FLORIDA GATEWAY COLLEGE

Institutional Effectiveness Handbook

Prepared by the
Department of Institutional Effectiveness

Updated July 2025

Table of Contents

Institutional effectiveness at Florida Gateway College

What is institutional effectiveness?

The mission of Florida Gateway College (FGC or the college) is to provide superior instruction, nurture individual development, foster career readiness, and enrich the diverse communities it serves through affordable, quality higher education programs and lifelong learning opportunities. Institutional effectiveness, or IE, is comprised of a set of interrelated processes through which FGC collects data and then uses the evaluation of this data to drive decision-making and institutional improvement. Through IE, FGC can ensure that it is meeting its mission and can monitor its progress toward the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. FGC is accountable to students, faculty and staff, the community, the state, accrediting agencies, and other stakeholders. By monitoring and evaluating processes and activities at all levels of the institution and engaging in data-driven decision-making, FGC ensures that it is effectively meeting the needs of these stakeholders.

IE involves every employee at the college. The Department of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) works with college personnel to manage and improve IE processes. This handbook is designed to provide college employees, particularly those involved in assessment, with an overview of the college's IE processes.

This handbook focuses on the college's core institutional effectiveness and assessment processes, including:

- Academic student learning outcomes assessment
- Administrative support outcomes assessment
- Program review
- Reporting for state, federal, programmatic, and other regulatory bodies
- Student achievement metrics and other key performance indicators
- Survey-based data collection

FGC's IE processes are designed to help the college meet its mission and pursue the goals outlined in the strategic plan. Because high-quality IE processes are essential to institutional performance, accreditation agencies require the college to demonstrate that its IE processes are sufficient for the continued evaluation and improvement of its operations and programs.

FGC has a responsibility as a public institution to demonstrate to students, local communities, and the state of Florida that its educational programs prepare students to work in their chosen careers or to pursue further education. One way in which FGC demonstrates its quality is through adhering to the quality requirements of accrediting bodies. FGC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The SACSCOC Resource Manual outlines expectations for IE processes at accredited institutions. Further information about SACSCOC and the accreditation process can be found on the SACSCOC website.

The college's SACSCOC accreditation statement is as follows:

Florida Gateway College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate and associate degrees. Florida Gateway College also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of Florida Gateway College may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).

In its *Principles of Accreditation* (SACSCOC, 2024), the Commission states that an institution "identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement…" (p. 68). To demonstrate the value of FGC's educational programs, program administrators must regularly assess the extent to which students are learning the knowledge and skills that will help them to be active, productive citizens.

Several programs at the college maintain programmatic accreditation. These include:

- The Nursing, B.S. program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), http://ccneaccreditation.org.
- The Registered Nursing, A.S. program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), www.acenursing.org
- The Physical Therapist Assistant, A.S. program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), www.capteonline.org
- The Paramedic, C.C.C. and Emergency Medical Services, A.S. programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Programs (CAAHEP), www.caahep.org
- The Health Information Technology, A.S. program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM), www.cahiim.org
- The Early Childhood Education, A.S. and B.S. programs are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), www.naeyc.org
- The Automotive Service Management Technology program at Florida Gateway College is accredited by the ASE Education Foundation, https://aseeducationfoundation.org/.

The Department of Institutional Effectiveness works with college personnel to ensure that the IE processes at FGC *exceed* the requirements of these accreditation bodies. IE also collaborates with the campus community to prepare required documents and reports for these accreditation bodies.

The IE website provides information about IE processes at FGC. Links to the college's student achievement metrics and various IE-related handbooks are also available on the website.

Two committees at FGC are tasked with monitoring and improving FGC's IE processes: the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) and the Assessment Committee.

- The IEC initiates and oversees the activities needed to move the institution toward optimal performance and increase the effectiveness of all areas of FGC. Specific areas of responsibility include college-wide planning, resource management, and accreditation compliance.
- The Assessment Committee oversees academic and administrative support assessment processes and advocates for a culture of assessment in all areas of Florida Gateway College.

These processes occur on a fixed timeline, as seen below:

Reporting timeline

Xitracs is the college's reporting system for student learning outcome assessment, academic program reviews, and administrative reporting. It houses performance goals, assessment data, and program analysis for all of FGC's academic and administrative programs, making it one of the most important technologies in use by the college. Xitracs reporting should be done on the following timeline:

Academic programs

These programs run on an October-September cycle for each reporting cycle. Each cycle covers a fall, spring, and summer semester. For example, Fall 2026, Spring 2027, and Summer 2027 would all fall under the 2026-2027 reporting cycle in Xitracs. Program administrators should conduct their Xitracs reporting as follows:

- Student learning outcomes assessment *reporting* is due September 30 of each year for the prior cycle.
- Student learning outcomes assessment *planning* is due October 15 of each year for the following cycle.
- Program reviews are due April 1 of the following reporting year.

For example, the program reporting cycle would look like this:

- **September 30, 2025:** assessment reporting is due for the 2024-2025 academic year.
- **October 15, 2025:** assessment planning is due for the 2025-2026 academic year.
- **April 1, 2027:** program review due for the 2024, 2025, and 2026 academic years.

To help program administrators successfully complete these reports, administrators will meet with IE one-on-one once a semester to review student learning outcomes, assessment methods, results, etc. Faculty program administrators will also meet with IE in two required fall semester seminars to review the assessment process, changes to reporting, and other pertinent information. These should be held in August and December of each year on a faculty duty day.

Administrative programs

Assessment plans for administrative programs follow the fiscal year cycle (July 1 – June 30). Program administrators should conduct their Xitracs reporting as follows:

- Administrative program *planning* is due in Xitracs by August 31 for the following cycle.
- Administrative program *reporting* is due in Xitracs by July 15 of each year for the prior cycle.

In other words, the program reporting cycle would look like this:

- **August 31, 2025:** program plan turned in on Xitracs for the July 2025 - June 2026 fiscal year.
- **July 15, 2025:** program reporting turned in on Xitracs for the July 2024 - June 2025 fiscal year.

To help program administrators successfully complete these reports, administrators will meet with IE one-on-one once a semester to review outcomes, assessment methods, results, etc. Administrative program administrators will also meet with IE in a spring and fall semester seminar to review the assessment process, changes to reporting, and other pertinent information. The first seminar will occur in May as a time for administrators to review their budget requests for the upcoming year and review the current cycle as it draws to a close. The second will occur in September to allow administrators to review program reports as the cycle has just ended and prepare for the upcoming cycle as the program plan will be due.

Institutional effectiveness

IE is responsible for monitoring and reviewing academic and administrative reports. The department sends out reminders, meets with program administrators, and compiles a summary of all program reports each year. This process is as follows:

- Reminders:

    - Emails for the academic program *plan* will be sent out to program administrators by September 15 reminding them that the Xitracs reporting cycle opens on October 1 and that program plans are due by October 15.
    - Emails for the academic program *report* will be sent out to program administrators by August 15 reminding them that the Xitracs reporting cycle closes on September 30 and that the program report is due by that date.
    - Emails for the administrative program *plan* will be sent out to program administrators by July 31 reminding them that the Xitracs reporting cycle opens on July 1 and that program plans are due by August 31.
    - Emails for the administrative program *report* will be sent out to program administrators by June 1 reminding them that the Xitracs reporting cycle closes on July 15 and that the program report is due by that date.
    - IE will also reach out to program administrators in the fall and spring semesters to set up a one-on-one meeting.
- The assessment summary is compiled and shared with the Assessment Committee (AC) by December 15 of each year.
    - The AC will share a list of their concerns based on the assessment summary, to be shared with academic leadership by January 30. Further action will be decided by academic leadership based on these concerns.

What is assessment?

Assessment is a fundamental and necessary component of the college's academic and administrative processes. It is a logical extension of teaching and administrative support that enables faculty and staff to determine whether learning and growth did indeed occur. If assessment results fall short of performance goals, there is an opportunity to thoroughly investigate programs to identify areas in which improvements can be made. Assessment is not merely a mandate from accreditors; rather, assessment is an integral part of academia. In fact, assessment results provide data points that help FGC determine the extent to which its strategic goals are being met.

Assessing **student learning outcomes** is necessary to improve educational programs and serves as a key input to educational planning processes. If students consistently fail to attain a learning outcome in a particular program, that indicates that programmatic changes are needed. Perhaps additional courses should be added to the program that stress this specific learning outcome, or one or more courses should be revised to better teach the knowledge and/or skills associated with the outcome. Without assessment data, program changes would be made blindly and might not target the areas in which improvement was most needed.

Students enroll at Florida Gateway College for many reasons, but all expect to learn the knowledge and skills that they need to improve their lives in some way. Student learning outcome assessment allows FGC to ensure that students are obtaining an education that will open doors wherever they choose to go.

Academic assessment at FGC

FGC recognizes that faculty are subject matter experts in their content area and are thus well-placed to create effective assessments and use assessment information for program improvement. Faculty are encouraged to use already-existing assignments to assess student learning; or, if current assignments are not well-aligned with program learning outcomes, faculty are encouraged to use this as an opportunity to create new, high-quality assignments that integrate with existing course material and align with learning outcomes. To the extent possible, faculty are encouraged to utilize **authentic assessments.**

Authentic assessments are application-focused and require students to use their knowledge and skills to solve realistic problems. Such assessments are excellent indicators of students' ability to use their learning outside the classroom (Mueller, 2016). While FGC staff are available to help faculty navigate the assessment process, student learning outcomes assessment at FGC is a faculty-driven process.

At the program level, student learning outcome assessment helps programs identify opportunities to improve student learning. Changes include, but are not limited to:

- curriculum redesign
- course redesign
- changes in resource allocation
- new technology
- improved advising strategies
- additional staffing

When to assess?

Students can be assessed at any point during their educational program. Since general learning outcomes (GLOs) and program learning outcomes (PLOs) should be taught throughout a student's educational program, assessing students towards the end of their program offers the best chance to assess what students can do upon completion of their educational experience. However, there are good reasons to assess learning outcomes earlier. Some learning outcomes may be taught in a course early in the sequence and not addressed again, particularly in short programs. In such cases, assessment of these learning outcomes early in the program is logical.

Additionally, those students who fail to complete their program of study would not be assessed if PLO assessments were concentrated at the end of the program (Nunley, Bers, & Manning, 2011). Program administrators should consult their program's **curriculum map** to determine where each learning outcome is taught in the program. Then, administrators should identify courses that help students master each learning outcome. Courses that focus on mastery of the learning outcome are good courses in which to assess that learning outcome, regardless of where they occur in the program.

Curriculum maps

Curriculum maps indicate where each learning outcome is assessed throughout a program of study. They also show whether the learning outcome is *introduced, reinforced,* or *mastered* (or *emphasized*). Learning outcome assessment should focus on courses in which the learning outcome is *mastered.* An example curriculum map can be found in Figure 1 below, and a template can be found in Appendix A. Note that curriculum maps are housed in Xitracs, the College's assessment, planning, and accreditation software. PLOs should be assessed in the course(s) in which they are mastered; this should be represented in the curriculum map.

Figure 1. Curriculum map example

Course	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4	PLO5
PSYC 1000	I	I	I	I	I
PSYC 2000	R	R			
PSYC 3000	M	R			R
PSYC 4000			R	R	M
PSYC 4900		M	M	M	

Note. I = introduced, R = reinforced, M = mastered

If a program administrator wanted to assess PLO 1 in the fictitious program in Figure 1, PSYC 3000 would be the ideal time to assess this learning outcome. Similarly, PLOs 2, 3, and 4 should be assessed in PSYC 4900. It is possible to measure several PLOs within a single course. In fact, if evaluation criteria (such as rubrics) are broken up by learning outcome, it is possible to measure several learning outcomes within the same assessment. For example, assume that PSYC 4900 above is a capstone course requiring that students complete their own research project. If the rubric for this project had separate sections for assessing PLO 2, PLO 3, and PLO 4, then this capstone project could be used to assess all three learning outcomes.

What to assess?

FGC's yearly programmatic assessment focuses primarily on student learning outcomes. Assessing these outcomes is necessary, of course, but first we must understand the levels of learning outcomes and how they impact assessment, as these levels of learning outcomes build upon each other to provide a solid program of study for students. These layered outcomes also provide students with a better understanding of what they will be learning and how the skills they will encounter in their chosen program will build upon each other. First, we must understand the overarching concept – student learning outcomes.

These student learning outcomes (SLOs) "clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education" (National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2025). They capture what students should know or be able to do upon completion of their educational program. SLOs are articulated at multiple levels of FGC; these levels appear below and are illustrated in Figure 1.

- **General learning outcomes (GLOs):** At the *institutional level,* FGC's mission is pursued through the 5-year strategic plan. FGC's general learning outcomes (GLOs) are designed to support the mission and strategy of the college by providing students in all associate degree programs with a core foundation of knowledge and skills applicable across a wide variety of topics and careers. The GLOs include communication, critical thinking, cultural awareness, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and scientific reasoning. Attaining these outcomes helps students to develop in their personal and professional lives and contribute meaningfully to their community, thus supporting the mission of FGC.
- **Program learning outcomes (PLOs):** At the *program level,* program learning outcomes (PLOs) articulate what program-specific competencies students should demonstrate upon leaving their educational program. Some of these PLOs align with GLOs, while other PLOs indicate which

field-specific competencies students should master by the time they finish their educational program.

- **Course learning outcomes (CLOs):** At the *course level,* course learning outcomes (CLOs) outline what students will know and be able to do at the end of a course. These CLOs align with PLOs and/or GLOs, as all courses in a program of study should contribute to student mastery of higher-level learning outcomes.

Faculty are directly involved in the assessment of CLOs, PLOs, and GLOs, and their work on these three levels of assessment directly contributes to the evaluation of whether FGC is fulfilling its mission. For more details on these learning outcomes, see the sections below.

Figure 2. Learning outcomes at FGC

Student learning outcomes assessment is facilitated through [Xitracs](), the college's assessment, planning, credentialing, and accreditation software. College employees with assessment responsibilities can access Xitracs training within this handbook.

What are learning outcomes?

Learning outcome statements indicate what the student should know or be able to do at the end of a course or program of study. They are focused on the student and what he or she will learn, not what the instructor will do (Indiana University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, n.d.). For example, "students will be introduced to key ethical frameworks in the medical profession" is not a good learning outcome, as it is focused on what the instructor will introduce to the students rather than what students will *learn*.

