

General Studies Assessment

Process and Results

GS Assessment Process

- Assessment of the GS Program is a vital component of continuous improvement and in evaluating if the program is achieving its stated goals. The assessment of General Studies is conducted on a rotating basis with each category or area assessed once during the 3-year cycle.

Semester	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Fall	Foundational Core: Written Communication and Oral Communication	Foundational Core: MATH and Democracy in Perspective	Distribution: Natural Sciences, Analytical & Quantitative Thought; and Wellness
Spring	Portal Courses (all classes with course number 188)	Distribution: Aesthetics, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Capstone Courses (all classes with course number 188)

GS Assessment Process

The GSC approves the list of courses to be assessed each semester; courses selected based on:

- **Portal courses:** all courses with the number 188 are assessed
- **Capstone courses:** all courses with the number 388 are assessed
- **Courses in the Foundational Core and Distribution Areas:** The goal is to collect assessment data from 25% of GS Foundational Core and Distribution courses; courses selected using the following criteria:
 - **Diversity:** Each area has courses from a number of different academic departments and, in most instances, undergraduate colleges. To reflect this, the courses selected for assessment should also be diverse.
 - **Representation:** The number of Departments participating in each area varies, as does the number of courses offered by the individual Departments. Thus, courses selected for inclusion in the assessment process should be representative of not only the Departments participating in that area but also the level of their participation.
 - **Multiple sections:** When possible, courses selected for inclusion should have multiple sections offered during the semester being assessed.
 - **Enrollment:** Courses selected for inclusion should have enrollments of 25 – 30 students.
 - **Exclusions:** Honors courses are excluded from the selection process due to their limited enrollment and availability to a select student population.

