



Policy Title:	ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT POLICY	Area of Responsibility: VICE PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC & REGISTRAR
Policy Section:	ACADEMIC	
Effective Date:	2023 03 02	Policy No: 1.4.6
Supersedes:	2022 01 13	Page: 1 of 7
Mandatory Review Date:	2028 02 29	Last Review Date: 2023 03 02

1.4.6 ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Preamble

1. St. Clair College confirms assessment practices as an integral component of Outcome- Based Education (OBE).
2. In OBE, assessments play a vital role in both promoting the development of effective learning skills and in validating student achievement of learning outcomes.
3. Effective Assessments Practices serve to:
 - 3.1. Provide appropriate data to determine the degree to which a student is achieving the intended learning outcomes in a course.
 - 3.2. Allow objective decisions regarding promotion of students to higher levels of learning or to the work environment.
 - 3.3. Provide both an evaluation process and an appropriate student feedback mechanism that fosters the development of personal learning strategies and successful academic behaviours.
 - 3.4. Provide appropriate data to adjust the curriculum to improve student learning.
 - 3.5. Reveal specific gaps in student learning that can be used to adjust learning activities and delivery practices.
 - 3.6. Aid in the communication of performance and learning expectations.

Definitions

4. Summative assessment is a formal assessment practice that results in an evaluation of student performance at the end of a unit of study. Summative assessment is high stakes, which means

that the activity carries a high percentage of the student's overall course grade. Summative assessment is used to determine student promotion.

5. Formative assessment is a formal or informal assessment practice that measures student development at a specific point in time. It provides feedback to faculty that is used to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment of learning outcomes. Formative assessment provides feedback to students, allowing them to identify strengths and weaknesses.
6. Authentic assessment is a term that describes any assessment activity that:
 - imitates or recreates expected performances in the workplace.
 - is focused on and requires application of knowledge and multiple skills to complete.
7. Evaluation is a systematic process of determining the value or worth of a student's work or efforts.

Assessment of Essential Employability Skills (EES)

8. Assessment of students for Essential Employability Skills (EES) is a requirement within all post-secondary programs. While it is not a requirement that every individual course assess students for EES, it is required that EES be assessed within the entire collection of courses students take to complete their program.
9. Assessment of EES may be done jointly with Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) in a single assessment activity, or separately with specific EES assessment activities. In either case, the assessment of EES must yield an evaluation that students can recognize separately from the CLO assessment. Students must be able to distinguish portions of an assessment activity that assess EES from portions that assess CLO.

Assessment Plans

10. All courses offered by St. Clair College will contain a complete Assessment Plan. A complete assessment Plan:
 - 10.1. Defines all individual assessment activities to be carried out during the delivery of a course.
 - 10.2. Provides a detailed breakdown of the method to be used to calculate a student's final grade for a course.
 - 10.3. Provides assessment activities for all currently authorized learning outcomes listed in the course outline.

11. The Assessment Plan for each course is documented in the Assessment Section of the Course Outline.
12. The Assessment Plan for a course is designed by the assigned faculty member. Completed Assessment Plans are validated by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance and approved by the Program Chair as part of the course outline approval process.
13. The Assessment Plan for a course will include assessment activities for all course learning outcomes listed in the course outline. An individual Assessment Plan is complete only when all course learning outcomes are subject to assessment activities.
14. The individual assessment activities that comprise an Assessment Plan are considered mandatory. Faculty are expected to follow the Assessment Plan documented in the course outline when delivering the course.
15. All students enrolled in all sections of a course offering are expected to complete the same Assessment Plan as defined in the course outline.
16. Any permanent changes to an Assessment Plan established in a St. Clair College course outline will follow the Course Outline Requirements and Approval Process (St. Clair College policy 1.6.19).
17. Unexpected conditions arising during the delivery of a course, such as snow days, may require that a faculty member make temporary changes to an Assessment Plan. Whether those temporary changes affect an entire cohort, a single section, or an individual student, such changes have no effect on the approved course outline. In order to be fair to all the learners and to avoid an unnecessary complaint or grade appeal from students, the faculty member should ensure that the following requirements are met:
 - 17.1. The faculty member has consulted the affected learners and obtained their feedback with regard to the proposed changes.
 - 17.2. The faculty member should ensure that the revised assessment plan does not hinder the attainment and measurement of any of the currently authorized course learning outcomes and EES.
 - 17.3. The faculty member should ensure that no learners are unfairly penalized with respect to grading through changes in the assessment weights.
 - 17.4. The faculty member should communicate the changes in writing to the affected learners via email, an announcement on College's Learning Management System (LMS) or email within a reasonable time frame prior to the implementation of any such temporary changes to the Assessment Plan.
 - 17.5. The faculty member should notify the School Chair in writing or via email that the temporary changes are being made and provide assurance that all the requirements of

this policy have been met.

18. Situational or operational factors, such as class size or physical space, may necessitate slightly different Assessment Plans for a course delivered simultaneously at different campuses. In such a case, any difference in assessment activities are to be documented in the course outline prior to the start of the course. Such changes will be validated by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance, approved by the appropriate Chair(s), and documented in the course syllabus.
19. The order, frequency (when a range is included on the outline), and timing with which assessment activities are delivered are considered flexible and may be unique to each section and offering of a course based on faculty preference, semester length, and scheduling considerations.
20. The evaluation of a student's final grade:
 - 20.1. is done with strict adherence to the Assessment Plan published in the Course Outline.
 - 20.2. is the responsibility of the faculty member assigned to the course including experiential learning (EL) and work integrated learning (WIL) courses.