Learning outcome statements should include **action verbs.** Verb choice is important, as it indicates the depth to which the student will master the knowledge or skill. This then dictates teaching and assessment practices. For example, if a learning outcome includes "create" as a verb, it would not be appropriate to assess this with a multiple-choice exam. Similarly, if a learning outcome includes "describe" as a verb, this learning outcome should not be assessed with an analytical essay.

Verbs included in learning outcome statements should be **measurable.** Verbs such as *appreciate*, *comprehend, be exposed to, master, be familiar with*, and *know* are vague and difficult to measure. Complex, multi-verb statements can complicate assessment, so it is best to try to limit the number of verbs included in each learning outcome statement to one or two.

For example, consider "Students will be able to describe, create, and evaluate lesson plans." To determine whether students achieved this outcome, it would be necessary to measure three things: Can students describe lesson plans? Can students create lesson plans? Can students evaluate lesson plans? Think carefully about what students should know or be able to do when they complete the program and choose verbs accordingly. For example, if students will need to create lesson plans in their post-graduation careers, then "Students will be able to create lesson plans" is an appropriate learning outcome statement.

Learning outcome statements should be **specific.** Vague learning outcomes are challenging to measure well. Specific learning outcomes, on the other hand, are easy to assess. For example, consider this learning outcome: "Students will be able to use accounting software." It is not clear from this outcome what exactly students will be able to do with accounting software when they complete the program. Compare this to "Students will be able to use accounting software to report key financial metrics to stakeholders." It would be much easier to assess whether students had achieved this learning outcome. As a rule of thumb, if it cannot quickly be determined how to assess a learning outcome, it is too vague.

All program learning outcomes must be assessed. Thus, if a program has 30 learning outcomes, all 30 learning outcomes will need to be assessed. Three to six learning outcomes per program is generally sufficient (Suskie, 2018). To ensure that a program doesn't have too many learning outcomes, program administrators should focus on the most important student learning outcomes. What knowledge and skills are most crucial for students to be able to succeed in their career, life, or further education?

Course learning outcomes (CLOs)

Course learning outcomes, or CLOs, articulate what students should know or be able to do by the end of a course. These CLOs should be listed in course syllabi so that students know what to expect in the course. CLOs should relate to course materials, including readings, presentations, exams, assignments, projects, and other learning opportunities.

CLOs should be specific enough to give the student an idea of what they will achieve throughout the course, but not so specific that they need to be updated each time an assignment or reading is slightly modified (University of Rhode Island, n.d.). For example, "Students will write a marketing plan for a product or service at a small nonprofit organization" is too specific, as a slight assignment change would require revising the CLO. "Students will write a marketing plan" is specific enough that the student knows what to expect, but general enough that the assignment can be modified slightly without requiring the CLO to be changed.

CLOs should focus on what the *student* knows and is able to do at the end of the course, not what the instructor will cover in the course. For example, "students will practice creating cash flow statements" is not a CLO. "Students will be able to create cash flow statements," however, is a CLO.

Courses that are a part of a specific program of study should have CLOs that align with PLOs. Similarly, courses that are part of the A.A. program, and thus part of the general education program, should have CLOs that align with one or more of the GLOs. This alignment ensures that students receive a coherent learning experience in which courses build program-level competencies.

Faculty are not required to complete any reporting related to CLOs. However, CLOs guide course pedagogy and should each be directly assessed through an activity that students complete during the course. The assessment module in Xitracs can be used by faculty to organize CLO-level assessments.

General learning outcomes (GLOs)

General learning outcomes, or GLOs, are the learning outcomes that all students completing an associate in arts (A.A.), an associate in science (A.S.), or an associate of applied science (A.A.S.) degree are expected to achieve prior to earning their degree. The Florida Department of Education requires that students complete 15 hours of general education (for A.S. and A.A.S. degrees) and 36 hours of general education (for A.A. degrees) across five subject areas: communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. Throughout the course of their degree program, students must take at least one course in each of these areas. FGC's GLOs build on these requirements to ensure that students will be prepared for their career and/or further education through their achievement of these essential competencies. These GLOs are defined below:

- **Communication**: Students will effectively communicate through oral or written skills.
- **Critical thinking:** Students will logically evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information.
- **Cultural awareness:** Students will explain how aspects of culture relate to the human experience.
- **Information literacy:** Students will use information effectively and ethically.
- **Quantitative reasoning**: Students will apply mathematical concepts and reasoning to draw valid conclusions.
- **Scientific reasoning**: Students will apply empirical evidence to evaluate natural phenomena.

A GLO workgroup has been formed as of Summer 2025 to advise departments and instructors in the revision of GLO course assignments and analysis of data collected from these assignments. As GLO representatives, faculty will serve as the primary liaison between instructors collecting data for their assigned GLO and play a crucial role in facilitating analysis of data. This workgroup is headed by the Director of Curriculum Development and the Director of Institutional Research & Assessment.

The College is preparing to restructure GLO assessment, which will take effect once the 2023-2024 to 2025-2026 GLO cycle is complete.

Currently, the following courses are included in GLO assessment:

- **Communication:** ENC 1101; SPC 2608
- **Critical Thinking:** PHI 2600; PHI 2020; ENC 1101; SPC 2608; ECO 2013; ECO 2023; STA 2023; MGF 1106; PSY 2012
- **Cultural Awareness:** AMH 2010; AMH 2020; ARH 1000; ARH 2051; HUM 2020; HUM 2551; MUL 1010; THE 2000
- **Informational Literacy:** Library Skills Assessment (no associated course); ENC 1102; SLS 2370

- **Quantitative Reasoning:** MAC 1105; MGF 1106
- **Scientific Reasoning:** BSC 2010; BSC 2085; CHM 2045; PHY 1020; GLY 1001

These courses are *not* the only courses in the A.A., A.S., and A.A.S. programs that develop the GLOs. In fact, the competencies measured by the GLOs are developed throughout all associate degree programs. The courses in the GLO assessment process were chosen because they are high-enrollment courses completed by many associate-degree-seeking students, thus providing opportunities to assess most associate degree seekers at FGC.

GLO assessment occurs annually. Figure 4 outlines important items, accountabilities, and deadlines for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Figure 4. GLO assessment calendar

Item	Responsibility	Deadline
Submit 2024-2025 assessment report	GLO team leaders	September 30, 2025
GLO assessment academic year planning meeting	GLO team leaders and associated faculty	August-September 2025
Complete 2025-2026 assessment plan in Xitracs	GLO team leaders	October 15, 2025
Midyear GLO assessment check-in with IE	Director of IR & Assessment	December 10, 2025
End-of-year GLO assessment check-in with IE	Director of IR & Assessment	May 04, 2026
GLO team meetings to discuss results with IE	GLO team leaders & Director of IR & Assessment	August 12, 2026
Complete 2025-2026 assessment report in Xitracs	GLO team leaders	September 30, 2026
Integrated LO assessment report submitted to Assessment Committee	Director of IR & Assessment	December 15, 2026
Assessment report is reviewed; concerns are sent to leadership	Assessment Committee	January 30, 2027

These yearly GLO assessment reports should be completed in the “programs” module in Xitracs. Each GLO report will be reviewed by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment using the rubric provided in Appendix B (note that this rubric is also available in Xitracs). The report may also be reviewed by the Dean of Academic Affairs. Revisions may be required of the report before it is considered complete.

Program learning outcomes (PLOs)

FGC requires that each degree and certificate program engage in program learning outcome, or PLO, assessment. This occurs annually.

Each academic program at FGC has defined PLOs that were developed by faculty to represent the most important competencies for students completing the program. These are things that a student should know or be able to do by the end of the program. Faculty within each program are responsible for determining PLOs, although PLOs must be aligned with Florida CTE Curriculum Frameworks as well as any state or programmatic accreditor requirements. Faculty are encouraged to review these PLOs on a regular basis, in conjunction with the program's advisory committee to ensure that they are aligned with student and workforce needs.

Figure 5 outlines important items, accountabilities, and deadlines for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Figure 5. PLO assessment calendar 2025-2026

Item	Responsibility	Deadline
Submit 2024-2025 assessment report	Program administrator	September 30, 2025
Upcoming academic year planning meeting (with IE)	IE	August-September 2025
Complete 2025-2026 assessment plan in Xitracs	Program administrator	October 15, 2025
Fall PLO assessment check-in with IE	Assoc. Dean IE & Libraries *or* Director of Institutional Research & Assessment	December 10, 2025
Spring PLO assessment check-in with IE	Assoc. Dean IE & Libraries *or* Director of Institutional Research & Assessment	May 04, 2026
Program meetings to discuss assessment results with IE	Program faculty (led by program administrator)	August 12, 2026
Complete 2025-2026 assessment report in Xitracs and submit report PDF to IE	Program administrator	September 30, 2026
Assessment compiled and sent to Assessment Committee	Assoc. Dean IE & Libraries *or* Director of Institutional Research & Assessment	December 15, 2026
Assessment reviewed and concerns identified	Assessment Committee	January 30, 2027

When writing PLOs, faculty are encouraged to use measurable action verbs (for example, *analyze, create, evaluate, write, compare*) and avoid non-measurable verbs such as *appreciate, comprehend,* and *know*. Faculty are also encouraged to be as specific as possible with their PLOs, as specific PLOs are easier to measure and serve as a useful framework for structuring the program curriculum.

The following are examples of well-structured PLOs:

- Students will produce digital illustrations using industry standard graphics software. (Digital Media and Design, A.S.)
- Students will demonstrate their ability to create positive family-teacher partnerships. (Early Childhood Education, A.S.)

- Students will demonstrate the ability to make groove welds with FCAW on plate in the vertical (3G) and overhead (4G) positions that can pass a specified standard or destructive test to determine soundness of weld. (Welding Technology, O.C.)

PLO assessment reports should be completed in the "Programs" module in Xitracs. Each PLO report will be reviewed by the program administrator's supervisor. The report will also be reviewed by the Director of Institutional Research & Assessment. Revisions may be required of the report before it is considered complete.

Assessing GLOs and PLOs

Faculty are encouraged to identify assignments that they are currently using in their courses to assess student achievement of PLOs and GLOs. Assessment data can be divided into two major categories: direct assessment and indirect assessment. **Direct assessments** *do* directly measure students' knowledge and skills. Faculty and program coordinators are probably quite comfortable with these kinds of assessments, as they are often administered as course assignments or used to award professional licenses and certifications. Common direct assessments, and the pros and cons of their use, can be found in Table 5.

Indirect assessments *do not* directly measure students' knowledge and skills. Common types of indirect assessments include grades, retention and graduation rates, job placement rates, student and alumni satisfaction surveys, and student self-ratings of knowledge and skills (Suskie, 2018). Indirect assessments can be used to *supplement* but not replace direct assessment methods.

Figure 6. Direct assessment types and their associated pros and cons

Assessment	Description	Pros	Cons
Locally developed test	• Test developed to assess course content, with questions aligned to LOs of interest	• Easy to grade • Can standardize across sections of course	• May not capture breadth and depth of student learning • Need multiple questions per LO to help ensure reliability and validity
Writing or presentation evaluated with a rubric	• Student-developed essay/paper or presentation on program-relevant topic	• Gives students opportunity to demonstrate content understanding, along with communication and critical thinking skills • Customizable to almost any course or program	• Requires good rubric aligned with LOs to score objectively • Grading can be time-consuming
Student portfolio	• Compilation of student's work throughout program, usually with student reflections on work	• Can examine student growth over time • Inclusive of all program LOs • Encourages reflection on learning	• Requires good rubric aligned with LOs to score objectively • Grading can be time-consuming • Electronic portfolios require portfolio management software

Creative projects or products	• Creative project or product (painting, program, website, etc.) that student creates	• Give students opportunity choose best way to demonstrate their knowledge and skills • Authentic assessment	• Requires good rubric aligned with LOs to score objectively • Grading can be time-consuming • Students may focus on aesthetics rather than content
Skills demonstration	• Students complete tasks requiring program-relevant skills, which are evaluated by the instructor	• Evaluates the skills students have learned in the program • Highly authentic assessment	• Requires good rubric aligned with LOs to score objectively • Can be time-consuming to implement within courses or programs
Performance evaluation from field/internship/clinical supervisor	• Performance evaluation completed by supervisor in student's field, internship, or clinical experience	• Evaluates student's career-relevant skills • Highly authentic assessment	• Requires evaluation form aligned with LOs and clear instructions for supervisor • Not all supervisors will make accurate evaluations • May not be possible in programs that aren't aligned with specific careers
Capstone projects	• Project completed at end of program utilizing skills student has learned throughout program	• Inclusive of all program LOs • Allows student to demonstrate depth of knowledge and skills • Can be authentic assessments	• Including a capstone project may require an additional course in the program • Requires good rubric aligned with LOs to score objectively • Time-consuming to evaluate
Licensing or certification exams	• Exam developed by licensing body to award professional license or certification	• Easy to score • Can compare pass rates with other institutions	• May not be possible to align scores with LOs • May not capture all knowledge and skills of interest

Note. Sources include Suskie (2018)

Using Xitracs effectively

The information below is intended to act as a guide for program administrators to learn to use Xitracs. It is divided into academic programs and administrative programs, as those processes are slightly different. Program administrators should use this section as a tool when working on their yearly Xitracs program reporting and planning. For further information and support, program administrators should contact the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment.

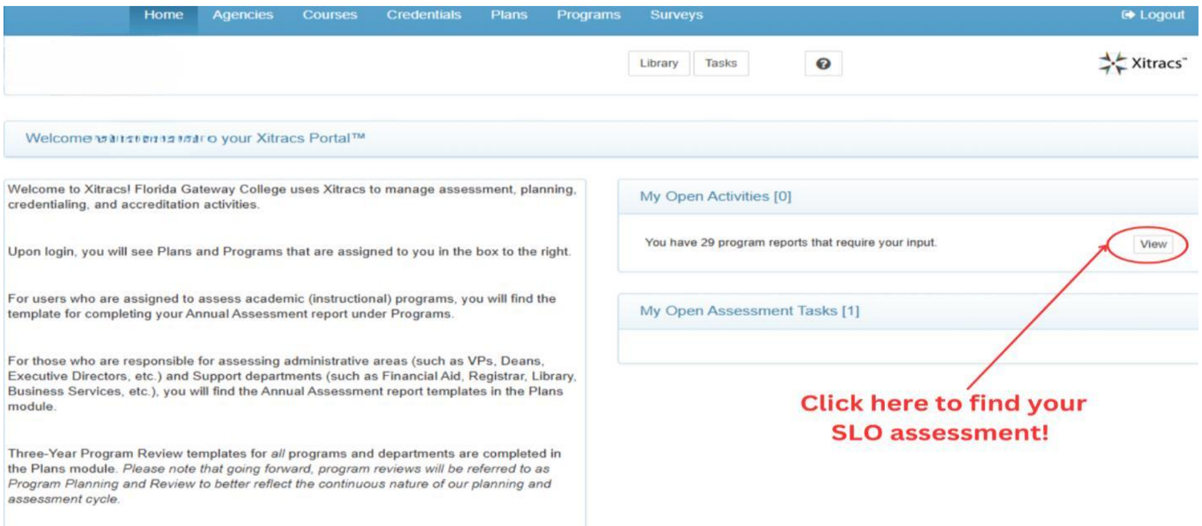
Academic programs

Getting started

Faculty should begin by logging in to Xitracs. This link should have been provided to faculty when they became program administrators and were given access to Xitracs, but it can also be accessed at xitracs.fgc.edu/portal.htm using their SSO information. For more information on how to access Xitracs, faculty should watch the video below.