GS Assessment Process

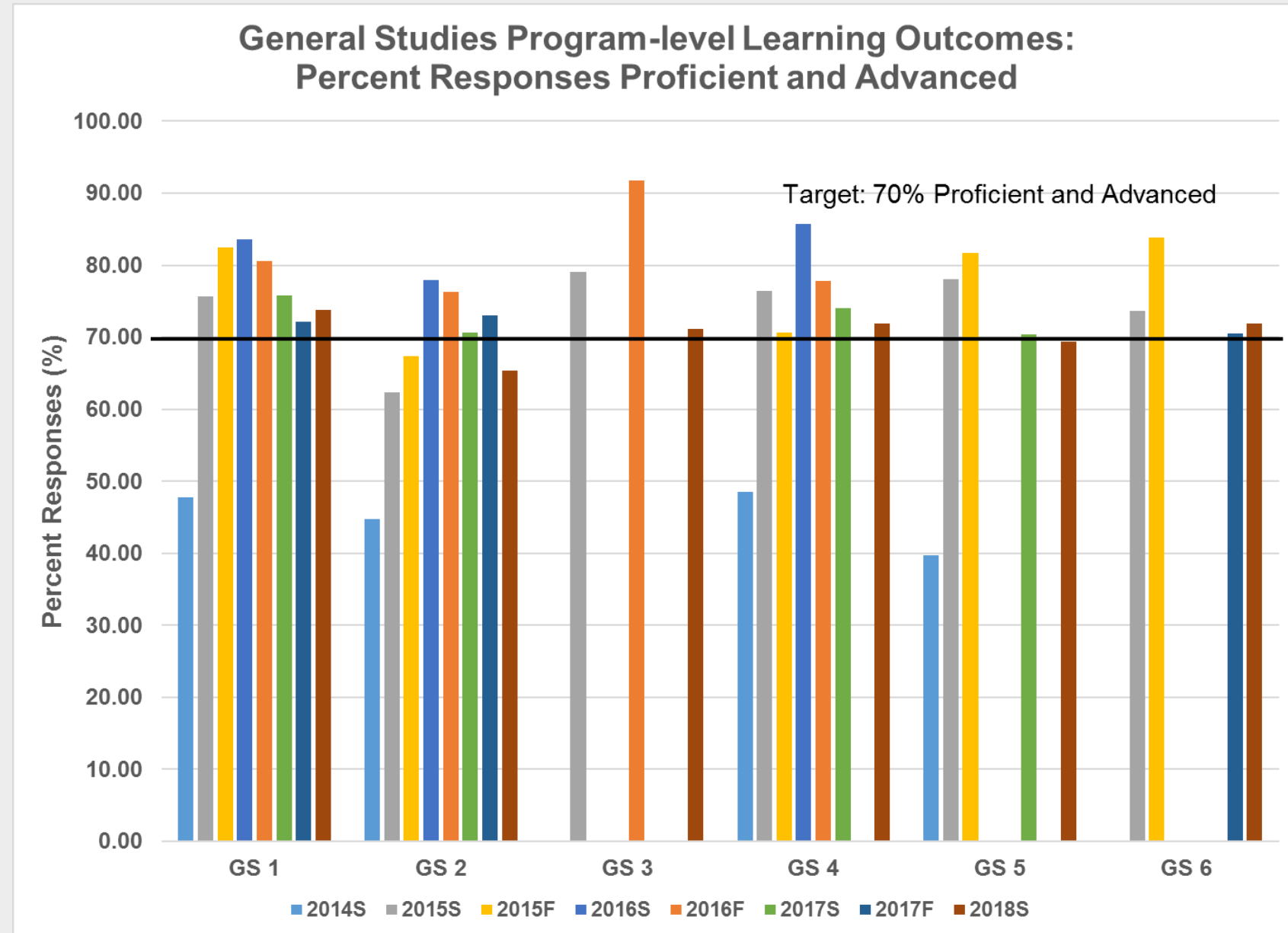
- Assessment of the GS learning outcomes is conducted using GSC approved [instruments and rubrics](#).
- In addition to assessing the specific learning outcomes for the courses in each category, the instruments used in the assessment process also measure the achievement on the GS Program Level Learning Outcomes.
 - GS 1: Evaluate information appropriate to the task
 - GS 2: Apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning.
 - GS 3: Communicate effectively in spoken form.
 - GS 4: Communicate effectively in written form.
 - GS 5: Analyze cultural issues within a global context.
 - GS 6: Evaluate in context significant concepts relating to democracy.
- The GSC has determined that students in general studies courses should meet the standard of at least 70% of students achieving Proficient and Advanced for each identified learning outcome, where “Proficient” describes the skills of the typical student near the end of the course and “Advanced” is anything above proficient.
- The assessment results for the six Program Level Learning Outcomes are presented below.

While there has been some variation in performance by learning outcome, proficiency levels for the six program-level student learning outcomes have settled at or slightly above the target of 70%. Highest proficiency levels are found in:

