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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 23, 2025

TO: Community College Institutional Research Directors

FROM: Yuxin Lin, Ph.D., Associate Director, Research and Policy
Analysis, Maryland Higher Education Commission

SUBJECT: Guidelines for the 2025 Performance Accountability Report

The 2024 Performance Accountability Report (PAR) for the State's public colleges and universities was approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission at its February meeting. The report was forwarded to the Governor and the General Assembly as required by law (§11-307 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland).

This memorandum and the Appendix that accompany it constitute the guidelines for the 2025 Performance Accountability Report. Please review the guidelines carefully. **Please note that the guidelines for the report narratives have been updated in the appendix. Kindly review them carefully before proceeding with the report preparation.** Submissions that do not follow these guidelines will be returned to you for correction.

Reporting Schedule and Submission Process

The institutional performance accountability reports should be submitted electronically to the Maryland Higher Education Commission no later than **October 1, 2025**. Please submit the materials via the Google form. Institutions must submit their reports in pdf format as well as their Degree Progress Analysis and benchmark data in Excel.

The reports submitted on or before this date should be in their final form and must be received and considered by the governing boards of the community colleges as required by law (§11-304 through §11-308 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland). Campuses whose governing bodies will not meet in time for the report before this deadline should contact me to make arrangements for submission.

Please submit the materials via this Google form (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf4fDLPEY7sRDLHRUZjTdkFZdyAK60nCMc9l52VWVdKZ19ckQ/viewform?usp=dialog). If you have difficulties accessing the form, please contact me as soon as possible to address the issue with your campus IT department.

Via the Google form, each institution must:

1) Indicate whether the Performance Accountability Report has been received and considered by the necessary governing bodies, as required by law;
2) Upload– as one combined PDF – the narrative report, benchmarks, and degree progress analysis report, and any other additional documentation; this combined PDF will constitute the published report for each institution,
3) Upload the Excel file of the Institutional Characteristics and Benchmarks report, and
4) Upload the Excel file of the Degree Progress Analysis report.

I have included a pdf copy of the Google form for reference.

Content of Institutional Performance Accountability Reports (New)

Each accountability report should contain a narrative discussing successes and challenges in meeting the goals, objectives, and performance measures that align with the goals of the 2022 State Plan for Postsecondary Education[1].

Details regarding the narrative and its requirements are found in the Appendix. Note that the narrative requirements have changed so please read the appendix carefully.

As Maryland looks beyond its 2025 55% completion goal, this year, please respond to two prompts regarding the lessons learned and experiences gained through your work toward the 2025 completion goal. Please answer both prompts within 1-2 pages:

1. **Given the complex needs of today's students, what innovative supports (academic, financial, mental health, basic needs) has your college found most effective in boosting student success? How might these be expanded or reimagined to support long-term degree completion goals?**

2. **In what ways has your institution changed (e.g., structures, policies, practices, or culture) as a result of pursuing the 55% completion goal? What lessons have you learned about sustaining institutional change over time?**

Colleges should include responses in a distinct sub-section of the institutional assessment portion of the report. In addition, colleges should include the original prompt from MHEC with the response.

Colleges are required to provide the calculations that were used to obtain the statistics for successful-persister rate and graduation/transfer rate for the **Fall 2020 cohort**. These statistics must be supplied for each of the four groups of students – college ready, developmental completers, developmental non-completers, and all students – using the accompanying degree

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[1] https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-105(b)(3)(i)_2022.pdf

progress definitions and template that were developed by the Maryland Community College Research Group.

The Commission has discontinued the requirement that institutions report cost containment results in a specified format. Colleges may choose to report briefly on significant steps taken to control expenditures but this is an optional section.

All narrative sections of the performance accountability report must adhere to the accompanying formatting requirements contained in the Appendix. Accountability reports should not include page numbers, headers, or footers; tables and charts are permissible. Please carefully proofread your report before submitting it to the Commission. See the Appendix for word and page length requirements and recommendations.

Indicators and Operational Definitions

The Appendix describes the requirements for the Degree Progress Analysis table. There is also a Degree Progress Analysis report template you must use for the institution's submission. Please ensure the **Fall 2020 cohort** and the name of your institution are indicated in the first row of your Degree Progress Analysis submission.

