



High School Outcomes-Based Assessment in CBE

Understanding the High School Proficiency Scale

What is an outcome?

The outcomes describe what a student is expected to know and be able to do, according to the Alberta Programs of Study.

What is outcomes-based assessment?

- A research-based assessment system where grades are based on student performance of key course outcomes. Assessments and teachers' gradebooks are set up to communicate information about the student's depth of understanding for each key outcome instead of a single, overall grade.
- Grades represent student performance of key course outcomes alone, and teachers work to reduce grade distortion from non-academic factors such as behavior, effort, homework completion, group grades and/or class participation. Information about the skills and attributes that contribute to student success is communicated separately from the grade.
- Final grades are based on the student's most recent and consistent demonstration of the key outcomes instead of an accumulation of points that are averaged and weighted using a mathematical calculation. This allows teachers to be more responsive to student need and more flexible with how they assess student achievement. One size does not need to fit all.

What is the CBE High School Proficiency Scale? What does it tell you?

The proficiency scale is a strengths-based and growth-oriented assessment tool. Eight performance categories describe the depth of understanding a student has demonstrated of course outcomes (Beginning 1, Beginning 2, Developing 1, Developing 2, Proficient 1, Proficient 2, Exemplary 1, Exemplary 2).

What does it look like to assess student understanding with a proficiency scale?

- Teachers work with students to identify success criteria for the outcomes being learned. These criteria provide a road map to success – clear learning targets that help students make progress toward the end goal.
- While learning is happening, students and teachers use the success criteria to track progress and provide feedback about strengths and next steps. This kind of assessment is called *formative assessment* and is not included in final grades.
- At the end of a period of learning, teachers use the success criteria to evaluate the student's level of understanding of the outcomes. This kind of assessment is called *summative assessment* and is used to determine final grades.
- Instead of one overall score on an assessment, achievement is communicated as a level of proficiency for each outcome associated with the assessment.

| Beginning | | Developing | | Proficient | | Exemplary | |
|---|-----|--|-----|---|-----|--|------|
| 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| <p>The student demonstrates a level of understanding and/or skill that is not yet meeting expectations of the course outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of work may be vague and/or undeveloped. ▪ Targeted adjustments to planning and instruction will be necessary for further learning in this area. | | <p>The student demonstrates a basic level of understanding and/or skill that meets expectations of the course outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of work may be adequate and/or concrete. ▪ Adjustments to planning and instruction may be necessary for further learning in this area. | | <p>The student demonstrates a well-developed level of understanding and/or skill that meets expectations of the course outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of work may be clear and/or well-reasoned. ▪ The student can be confident of being prepared for further learning in this area. | | <p>The student demonstrates a mastery level of understanding and/or skill that meets expectations of the course outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of work may be perceptive and/or insightful. ▪ The student can be confident of being prepared for further learning in this area. | |
| 20% | 40% | 55% | 65% | 75% | 85% | 95% | 100% |

What is an assessment?

Assessments are used to determine how well students have learned the outcomes. There are many ways to assess student learning, including projects, skill demonstrations, essays, conversations written tests and performances.

How will student achievement be recorded on report cards?

In accordance with Alberta Education requirements, achievement in all high school courses will still be reported with one final percentage grade.

Why is achievement on assessments separated by outcomes instead of using one overall score?

- One overall score on an assessment that targets multiple outcomes can hide information about a student's understanding of the outcomes and provides little beneficial information about what was done well or done poorly.
- Providing assessment for each outcome gives students more specific information about their strengths and next steps because they can see which outcomes they understand well and which ones they need to improve on.
- For example, a student may have mastered Outcome 1 and only have a surface-level understanding of Outcome 2. If only one average score is reported, the student does not know they need to focus their efforts on building a stronger understanding of Outcome 2.

Why is achievement on assessments communicated with proficiency levels instead of raw scores or percentages?

- Raw scores / percentages on assessments are often based on a tally of how many questions a student answers correctly, and do not distinguish between surface-level understanding and deeper-level understanding.
- Using a proficiency scale with clearly defined criteria helps students focus on the learning rather than the scores they are accumulating. Students become more motivated to truly understand the material and improve their performance of the key outcomes.
- Using a proficiency scale increases the reliability of grades because the likelihood of a group of teachers assigning the same piece of student work the same mark increases. With fewer levels of performance (especially compared to the 101 levels of the percentage scale), a group of teachers is more likely to determine that a sample of student work demonstrates a "Proficient 2" level of understanding than they are to all give the work, say an 87%.

How are final percentage grades determined for report cards?

- Instead of using different types of assessments to calculate percentage grades (e.g., Tests = 60%, Projects = 40%), the outcomes are used to calculate percentage grades (e.g., Outcome 1 = 20%, Outcome 2 = 50%, Outcome 3 = 30%).
- The student's proficiency level for each outcome is converted to a percentage grade using the percentage equivalents shown in the proficiency scale table above (e.g., Proficient 1 = 75%) and these percentage grades are then used to calculate the overall percentage grade.
- The table below provides an example for two students in a course with five key outcomes. The summative assessment information gathered throughout the course shows that Student A demonstrated a Proficient 1 level of understanding of each of the five outcomes, while Student B demonstrated a between a Proficient 1 and Exemplary 1 level understanding, depending on the outcome. The final percentage grade was calculated by using the percentage equivalents of each proficiency level and the weighting of each outcome.

| Outcome (Outcome Weighting of Final Grade) | Outcome 1 (25%) | Outcome 2 (15%) | Outcome 3 (15%) | Outcome 4 (25%) | Outcome 5 (20%) | Final Percentage Grade |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Student A | Proficient 1 (75%) | Proficient 1 (75%) | Proficient 1 (75%) | Proficient 1 (75%) | Proficient 1 (75%) | 75% |
| Student B | Proficient 1 (75%) | Proficient 2 (85%) | Exemplary 1 (95%) | Proficient 1 (75%) | Proficient 2 (85%) | 81.5% |