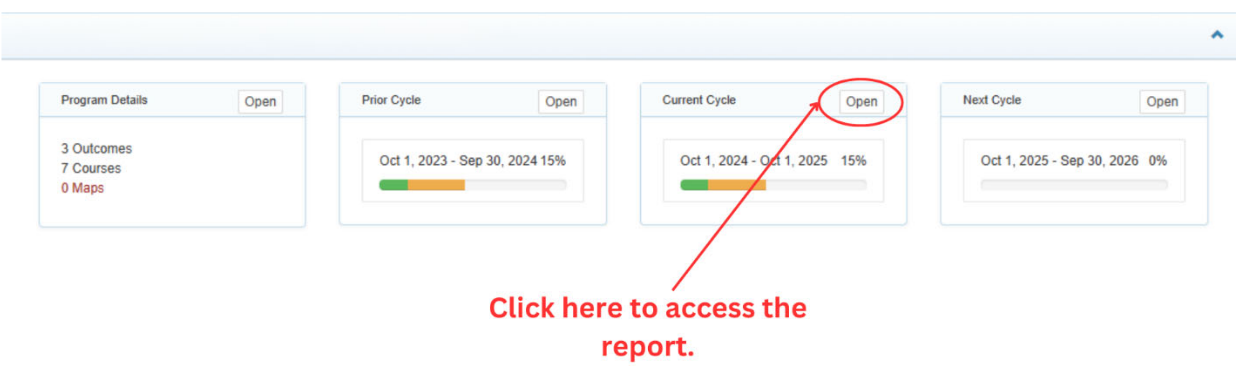
After logging in, faculty should see the Home page as it appears below in Figure 7. They should then select “View” under “My Open Activities” to see their program reporting cycles.

Figure 7. Xitracs home page



After selecting “View,” faculty will then have the option of selecting from their program details, the prior year’s cycle, the current reporting cycle, and the future cycle. Faculty may only access these three cycles; older cycles are locked in Xitracs and can only be accessed and edited by IE. To get started, faculty program administrators should select the appropriate cycle and click “open.” See Figure 8 below.

Figure 8. Opening a reporting cycle in Xitracs



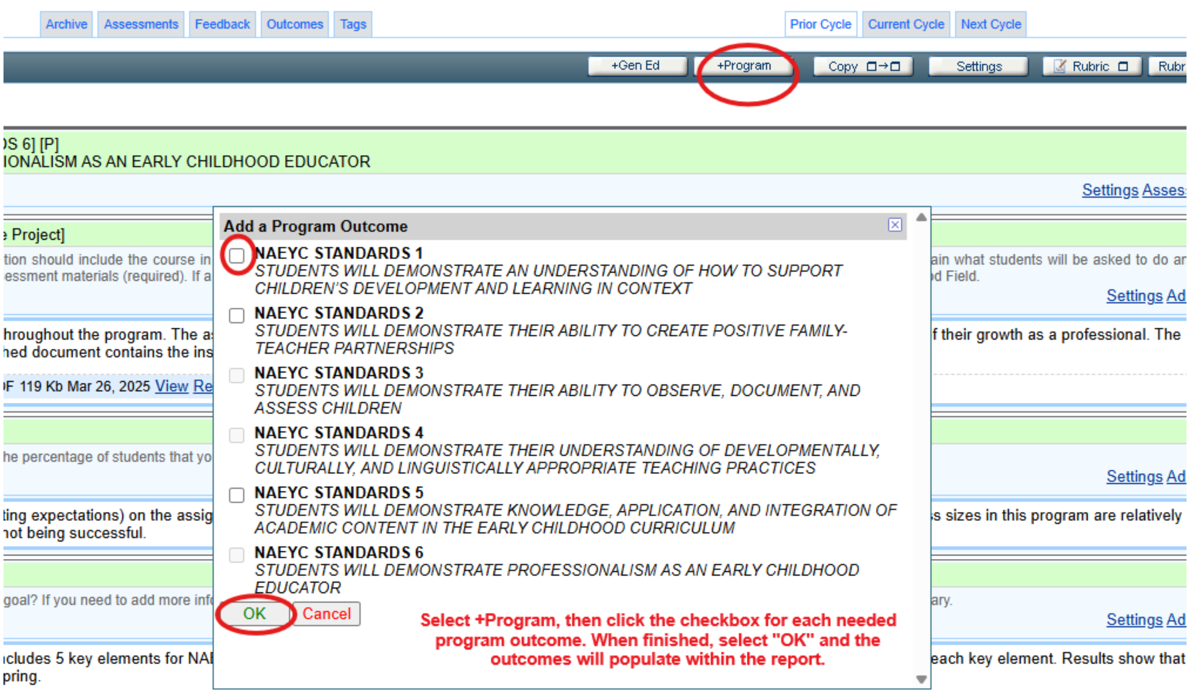
Once a program administrator has accessed the appropriate cycle, they can either create their assessment plan or complete their assessment reporting depending on their needs. Faculty should remember that their yearly program assessment *plan* is due no later than October 15 of that year, while their yearly assessment *report* is due no later than September 30 following an academic cycle (Fall, Spring, Summer).

Creating a reporting plan

Step 1: Adding student learning outcomes (SLOs)

Program administrators should begin by clicking “+Program” to add all student learning outcomes, as seen in Figure 9 below. All outcomes must be assessed every year, so faculty must be sure to add them all. These outcomes are stored within Xitracs as they are given to IE, and program administrators do not have the ability to change PLOs. Program administrators who wish to update or otherwise correct an SLO should contact the Department of Institutional Effectiveness in order to do so.

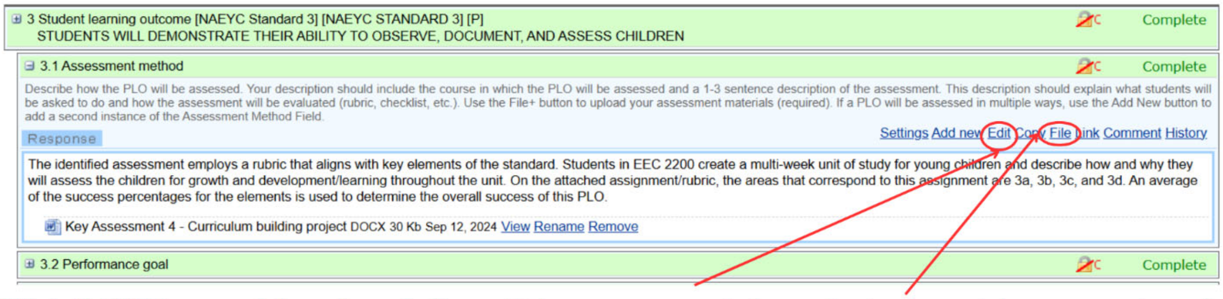
Figure 9. Adding outcomes



Step 2: Creating the assessment method

The second part of creating a program assessment plan is to describe how each SLO will be assessed. Under “Assessment Method” in Xitracs, program administrators should provide a description that includes the course in which the PLO will be assessed and a 2-4 sentence description of the assessment. This description explains what students will be asked to do and how the assessment will be evaluated (for example, a rubric, checklist, etc.). An example assessment method section can be found in Figure 10, below.

Figure 10. Adding assessment method and documentation



Click "Edit" to provide a description of the assessment, how student work is assessed, and how it fits the SLO. Click "File" to add documentation.

Determining signature assessments

GLO and PLO assessment processes at FGC utilize **signature assessments**. Signature assessments are designed to assess students across multiple courses with a common assessment; they are meant to measure student achievement of the program or general learning outcomes.

A signature assessment:

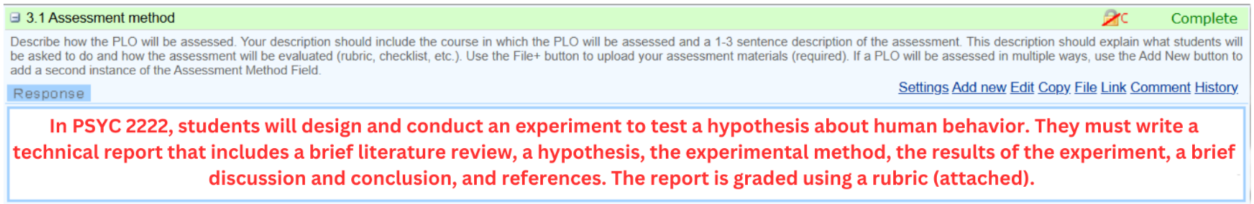
- Is intentionally designed to measure one or more learning outcomes (a good signature assessment can measure multiple PLOs)
- Is realistic and applicable to real-world situations
- Requires students to use higher-order thinking skills (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
- Is something that a student could show to a potential employer to demonstrate their knowledge and skills
- Makes up at least 10% of the final course grade
- Has an associated scoring guide (rubric, checklist, or similar)
- Is used in all sections of a course

Some examples of signature assessments in use at FGC include:

- **Criminal Justice Technology, A.S.:** A case project in which students are given a criminal complaint and go through the states of the investigative process. Students collaborate in pairs to decide the appropriate steps needed to effectively prepare the case to be prosecuted.
- **Registered Nursing, A.S.:** An evaluation of students' performance in a clinical setting. The evaluation uses PLOs as a framework for evaluating students' knowledge and skills.
- **Law Enforcement, O.C.:** A driving test in which students must demonstrate proficiency in various driving scenarios, including evasive maneuvering, emergency braking, and slide recovery.
- **HUM2020/Cultural Awareness GLO:** An essay in which students relate their personal values to specific works of art using various types of criticism.

Documentation of these assessments is necessary. Program administrators should include copies of these assessments and their evaluation tool. This can be done by using the "File" button within the assessment methods section to upload assessment materials. If a PLO will be assessed in multiple ways, program administrators should use the "Add New" button to add a second instance of the assessment method field. An example of an assessment method is available in Figure 11, below.

Figure 11. Example of an assessment method


3.1 Assessment method Complete

Describe how the PLO will be assessed. Your description should include the course in which the PLO will be assessed and a 1-3 sentence description of the assessment. This description should explain what students will be asked to do and how the assessment will be evaluated (rubric, checklist, etc.). Use the File+ button to upload your assessment materials (required). If a PLO will be assessed in multiple ways, use the Add New button to add a second instance of the Assessment Method Field.

Response

Settings Add new Edit Copy File Link Comment History

In PSYC 2222, students will design and conduct an experiment to test a hypothesis about human behavior. They must write a technical report that includes a brief literature review, a hypothesis, the experimental method, the results of the experiment, a brief discussion and conclusion, and references. The report is graded using a rubric (attached).

Step 3: Determine the performance goal

The performance goal for each SLO must be determined as the final part of an assessment plan. In this section, program administrators should include the performance goal for the assessment and the percentage of students that are expected to meet the goal. Faculty must be able to explain in 1-2 sentences why the performance goal was selected. See below for information on determining a performance goal.

How to determine a performance goal

Setting performance goals helps faculty identify areas in which students are struggling. There are several ways to identify appropriate performance goals (Suskie, 2018):

- **Create a local standard based on faculty consensus regarding what "acceptable" performance on the assessment looks like.** For example, English faculty may determine that a score of "3" on the argument development section of an essay rubric indicates an acceptable level of critical thinking. According to Suskie (2018), a good way to identify what "acceptable" performance looks like is to decide what level of performance must be achieved for an instructor to feel as though students have had a successful learning experience.
- **Use external standards to determine what level of competency students should demonstrate**. For example, nursing faculty could identify current passing standards for the NCLEX exam to set standards for student NCLEX exam performance. Note, however, that it may be difficult to align external standards (such as required exam scores) with program learning outcomes.
- **Use internal or external peer groups to identify appropriate levels of performance.** As an example of an internal peer group, math faculty could use student performance in traditional sections of a course to identify expected levels of performance in online sections of the same course. As an example of an external peer group, corrections faculty could consult with faculty at other institutions to determine what percentage of students in the corrections program at these institutions can successfully perform key defensive tactics at the end of their program.
- **Look at historical trends to evaluate how students performed in the past and use this to set standards for student performance.** For example, if over the past 5 years an average of 60% of students in the welding certificate program were able to successfully cut materials using oxyfuel cutting equipment, expecting 90% of students to perform this task successfully might be unrealistic in the near term.

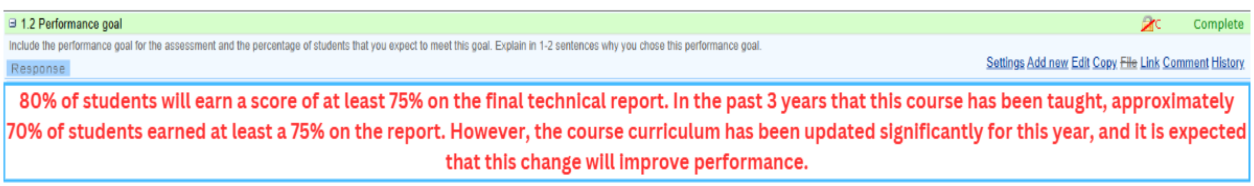
It is important to set *realistic* goals. Not all students will perform well in a program, and there will always be opportunities to improve programs through curricular and pedagogical changes. On the other hand, setting goals too low risks graduating students who are unprepared for the workforce or further education. Remember, the goal of student learning outcomes assessment is to improve student learning. Challenging but realistic performance goals help faculty identify areas in which course and program changes are needed. As student performance improves over time, performance goals can be adjusted accordingly.

Below are some examples of good performance goals being used in FGC programs. Note that they include analysis and/or reflection by the program administrator as to why these goals are set at these percentages. This reflection and analysis is an indication that the program's learning outcomes and assessment methods have been thoughtfully selected and monitored.