This is the last reporting year of which the current PAR indicators starting from 2021 are reported. The Appendix contains a table showing the common indicators and the nine student profile items for community colleges, along with the operational definitions and sources to be used in providing the data for each indicator and profile item.

Please keep the following points in mind when updating performance indicators:

- Colleges are to supply data for the most recent year for each indicator. Note that the template specifies the year or term for each indicator. Please follow the template exactly.
- Colleges are encouraged, but not required, to submit historical data for new indicators. Colleges choosing not to provide historical data should mark "*" in the relevant cells.
- When reporting percentages, please report to at least one significant decimal place (e.g. 22.7% rather than 23%). The compiled report will show percentages to one decimal place.
- The Commission will provide information, under separate cover, for the indicator market share of recent, college-bound public high school graduates no later than June 20; the remaining market share indicators can be obtained from the corresponding enrollment reports published on the agency's Research page.[2]
- The Commission will provide, under separate cover, the information for the Indicator performance at transfer institutions; this will be provided no later than June 20.
- The average tuition and fee figure for Maryland public four-year institutions, to be used in the calculation **$10,499.**

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[2] The Fall 2024 Enrollment by Place of Residence Report will be published on the Research page (under Enrollment Reports) no later than June 20, 2025.

- Colleges are encouraged to add institution-specific indicators that measure performance outcomes that are important to each campus. Four years of trend data and benchmarks must be provided for all additional indicators.

The accountability materials you submit include a Microsoft Excel template, provided by MCCRG, which should be populated with your institution's data for each of the indicators. **The format of this spreadsheet must not be changed, except to add campus-specific measures and/or to expand the number of licensure exam areas. Please ensure that any changes made to the data source, reporting timeframes, definitions, or calculation methodology should be marked clearly as a footnote to the respective indicator.**

Note: MHEC uses de-identified unit record data (name, address, and other Personally Identifiable Information are stripped), and merges data on a scrambled unique identifier based on institutional submissions. These data may undercount outcomes due to inconsistent unique identifier data provided by the institution.

Benchmarks

The current benchmarks are expected to remain constant through the end of this reporting cycle. If, however, there is a compelling reason to propose a change, the change must be approved by the governing board and clearly highlighted in this report.

A set of guidelines for benchmarking is included in the Appendix. This information provides institutions with examples of the various approaches they can use to prepare their objectives; it is intended to serve only as a guideline, and not as an authoritative model which must be followed.

In instances where there are multiple data items for one indicator, separate benchmarks must be set for each item. The student characteristic items are not benchmarked.

Conclusion

Please contact me at any time if you would like to discuss the guidelines, have questions about the performance accountability process, or suggestions on improvements or adjustments to the process. You can email me at yuxin.lin@maryland.gov. I appreciate your efforts on this important project. Please extend our thanks to your colleagues at your college who contribute to the success of this work and to the education of your students.

Appendix

**I.   2025 Institutional Performance Accountability Report
Format for Community Colleges**

The institutional narrative should be a total of no more than **eight pages**. Please consider the word and page limit instructions detailed below as a guide.

1. Mission

   Provide a brief summary of your approved institutional mission statement (no more than 75 to 100 words).

2. Institutional Assessment **(new – updated instructions bolded below)**

   Each report should contain a narrative discussing progress made toward the goals, objectives, and performance measures that align with the goals of the 2022 State Plan for Postsecondary Education. **This year is the final year of the current reporting cycle. Each community college shall report on its current performance measures and compare them to the benchmarks set in the PAR Indicators. Please discuss whether the institution has met the established goals. If not, please specify how the institution plans to improve the performance and address the challenges that impede progress in the next cycle. Reports that do not follow this format will be returned for corrections and edits.**

   The report should also include a response subsection, which addresses the selected questions provided by the Commission. Please include the original prompts from the Commission with the response. The response to MHEC prompts should be no more than **two pages.**

   Please ensure the prompts have been addressed, in full, before submitting the Report.

   Please note that the Commission will include, unedited, the institutional that is submitted by the institution for the 2025 Performance Accountability Report.