Assessment Activities

21. To the extent that it is possible, summative assessment activities will be authentic. Authentic assessment is the preferred type of summative assessment in advanced and higher-level courses.
22. Assessment activities will be built from and mapped to specific course learning outcomes. The type and level of student performance expected to successfully complete assessment activities must match the described level and performance in the specific course learning outcomes.
23. Assessment activities will follow best practice and sound pedagogy.
 - 23.1. Courses of six weeks or more will have a minimum of three summative assessment activities within their Assessment Plan.
 - 23.2. Students will complete assessment activities accounting for at least 30% of their final grade by the midpoint of any course.
 - 23.3. The Assessment Plan for a course will contain a variety of summative assessment methods. Assessment Plans will provide more than a singular method of summative assessment.
 - 23.4. An individual summative assessment activity will not exceed 40% of the student's final grade. Assessment activities within clinical, work placement, project, and capstone courses are excluded from this requirement. It is recommended that "high stakes"

assessment is carefully considered in the assessment plan and more frequent assessment at lower percentage is encouraged.

- 23.5. The Assessment Plan for a course will contain formative assessment activities to the extent that it is possible within the specific discipline and within the context of the course. Formative assessment activities will be “low stakes” assessment having a total weight of no more than 25% of the final grade. It is best practice to include formative assessment activities in course delivery, even if they are not included in the final grade calculation.
- 23.6. Summative assessment activities involving assignments and projects will have appropriate documentation necessary to communicate to students the goals, requirements, standards, and procedures associated with the activity (i.e. instructions, rubrics, grade sheets). Students will receive such documentation prior to beginning the activity.
- 23.7. Summative assessment activities involving assignments or projects of significant weight in the student’s final grade or that span several weeks to completion will have a mechanism to provide feedback to students prior to the final submission of the assignment or project. Appropriate feedback may include any method that allows students to assess the progress and/or quality of their work.
- 23.8. Summative assessment activities involving assignments or projects will use rubrics or grade sheets to provide students with feedback on their performance and/or the quality of their work.
24. Attendance in itself does not constitute an assessment activity. Requirements related to attendance are found in Policy 1.6.12.
25. Any exceptions to the policy outlined in the previous section must be validated by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance and approved by the appropriate chair.

Documenting Assessment Plans

26. The assessment activities within a course’s Assessment Plan will be documented in the Assessment Section of the course outline for each course.
27. Individual assessment activities will be described in the Assessment Plan using the following descriptors:
 - i. Assessment name – A descriptive name assigned to individual assessment activities given in the course.
 - ii. Linked Course Learning Outcomes – A list of the course learning outcomes for which the individual assessment activity is created.
 - iii. Description – A brief description that demonstrates the individual assessment’s suitability for the linked course learning outcomes.

- iv. Linked Essential Employability Skills – A list of the essential employability skills assessed by the individual assessment activity.
 - v. Frequency – The number of instances of an individual assessment activity.
 - vi. Weight – The value of the individual assessment activity as a percentage of the student’s final grade. When similar assessment activities are grouped as a single assessment activity, the total percentage of all the grouped activities is listed.
28. Any individual assessment activity greater than 7% of the student’s final grade will be listed as a single item in the Assessment Plan. When an assessment plan contains a number of similar assessment activities in which each is worth up to 7% of the student’s final grade, those assessments may be grouped and listed as a single item in the Assessment Plan’s documentation.
29. For documentation purposes, a test worth 5% or less of a student’s final grade may be labeled a quiz in the course outline. Tests worth more than 6% to 24% of a student’s final grade will be called a test. Any test worth 25% or more of a student’s final grade and/or which evaluates multiple course learning outcomes (i.e., is cumulative) will be called an exam.
30. The order, frequency, and timing of assessment activities within an Assessment Plan will be documented in the course syllabus for each course.
31. Assessment linked to digital learning resources and assessment tools shall comply with requirements set in the Use of Digital Learning Resources for Instructional and Assessment Purposes policy (St. Clair policy 1.1.19).
32. Instructors may use third-party vendors of digital learning resources to assess student performance so long as this assessment constitutes 25 % or less of the final grade in the course. Values above 25% (to a maximum of 35%) must be validated by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance and approved by the Vice President, Academic & Registrar.

Timely Feedback of Assessments

33. The purposes of assessment outlined in this policy in section 3 will be hindered, or even, prevented, if there is no timely and full feedback to students relating to their performance on each assessment.
34. As a general rule feedback by faculty to individual students on their performance on any separate evaluation should be complete within a reasonable period of time taking into account a variety of situational factors, including the number of students that need to be evaluated for each assessment and the complexity of the evaluation of each student’s performance on any particular assessment provided for in the assessment plan. Often feedback can be instantaneous or within a short period of time owing to the nature of the assessment itself.

35. The feedback to students for each individual assessment that requires specific or personal evaluation by the faculty member should be provided within a period of ten college working days from the completion of the assessment by the student.
 - 35.1. Exceptions to the ten (10) working day timeline may be permitted where the delay in providing the feedback is caused by the extenuating factors over which the professor has no control such as illness of the professor or some other similar factor.
 - 35.2. Where the ten working day timeline will likely be exceeded, the professor and, in appropriate cases, the School Chair should communicate with the students and inform them of the delay and provide them with the anticipated date when the feedback will be provided to the students.
36. The feedback, when provided, should be meaningful and should assist the student in understanding why the performance on the evaluation was rated as it was by the professor. The use of a rubric and additional comments to explain a student's grade or how a student earned marks are examples of meaningful feedback.
37. Students should have access to their overall performance on all assessments on a regular, if not a continuous, basis.
38. The timely and meaningful feedback provided to students by professors should assist the student in identifying how to fully achieve the learning outcomes and EESs of the course and how to improve the student's performance.
39. All assessment marks and final course grades must be posted on LMS for students throughout the semester.