- **Nursing, B.S.:** "80% of students will obtain at least an 85% on the laboratory evaluation tool."
  - Analysis of this goal would indicate that since more than 80% of the students scored above average in this PLO during a reporting cycle, the benchmark should be increased to 85%.
- **Video Game Design, C.C.C.:** "75% of the students will score in the "Meets Expectations" level, or higher, on all five categories of the rubric being used to score the assessment."
  - The expectation of 75% is based upon the previous four years of experience and the average of the pass/fail rate of students in those four years.
- **Corrections, O.C.:** "85% of students will score at least 80% on the end-of-course multiple choice exam."
  - A score of 80% is the chosen passing score, pursuant to subsection 11B-35.001(9), F.A.C. for all Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission approved Basic Recruit Training Program end-of-course examinations.

See the example below in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Example of a performance goal



Compiling academic assessment reporting

At the end of each academic year, the program faculty reports on the results and planned actions of the student learning outcomes assessment outlined in the assessment plan within Xitracs. Both full- and part-time faculty within each area (program or GLO) should review assessment results as a group. This collaborative review is critical for determining needed actions and completing the analysis and reflection section of the report, both of which are discussed below. Program administrators and GLO team leaders are responsible for integrating assessment information provided by faculty into a single, coherent report.

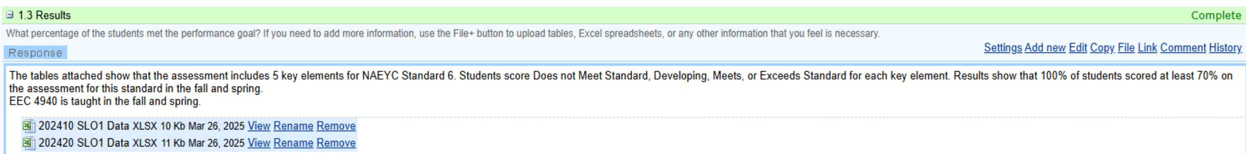
They should then complete the overall analysis and reflection section found in the assessment report in Xitracs. The final report is due on September 30 of each year.

Step 1: Compiling assessment results

For each assessment, faculty must indicate **what percentage of students met the performance goal, and whether the performance goal was achieved.** This percentage should be calculated over the fall, spring, and summer semesters of the reporting cycle and must be completed by September 30.

Faculty are encouraged to go beyond this and break down results in more detail (for example, by student groups, by course modality, by rubric category, etc.). This additional detail may be useful for faculty in order to better analyze performance results and determine what these results mean for programs and/or courses. This additional information, if provided, should be uploaded as a file to Xitracs within the **results** section for a given student learning outcome. Program administrators can use the "File+" button to upload tables, Excel spreadsheets, or any other information that supports their assessment results. See Figure 13 below.

Figure 13. Assessment results



For example, if a rubric or similar evaluation instrument is used to evaluate an assessment, program administrators can report the number and percentage of students in each rubric category. Figure 14 illustrates one way in which rubric results can be reported. As was done in Figure 14, it may be helpful to include a summary column showing the number and percentage of students who achieved the targeted level of performance. If there are multiple course modalities (for example, online and traditional), consider breaking down results by modality.

Figure 14. Example rubric reporting table

Rubric section	4 (mastery)		3 (competent)		2 (developing)		1 (needs work)		Total 3 or higher	
	Traditional	Online	Traditional	Online	Traditional	Online	Traditional	Online	Traditional	Online
Identification of ethical issues	5 (29%)	3 (17%)	8 (47%)	7 (39%)	3 (18%)	5 (28%)	1 (6%)	3 (17%)	13 (76%)	10 (56%)
Stakeholder perspectives	6 (35%)	5 (28%)	8 (47%)	4 (22%)	2 (12%)	3 (17%)	1 (6%)	6 (33%)	14 (82%)	9 (50%)
Connection to ethical frameworks	2 (12%)	1 (6%)	5 (29%)	3 (17%)	8 (47%)	9 (50%)	2 (12%)	5 (28%)	7 (41%)	4 (22%)
Evaluation of consequences	6 (35%)	6 (33%)	10 (59%)	8 (44%)	1 (6%)	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	16 (94%)	14 (78%)

Many programs utilize evaluation forms to capture student performance in a simulation, clinical, or internship experience. These forms are often broken down into categories that are aligned with PLOs. When reporting results of these practical, hands-on experiences, be sure to present results by PLO, rather than for the evaluation as a whole. As an example, Figure 15 includes the results by PLO for a clinical evaluation instrument.

Figure 15. Example PLO reporting table for clinical evaluation

PLO #	PLO	# assessed	% meeting 80% standard
1	Knowledge	25	87%
2	Leadership	25	91%
3	Inquiry	25	82%
4	Service	25	86%

Graphs can also be very useful, especially when comparing performance across course modalities. The figures below provide several examples of graphs that can be used to present results, although these are not inclusive of all graphs that could be used for results presentation.

Figure 16. Course modality comparison graph

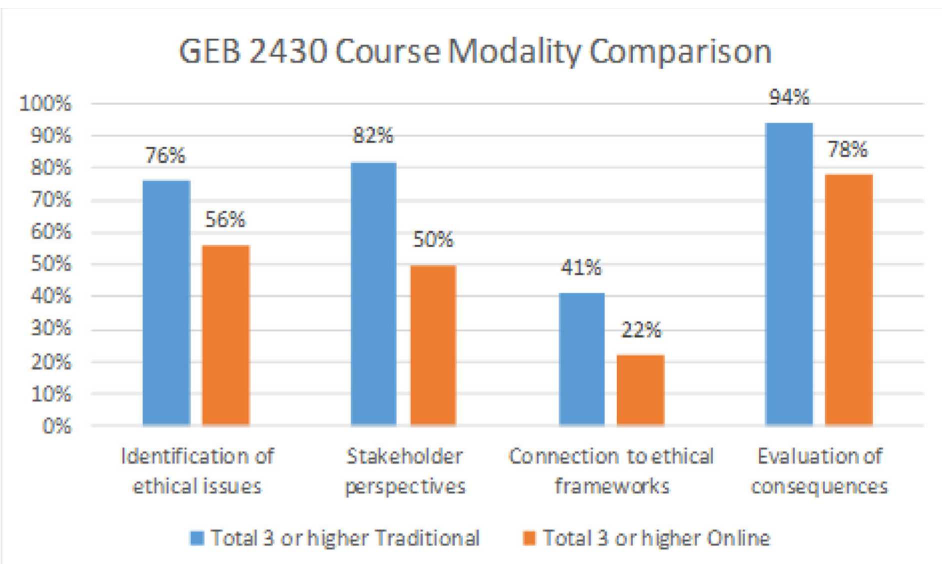


Figure 17. Fall to spring PLO achievement comparison graph

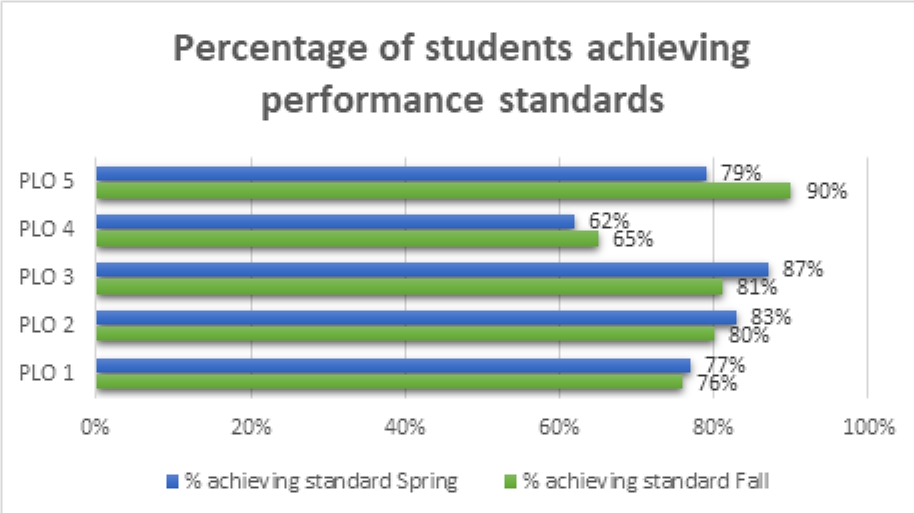
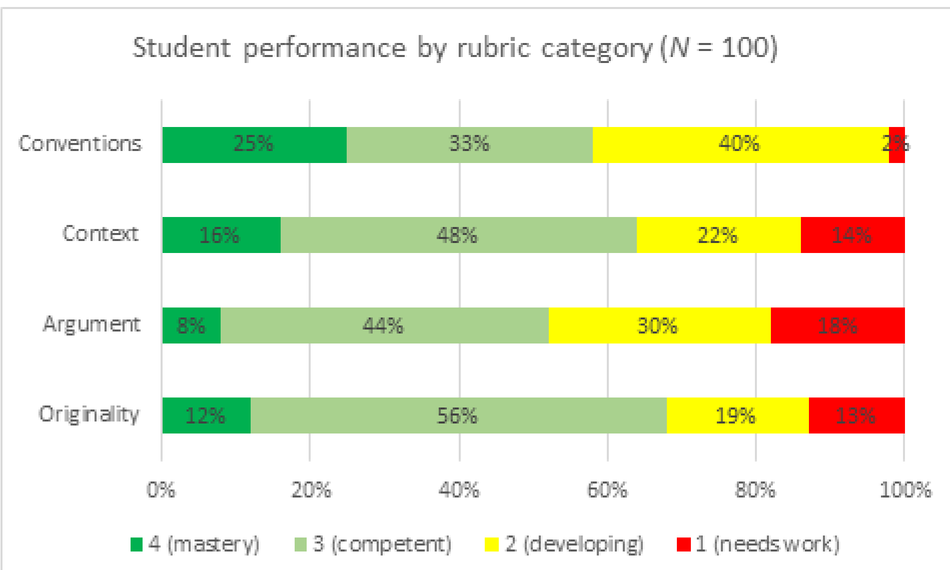


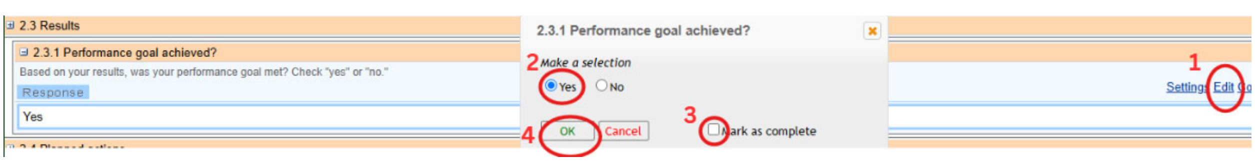
Figure 18. Performance by rubric category graph



Step 2: Reviewing the performance goal

This section is simple! Program administrators should review the results for each SLO and determine if the performance goal was met based on those results. Then, faculty should check yes or no based on if the performance goal was met. See Figure 19 below for an example.

Figure 19. Performance goal met



Step 3: Determining planned actions

Based on assessment results, the program administrators or team leaders should explain what actions will be taken to improve student performance. A specific action must be identified, along with the person(s) responsible for completing the action, a timeline for the action, and a plan for reassessing the effect of the change. A planned action is required if a performance goal is not met. The list below (adapted from the University of Central Florida, 2008) identifies changes that can be made based on assessment results.

Note that the use of results should focus primarily on *curriculum changes.* Assessment plan modifications should be made only if there are clear problems with the approach currently being used (for example, it doesn't adequately measure student achievement of the learning objective). *Do not* change the assessment just because students are performing poorly, as this could indicate a curriculum issue rather than an assessment issue. These **planned actions** must be specific; continuing to monitor student performance does not count as an action. A planned action is *required* if a performance goal is not met.

Potential changes include:

- Changes to curriculum
    - Changes in teaching practices
    - Revision of prerequisite courses
    - Changes to program course sequences
    - Changes to course content
    - Addition of course(s)
    - Removal of course(s)
- Changes to academic processes
    - Changes to course scheduling/frequency with which course is offered
    - Changes to course technology
    - Personnel changes
    - Additional training for instructors
- Changes to assessment plan
    - Revise learning outcome statements
    - Revise assessment(s)
    - Collect additional data

Once clear actions are identified for improving student learning, faculty should create a plan for implementing these changes and assessing the effect of these changes. A change is not an improvement unless it actually improves student learning. It is possible that a change to a course or program, despite being well-intentioned, will not improve student learning. In the assessment report, faculty should identify:

- Who will be responsible for implementing the planned change
- When the planned change will be implemented
- How the effect of the planned change will be assessed
    - Be specific. What tool(s) will be used to evaluate whether student learning has improved? Over what timeframe will this evaluation occur?

A planned action is *required* if the performance goal is not met. If it is met, planned action is optional. See Figure 20 below for an example of a planned action.

Figure 20. Planned action

2.4 Planned actions

Explain what you will do to improve student performance based on the results of this assessment. Be specific! Include what action will be taken, who is responsible, a timeline, and a plan for re-assessing the effect of the change. A planned action is required If it was met, a planned action is optional.

Response

Settings Edit

The course curriculum underwent significant change last year in part to improve students' rhetorical writing. However, it is clear that students need additional exposure to rhetorical writing throughout the program. Beginning next fall, a rhetorical writing project will be added to ENC 1101 and ENC 1102. Dr. Jane Jones, the primary instructor for both courses, will create a task force in Spring 2026 to plan these changes. She will then implement them in the courses by Spring 2027. Student performance on the ENC 1101 and 1102 reports will be assessed for two years following the change to determine if the change to courses earlier in the curriculum improves student performance on the final writing project in ENC 1102.

Step 4: Analysis and reflection

The assessment report concludes with an **analysis and reflection.** In this section, faculty explain what assessment results mean for the program. All SLOs (or courses for GLOs) should be addressed. Faculty should discuss the results with attention to program strengths and weaknesses, as well as any other information that is relevant to the interpretation of assessment results.

The program administrator should clearly answer the following questions in their analysis:

- What do the results suggest about the program's strengths and weaknesses?
- How will planned actions improve program weaknesses?

This is an opportunity to discuss anything that program administrators and faculty feel is important regarding the SLO assessment process and students' performance relative to the SLOs. It must be filled out, even if all performance goals are met. This should not be an individual decision made by only the program administrator; if there are other faculty within the program, the administrator should consult with those faculty to consider other points of view and find avenues of improvement. See Figure 21 for an example of a well-thought-out analysis and reflection section.