3. Community Outreach and Impact

   Provide a brief description of the manner in which the institution is serving key constituencies in its county or larger service area, particularly employers and schools. Emphasize the activities that were most significant and/or not included in the previous year's report.

4. Accountability Indicators

   Supply the data and benchmarks/goals for each indicator, using the definitions provided and following the format included in the templates. This information must be submitted to the Commission in electronic form using the Google form link.

   Provide tables showing the calculations that were used to obtain the statistics for the degree progress analysis indicators (successful-persister rate and graduation/transfer rate) for the

cohort entering in Fall 2020. There should be separate analyses for each of the four groups of students (college ready, developmental completers, developmental non-completers, and all students).

II.   Formatting Requirements for Narrative Sections of the

2025 Accountability Reports

- Submissions should be no more than **eight pages**
- Document font: Times New Roman 12pt
- Margins: 1" all sides
- Left-justified text
- Document heading (Institution name): 14pt bold, centered
- Section headings: 14pt bold, centered
- Subheadings: 12pt bold, left justified
- No headers or footers
- No page numbering
- No section breaks
- No logos, pictures, graphics, or art of any kind

5. **Instructions for preparing the PDF report for submission (new – updated instructions bolded below)**

Please prepare, **<u>as one pdf document</u>** the materials in the following order:

1) The institutional narrative – the mission and institutional assessment, community outreach, and institutional response to the prompts listed on page 2.
2) The Degree Progress Analysis data – **first tab of the worksheet**.
3) The institutional Accountability Indicators
4) Optional – data definitions, control procedures, or other documentation tied to the submission

Each institution's pdf will be combined into one, larger volume containing all of the community college and public four-year institutions' submissions.

Reports that do not follow these guidelines will be returned to you for correction.

III. Community College Degree Progress Four Years after Initial Enrollment Fall Entering Cohort

Data definitions:

All Students: All first-time students entering the community college in the fall (no transfer students).

College-ready students: Students not requiring any developmental coursework, including those who were not tested, received testing waivers or required ESL coursework.

Developmental completers: Students successfully completing all recommended developmental coursework or completing a college-level course in the recommended areas.

Developmental non-completers: Students failing to complete all recommended developmental coursework.

The last three groups are mutually exclusive and together account for all students in the cohort.

Notes:

1. Use third-week data (same as EIS) to identify the cohort. If an error is found in the first-time cohort that was reported in the EIS, make corrections for this analysis. For example, if a student that was reported as first-time is found to have attended previously, transferred in, or was in high school at the time, do not include the student in this analysis.
2. National Student Clearinghouse data should be used to make the analysis as complete as possible. Data provided by MHEC may be used in addition to NSC data.
3. If a student transferred to both a 2-year and a 4-year institution, report the 4-year institution.
4. Minority groups with less than 50 students in the cohort for analysis should be reported in the minority degree progress charts even though they are not reported on the performance accountability report.

Line item definitions:

1. Number of full- and part-time first-time students in the fall cohort.

2. Number attempting less than 18 hours over first 2 years (including developmental courses).

3. Cohort for analysis – all first-time students attempting at least 18 hours over the first 2 years. (Line 1 – Line 2) (This cohort is the denominator for all percentages reported below.)

4. Earned an associate degree at the community college by the end of the summer of the fourth year.

5. Earned a certificate (but no degree) at the community college by end of summer of the fourth year.

6. Total awards earned at the community college. (Line 4 + Line 5) (This is an unduplicated number – students are counted only once in Lines 4 and 5)

7. Transferred to a Maryland 2-year college if the transfer occurred after a student's initial semester of attendance up to the end of the fall semester following the fourth year.

8. Transferred to a Maryland public 4-year college if the transfer occurred after a student's initial semester of attendance up to the end of the fall semester following the fourth year.

9. Transferred to a Maryland private 4-year college if the transfer occurred after a student's initial semester of attendance up to the end of the fall semester following the fourth year.

10. Transferred to an out-of-state 2-year/technical college if the transfer occurred after a student's initial semester of attendance up to the end of the fall semester following the fourth year.

11. Transferred to an out-of-state 4-year college if the transfer occurred after a student's initial semester of attendance up to the end of the fall semester following the fourth year.

