

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 26, 2026

TO: Anthony Foster, University System of Maryland  
Cheryl Rollins, Ph.D., Morgan State University  
Anne Marie Brady, Ph.D., St. Mary's College of Maryland

FROM: Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D., Director of Research and Policy Analysis, Maryland  
Higher Education Commission

SUBJECT: Guidelines for the 2026 Performance Accountability Report

The 2025 Performance Accountability Report (PAR) for the State's public colleges and universities was approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission at its March 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 accompanying appendix 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 the 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, 2026**. **The reports submitted on or before this date should be in their final form and must be received and considered by the necessary governing bodies 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/1FAIpQLSdBzIxHZ4Pv\\_DPBBaGV8CSuI8jMmZtAEf7HP](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdBzIxHZ4Pv_DPBBaGV8CSuI8jMmZtAEf7HP))

[Lkb7XGPjNCdLw/viewform?usp=header](#)). 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<sup>1</sup>;
- 2) Upload— as one combined PDF – the narrative report, goals, objectives and performance measures and any other additional documentation; this combined PDF will constitute the published report for each institution<sup>2</sup>, and
- 3) Upload the completed Excel file as provided to the Department of Budget and Management for the annual Managing for Results submission.

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 Higher Education<sup>3</sup>.

**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.**

**The performance accountability process for Maryland public colleges and universities includes the development of objectives with specific numerical targets. These benchmarks serve as time-based (e.g., five-year cycles) numeric goals for each objective 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. This year, please respond to two prompts related to the benchmarking process.**

- 1. How were the benchmarks for your institution's Performance Accountability Report (PAR)/Managing for Results (MFR) metrics established for the current cycle? If a benchmark has not been established for a particular metric, please**

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<sup>1</sup> See §11-306 which states " Every year the president of each public institution of higher education shall submit to its governing board a written report on the attainment by the institution of the objectives in the performance accountability plan of the institution. The governing board shall: Submit the report to the Commission; and Hold each president accountable for meeting the objectives in the performance accountability plan."

<sup>2</sup> See appendix for compilation order for pdf of report.

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

**explain why and describe how your institution tracks progress and holds itself accountable for improvement in that area. Please describe the process used to set targets, including the role of institutional data, historical trends, peer comparisons, or strategic priorities. Please state your current MFR cycle in your response (e.g., 2026-2030 or 2026-2029).**

- 2. Please describe the role of your institution's governing body in monitoring progress toward PAR/MFR accountability metrics. How are these metrics communicated to the governing body, and how does the governing body use this information to support institutional improvement and accountability?**

Institutions should include responses in a distinct subsection of the institutional assessment portion of the report. In addition, colleges should include the original prompt from MHEC with the response.

Benchmarks may not be changed without the approval of the appropriate governing bodies, and changes must be explicitly noted in the institution's accountability report.

The Commission has discontinued the requirement that institutions report cost containment results in a specified format. Institutions may choose to report 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.

### **Key Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures Table**

Each public four-year institution should use the goals, objectives, and performance measures that are submitted to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for the State's Managing for Results (MFR) process. The formatting and style of the table must be consistent with the guidelines that DBM has established for MFR submissions. **Reports that do not follow this format will be returned for corrections.**

In addition, each institution will receive a file containing information for all applicable institutional data on second-year retention and six-year graduation rates for all students, African American students, and all minority students for the corresponding cohorts no later than June 30, 2026. Upon request, the Commission will provide campuses with other statistics for those

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measures for which they are unable to generate information at their institutions or at the system, and which are available only from the Commission.

**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.**

### **Conclusion**

Please contact me at any time if you would like to discuss the guidelines or have questions about the performance accountability process. You may email me at [barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov](mailto:barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov). Thank you to you and your colleagues for your efforts in this process.

## APPENDIX

### 2026 Institutional Performance Accountability Report Format For Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities

#### 1. Mission

Provide a brief summary of the college or university's 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 Higher Education (see next paragraph for further instructions). **Institutions are required to identify the key goals, objectives, and MFR performance measures tied to the State Plan's goals and to discuss the successes or challenges faced in their progress toward THE SELECTED ITEMS ONLY.**

**Specifically, each public four-year institution shall report on**

- 1. Based on progress to date in the current accountability cycle, which PAR/MFR metrics are on track to meet their benchmarks and which are not?**
- 2. For any metrics that are currently behind schedule, please briefly describe the factors contributing to the gap.**
- 3. For metrics that are currently falling short of their benchmarks, what specific strategies or initiatives is your institution implementing to improve performance before the end of the reporting cycle? Please describe:**
  - The actions being taken**
  - The populations or programs targeted**
  - The anticipated timeline for improvement**

**For example, MFR Objective 2.2 for Bowie State University is "Increase the undergraduate six-year graduation rate to over 50 percent" and is aligned with the success goal of the State Plan. Bowie shall compare the current undergraduate six-year graduation rate stated in the MFR to the benchmarked level<sup>4</sup>. Then discuss whether the**

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<sup>4</sup> If your institution identifies the year of benchmarks (e.g. increase undergraduate six-year graduation rate to xx percent in 2027), please indicate whether the measures are on track to meet the benchmarked level by the stated year in the benchmark.

**institution is on track to meet the established goals by the benchmark year. If not, please specify how the institution plans to improve the performance and address the challenges that impede the progress.**

The institutional assessment should also include a response subsection, which addresses the 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 assessment that is submitted by the institution for the 2026 Performance Accountability Report.

#### 4. Accountability Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

The institution should use the goals, objectives, and performance measures that are submitted for the State's MFRs process. Institutions should provide the completed Excel templates from their most recent MFR submission. Please submit the original Excel format and ensure the "MFR Do Not Edit" tab is included in the PDF version of the full Accountability Report submission.

### **Formatting Requirements for Narrative Sections of the 2026 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, nor art of any kind

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Please adhere to the page limits. Proofread your submission carefully. **Reports that do not follow these guidelines will be returned to you for correction.**

### **Instructions for preparing the PDF report for submission**

Please prepare, **as one pdf document** the materials in the following order:

- 1) The institutional narrative – the mission and institutional assessment and institutional response to the prompts listed on page 2
- 2) The Mission, Vision, Key Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures from the institution's most recent Managing for Results submission (the "MFR Do Not Edit" tab)
- 3) 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.