Figure 21. Analysis and reflection

4 Analysis and reflection Incomplete

Explain what these results mean for the program. Be sure to address all PLOs. What do the results suggest about the program's strengths and weaknesses? How will planned actions improve program weaknesses? This is your opportunity to discuss anything that you feel is important regarding the PLO assessment process and students' performance relative to the PLOs.

Settings Edit Copy File Link Comment History

While the curriculum changes in ENC 1101 substantially improved students' performance on the rhetoric report, students are still not meeting performance expectations. Incorporating more rhetoric content in ENC 1101 will hopefully improve students' writing skills prior to their enrollment in ENC 1102.

Program faculty are still struggling with overseeing writing projects in ENC 1101, as it is very difficult for students to develop strong writing skills in a single semester. Each year, a number of students perform poorly on the critical thinking GLO in ENC 1101 because they lack foundational writing skills. Beginning in Fall 2026, each section of ENC1101 will conduct a writing project over the course of the semester. This will reduce the time pressure students face while still giving them the opportunity to develop their rhetorical writing skills in an applied setting.

Step 5: Finalizing the assessment report

Once finished, program administrators should review the rubric that will be used to evaluate it. The "rubric report" button next to "view pdf" will allow program administrators to see the rubric and ensure that the report includes all necessary information. After completing and reviewing the assessment report, faculty may submit their report for approval. Their program supervisor, along with the Director of Institutional Research & Assessment, will review it using a rubric in Xitracs (note that faculty have access to this rubric as well). Once it has been approved, faculty print a PDF copy and send it to the

Director of Institutional Research & Assessment. When printing, faculty should be sure to include all uploaded files as attachments.

When the report has been printed and saved, the program administrator must send a copy to the Department of Institutional Effectiveness at rie@fgc.edu. IE keeps track of all assessment reporting for institutional documentation and accreditation purposes. A final summary of assessment results across programs is compiled by IE by December 15 each year and shared with the Assessment Committee. The Assessment Committee will prepare a list of their concerns following this review and share this list with academic leadership by January 30. Academic leaders will determine if any action (for example, further actions to improve poor student learning outcomes, revision of program assessment processes, etc.) is needed.

Administrative programs

Each administrative program at FGC seeks to provide the best services possible to its stakeholders. Stakeholders can be students, other FGC units, or members of the community. All employees at FGC are likely engaged in informal assessment on a daily basis, as employees should regularly question whether there is anything they can do to improve the services they provide to stakeholders at FGC.

Assessment is a formalization of this process so that inquiry, data collection, analysis, and action are systematic and documented. These ongoing assessment processes ensure continuous improvement in each program at FGC. This assessment and continuous improvement process is the core of institutional effectiveness and ensures that FGC is accomplishing its mission and meeting the needs of its stakeholders.

For administrative programs, the assessment process within Xitracs is as follows:

- Create program goal/outcome
- Determine assessment method
- Create program benchmark/objective for success
    - Monitor if objective is achieved
- Review results
- Analyze and reflect
    - Consider how results will be used
- Use of results (selected from a dropdown)
- Use of results (create a narrative)

Getting started

Program administrators should begin by logging in to Xitracs. This link should have been provided to the program administrator, but it can also be accessed at xitracs.fgc.edu/portal.htm using their SSO information.

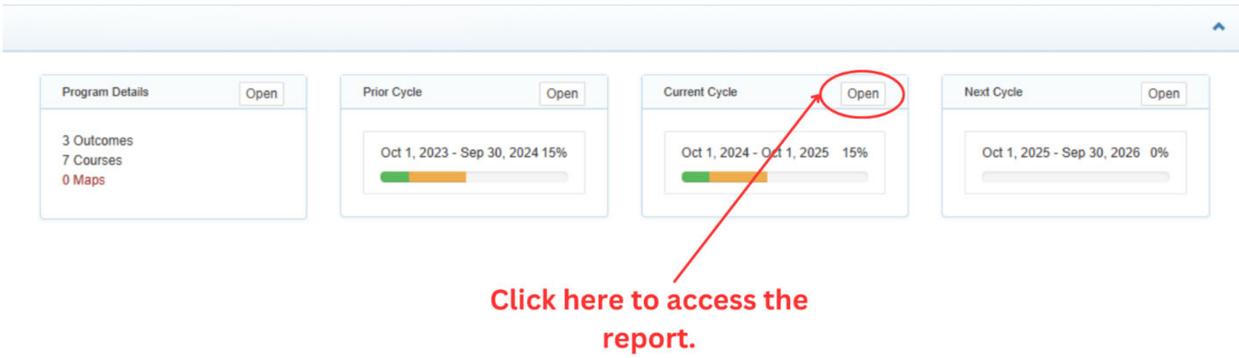
After logging in, program administrators should see the Home page as it appears in Figure 22. They should then select “View” under “My Open Activities” to see their program reporting cycles.

Figure 22. Xitracs home page

PICTURE HERE

After selecting "View," the administrator will then have the option of selecting from their program details, the prior year's cycle, the current reporting cycle, and the future cycle. The administrator may only access these three cycles; older cycles are locked in Xitracs and can only be accessed and edited by IE. To get started, program administrators should select the appropriate cycle and click "open." See Figure 23 below.

Figure 23. Opening a reporting cycle in Xitracs



Once a program administrator has accessed the appropriate cycle, they can either create their assessment plan or complete their assessment reporting depending on their needs. They should remember that their yearly program assessment *plan* is due no later than August 31 of that fiscal year, while their yearly assessment *report* is due no later than July 15 following a fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

Creating a reporting plan

Step 1: Creating administrative program goals

Xitracs currently refers to this section as program *goals.* It may appear in a program as *goals* or *objectives* based on what year is being reviewed. Hereafter, it will be referred to as goals.

These goals are a crucial element of a successful administrative program. They are the overarching plans of a program; ideally, they should highlight what the program or department aims to do for the college and its stakeholders.

Administrative assessment, like student learning outcomes assessment, is managed through Xitracs. Plans for each new fiscal year, which include a benchmark for each goal and an assessment method for each benchmark, must be entered into Xitracs by August 31.

Good goals are:

- **Specific:** Explain what a program contributes to the college. "Help students learn study skills" doesn't tell anyone what a program does. However, "provide workshops, study groups, and tutors to improve students' academic performance" does.
- **Focused on things that matter:** It's unlikely that one of a program's roles at the college is to hold monthly staff meetings. Goals should focus on the things a program does that are vital to the college's continued operation.
- **Relevant to the entire program:** While leaders play a key role in determining program direction, program-level goals should be relevant to all staff in the area, not just the program leader. If a

goal applies only to the director, the goal should be revised so that it is relevant to all staff in the program.

There are three types of goals that administrative programs can use: learning goals, operational goals, and strategic goals.

Learning goals

Learning goals focus on learning skills and information and should be present in student-facing programs. For example, the Department of Financial Aid helps students learn how to fund their education while minimizing debt. Through programs and activities offered through the Department of Student Life, students learn leadership and other important life skills. Faculty and staff-facing programs may also have learning goals. For example, the Department of Academic Quality helps faculty create online courses that optimize student learning.

Operational goals

Operational goals focus on the key functions of the program and should be tied to the program's mission. They should relate to essential services that the college provides to students, faculty, staff, and community members. For example, the Department of Institutional Effectiveness provides accurate and actionable data to support College decision makers. The Department of Business Services ensures the college's compliance with state and federal financial requirements.

Strategic goals

Strategic goals relate to efforts to make significant changes to a program. These types of goals often relate to the college's strategic plan or other College-wide strategic initiatives. For example, a program-level initiative to increase engagement with community leaders would be considered a strategic goal.

Outcomes should be reviewed and approved by the administrator overseeing each program. They should then be sent to the Director of Institutional Research & Assessment, who will add them to Xitracs.

Step 2: Creating program benchmarks

A benchmark is a specific action that a program plans on undertaking to help the program achieve an outcome or goal. They should always be something that will improve a program's ability to serve the college.

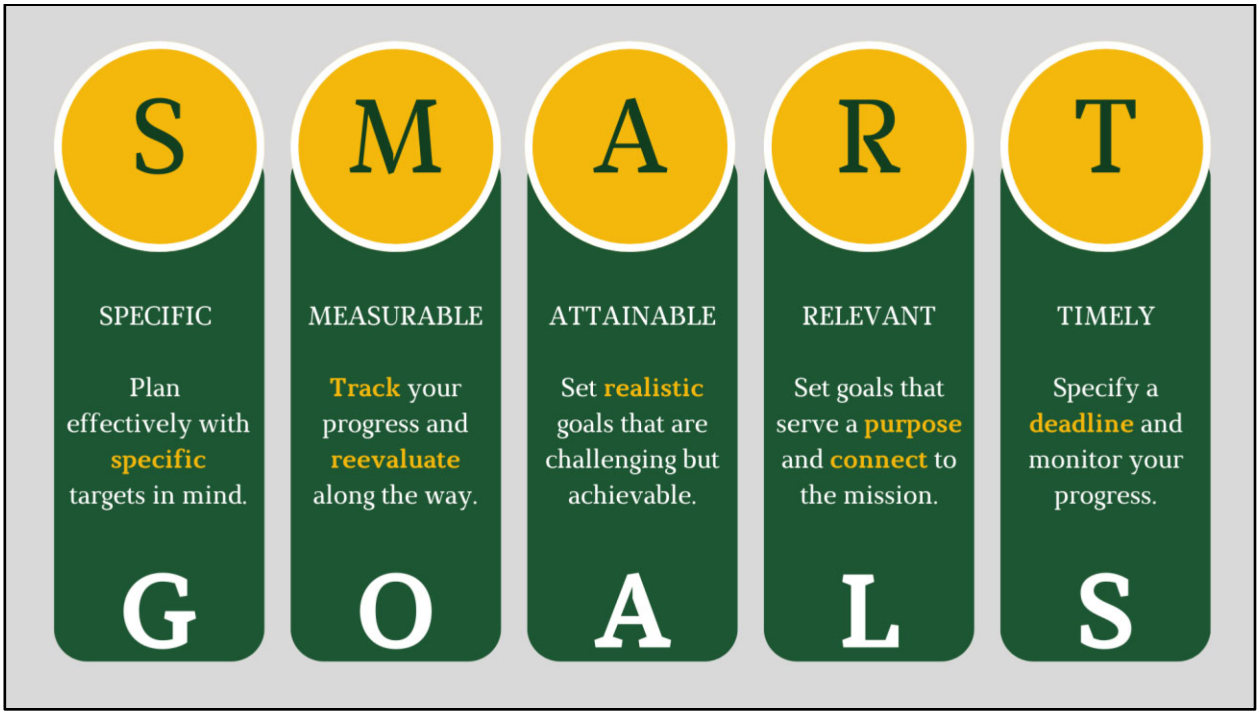
Multi-year benchmarks are fine, as big projects and initiatives take time to complete. However, the same benchmark should not be listed year after year if it is not related to a large project or initiative. Additionally, benchmarks should be focused on program improvement or evaluating how the program is doing to better identify what needs to be improved. Routine operations should not be listed as benchmarks.

Good benchmarks are **SMART:**

- **Specific:** Benchmarks should describe in detail what the program is going to do. It identifies who is involved and what is needed.
- **Measurable:** It should be easy to determine if the benchmark has been achieved. In other words, progress should be trackable. The program should determine what data will measure the goal.

- **Attainable:** The benchmark requires resources, skills, and other inputs that a program has, and it can believably be achieved.
- **Relevant:** The benchmark meaningfully aligns with the program's mission or outcomes and has a purpose relevant to achieving them.
- **Timely:** Benchmarks should be accomplished within a set period. This can be six months, a year, or longer, but good benchmarks have a timeline.

Figure 24. Creating SMART goals



Step 3: Creating assessment methods

Assessment methods help a program determine whether a benchmark has been met. What kind of evidence will the program gather to support this? The chosen assessment method should provide accurate and reliable information.

The specific assessment method used depends on the outcome and the benchmark. However, the following are assessment suggestions, organized by area:

Finance:

- Financial ratios (such as operating margin)
- Contribution ratios (such as tuition income as a percentage of revenue)
- Financial trends (such as maintenance and operations costs)
- Business plan surplus/deficit
- Financial responsibility standards (such as equity ratio)

Enrollment and recruitment

- Number of applications by program

- Yield rates by program
- Student diversity
- Admissions costs
- Applicant satisfaction survey

Registrar

- Time to complete the registration process
- Time to issuance of academic status letters
- Incidents of FERPA noncompliance
- Incidents of incorrect status reporting
- Student satisfaction with registration process survey

Financial Aid

- Number of financial aid applications processes
- Student loan default rates
- Time from application receipt to disbursement
- Scholarship dollars awarded
- Number of work study students on campus
- Annual median student debt
- A-133 audit results
- Student satisfaction with financial aid services survey

Bursar

- Receipts per academic term
- Percentage of errors on bills per academic term
- Outstanding student receivables by term
- Amount of student receivables written down/off

Library

- Collection size
- Collection use
- Gate count
- Services delivered
- Staff to student ratio
- Student satisfaction with library services survey

Information technology

- Number of security breaches
- Percentage of up time for each critical system
- Number of help desk calls
- Response to help desk calls
- Percentage of bandwidth utilized during peak periods
- Number and severity of audit findings
- Cost of operations by year
- Satisfaction with technology services survey

Student affairs

- Ratio of students to advisors
- Number of students advised per term
- Average wait time for advising appointment
- Student satisfaction with advising services survey
- Number of students contacting Disability Services per term
- Number of Student Success Center staff
- Number of students utilizing Student Success Center
- Number of employers at career fair(s)
- Number of on-campus residence applications
- Number of students utilizing Career Services each term
- Student satisfaction with Student Success Center survey
- Student participation in student activities
- Student participation in athletics
- Student attendance at athletic events
- Student participation in student organizations
- Student satisfaction with student activities survey
- Student satisfaction with student organizations survey
- Student participation in special program
- Student satisfaction with special program survey
- Student satisfaction with residence life survey
- Student satisfaction with food services
- Student satisfaction with Career Services survey
- Student satisfaction with overall student experience

Human Resources

- Cost of benefits by benefit type
- Median time to fill open positions by job category and in total
- Number of grievances and complaints filed
- Median salary for each job category compared to peer group
- Number of employee outreach sessions (training, benefit fairs, wellness events, etc.)
- Number of performance management evaluations in which employees met expectations across all categories
- Percent employee turnover by year
- Employee satisfaction with HR services survey

Public Safety

- U.S. Department of Education crime statistics as listed in CLERY report
- Safety-related activities (such as fire drills and active shooter training)
- Expenditures for security-related agendas
- Satisfaction with campus security survey

Facilities

- Size of capital budget

- Percentage of capital projects completed on time and on budget
- Cost of deferred maintenance projects
- Average days to completion of maintenance requests
- Comparison of electricity usage and cost per year
- Satisfaction with buildings and grounds survey

Assessment methods should be reasonable. If there is specific data that will be examined, program administrators are urged to contact IE to determine the feasibility of gathering the needed data.