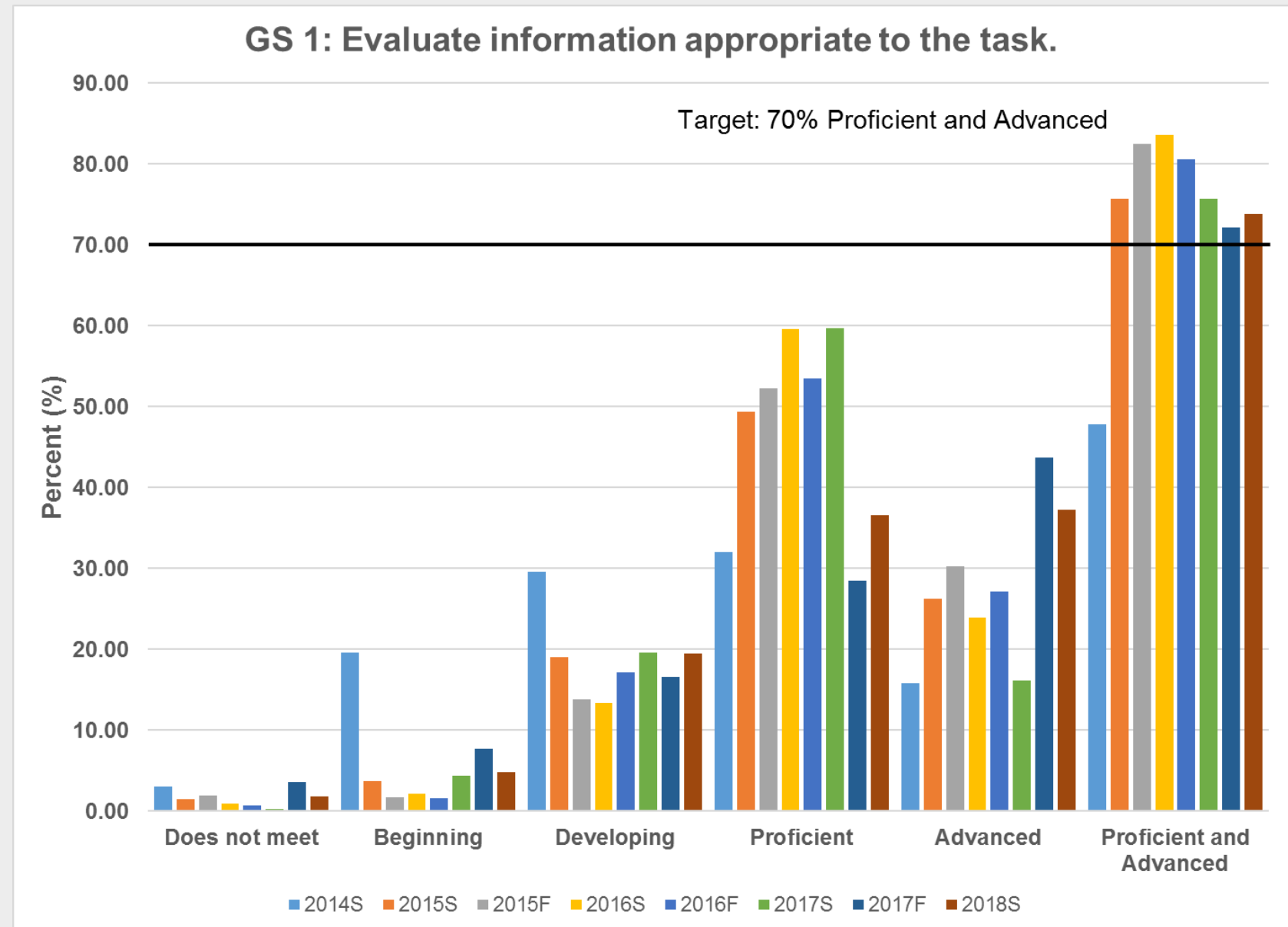
GS 1: Evaluate information appropriate to the task

GS 3: Communicate effectively in spoken form.

