

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT Rubric for Evaluating General Education Assessment Process

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
GE Outcomes	GE learning outcomes have not yet been developed for the entire GE program; there may be one or two common ones, e.g., writing, critical thinking.	Learning outcomes have been developed for the entire GE program, but list is problematic (e.g. too long, too short, unconnected to mission and values). Outcomes do not lend themselves to demonstrations of student learning.	The list of outcomes is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the most important knowledge, skills, and values of the GE program. Outcomes express learning can be demonstrated. Work to define levels of performance is beginning.	The list of outcomes is reasonable and appropriate. Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate learning. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing students' mastery and have identified exemplars of student performance at varying levels for each outcome.
Curriculum Alignment with Outcomes	There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the GE curriculum. Students may not have opportunity to develop each outcome adequately.	Students appear to have reasonable opportunities to develop each of the GE outcomes. Curriculum map may indicate opportunities to acquire outcomes. Sequencing and frequency of opportunities may be problematic	The curriculum is explicitly designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. Design may be summarized in a curriculum map that shows "beginning," "intermediate" and "advanced" treatment of outcomes.	GE curriculum, pedagogy, grading, advising, etc. explicitly aligned with GE outcomes. Curriculum map and rubrics in use well known and consistently used. Co-curriculum and relevant student support services are also viewed as resources for GE learning and aligned with GE outcomes.
Assessment Planning	There is no formal plan for assessing each GE outcome. There is no coordinator or committee that takes responsibility for the program or implementation of its assessment plan.	GE assessment relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year. Interpretation and use of findings for improvement are implicit rather than planned or funded. There is no individual or committee "in charge."	The campus has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each GE outcome will be assessed. The plan includes specific mechanisms for interpretation and use of findings for improvement. A coordinator or committee is charged to oversee the program and its assessment.	The campus has a fully articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed. A coordinator or committee leads review and revision of the plan, as needed, based on experience and feedback from internal & external reviewers. The campus uses some form of comparative data (e.g., own past record, aspirational goals, external benchmarking).

Assessment Implementation	It is not clear that potentially valid evidence for each GE outcome is collected <u>and/or</u> individual reviewers use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work.	Appropriate evidence is collected and faculty have discussed relevant criteria for assessing each outcome. Reviewers of student work are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and/ <u>or</u> faculty check for inter-rater reliability.	Appropriate evidence is collected and faculty use explicit criteria, such as rubrics, to assess student attainment of each outcome. Reviewers of student work are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Assessment criteria, such as rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined over time; and they usually are shared with students. Reviewers of student work are calibrated, and faculty routinely find high inter-rater reliability. Faculty take comparative data into account when interpreting results and deciding on changes to improve learning.
Use of Results	Results for GE outcomes are collected, but relevant faculty do not discuss them. There is little or no collective use of findings. Students are unaware of, uninvolved in the process.	Results for each GE outcome are collected and discussed by relevant faculty; results have been used occasionally to improve the GE program. Students are vaguely aware of outcomes and assessments to improve their learning.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by relevant faculty and others, and regularly used to improve the GE program. Students are very aware of and engaged in improvement of their GE learning.	Relevant faculty routinely discuss results, plan improvements, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others, such as librarians, student affairs professionals, students, to improve the program. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.

How Visiting Team Members Can Use the GE Assessment Rubric

Conclusions should be based on review of the GE program's written assessment record and discussion with relevant campus representatives (e.g., GE chair, GE Assessment Coordinator, faculty who teach GE courses). Discussion should validate that the reality matches the written record.

The rubric has five major dimensions:

1. **GE Outcomes.** The set of GE learning outcomes should be a comprehensive list of the most important knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the GE program. There is no strict rule concerning the optimum number of outcomes, but quality is more important than quantity. Faculty should not confuse learning processes (e.g., completing a science lab) with learning outcomes (what is learned in the science lab, such as ability to apply the scientific method). Outcome statements should specify what students do to demonstrate their learning. For example, an outcome might state that "Students who complete the GE program can explain major concepts and theories in at least two social science disciplines." This outcome is assessable because faculty can rate the quality of students' explanations. Criteria for assessing student work usually are specified in rubrics, and faculty should identify examples of varying levels of student performance, such as work that does not meet expectations, that meets expectations, and exceeds expectations. Questions. Is the list of outcomes reasonable and appropriate? Do the outcomes express how students can demonstrate learning? Have faculty agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing each outcome? Do they have exemplars of work representing different levels of mastery for each outcome?
2. **Curriculum Alignment.** Students cannot be held responsible for mastering learning outcomes unless the GE program systematically supports their development. The GE curriculum should be explicitly designed to provide opportunities for students to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design often is summarized in a curriculum map—a matrix that shows the relationship between GE courses and GE learning outcomes. Pedagogy and grading should align with outcomes to foster growth and provide students helpful feedback on their development. Relevant student services (e.g., advising and tutoring centers) and the co-curriculum (e.g., student clubs and campus events) should also be designed to support development of the learning outcomes, since learning occurs outside the classroom as well as within it. Questions. Is the GE curriculum explicitly aligned with program outcomes? Do faculty select effective pedagogies and use grading to promote learning? Are student support services and the co-curriculum explicitly aligned to promote student development of GE learning outcomes?
3. **Assessment Planning.** Faculty should develop explicit, sustainable plans for assessing each GE outcome. They need not assess every outcome every year, but they should have a plan to cycle through the outcomes over a reasonable period of time, such as the period for program review cycles. Experience and feedback from external reviewers should guide plan revision. Questions. Does the campus have a GE assessment plan? Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be

assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time? Is the plan sustainable? Supported by appropriate resources? Are plans revised, as needed, based on experience and feedback from external reviewers? Does the plan include collection of comparative data?

- 4. Assessment Implementation.** GE assessment data should be valid and reliable. A valid assessment of a particular outcome leads to accurate conclusions concerning students' achievement of that outcome. Sometimes campuses collect assessment data that do not have the potential to be valid. For example, a multiple-choice test may not collect information that allows faculty to make judgments about students' ability to explain phenomena. Assessment requires the collection of valid evidence and judgments about that evidence that are based on agreed-upon criteria that specify how to identify work that meets or exceeds expectations. These criteria usually are specified in rubrics. Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about individual student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated. Sometimes a discrepancy index is used. How often do the two raters give identical ratings, ratings one point apart, ratings two points apart, etc.? Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if the discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to pre-selected examples of student work that vary in quality; then they reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product would receive the same score, regardless of rater. Faculty may take external benchmarking data or other comparative data into account when interpreting results. Questions: Do GE assessment studies systematically collect valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Do faculty use agreed-upon criteria such as rubrics for assessing the evidence for each outcome? Do they share the criteria with their students? Are those who assess student work calibrated in the use of assessment criteria? Does the campus routinely document high inter-rater reliability? Do faculty pilot test and refine their assessment processes? Do they take external benchmarking (comparison) data into account when interpreting results?
- 5. Use of Results.** Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning, so assessment findings should have an impact. Faculty should reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet faculty standards, faculty (and others, such as student affairs personnel, librarians, tutors) should determine which changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty support. Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other campus professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?