12. Total transfers. (Sum of Lines 7 – 11) (This is an unduplicated number – students are counted only once in Lines 7 - 11)

13. Graduated from the community college and transferred. (Students who are reported in both Lines 6 and 12)

14. Total graduated from the community college and/or transferred. (Line 6 + Line 12 – Line 13) (This is an unduplicated number.)

15. No award or transfer, but earned at least 30 credit hours (not including developmental courses) at the community college with GPA >= 2.00 by the end of the summer of the fourth year.

16. Graduated, transferred or earned at least 30 credit hours at the community college with GPA >= 2.00. (Lines 14 + 15)

17. Students not included in Line 16 who were enrolled at the community college in spring or summer of the fourth year.

18. Total successful or persisting students. (Lines 16 + 17)

SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR DEGREE PROGRESS REPORT

		All Students		College-ready Students		Developmental Completers		Developmental Non-completers	
1	First-time full- and part-time fall headcount								
2	Number attempting fewer than 18 hours over first 2 years								
3	Cohort for analysis (Line 1 – Line 2)	0	100.0%	0	100.0%	0	100.0%	0	100.0%
4	Earned associate degree from this community college		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
5	Earned certificate, but no degree, from this community college		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
6	Total associate and certificate graduates (Line 4 + Line 5)	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
7	Transferred to Maryland two-year/technical college		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
8	Transferred to Maryland public four-year college		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
9	Transferred to Maryland private four-year college or university		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
10	Transferred to out-of-state two-year/technical college		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
11	Transferred to out-of-state four-year college or university		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
12	Total transfers (sum of Lines 7 – 11)	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
13	Graduated from this college and transferred (Line 6 + Line 12)		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
14	Graduated and/or transferred {(Line 6 + Line 12) – Line 13}	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
15	No award or transfer, but 30 credits with GPA ≥ 2.00		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
16	Successful transition to higher ed (Line 14 + Line 15)	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
17	Enrolled at this community college last term of study period		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!
18	Successful or persisting (Line 16 + Line 17)	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!

IV.   SUGGESTED GUIDELINES BENCHMARKING ACCOUNTABILITY OBJECTIVES

The performance accountability process for Maryland public colleges and universities includes the development of objectives with specific numerical targets. For community colleges, these objectives are agreed upon at the state level, although each campus has authority to develop its own goals, with the approval of its governing board.

This document is designed to be illustrative of the type of approaches that institutions can use in preparing benchmarks. It is not an authoritative model that must be followed. Benchmarking approaches may vary with each objective.

Definition of "Benchmark"

The benchmark is a five-year goal for each objective that the institution sets for itself. The goal is expected to be achievable, indicative of progress, based on the performance of similar institutions (where feasible), and reflective of the adequacy of funding.

Use of Comparative Information

Where appropriate and available, benchmarks should be based on national data using either all institutions in either the relevant Carnegie category or a designated set of peers (either aspirational or current as determined by the governing board). If national data are used for benchmarking, the following should apply:

•   If the institution is below the national average (mean or median) on an indicator, the benchmark should be set at the national average or an improvement of at least 20 percent above its current level.

•   If the institution is above the national average, the benchmark may be set at its current level or any improvement deemed appropriate and feasible.

Where comparative national information is not available, Maryland data may be used. For community colleges, this would involve comparisons either with the statewide average for two-year institutions or with colleges of a similar size (small, medium and large).

•   If the institution is below the selected average (mean or median) on an indicator, the benchmark should be set at that average or an improvement of at least 20 percent above its current level.

•   If the institution is above the selected average, the benchmark may be set at its current status or any improvement deemed appropriate and feasible.

Tailoring Benchmarks to Individual Situations

Some campuses may find the above guidelines inappropriate in the case of certain objectives. Each campus's situation may require the adoption of other methods for the establishment of some benchmarks. In adopting any single benchmark, an institution may deviate from these guidelines if

institutional circumstances make it reasonable to do so, provided that this action is supported by the campus's governing board.

Using Benchmarks in the Annual Report (New)

The importance of setting benchmarks extends beyond just preparing the PAR materials for your campus. These benchmarks are also used by MHEC to assess progress while compiling its statewide report. The reported measures will be compared to the established benchmarks to determine whether the institutions are on track to meet those goals.