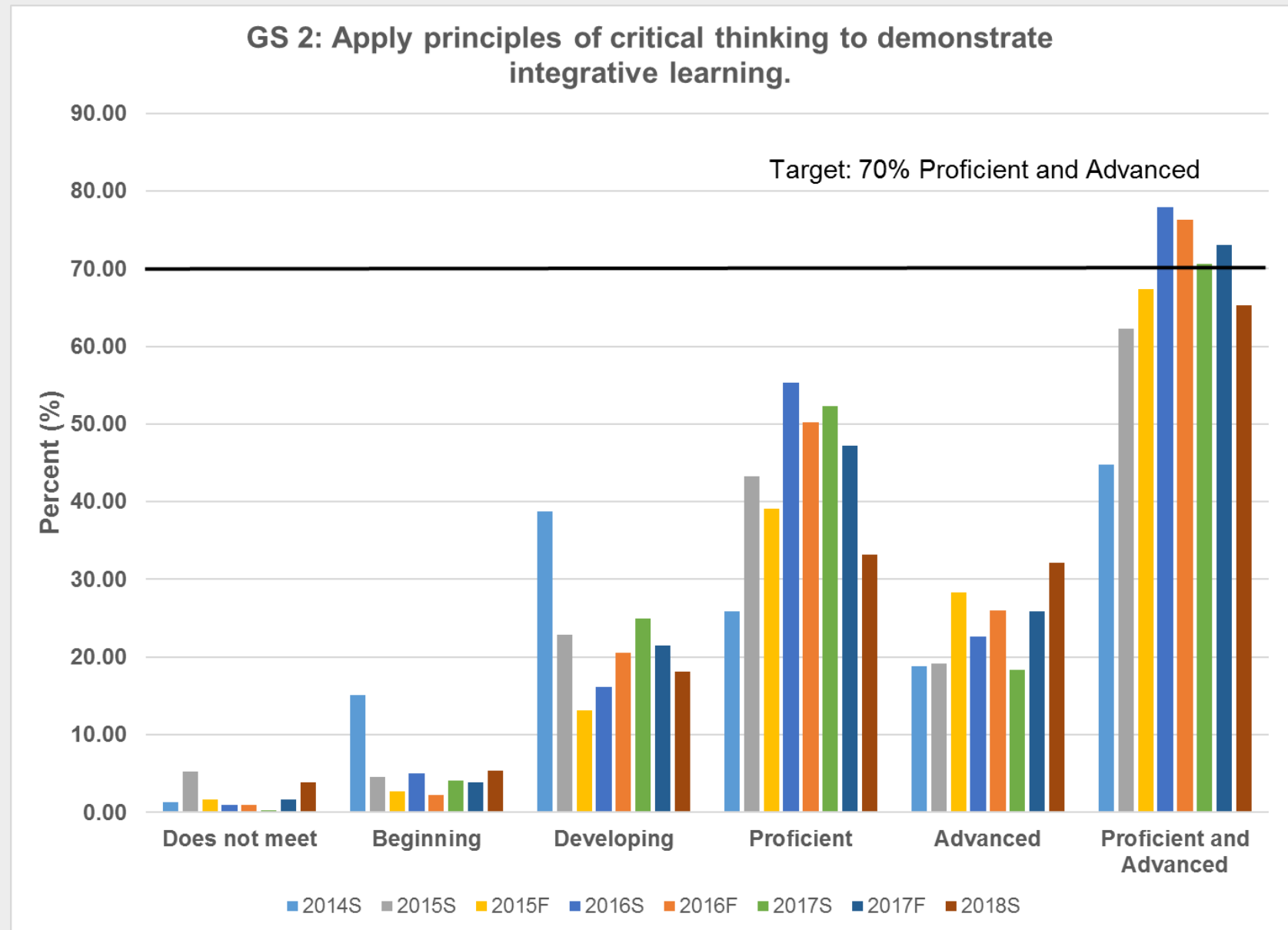
GS 4: Communicate effectively in written form.



