ALL faculty members teaching the course or a committee of faculty if it is a large multi-section course should participate in planning the course assessment.

“Phase 1” of the Course Assessment process is completed at the beginning of the assessment cycle and is submitted to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for review. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee communicates with the Division about approval. When concerns arise that prevent approval, the Chair of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee will work directly with the Division Dean and/or Faculty Team Leader to resolve the Committee’s concerns.

B. Implementing/Conducting the Assessment (During the Semester)

Follow the plan designed and approved the previous semester to assess the course learning outcomes.

C. Analyzing the Assessment Results, Discussing How to Improve Student Learning in the Course, and Making Appropriate Improvements (End of the Semester)

“Phase 2” of the Course Assessment process is completed at the end of the assessment cycle and is submitted to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for review. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee communicates with the Division about approval. When concerns arise that prevent approval, the Chair of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee will work directly with the Division Dean and/or Faculty Team Leader to resolve the Committee’s concerns.

After completing a cycle refer back to the previous cycle for analysis and discussion on how the use of results were used. For example, if in fall 2015 the standards were not met and the faculty stated to increase the standard level a new grading rubric should be introduced. At the end of fall 2016, reflect back on the use of the new rubric to see if it increased the standard level or not.

When the course assessment is complete the Office of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation and Research will use the assessment in institutional effectiveness reports and publications.

Changing Approved Learning Assessment Components

When the need arises to make a change to established/approved learning outcomes, method of assessment, and/or the measures of assessment those involved must collaborate and agree to the change. The change is then submitted to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for their review and approval.

Once the change has been approved, it is incorporated in the student learning outcome assessment process.