Compiling administrative assessment reporting

At the end of each fiscal year, program staff should report on the results and planned actions outlined in the assessment plan within Xitracs. They should also complete the overall analysis and reflection section found in the assessment report in Xitracs. The final report is due on July 15 of each year.

Prior to completing the assessment report, program teams should collectively review the assessment results and discuss them to determine their implications for the program. The report should be a collaborative effort and *should not* reflect the viewpoints of only one person in the program.

Step 1: Compiling assessment results

In June and July of each year, program teams will review the assessment results and determine whether each benchmark was met. The results should then be explained in greater detail in Xitracs.

Staff are encouraged to go beyond this and break down results in more detail, explaining how their results were achieved, future implications, etc. This additional detail may be useful for faculty to better analyze performance results and determine what these results mean for programs and/or courses. Supporting documentation, such as survey results, can be attached to this section of the report using the “File+” button to upload tables, Excel spreadsheets, or any other information that supports assessment results.

Step 2: Analyze and reflect

For each outcome, program teams should reflect on the program’s progress toward the outcome, as suggested by the program’s achievement (or non-achievement) of objectives associated with the outcome. Teams should consider what assessment results indicate about the program’s strengths and weaknesses and explain how planned actions will help the program better serve the college and the community.

Step 3: Use of results

Program teams should explain what will be done based on the results of the benchmark assessment. Planned actions are required if a benchmark is not met. Planned actions must be specific and should include the person(s) responsible, what they will do, when they will do it, and how the program will determine whether this action was effective. Costs must be estimated for each planned action, and programs must indicate which budget(s) will be used to fund each action.

Step 4: Finalizing the assessment report

Assessment reports are due July 15. Once finished, program administrators should review the rubric that will be used to evaluate it. The "rubric report" button next to "view pdf" will allow program administrators to see the rubric and ensure that the report includes all necessary information. After completing and reviewing the assessment report, administrators may submit their report for approval. Their program's supervisor, along with the Director of Institutional Research & Assessment, will review it using a rubric in Xitracs (note that faculty have access to this rubric as well). Once it has been approved, program administrators must print a PDF copy and send it to the Director of Institutional Research & Assessment. When printing, they should be sure to include all uploaded files as attachments.

When the report has been printed and saved, the program administrator must send a copy to the Department of Institutional Effectiveness at rie@fgc.edu. IE keeps track of all assessment reporting for institutional documentation and accreditation purposes. A final **assessment summary** compiling assessment results across programs is created by IE by December 15 each year and shared with the college's academic leaders, as well as the Assessment Committee. The Assessment Committee will prepare a list of their concerns following this review and share this list with academic leadership by January 30. Academic leaders will determine if any action (for example, further actions to improve poor outcomes, revision of program assessment processes, etc.) is needed.

Program review

Each program, both academic and administrative, is required to complete a comprehensive program review. This occurs yearly for administrative programs and every three (3) years for academic programs.

Program reviews give each program the opportunity to holistically review all aspects of their operations to identify areas for improvement. These reviews are a critical component of the college's IE processes, as they integrate program-level assessment, planning, and improvement efforts. Information from academic program reviews is also required by the State of Florida in its Level II program review reports.

Program reviews are completed through the planning module in Xitracs. Program reviews are due on April 1 of the academic year in which they are scheduled.

Academic program review

Academic program reviews include the following sections:

Mission

Each program should have a mission statement. The mission statement explains in one or two sentences why the program exists, what it does, and the principles guiding its operations. Examples of academic program missions include:

- The Environmental Science Technology program serves to implement and maintain a high-quality instructional program, cultivate the development of the student, and enhance the community by providing knowledgeable and skilled graduates into the workforces of which we serve. We do this by imparting knowledge in the subject areas of water/wastewater treatment, environmental sampling and analysis, hydrology, pollution control, and many more.

- The mission of the Associate in Science in Criminal Justice Technology degree program is to prepare students for employment in the criminal justice profession, including careers in law enforcement, corrections, private security, juvenile justice, and probation and parole.
- The mission of the Digital Media and Design A.S. program, and its associated certificates, is to prepare students to become digital content creators in a world that is constantly being shaped by technology. Our project-based curriculum allows students to master current digital media software, study design trends, and apply their knowledge to real-world situations. Our students emerge from our program with the ability to apply their knowledge to the most current media needs in the workplace.

Degrees and certificates awarded

List the highest degree or certificate awarded for the program, along with any other certificates that students may earn on their way to this final credential. For example, on their way to completing the Emergency Medical Services, A.S. degree students can earn an Emergency Medical Technician certificate and a Paramedic certificate.

Program description

Describe the program. What are the overall goals of the program? What is the philosophy of the program? How does it prepare students for future educational or career opportunities? What makes the program special?

Industry certifications or licensures graduates are prepared for

If the program prepares students to complete any licensure or certification examinations, list them in this section and provide a brief description of what the certification or licensure enables students to do.

Members of advisory committee

If the program has an advisory committee, list its members and their affiliations.

Marketing and recruitment strategies

How are students recruited for the program? Explain any marketing and recruitment materials used, events attended, schools visited, community organizations contacted, etc.

If there are any strategies designed to recruit students that are traditionally underrepresented in the program, be sure to describe them.

Role of the program in meeting community educational needs

How does the program meet the educational needs of the community? Be sure to include information about needs such as community skill shortages and regional job growth in jobs for which program graduates will be qualified.

Program metrics

For the past three years (excluding the current year), list the following information:

- Number of declared majors (program headcount)

- Persistence rate
- Number of graduates
- Number of full-time faculty
- Number of part-time faculty
- Employment and continuing education rate for program graduates

This information is provided by the Department of Institutional Effectiveness early in the spring term of each academic year.

Course success rates

Evaluate course success rates for the past 3 years *excluding the current year.* These will be provided by the Department of Institutional Effectiveness.

Pay particular attention to courses with high W or DF rates. Discuss any areas of potential concern.

Attach all course success rates to the program review document.

Success of graduates on industry licensure or certification exams

If the program prepares graduates for industry licensure or certification exams, list the name of the exam, the pass rate for each of the past 3 years for which results are available, and the state and national pass rate (if available) for each of these years.

Summary of program learning outcome assessment results for past 3 years

This information can be obtained from the program's annual program learning outcome (PLO) assessment reports. The current year's information should not be included. Each of the program learning outcomes should be listed. A short description of the assessments used for each PLO should be included, along with a summary of results (broken down by year) and actions taken based on results (also broken down by year).

Aim to provide enough information for the reader to determine how well students are achieving the program's learning outcomes. It is not necessary to provide detailed descriptions of the assessments or thorough accounts of the results, as this information is available in the PLO assessment reports. Instead, aim for a high-level summary. The Department of Institutional Effectiveness maintains all submitted assessment reports, so archival reports are available upon request.

Additional student outcome data

Summarize the results of any other assessments or metrics that are important for evaluating the overall health of the program. These include, but are not limited to, graduate satisfaction, employer satisfaction, transfer rates, and transfer GPA. If available, summarize the past 3 years of results. If a survey, such as a graduate satisfaction survey, was administered and summarizes the key findings; it is not necessary to include item-by-item results.

Faculty responsibility for program

Explain how faculty take responsibility for maintaining and improving the quality of the program.

Questions to consider include:

- How is the curriculum reviewed to ensure that it is current and relevant?
- How do faculty align the program with industry and employer needs?
- How do faculty use student learning outcome assessment results and other student outcome metrics to improve the program?
- What is the process for making significant changes to the program?

Faculty

List all of the faculty that teach in the program, their status (full-time or part-time), the courses that they teach, and their relevant qualifications. Relevant qualifications include their degree, their work and teaching experience, and any significant accomplishments relevant to the courses that they teach.

Based on this list, evaluate whether there are enough faculty to support the program, and provide evidence for the conclusion. If there are determined to be an insufficient number of faculty, explain why. What aspects of the program are neglected because of insufficient faculty? What could the program do with more faculty?

Faculty professional development

List the professional development opportunities in which faculty have participated over the past 3 years. Consider courses, conferences, workshops, and other formal professional development. Do not include anything not directly applicable to teaching or scholarship, such as new employee orientation.

Institutional resources

Evaluate the physical resources (office space, meeting space, and such), equipment, technology, student support services, academic and administrative support services, and any other non-budgetary resources that are used by the program. Are these adequate to support the program's needs? Similarly, evaluate the program's budget to determine whether it is adequate. If any resources are judged to be inadequate, clearly explain why they are not adequate and what else is needed.

Internal and external events that could affect the program

Identify events that are happening outside the college that could affect the program in the future. These can be things expected to have either a negative effect, a positive effect, or the potential for both. Be sure to clearly link external changes to the program's future operations. For example, if there is a projected shortage of qualified HVAC technicians in the state of Florida, this could help the HVAC program recruit students while also making it difficult to find qualified faculty to teach classes. Provide evidence to support your claims.

Explain how events occurring at the college could affect the program. Again, these can be things expected to have either a positive or a negative effect (or both!). For example, an internal push for increasing online course availability could present a program with the opportunity to reach more students while also requiring additional resources to be diverted to online course development and professional development for faculty who need to learn best practices for online teaching. Provide evidence to support your claims.

Program strengths

Based on the information provided in the preceding sections of the review, evaluate the program's strengths. Be as specific as possible, and don't make vague statements. For example, if faculty expertise is a strength, explain what the instructors' knowledge and skills contribute to the program. Are they considered experts in their field who regularly present at conferences? Are they dynamic instructors who use instructional technology in creative ways?

Program weaknesses

Based on the information provided in the preceding sections of the review, evaluate the program's weaknesses. Avoid vague comments such as "attracting students is challenging." Why is this challenging? Are there few jobs available in the area? Is pay low? Are students unaware of the program?

Future goals and action plan

This is the most important part of the program review. Based on all of the information gathered as part of the program review, determine what needs to be done to improve the program. The action plan should seek to build on program strengths and improve program weaknesses. First, determine 3-5 goals for the program over the next 3 years. Goals are a way for the program to map where it wants to be in the future. For example, "Increase program enrollment by creating an online-only program track" defines where the program would like to be in three years. Then, determine what actions are needed to make these goals a reality. Indicate what will be done, who will do it, and when they will do it. Be as specific as possible with this action plan.

Vague actions such as "improve online courses" are not useful, as their generality makes it difficult to know where to start. Something more specific, such as "The coordinator will work with program faculty and the Associate Dean of Academic Quality to implement online course proctoring in all online courses in the program by Fall 2027" makes the action more manageable and is more likely to lead to progress. Indicating who is responsible for each action and a timeline for the action creates accountability.

Estimate the cost of each action. If the cost is greater than $0, indicate which budget(s), including index and GL code, will be used to fund these actions. This should be considered in the program's next budget request.

Explain how the program will evaluate whether each goal has been met. For example, "the annual number of students enrolling in the online-only track after its creation will be compared to enrollment prior to the online track to determine whether the online-only track has increased student enrollment."

This action plan should be aligned with the three-year program review cycle, so this action plan should include everything that the program would like to do within the next three years.

Completing the review

Completed program reviews should be emailed to the Director of Institutional Research & Assessment by April 1 of the year they are due. The Director will review the program information to determine that the program review includes all necessary information.

After the Director's review, completed program reviews will be reviewed using a rubric by members of the Assessment Committee. The program review and the associated rubric will them be sent to the program Director, the program's Executive Director or Associate Dean, the Dean, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Meetings to evaluate the program reviews will take place by October 30 and will include the program's coordinator or responsible full-time faculty member, the program area's Director, and at least one member of academic leadership.

In November of each year, program reviews and the Assessment Committee's evaluations for the previous year will be compiled and presented to the Executive Council by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, along with the Assessment Committee's evaluations. The Executive Council will have the opportunity to review the program reviews and discuss any concerns.

After this, identified curriculum and other instructional changes will proceed to the Educational Affairs Committee (EAC).

The academic leader overseeing the program will be responsible for monitoring the changes outlined in the action plan and requesting updates as needed.

Administrative program review

Mission

Each program should have a mission statement. The mission statement explains in one or two sentences why the program exists, what it does, and the principles guiding its operations.

Examples of mission statements include:

- The mission of the Office of Enrollment Services is to support the instructional and student success endeavors of the institution, relating to admission, registration, enrollment, and security and maintenance of student records. The office strives to provide quality service and convenient access to future, current, and former students, faculty, staff, and the public.
- The mission of Florida Gateway College Athletics Department is to provide student-athletes with the highest quality educational opportunities, resources, services and facilities needed to achieve academic and athletic excellence while adhering to both NJCAA and FCSAA guidelines.
- The mission of the Library is to support the educational and enrichment goals of Florida Gateway College through instruction and access to information for FGC students and community members.

Program functions

Identify the key functions of the program. This will involve looking at the key functions of each unit embedded within the program. What are program staff expected to do regularly? Do personnel collaborate with any other programs to perform these functions?

For example, one function of Institutional Effectiveness is to provide student outcome metrics to internal stakeholders. This involves collaborating with Information Technology to ensure that the reports generated through the APEX system are accurate.

Staff

List all of the employees in the program (including part-time and student workers), their employment status (full-time or part-time), their position, and their relevant qualifications. Individuals' resumes do not need to be reproduced in the qualifications section; simply highlight a few things that support their qualifications for their position (i.e., degrees, certifications, and years of experience). The senior leadership member responsible for the oversight of the program should be included in this section. Be sure to explain the evaluation of whether there are enough staff to support the program.

Staff professional development

List the professional development opportunities available to program staff. These opportunities should be specific to the program, not non-specific opportunities such as New Employee Orientation. Evaluate whether these are sufficient to support program staff.

Institutional resources

Evaluate the physical resources (office space, meeting space, and such), equipment, technology, administrative support services, and any other non-budgetary resources that are used by the program. Are these adequate to support the program's needs? If not, clearly explain why they are not adequate and what is needed. For example, if the program has more personnel than available office space, provide the number of personnel relative to available offices to highlight the need. If the program needs a particular piece of software to automate a time-consuming process, explain what this software does and how it could help the program operate more efficiently. Similarly, evaluate the program's budget to determine whether it is adequate. If not, explain why.