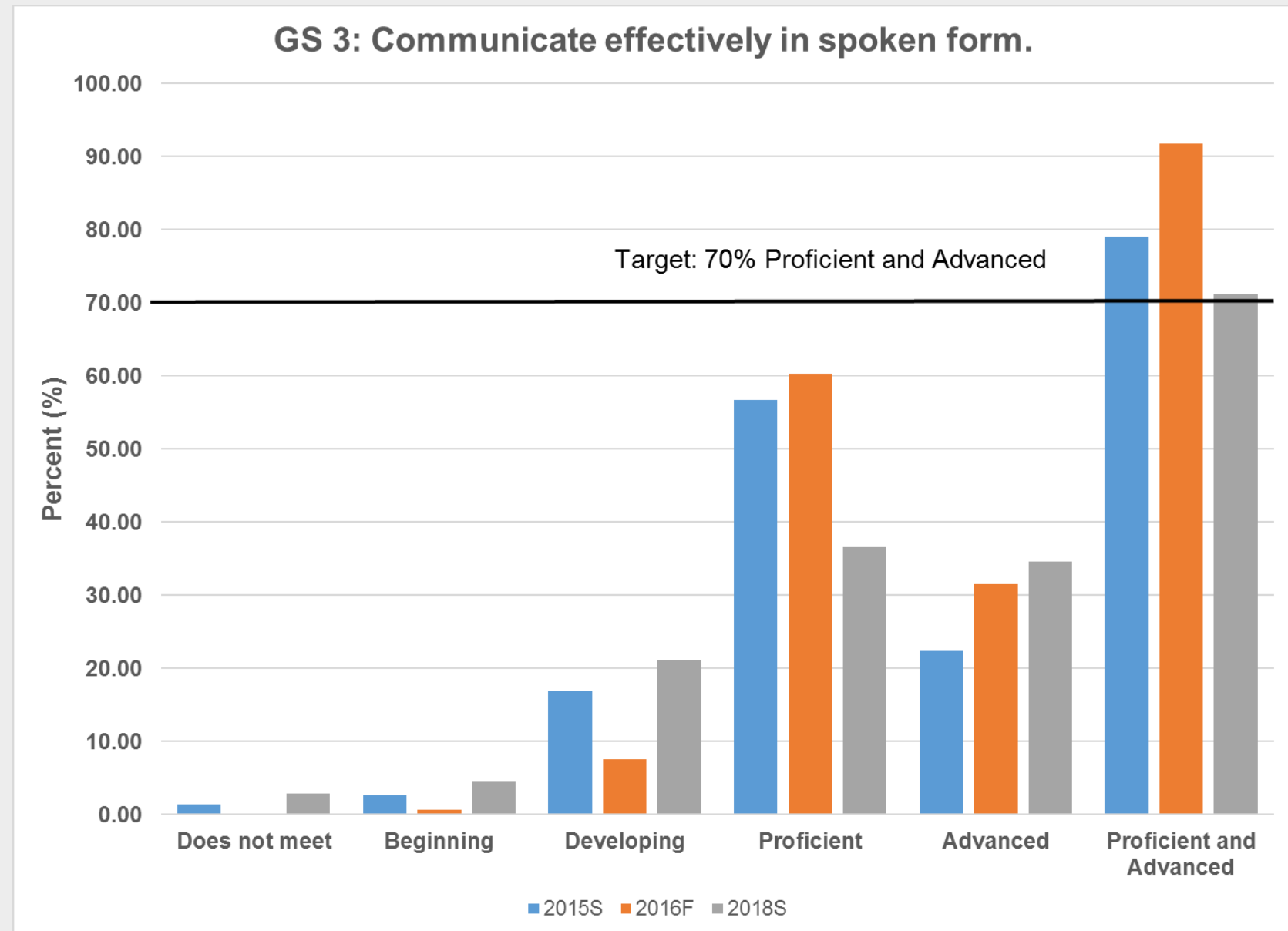
Results for students scoring at proficient or advanced level peaked in 2016 and are closer to the target of 70% in the latest assessment cycle (Spring 2018). Different courses are assessed each semester so it is not uncommon to see variation in scoring by instructor and/or course.



