



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL
TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE
ACTION BRIEFING NOTE - For Discussion

SUBJECT: Guiding Principles for the Assessment of Student Learning

PROPONENT(S)

Natasha Kenny, Senior Director, Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning (Co-chair)
Barbara Brown, Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, Werklund School of Education (Co-chair)
Adil Arshad, PhD Candidate, Werklund School of Education

REQUESTED ACTION

We are eager to hear the Teaching and Learning Committee's feedback on the following questions:

- What initial comments or reflections do you have related to the principles for the assessment of student learning that have been developed at other U15 institutions (see attached Environmental Scan)?
- What initial thoughts or questions emerge for you related to the development of institutional principles for the assessment of student learning at UCalgary?
- What advice or input do you have as we start to reach out to relevant groups regarding the creation of an assessment principles group at UCalgary?

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/POINTS

Increased attention has been focused on the assessment of student learning, especially as it relates to what we have learned through our experiences of teaching and learning during the global pandemic. In March 2023, a group of leaders from academic units, the student experience portfolio, Registrar's office, Taylor Institute, Secretariat's office and Legal/Student Appeals met to identify pressing issues related to assessment of student learning, and potential actions to be taken. One of the key recommendations from the group was to develop a set of *principles to guide practices for the assessment of student learning* at the University of Calgary.

To learn more about the development and implementation of assessment principles for student learning at the institutional level, we conducted an environmental scan of Canadian U15 universities. The objective was to develop a high-level understanding of what assessment principles for student learning are in place at leading research-intensive universities in Canada, and to learn how and where these principles were identified or discussed on their respective websites.

Our review of U15 websites found that most universities do not have a comprehensive list of assessment principles publicly accessible on their websites. **Only four universities, out of the 12 reviewed**, explicitly identified the principles that guide their assessment practices. Universities that have assessment principles shared publicly on their websites included the University of Alberta, McGill University, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Toronto (*see Table 1 in the attached Environmental Scan*).

When looking at the principles across the four Universities, we noted that they commonly focussed on areas such as:

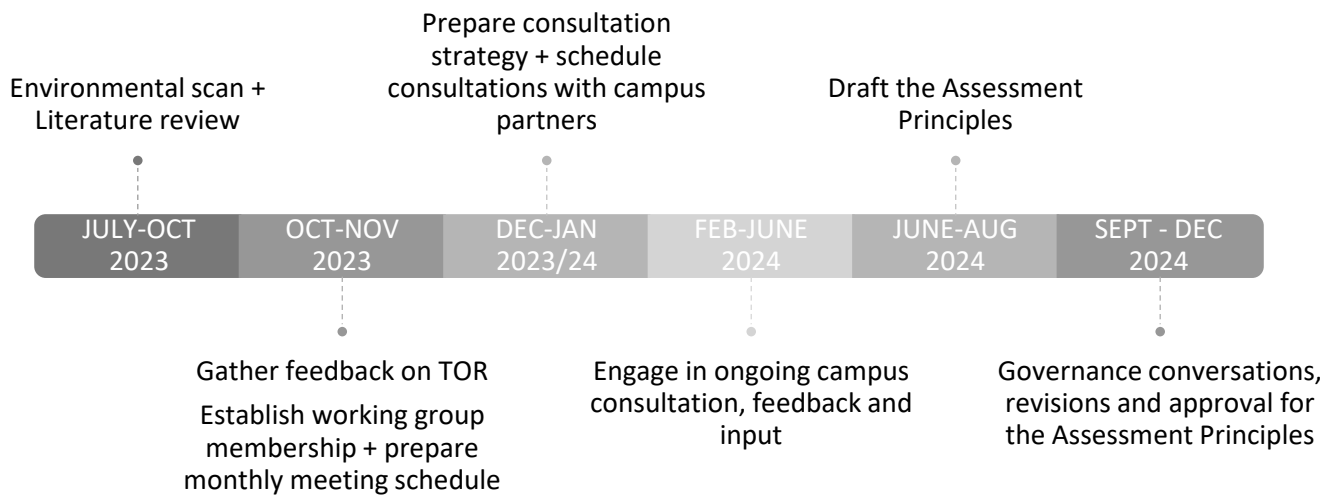
- Assessment reflects high academic standards.
- Course instructors are primarily responsible for the assessment of student learning in academic courses.
- Assessment practices provide provisions for the accommodation of student needs.

- Resources are available to support course instructors in developing expertise in student assessment, and to assess student learning in meaningful ways.
- Student assessments are intentionally designed and aligned with learning outcomes.
- Assessment strategies provide equitable opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning.
- Criteria, methods, and expectations for assessment are clearly communicated to students.
- Assessment practices emphasize the importance of feedback, progressive learning and practice, and both formative and summative assessment practices.

Our preliminary scan of U15 university websites has provided a starting point for understanding the landscape of the development and identification of assessment principles for student learning at universities across Canada. We noted that there are a few relevant gaps and missed opportunities in the identified assessment principles for student learning. For example, we have noted that there was little emphasis on issues related to generative artificial intelligence (AI), student/educator well-being and mental health, Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing and connecting, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA), graduate student assessment practices, and multiple instructional modalities (e.g., online/blended learning). **We believe there is opportunity for UCalgary to develop assessment principles for student learning that are most relevant to our context, research-informed practice, and which more fully consider these trends and issues in higher education.**

To begin conversations for developing principles for the assessment of student learning at the University of Calgary, we are proposing the creation of an “Assessment Principles Group” (see attached Terms of Reference). The intent of the APG is to bring together individuals with interest, expertise, and experience in the assessment of student learning to help move forward with the development of *assessment principles* for student learning at the UCalgary.

Proposed Timeline:



ROUTING AND PERSONS CONSULTED

<u>Progress</u>	<u>Body</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Information</u>
X	Teaching and Learning Committee	2023-11-21			X	

NEXT STEPS

Immediate next steps will be to reach out to relevant groups across campus to recommend and invite individuals with interest, expertise, and experience in the assessment of student learning to join the Assessment Principles Group (APG).

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

1. Environmental Scan: U15 Principles for the Assessment of Student Learning
2. Assessment Principles Group Terms of Reference