Assessments, goals, and objectives

Summarize the program's efforts to meet its student learning, strategic, and/or operational outcomes over the past three years. Include a list of the outcomes, how they were assessed each year, and what the assessment results indicated. Programs may find that tables are useful for organizing information in this section.

Programs are encouraged to report this information in the way that they think best organizes and explains their assessments, their results, and how these results were used to make improvements.

Internal and external events that could affect the program

Identify events that are happening outside the college that could affect the program in the future. These can be things expected to have either a negative effect, a positive effect, or the potential for both. Be sure to clearly link external changes to the program's future operations. For example, if there is a projected shortage of students with a high school education in the state of Florida, explain how this will affect your program.

Explain how events occurring at the college could affect the program. Again, these can be things expected to have either a positive or a negative effect (or both!). For example, an internal push for increasing online course availability could present opportunities for recruiting additional students while potentially reducing the availability of face-to-face classes. Provide evidence to support your claims.

Program strengths

Based on the information provided in the preceding sections of the review form, evaluate the program's strengths. Be as specific as possible, and don't make vague statements. For example, if staff expertise is a strength, what knowledge and skills do program staff contribute?

Program weaknesses

Based on the information provided in the preceding sections of the review form, evaluate the program's weaknesses. Avoid vague comments such as "attracting qualified staff members is challenging." Why is it challenging?

Future goals and action plan

This is the most important part of the program review. Based on all of the information gathered as part of the program review, determine what needs to be done to improve the program. The action plan should seek to build on program strengths and improve program weaknesses. First, determine 3-5 goals for the program over the upcoming three years. Goals are a way for the program to map where it wants to be in five years. For example, "Increase student enrollment by creating strong connections with youth organizations in the community" defines where the program would like to be in a year. Each goal should be aligned with one of the program's outcomes. Then, determine what actions are needed to make these goals a reality. Indicate what will be done, who will do it, and when they will do it. Be as specific as possible with this action plan.

Vague actions such as "reach out to community organizations" are not useful, as their generality makes it difficult to know where to start. Something more specific, such as "The director will reach out to 4-H groups in the five-county service area and give presentations to these groups by Fall 2026" makes the action more manageable and is more likely to lead to progress. Indicating who is responsible for each action and a timeline for the action creates accountability.

Estimate the cost of each action. If the cost is greater than $0, indicate which budget accounts (identified by index and GL code) will be used to fund the action. The program should consider this when making its next budget request.

Determine how the program will assess whether each goal has been met. For example, "an item will be added to the College's application to determine how applicants heard about the college and its programs. Answers to this item will be analyzed annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the local youth organization recruitment initiative."

This action plan should be aligned with the yearly program review cycle, so this action plan should include everything that the program would like to do within the next three years.

Completing the review

Completed program reviews should be emailed to the Director of Institutional Research & Assessment by April 1 of the year they are due. The Director will review the program information to determine that the program review includes all necessary information.

After the Director's review, completed program reviews will be reviewed using a rubric by members of the Assessment Committee. The program review and the associated rubric will then be sent to the college leader(s) overseeing the program. Meetings to evaluate the program reviews will take place by

October 30 and will include the individual overseeing the program, their direct supervisor, and any other relevant program personnel.

In November of each year, program reviews and the Assessment Committee's evaluations for the previous year will be compiled and presented to the Executive Council by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, along with the Assessment Committee's evaluations. The Executive Council will have the opportunity to review the program reviews and discuss any concerns.

The college leader overseeing the program will be responsible for monitoring the changes outlined in the action plan and requesting updates as needed.

Additionally, the actions identified in the action plan should be included as objectives in the outcomes assessment process over the next year.

State and federal reporting

State and federal reporting is a vital part of the college's accreditation process. FGC reporting includes state databases, IPEDS, FTE, FLVC, NC-SARA, and more, making the assessment process a vital part of IE's work.

State Databases

Database submissions are completed by the Coordinator of Research and Data Analysis, who serves as FGC's State Reports Coordinator.

Student Database

The student database (SDB) is submitted to the state twice each fall and spring semester: once at the beginning of the term, and once at the end of the term. It is submitted once at the end of the summer semester. This database includes all students who were enrolled for the term or who had either a completion or an acceleration record (credit earned from testing or experience) for the term. Information submitted includes students' program(s) of study, demographics, courses in which they are enrolled, completion records, and industry certifications earned. The information included in the SDB is used to create a number of reports twice each Fall and Spring term, and once each Summer term. Headcount reports are generated at the beginning-of-term, and both headcount and completion reports are generated at end-of-term. The SDB is also the primary source of information used by the state to calculate FGC's retention and completion metrics for annual accountability reports, Perkins, IPEDS, as well as FTE and current performance funding.

Personnel Database

The personnel database (PDB) is submitted once each term. It includes information about faculty and staff positions, contract status, courses taught, demographics, and other employee information.

Facilities Database

The facilities database (FDB) is submitted once each term. It includes information about the college's facilities, including campus sites, building usage, rooms and use, construction, and other facilities and site information.

Admissions Database

The admissions database (ADB) is submitted once each term. The database provides information about admission to the college's baccalaureate programs, including program-level admission counts and demographic information about students. The data reported on the admissions database is primarily required for reporting to Teacher Certification for Teacher Preparation Programs.

Integrated Database

The integrated database (IDB) is generated at the state level once each term. This is done by pulling data from the Student, Personnel, Facilities, and Admissions databases. It provides information about admissions, developmental education, distance learning, and room utilization.

Annual Financial Aid

The annual financial aid database is submitted once each year, at the end of the financial aid year. The database includes demographic information for each student who was awarded financial aid, as well as the type and amount of that aid.

APR (Annual Personnel Report)

The APR (Annual Personnel Report) includes all college employees on the payroll of the institution as of November 1st – that is the last bi-weekly payroll period that ends prior to November 1st. One record is reported for each employee that contains demographic information, position information, and salary information. Only the employees' primary occupational activity will be reported. This data is used for the IPEDS Human Resources survey.

Annual Calendar Year Personnel

The annual calendar year personnel database is submitted at the end of each calendar year. It includes all employees who worked during the specified timeframe. Demographic information, aggregate salary information, and aggregate fringe benefits information must be reported. This data is used to report information to the Florida Has a Right to Know site per Florida statute. While all employees must be reported to the state, those whose 'exempt from public records' flag is set to and reported as 'Y' will not be sent to Florida Has a Right to Know.

Annual Salary & Benefits

The annual salary & benefits database is submitted once per year, at the end of the fiscal year. The database includes demographic records for each employee who worked during the specified timeframe, as well as aggregate salary and aggregate fringe benefits records. This data is sent to Florida Has a Right to Know, except for those employees whose 'exempt from public records' flag is set to and reported as 'Y'. Salary and benefits records are reported by Org/GL code.

IPEDS

Institutional Characteristics

Data for this survey must be input at the college level. There are two parts to the IPEDS institutional characteristics survey, the institutional characteristics header and the institutional characteristics survey. The institutional characteristics header is a very high-level overview of the educational offerings and calendar system for the college. This must be completed and locked before any other IPEDS survey can be started.

The institutional characteristics survey collects information about the college's mission, student services, and student charges. Most of these data appear on College Navigator. The cost of attendance reported in this survey is used to calculate the net price of attendance in the IPEDS financial aid survey as well as College Affordability and Transparency Center's lists.

Enrollment

The IPEDS 12-month enrollment survey collects unduplicated student enrollment counts and instructional activity data for a full 12-month period. While the IPEDS site states this timeframe must be July 1 – June 30, Florida state officials have explained to IPEDS that state colleges report data for the year from August – July (terms Summer, Fall, Spring). Florida state colleges report data based on this timeframe.

Data for this survey is pulled by the state IPEDS coordinator from individual state colleges' student databases and personnel databases. The data is uploaded to IPEDS by the state. The college IPEDS Keyholder is then responsible for verifying the data and locking the survey.

Completions

The IPEDS Completions survey collects the number of degrees and certificates awarded by field of study, level of award, race/ethnicity, and gender. This data is for a 12-month period. While the IPEDS site states this timeframe must be July 1 – June 30, Florida state officials have explained to IPEDS that state colleges report data for the year from August – July (terms Summer, Fall, Spring). Florida state colleges report data based on this timeframe.

Data for this survey is pulled from the student database by the state IPEDS coordinator and uploaded to IPEDS. The college IPEDS Keyholder is then responsible for verifying the data and locking the survey. Some data from this survey appears in College Navigator.

Student Financial Aid

The purpose of the Student Financial Aid IPEDS survey is to collect information about financial aid provided to various groups of students as well as military/veteran educational benefits. Revisions to the cost of attendance reported in the Institutional Characteristics survey can be made in this survey. Also, the net price of attendance is calculated in the student financial aid survey and is used to populate the U.S. Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency lists.

Data for this survey must be generated at the college level and keyed into the IPEDS survey screens.

Graduation Rate

The IPEDS Graduation Rate survey gathers data on the cohort of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students and tracks their completion status at 150% of the normal time to complete all requirements of their program of study.

Data for this survey is pulled from the student database by the state IPEDS coordinator and uploaded to IPEDS. The college IPEDS Keyholder is then responsible for verifying the data and locking the survey. This information is collected to assist institutions in complying with the requirements of the Student Right-to-Know Act.

Outcome Measures

The IPEDS Outcome Measures survey includes award and enrollment data from degree-granting institutions on four cohorts and eight sub-cohorts at three status points: four-years, six-years, and eight-years after entry. While the IPEDS site states this timeframe must be July 1 – June 30, Florida state officials have explained to IPEDS that state colleges report data for the year from August – July (terms Summer, Fall, Spring). Florida state colleges report data based on this timeframe.

Data for this survey is pulled by the state IPEDS coordinator and uploaded to IPEDS. The college IPEDS Keyholder is then responsible for verifying the data and locking the survey.

Human Resources

The IPEDS Human Resources survey collects information about each college's staff, including full-time/part-time status, occupational category, gender, race/ethnicity, and salary range. This information is reported for all employees on the college payroll as of November 1st.

Data for this survey is pulled from the APR (Annual Personnel Report) by the state IPEDS coordinator and uploaded to IPEDS. The college IPEDS Keyholder is then responsible for verifying the data and locking the survey.

Fall Enrollment

The IPEDS Fall Enrollment survey collects student enrollment counts by level of student, enrollment status, gender, and race/ethnicity. First-time student retention rates and the student-to-faculty ratio are also collected. Enrollment by age is required in odd-numbered years, and enrollment by residence of first-time students is required in even-numbered years.

Data for this survey is pulled from the Student Database by the state IPEDS coordinator and uploaded to IPEDS. The college IPEDS Keyholder is then responsible for verifying the data and locking the survey.

Academic Libraries

The IPEDS Academic Libraries Survey collects information on library collections, library expenses, and library services for libraries in degree-granting postsecondary institutions.

Colleges are responsible for pulling needed data and keying into the IPEDS survey. Once all data has been keyed and verified, the IPEDS Keyholder must lock the survey.

Finance

The IPEDS Finance survey collects basic financial information from items associated with the institution's General Purpose Financial Statements.

Colleges are responsible for pulling needed information and keying into the IPEDS survey. Once all necessary data has been keyed in and verified, the IPEDS Keyholder must lock the survey.

FTE

Full-time equivalent (FTE) reporting is done three times per academic year. The submissions are called FTE1, FTE2, and FTE Enrollment and Capital Outlay (COFTE). One FTE is equivalent to one student completing 30 credit hours or 900 clock hours of coursework within an academic year.

- FTE1 is generated from the Student Database for summer end-of-term and fall beginning-of-term data with estimates of enrollment for the remainder of the year.
- FTE2 is generated from the Student Database for summer and fall end-of-term and spring beginning-of-term data with estimates of enrollment for the rest of the spring term.
- FTE Enrollment and Capital Outlay (COFTE) is generated using actual enrollment data from the Student Database for the full state reporting year (Summer, Fall, Spring).

For each submission, the state generates estimates that the college can either accept or adjust based on local knowledge of the college. A justification must be written and supporting documentation provided in either case and must be detailed in its explanation as to why the college chose to either accept or adjust the state's estimate.

FLVC

Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) requires the college to submit course data each term. It also requires that a program file listing all programs offered by the college be submitted once per year. The college is also required to update its institutional profile on the FLVC site each year. These data include a wide array of data that will assist potential students with determining if the college is a good fit for them overall. Students can access the college's information through the FLVC Florida Shines portal.

NC-SARA

The State of Florida is a participating state in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). This allows colleges in Florida to offer distance education to students in other participating NC-SARA states. FGC also participates in NC-SARA. Each spring, the Associate Dean of Academic Quality coordinates the submission of the college's annual renewal application. IE provides institutional data about distance education programs and students to facilitate this process.

Surveys and other reporting

The college reports institutional and programmatic data routinely to several organizations for the purpose of widely sharing important information about the college to prospective students. At the end of each calendar year, IE coordinates the completion of the annual College Board survey. An additional College Board cost survey is completed by IE each summer. Each spring, IE coordinates the completion of several US News & World Report Best Colleges surveys. IE coordinates the completion of other surveys upon direction and approval of the President.

Why report?

The State of Florida uses information submitted via the state databases and other state-level reporting to calculate metrics considered in funding decisions. While the specific metrics considered are subject to change, enrollment, retention, and completion generally play a role in the State's funding decisions.

Information submitted to the state is also used for other state-level decisions, including financial and program audits.

Information submitted to the state is used to generate reports used by the college to obtain data for key performance indicators. Annual accountability reports that include enrollment, retention, and completion information are generated based on data submitted to the state, as are reports such as AA1A, which provides enrollment counts by program and student type.

IPEDS data are publicly searchable on the IPEDS website. IPEDS enrollment information is used to classify the college's size and is often a consideration for software and service pricing. Various award agencies, such as the Aspen Institute, use IPEDS data to identify candidates for performance-based awards.

Student achievement metrics and key performance indicators

The college collects and disseminates information on metrics used to evaluate progress towards goals outlined in the strategic plan, as well as other college goals and initiatives.

Student achievement metrics

Several achievement metrics are evaluated annually to determine the extent to which FGC is serving its students' needs. Metrics are updated each summer and are available on the IE website. Per SACSCOC requirements, metrics are publicly available and disaggregated when possible by demographic groups of interest to the college.

