

SUBJECT	Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning
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BACKGROUND

Northern College is committed to providing students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning and receive timely feedback to support further learning and achievement.

The purpose of this policy is to support a consistent approach to the assessment and evaluation practices across Northern College. The learning and progress of the students in each course are evaluated by the course faculty member.

The College, in conjunction with the faculty member, will demonstrate accountability by designing assessments and evaluations that are linked to course learning outcomes and informed by teaching/learning activities. Assessments are communicated in course outlines and provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

The policy and related procedure aim to create self-assessment skills in the College's graduates.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy shall serve as a guide for student assessment and evaluation and applies to all forms of assessment and evaluations in all courses offered by Northern College except where programs and courses are offered with external partners and alternate assessment criteria may apply (i.e., external accreditation, collaborative programs, clinical placement, field placement, etc.).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all methods of course delivery. It provides a coordinated and consistent institutional approach to the evaluation of student learning.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Accommodation:** An instructional or environmental change that allows a student to successfully understand and respond to the regular curriculum. Examples of accommodations include, but not limited to, preferential seating in the classroom, extended time on tests, and oral testing. Accommodations seek to provide "fairness" in the classroom and are determined after assessment of the student by a psychologist or a psychometrist. Prescribed accommodations are made available by the College for a student's use on the basis of their individual diagnosis. It is the student's learning needs that are accommodated, not the learning outcome or standard. Accommodations include retroactive accommodations.

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2. **Assessment:** The process of gathering information about student learning in order to improve the teaching and learning activities and engage the student in self-assessment. As such, assessment is fundamental in shaping the design of teaching and learning strategies. While assessment and evaluation meet a grading function, a significant purpose of assessment should be to ascertain "if" and "how" an individual student is learning, and/or support adjustments to the course learning strategies to enhance student success ([See A-26-PR-1 Procedure, Section I](#)).

3. **Course Learning Objectives/Requirements:** Articulate the desired expected goals (knowledge and skills students should acquire) by the end of a lesson, module, or component of the course.

4. **Evaluation:** Primarily composed of summative activities that assess student achievement of course learning outcomes after learning opportunities are provided. These activities provide evidence of the degree to which the student has met the learning outcomes. These include, but are not limited to, demonstrations, exams, projects, tests, and quizzes ([See A-26-PR-1 Procedure, Section I](#)).

Faculty at Northern College may use either the term Assessment or Evaluation dependent upon the needs of their students and course. The table below highlights some of the key differences between the terms assessment and evaluation as identified at ontariolearn.com

Assessment	Evaluation
Emphasis on the teaching process and progress	Emphasis on the mastery of competencies
Focus on the Faculty Activity or Student Activity	Focus on Student Performance
Methods include Student Critiques, Focus Groups, Interviews, Reflective Practice, Surveys and Reviews	Methods include Test/Quizzes, Semester Projects, Demonstrations or Performances, Exams
Purpose is to improve the teaching and learning process	Purpose is to assign a grade or ranking
Generally Formative	Generally Summative

Source: Adapted from LENS ([League for Innovation](#)): Assessment and Evaluation Modules

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5. Formative and Summative Assessment:

- a. **Formative assessments** are evaluations of someone’s (or the class’s) learning progress during a class. It refers to the gathering of information on student learning during a course to guide improvements in teaching and learning. Formative assessment activities may not contribute substantially to the final evaluation or grade of the student and may not even be assessed for each student. For example, observing by show of hands how many students responded incorrectly can guide further teaching ([See Note in A-26-PR-1 Procedure](#)). Formative assessments work best when used on a regular basis (calendar or lesson plan/unit), and common types include quizzes, games, projects, presentations, and group activities.
- b. **Summative assessments** are evaluations of what someone (or the class) has learned throughout a course. These typically contribute substantially to the final evaluation or grade. They formally capture for the academic record how well students have mastered the course learning outcomes. Summative assessments typically take place at the end of the course or major unit, and commonly include tests, final exams, reports, papers, and end-of-class projects.

6. Retroactive accommodations: Requests for an accommodation that arises after a deadline or the completion of a test, academic milestone, or course. The College has a duty to meaningfully consider all requests for retroactive accommodations, on a case-by-case basis.

7. Vocational Learning Outcomes: Terminal statements that indicate what a student is reliably expected to demonstrate at the end of a course.

