

Course Progress Self-Assessment Allegheny College Learning Commons

Use these directions along with the accompanying Excel sheet to assess your current course performance and to set goals for your course grade. To use the sheet well, you will need your course syllabus and all of the grades you have received in the course to date. Note that very few Allegheny faculty grade on a curve. Typically, the assignment and test grades you have earned over the semester are averaged using a weighting that should be described in the course syllabus.

As a first step to assessing your work, figure out what grade you will earn if you continue your current study patterns. Once you have established what is happening, you can decide if you want to make any changes, and if so, what those should be. Begin this process by completing the Excel worksheet using the following instructions:

- The first column should list everything that figures in the final grade. If you don't have enough rows to record everything, add another row by choosing by selecting a row
- In the second column, indicate the date the assignment is due or the test will be given. For ongoing work like homework, class participation, or quizzes, simply write "ongoing" as the due date.
- The third column indicates how much each element is worth. This information is typically contained in a course syllabus. Usually, this is described as a number of points, or as a percentage of the final grade.
- In the fourth column, enter any grades that you already have. In the case, of ongoing work, *it is most helpful* for this process if you assume that the grades you are receiving now are the grades you will continue to receive. It is important to be realistic. If your quiz grades are currently 6 out of 10, then unless something *significant* changes in your study habits—vowing to work harder is not enough—your quiz grades are likely to stay the same or drop.
- In the fifth column, enter the grades you expect to earn on each element *if nothing changes* in your study habits. So, if your first exam grade is a C+, assume your second exam grade is a C+. *Be realistic.* So that you can base your decisions on sound information. If you don't know what grade you are earning on some component (e.g. participation), you can ask your instructor about it. (At the same time, you might ask how you can be a more effective class participant.)

Note all the grades should be entered using a common numerical format. Use numerical equivalents for letter grades: A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, and so on. If a percentage system is used, then enter all grades as percentages. (So for example if the average quiz grade is 5 out of 8, the percentage is $(6.5 \div 8) \times 100 = 81.25$.) If a point system is used, enter all grades as total points earned. (For example, If you earn 6 points on each of 8 quizzes, you will earn $6 \times 8 = 48$ points.)

- The final column is computed automatically and should fill in itself. Don't worry if there are zeros in rows that you are not using.

After reviewing where you are, experiment with the projected grade for each course element to see how changing your performance on individual elements will change your course grade. Spend enough time looking at different scenarios to get a good sense of what is possible. Then set goals for yourself focusing on what you want to accomplish in this course.

Finally, figure out how you are going to meet your goals. Remember, simply vowing to work harder is *unlikely* to result in significant change. You need to work *smarter*. Think about how you can use your time more effectively. Explore resources in the Learning Commons and on the web and that can help you learn how to read more quickly and effectively, how to remember what you have read or heard in class, how to write more effectively, and how to better prepare for exams.

For more help or tips, we would be happy to meet with you to help you identify study habits that will serve you better. Call (332.2898) or email the Learning Commons (learningcommons@allegheny.edu).