These metrics are:

- **Traditional IPEDS graduation rate.** Calculated based on the number of first time in college students attending the college full-time who graduate within 150% of normal degree completion time.
    - Because IPEDS considers Florida Gateway College to be a four-year institution, 150% normal degree completion time represents six years.
- **Florida College System graduation rates.** The Florida College System graduation rates show the percentage of first time in college (FTIC) students, both full-time and part-time, who graduated within 200% of normal time to degree.
    - This metric is presented for associates degree programs, certificate programs, and baccalaureate programs.
- **Florida College System retention rates.** The Florida College System considers students in a cohort to be retained if they enrolled in two consecutive fall terms. Retention calculations include both part-time and full-time first time in college students.
    - This metric is presented for associates degree programs, certificate programs, and baccalaureate programs.
- Associate of Arts Transfer rates, calculated as the percentage of A.A. graduates who transfer to a four-year institution.
    - A.A. graduates enrolled at another Florida College System institution or a district postsecondary institution are not included in these percentages.
- Placement rates, defined by the Florida College System as being employed in work related to the educational program, being enrolled in an educational program, or being in military service.

Two goals are created for each metric. The minimum goal is the five-year average of the metric, while the challenge goal is the five-year average of the metric plus an additional 5%.

Updated student achievement metrics are reviewed by the Executive Council prior to being placed on the college's website.

Retention and completion reports

Each year, IE compiles a Retention Report and a Completion Report. Multiple sources of data are used for these reports, including internal data available through Apex, state data provided in annual accountability reports and the Florida College System Factbook, IPEDS data, and National Student Clearinghouse data.

These reports provide college leaders with a deep dive into these crucial metrics and help identify groups of students who are at risk of not continuing their coursework and earning their degree or certificate through FGC. These reports are reviewed by the Executive Council.

Enrollment reports

Weekly headcount and credit hour enrollment reports are prepared by IE and sent to the Vice President of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Associate Dean of Enrollment Services. These reports, generated through a report in Apex, compare enrollment in the term of interest (current, upcoming, or both) to enrollment in the term at the same time the previous year. This information gives college leaders the opportunity to react quickly to lower-than-expected enrollments.

Course success rates

IE generates course success rates for all faculty members at the end of each term. These reports are generated using an Apex report and an Access database. Reports provided to faculty members and the Dean of Academic Affairs include the number of students enrolled in each course, the percentage who earned incompletes, the percentage who withdrew, the percentage who succeeded (i.e., earned an A, B, C, or S), and the percentage who failed (i.e., earned a D, F, or U). Course success rates are used in the annual faculty evaluation process, as well as in the academic program review process.

Other metrics

Through internal Apex reports, state and federal reports, and the National Student Clearinghouse, IE can access data needed by College personnel to evaluate areas, programs, initiatives, and overall institutional functioning. Data available on-demand includes the following. Note that some types of data can be disaggregated by demographic variables (such as gender and race) and program characteristics (such as degree or certificate type). Data for the past 5 years is available for most metrics.

- College enrollment and FTE
- Program enrollment
- College retention rate (limited to FTIC students)
- College completion rate (limited to FTIC students)

- Program placement rate
- Program persistence rate
- Program retention rate (limited to FTIC students)
- Program completion rate (limited to FTIC students)
- Post-FGC enrollment in higher education institutions (requires list of students for submission to National Student Clearinghouse)

College Fact Book

Each year, IE generates a Fact Book that provides internal and external audiences with information about the college. The Fact Book includes:

- Basic information about the college, including its history, mission, leadership and organization, strategic plan, and accreditation status
- Service area information and demographics
- Overall student enrollment and FTE by demographic group and student type
- Program enrollment
- Classroom and instruction statistics
- Retention and completion metrics
- Graduate outcomes
- Faculty and staff statistics
- Information about campus facilities
- Athletics information
- Financial aid statistics
- College cost information
- College audited financial information

The Fact Book is available on the college's IE website. A limited number of copies are printed each year upon request.

Survey-based data collection

The college uses a variety of surveys to obtain information about current and former students, College employees, and community members. For the sake of brevity, only surveys managed by IE are included in this handbook.

Course evaluations

At the end of each term, students are sent a course evaluation, which asks them to provide feedback about the course, the instructor(s), and their own effort in the course. Course evaluations are administered via Watermark. Students can access evaluations through an emailed link, as well as through Canvas. Evaluations are confidential, and instructors cannot tie responses to any individual student. To reduce biases in evaluation responses and grading, the evaluation period ends before final exams begin, and instructors are not provided with evaluation reports until after grades have been submitted. At the end of each evaluation period, instructors are given a report that includes descriptive statistics for all evaluation items, as well as the text of students' comments.

Course evaluations are used by instructors to improve their courses, including instructional strategies and materials. Course evaluations are also included in each faculty member's annual evaluation, and course evaluation results are one source of information used for making administrative decisions about faculty members.

Program-specific surveys

IE administers surveys via Watermark to program students, program graduates and employers of program graduates for several programs in the Department of Teacher Preparation Programs and the Department of Nursing and Health Sciences, including Nursing, B.S.; Registered Nursing, A.S.; Practical Nursing, O.C.; Early Childhood Education, A.S.; Early Childhood Education, B.S.; and Educator Preparation Institute, C.C.C. Results from these surveys are used by these programs to identify areas in need of improvement, as well as to meet accreditation and regulatory requirements.

Facilities survey

IE administers a facilities survey via Watermark as needed (approximately every two years) to faculty, students, and staff to evaluate satisfaction with FGC's facilities. This survey is used by facilities staff to determine facilities priorities and make timely updates to the Master Plan. IE collaborates with the Director of Facilities to determine the timeline and the content of the survey.

Questions and concerns about IE

Questions about any of the IE processes in this document should be directed to the Department of Institutional Effectiveness:

Questions about accreditation, assessment, and planning:

Christine Boatright, Associate Dean, Libraries & Institutional Effectiveness

christine.boatright@fgc.edu; ext. 4337

Kaitlyn White, Director, Institutional Research & Assessment

kaitlyn.white@fgc.edu; ext. 4285

Questions about data and metrics:

Laurie Layton, Coordinator of Research and Data Analysis

laurie.layton@fgc.edu; ext. 4365

Jessica Cohen, Research Specialist

jessica.cohen1@fgc.edu; ext. 4309

Definitions

Clock hour

A clock hour is equivalent to the total number of hours per week that a student completes activities related to their program in study. The occupational certificate programs at FGC calculate credit in clock rather than credit hours. Clock hours can be converted to credit hours by dividing the clock hours by 30.

Credit hour

Each credit hour is equivalent to one hour of class instruction (which includes online instructional activities) and two hours of work which the student completes outside of the classroom per week.

Completion

Three definitions of completion are used at FGC:

- **IPEDS completion:** The percentage of full-time first time in college students who begin in a fall term and complete their program of study within 150% of normal time-to-degree.
- **FCS completion:** The percent of first time in college students who begin in a fall term and complete their program of study within 200% of normal time-to-degree.
- **Modified Aspen Institute completion (used for internal calculations):** The percentage of first time in college students who begin in a fall term and complete their program of study within 150% of normal time-to-degree **or** transfer to another institution within 150% of normal time-to-degree.

Note that completion rates **cannot** be calculated individual programs that do not utilize cohorts and a predetermined course sequence. They also **cannot** be calculated for all students at the college.

Course success

Course success is the percentage of students who earn an A, B, C, or S in a course at FGC.

Enrolled

A student is considered to be enrolled in a particular term if he or she has registered for at least one course in that term.

First time in college (FTIC)

A student is considered to be FTIC if he or she has not previously attended an institution of higher education. However, former dual enrollment students are considered to be FTIC when they first matriculate at a higher education institution after graduating from high school.

Full time student

A student is considered to be full-time if he or she is enrolled in at least 12 credit hours of coursework in a term. For clock hour programs, a student is considered full time if he or she is enrolled in at least 24 hours of scheduled instruction per week.

Full-time equivalent (FTE)

FTE is based on the number of credit hours generated by a program, or the college as a whole. It is assumed that a full-time student will complete 30 credit hours in one year, so FTE is calculated by dividing the total number of credit hours generated by 30.

Persistence

Persistence is the percentage of students enrolled in one term who are still enrolled or have graduated one year later.

Placement

Placement includes only students who graduate from FGC within a given academic year. A student is considered to be placed if he or she is completing higher education coursework, employed, or has enlisted in the military by the end of the calendar year following the academic year of their graduation (for example, a graduate in the 2025-2026 academic year would need to meet placement criteria by December 2026 to be considered placed).

Retention

Retention is the percentage of first time in college (FTIC) students who begin in a fall term and are still enrolled or have graduated one year later. The FCS Accountability Report calculation of retention limits this calculation further to students who achieved 9 (for certificate students) or 18 (for degree-seeking students) credit hours by the summer following their first fall enrollment.

Note that retention rates **cannot** be calculated individual programs that do not utilize cohorts and a predetermined course sequence. They also **cannot** be calculated for all students at the college. However, persistence rates can be calculated for both of these situations and can help identify groups of students at risk of attrition.

Transfer

A student is considered to have transferred if he or she leaves at FGC and begins a program of study at another institute of higher education within 150% of normal time-to-degree for the student's program.

Transfer can also refer to the percentage of a program's graduates that continue their education post-graduation. This metric is commonly evaluated for the college's Associate in Arts (A.A.) program.

Guides

The following guides have been created to assist faculty in effectively planning and assessing their programs.

Planning

Report Plan Elements **(Due Oct. 15, 2025)**	**Guiding Questions & Instructions** ***This is for the upcoming academic year (e.g. 2025-2026.)***
Student Learning Outcomes *These are the learning outcomes for your program. They should already be in Xitracs, but you should also be able to find them on your program's page on FGC's website.*	Do these SLOs still fit your program? Have there been substantive changes to your program, or to the standards set by your accrediting body? If so, reach out to IE and set up a meeting to adjust your SLOs.
Assessment Methods *This is how you assess your SLOs.* *SLOs should generally be assessed using a* ***signature assessment*** *within a course, but this may vary by program. See the list (right).*	The following assessment types may be used to assess SLOs. • Faculty-developed summative assessments • Third-party examinations (e.g. national and state certification/licensure exams) • Major/final paper or presentation • Capstone projects • Major course assignments • Performance evaluations (e.g. skills mastery sheets) • Clinicals/internships/student teaching • Portfolios • Other dependent on program If you're unsure if an assessment adequately assesses your SLO, contact IE or your supervisor. **Please attach a copy of the assignment and any pertinent rubrics or other grading materials using the "File" option in Xitracs**.
Performance Goals *These are the standards for success that you set for your program; i.e. the percentage of students you expect to successfully meet your goal.*	What is the acceptable percentage of students who need to achieve a given SLO for you to consider that outcome to have been met successfully for your program? At a minimum this should be 70%, but you can aim higher. This is also something that you can change from year to year – if your goal is 70% and 80% of students are consistently meeting your goal over two or more years, it would be appropriate to raise your performance goal.

Assessing

Report Review Elements **(Due July 15, 2025)**	**Guiding Questions & Instructions** ***This is for the prior fiscal year (e.g. July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.)***

Results
 	
How did your performance compare to your goals? You will examine data relevant to each of your goals/benchmarks for the fiscal year.
	Answer the following in your response:
	• What did you assess for a given outcome? You should include all data generated by the department within the reporting cycle.
	• What are the numbers? It's time to crunch the data – for example, if your benchmark was for 50% of currently enrolled students to meet with an SSC tutor, you need to know:
	  o How many students are currently full-time enrolled at FGC?
	  o How many students did the SSC meet from July 1 – June 30? (Make sure that you don't count duplicates!)
	    ▪ Once you have these numbers, you can find the percentage of students who visited the SSC.
	Please attach a copy of any relevant materials that indicate your results using the "File" option in Xitracs. This can be an Excel spreadsheet, signup sheet, data table, etc.

Analyze and Reflect *Consider: How do your assessment results impact your program?*	With your department, discuss the assessment results for your various benchmarks and determine if your department is making progress towards your goals. What do your assessment results indicate about the department's strengths? Its weaknesses? Use this in your Use of Results (Narrative) section as well to justify your future plans.
Use of Results *How will you use these results to shape your planning for the upcoming year?*	Select an option from the dropdown menu to indicate how you will use your results.
Use of Results (Narrative) *This is where you'll explain (in detail) what actions you plan to take based on your results and your selection from Use of Results (above.)*	Based on your assessment results, explain what will be done in the upcoming year to meet your goals. These should be specific – you are essentially describing your benchmarks for the upcoming year. What do you hope to work on? Where can you improve? This narrative should be thorough and detailed. List actions to be carried out, who is responsible, when it will occur, and what it will cost.

Other Supporting Evidence *This is NOT a required section. If you choose to, you may add additional evidence of your annual planning to this section.*	If you add to this section, it is up to you what goes in it. It might be evidence of departmental meetings where plans to act on your goals and benchmarks are made (e.g. meeting minutes), flyers distributed around campus or on Canvas that invite students to programs and events held by your department, evidence of professional development undertaken by department members, etc.

References

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (2025). *Transparency Framework.* Retrieved from https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/ourwork/transparency-framework/components/student-learning-outcomes-statements/

SACSCOC (2023). *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement.* Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Retrieved from https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2024/01/2024PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf

Suskie, L. (2018). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide* (3rd edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Alancraig, M., Connal, J., Fulks, J., Kjeseth, L., Simmons, J., Mixson, F., Monahan, G., & Reynolds, S. (n.d.). *Assessing student learning: Assessment tools and quality data.* Retrieved from https://canadacollege.edu/inside/slo/docs/Assessment_Techniques.pdf

Florida Department of Education (2014). Board of Governors Regulation 8.005. Retrieved from http://www.flbog.edu/documents_regulations/regulations/8_005GeneralEducationCore_final.pdf

Indiana University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (n.d.). *Developing learning outcomes.* Retrieved from https://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/course-design/developing-learning-outcomes/

Mueller, J. (2016). What is authentic assessment? *Authentic Assessment Toolbox.* Retrieved from http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/whatisit.htm

National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). *NCES Handbook of Survey Methods*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/statprog/handbook/ipeds.asp.

Nunley, C., Bers, T., & Manning, T. (2011). Learning outcomes assessment in community colleges. *National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment* (Occasional Paper #10). Retrieved from http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CommunityCollege.pdf

SACSCOC (2018). *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement.* Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Retrieved from http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAcreditation.pdf

Suskie, L. (2018). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide* (3rd edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

University of Central Florida (2008). *Program assessment handbook* (February 2008 edition). Retrieved from https://oeas.ucf.edu/doc/acad_assess_handbook.pdf

University of Rhode Island (n.d.). *Developing & writing course-level student learning outcomes.* Retrieved from https://web.uri.edu/assessment/course-level-outcomes/