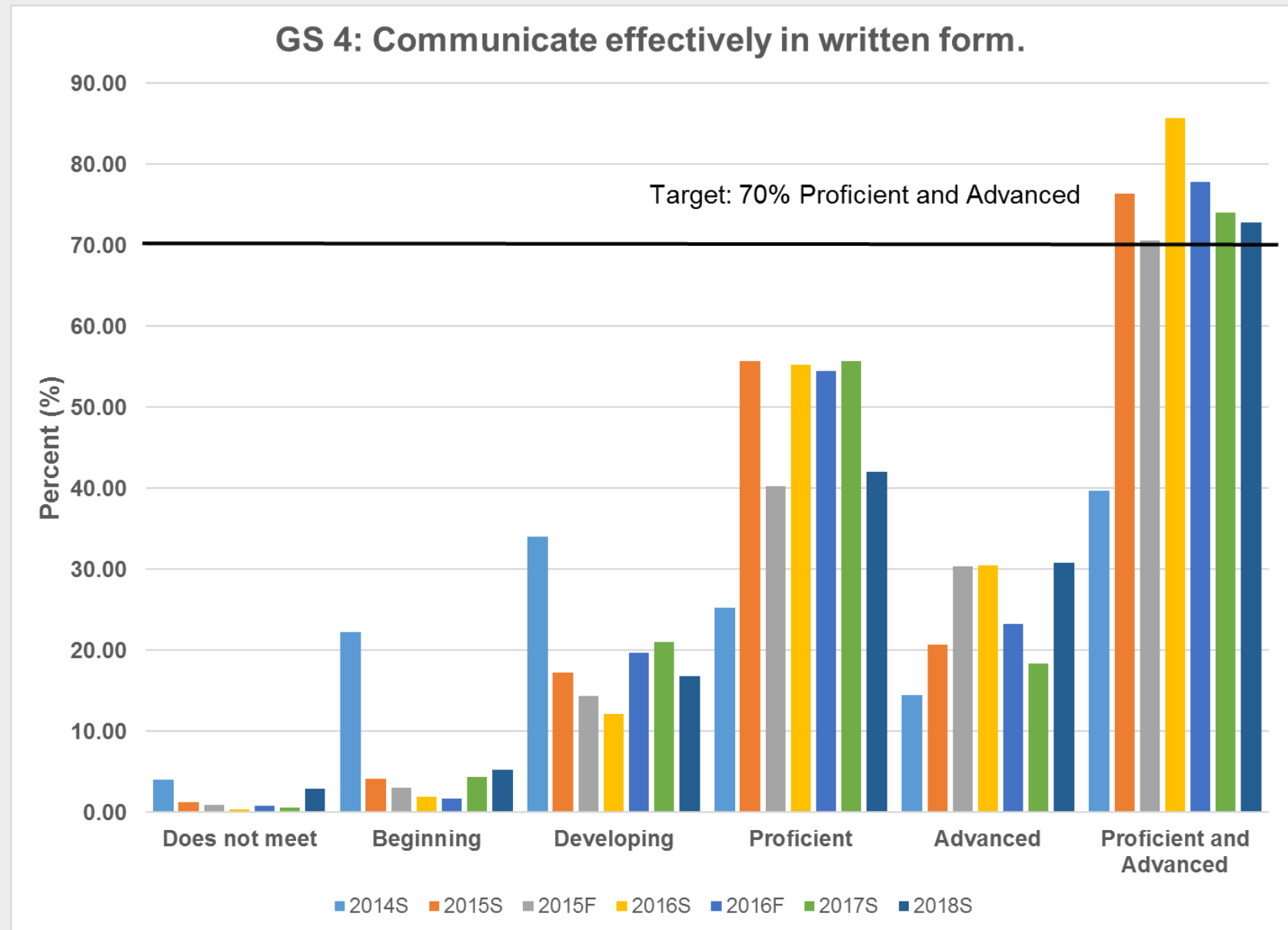
Results for students scoring at proficient or advanced level have varied by category over time. Though results have leveled off at or slightly above the stated target of 70% proficiency, the lowest results of the last two years were in Spring 2016. This is the first time Capstone courses were assessed.