GRADING
1. Grading System

The following grades are used:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
A (80-100%)	4	EXCELLENT: outstanding performance
B (70-79%)	3	GOOD: better than average achievement
C (60-69%)	2	SATISFACTORY: achievement sufficient Enable the student to progress in the course
D (50-59%)	1	MARGINAL: minimum acceptable level of achievement

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In some departments, a “C” or “D” may not be considered a passing grade. Students should consult departmental policies, manuals, and course outlines to determine the minimum passing grade for each course.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
F (0-49%)	0	UNSATISFACTORY: Insufficient achievement; must repeat or substitute
TC	Neutral	TRANSFER CREDIT: granted on the basis of previous work covered in another educational institution.
S	Neutral	SUPPLEMENTAL: course is incomplete. (Students should refer to the policy on Supplementals to determine when a Supplemental may be given.)
CR/F	Neutral/0	CREDIT/FAILURE: course is of such a nature that a differential grade of A, B, C, D cannot be assigned. This grade is not included in grade-point average calculation unless the student receives an “F” in which case a grade-point of 0 will be assigned.
CO	Neutral	CONTINUED: course continued in the following semester and grade assigned at that time – not included in grade-point average calculation.
AU	Neutral	Neutral AUDIT: student has enrolled in this course for information only. No grade is assigned.
NG*	Neutral	NO GRADE: for some valid reason (such as illness) a grade is not assigned but credit is given for course. Not included in grade point average calculation.
SC	Neutral	SATISFACTORY COMPLETION
W	Neutral	WITHDRAWN: student has withdrawn from course(s) between the “Final Date for Course Withdrawal – no academic penalties” and the “Final Date for Course Withdrawal – without failure.”

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The Student Record System will understand only the above codes and no other code are to be used.

* A Compassionate (Aegrotat) grade [displayed on transcript as 'NG'] may be offered when a student whose performance over the majority of the course is fully satisfactory but is prevented from writing one or more final examinations for reasons beyond his/her control.

If a student is in this category, the following should occur:

1. The student informs the appropriate faculty member or coordinator as soon as possible.
2. For each course involved, the professor consults with the **Vice President Academic and Student Success/Dean** to determine if a compassionate grade will be offered.

The student has the right to deny the compassionate grade and complete the course requirements at a time mutually agreed upon with the professor.

2. Calculating Grade Point Average

1. The grade point average (GPA) per semester (Term Grade Point Average) is based on the letter grade (A-B-C-D-F) and calculated as follows:

course credit weight x course grade numerical value

= course grade points

total term course grade points ÷ total term course credit weights

= term grade point average

2. The cumulative program grade point average (GPA) is calculated as follows:

total of all course grade points ÷ total of all course credit weights where:

course credit weight is the credit weight assigned to a course, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0

course grade is the numerical value given to a letter grade:

A (80-100%) = 4

B (70-79%) = 3

C (60-69%) = 2

D (50-59%) = 1

F (0-49%) = 0

Neutral grades (TC, S, CR, CO, AU, NG, SC, and W) are not included in the GPA calculation.

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REQUIREMENTS TO GRADUATE

For most programs, in order to graduate, a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 is required, and all required courses must be passed.

Students should consult departmental policies and manuals to determine the specific GPA requirements for their program.

Graduation Designations:

The distinction of Honours is conferred upon a student who attains a cumulative program GPA of 3.25 (or 81.25%) or greater.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Office of the Vice President of Academic and Student Success is responsible for overseeing the full implementation of this policy.

Administration, Staff, Faculty and Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this policy and acting ethically and in accordance with this policy.

Faculty are also responsible for:

1. Clearly defining and communicating to students, in writing, in course outlines, course outline addendums, placement or practicum manuals, program policies and procedures documents, etc. the criteria to be used in assessing and evaluating the students' work for the course for the entire academic semester.
2. Ensuring the assessments/evaluations are aligned with the outcomes, the right tool is being used to shape or measure the learning, and the student can access the information easily, and all information is available in a timely fashion.
3. Ensuring that assessments/evaluations do not unduly disadvantage students by carrying too much weight on any one assessed item or examination.

Students are also responsible for:

1. Keeping track of their academic standing in each course and in the program. Students are also encouraged to seek opportunities to facilitate success by consulting with course professors, accessing advising, attending classes/labs, and by seeking tutoring.

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2. Ensuring that they are compliant with our [Bring Your Own Device \(BYOD\)](#) policy and our [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [Procedure](#).

APPROVED BY PRESIDENT



Dr. Audrey J. Penner



Date

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Northern College wishes to acknowledge the work of Centennial College, Conestoga College, Lambton College, OntarioLearn, University of Ontario Institute of Technology and the University of Waterloo, Eberly Centre (Carnegie Mellon University) for their contributions to the development of this policy.

The definition of Assessment is from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology [Workshop for Northern College on Assessment June 2018](#) .

REFERENCE(S)

Student Assessment and Evaluation Procedure ([See A-26-PR-1 Procedure](#)):

- I. Student Assessment and Evaluation
- II. Grading, Promotion and Requirements to Graduate
- III. Testing, Examination and Supplementals
- IV. Repeated Courses

The [Student Assessment and Evaluation Policy \(A-26\)](#) and [Procedure \(A-26-PR-1\)](#) encompasses the following policies, therefore, declaring them redundant effective August 2016.

- A-8 Evaluation and Tracking of Student Progress
- A-9 Faculty Procedures for Exams
- A-15 Protocol for Assignments, Tests and Exams
- A-17 Repeated Courses
- A-19 Supplementals

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