

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)

Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning

A. Code of Virginia, § 23-9.6:1. SCHEV Duty #10:

Develop in cooperation with institutions of higher education guidelines for the assessment of student achievement. An institution shall use an approved program that complies with the guidelines of the Council and is consistent with the institution's mission and educational objectives in the development of such assessment. The Council shall report the institutions' assessments of student achievement in the biennial revisions to the state's master plan for higher education.

B. Core Areas to be Assessed

Critical Thinking

Information Technology Literacy (An institution may choose to forego assessing Information Technology in favor of another competency of relevance to its mission.)

Oral Communication

Quantitative Reasoning

Scientific Reasoning

Written Communication

C. Statement of Principles

- Institutions shall design learning outcomes and methods of assessing student achievement that are aligned with their missions and enable efficient satisfaction of accreditation requirements.
- Institutional assessment of student learning shall be designed to
 - demonstrate that an institution's students are achieving—at a college level—skills, abilities, knowledge, and/or dispositions central to the institution's mission; and
 - produce information that is used to improve the institution's educational programs.

D. Process

- i. Each institution shall submit to SCHEV its plan to assess the core areas according to the principles described above, and according to a timetable that is appropriate to its institutional accreditation schedule. The Virginia Community College System shall submit a single plan that satisfies the accreditation schedules of the community

colleges. SCHEV shall provide feedback on, and facilitate peer review of, institutional plans as appropriate.

ii. At the conclusion of each complete cycle of assessment (i.e., after all six core areas have been assessed), an institution shall submit to SCHEV a description of the results of assessing the six core areas and the use to which those results have been put for purposes of improving educational programs. SCHEV shall make these results available on its website.

iii. This policy takes effect immediately, and supersedes the previous SCHEV policy on assessment, "Guidelines for Assessment of Student Learning," approved by Council in October 2007, with the following exception: any institution that wishes to continue under the 2007 Guidelines may do so through the completion of the current cycle of assessment.

iv. SCHEV staff shall work with the Instructional Programs Advisory Committee (IPAC), and/or any specialized group established with the assistance of IPAC, to determine any further procedural details that may be necessary to ensure the smooth implementation of this policy, both at its inception and throughout its life. Any substantive change to this policy shall be subject to approval by Council.