

Assessing and Scoring an Organization Against the Progressive Excellence Program[®] Criteria

Introduction to Excellence Canada's Assessment and Scoring Methodologies

Assessment is a method to evaluate all dimensions of an organization against set criteria. There is no “passing” or “failing” grade associated with assessment. The purpose is for the organization to learn where it stands when compared with established Criteria and, with this knowledge, to move forward. Assessment is a powerful diagnostic tool designed to both evaluate organizational performance and help improve it.

The Aim of Assessment

- To begin and/or sustain a strategic improvement journey.
- To discover and reinforce strengths and build upon them.
- To improve those areas where opportunities are identified – in particular, those that link to strategic direction. This helps the organization focus on an improvement strategy.

The Benefits of Assessment

- Helps achieve consistency of direction and consensus on what needs to be done.
- Helps integrate various improvement initiatives.
- Improves communication within the organization.

Assessing Strengths and Opportunities

1. Use the Approach-Implementation-Results Model as a framework to guide your evaluation of the strengths and opportunities. Note where a Result (good or bad) links to the Implementation of an Approach.
2. Be on the lookout for consistent themes throughout the interviews that span all levels. These are the strongest themes.
3. It has been found that themes are stronger at some levels than others. It is important to note at what levels the themes or concerns predominate.
4. Avoid listing numerous symptoms. Try to report the underlying causes, methods, or lack thereof, that are creating the symptoms observed.
5. Keep the focus on methods, not individuals. Describe what is working and what is not, rather than who is doing a good job and who is not.

6. Be careful about focusing on specific groups or departments, although if major variations exist between functions in the approach taken, this should be pointed out as it usually indicates an inconsistency in the management system.
7. Separate strengths from opportunities, but keep related topics together.
8. Try to achieve a balance of strengths and opportunities. It may also be helpful to highlight significant ones using double plus or double minus symbols.
9. Avoid getting into solutions at this stage. Stick to observations only.
10. Some relevant quotes that illustrate the strengths and opportunities should also be noted.

Key Points About Scoring

1. Scoring the assessment will help calibrate the assessment team's approach to criteria intent and gain consensus on overall conclusions, as well as assist the organization in tracking progress (levels and trends) over the long term.
2. The score is a measure of how far the organization has progressed on its journey toward organizational excellence. All progress that the organization has made from zero is therefore of value.
3. The best approach is to see scoring as a means to review progress from one year to another.
4. Scoring is not a pass/fail or a finger-pointing exercise. The 50% boundary does not represent "passing or failing" the assessment. A competitive approach must be avoided.
5. A score in the 10 to 30 percent range is indicative of an organization that has many good practices going on, but additional practices still need to be built into the management system.
6. The score is not the most important output. The main focus should be on the strengths, and the opportunities for improvement. These are the key findings of the organizational excellence assessment.
7. The assessment can be seriously undermined if too much significance is attached to the score.
8. Scoring is a team job, and is done by consensus.
9. The best approach to scoring is to start in the 20-point range and see if the comments reflect the organization (in the area of the Criteria being discussed). If not, move up or down the scale to locate the most appropriate range.
10. If a difference in scoring of 20 points exists between team members on a particular criterion, simply halve the difference. For example, if two people scored at 20, and two others at 40, use 30 and move on.

Progressive Excellence Program[®]
Assessment Scoring Guidelines
(Private and Public Sectors)

10 Points – (“Just Beginning”)

- **Overview** – Approaches around the subject described in the Criteria question have been discussed but not as yet applied.
- Any activity around the subject described in the Criteria question is purely on an ad-hoc basis, with no systematic approach being applied to it.
- The level of effectiveness of activity on the subject described in the Criteria question is regarded as low, based on input received during the assessment process.
- The focus in the organization is on corrective action as opposed to the application of preventive techniques such as data collection, process mapping, team involvement, and procedure reviews.
- Basically, the same problems or roadblocks to progress keep returning with regard to issues around the subject described in the Criteria question. Root causes are not addressed.
- Overall, there is very little implementation in the organization of the activities described in the Criteria questions.

20 Points – (“On Our Way – With Some Implementation”)

- **Overview** – Approaches around the subject described in the Criteria question have been discussed and implemented in the organization, either in a “pilot” form or in a few key areas.
- Activity around the subject described in the Criteria question is at a fairly early stage of implementation in the organization.
- The level of effectiveness of activity on the subject described in the Criteria question is regarded as good, based on input received during the assessment process.
- The approach being applied in the organization is systematic as opposed to ad-hoc, albeit with limited implementation.
- Key processes impacting the activity are understood and stable. The approach being taken to improvement (in most key areas) is more focused on prevention and root cause identification, than on fighting fires.

30 Points – (“Well On Our Way – Good Level of Implementation”)

- **Overview** – Approaches around the subject described in the Criteria question have been discussed and implemented in a systematic manner in all key areas of the organization.
- Activity around the subject described in the Criteria question is systematic, based on good planning, and has been well implemented in all key areas across the organization.
- The level of effectiveness of activity on the subject described in the Criteria question is regarded as very good.
- Key processes impacting the activity described in the Criteria question are understood, documented, stable, and reviewed for improvement in a systematic manner in all key areas of the organization. The focus is on continuous improvement and the application of preventive techniques that address root causes of problems/issues. As a result, positive outcomes are being achieved (and measured) in a number of key areas.

40 Points – (“Fully Integrated and Effective – With Good Results”)

- **Overview** – Approaches around the subject described in the Criteria question have been discussed and implemented in a systematic manner in all key areas of the organization, including all support areas. There is evidence that refinements have been made and that good results are being sustained.
- Activity around the subject being described in the Criteria question is systematic, based on good planning, and has been fully implemented. There are high levels of understanding in all key areas.
- The level of effectiveness of activity on the subject described in the Criteria question is regarded as very good, with positive outcomes emanating from extensive cross-functional involvement.
- Key processes impacting the activity described in the Criteria question are fully understood, documented, and reviewed for improvement in a systematic manner across all key and support areas of the organization. The focus is on continuous improvement, and positive results are documented showing sustained improvement.