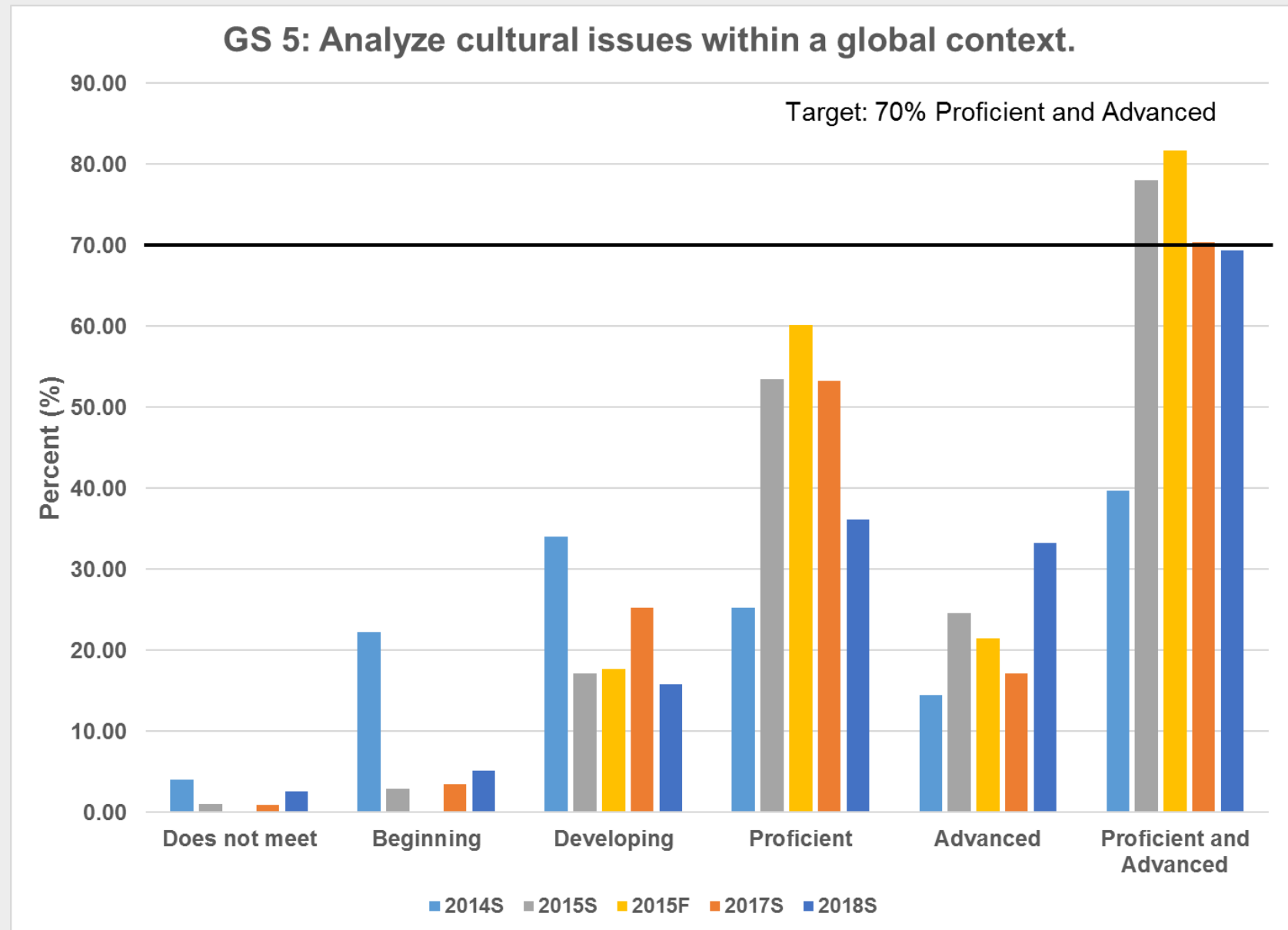
Students are scoring well above the target level of 70% proficiency. Faculty feel that most students are able to communicate effectively in spoken form.



Scores peaked in this category in Spring 2016, when Capstone courses were assessed. A small dip occurred in Fall 2015 when natural sciences, analytical & quantitative thought, and wellness were assessed. It is possible that many students were not used to writing in a style consistent with that expected in scientific and analytical courses.



Results indicate that students scored at or above the target level of 70% proficiency only two of the five semesters in which assessment occurred. Faculty and students may need additional guidance to effectively assess this outcome.



In the latest results, scores have fallen significantly in this category. While it is possible that faculty and students may need more guidance to effectively assess this outcome, it may also be the case that courses in the Democracy category (assessed in Fall 2017) may need to be examined for compatibility with the learning outcome.

