



Creating a Culture of Assessment

Developing Learning Outcomes for
General Education



What is General Education Assessment?

Student Learning Outcome (SLO)

Knowledge or skill a student will learn upon successfully completing a particular course.

For example, here is an SLO for PHIL S111, Introduction to Logic and Reasoning:
“Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to apply formal techniques for proving the validity or invalidity of a logical statement.”

A list of each program’s SLOs can be found here:

<http://www.uas.alaska.edu/schedule/slo.html>

SLOs transfer **vertically**

SLOs are typically specific to an individual program.

The knowledge and skills gained in one course transfer upward toward application in future program courses and/or toward the degree or certificate.

Biology SLO ≠ Art SLO ≠ Welding SLO

Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs)

Knowledge and skills applicable across all institutional programs.

Identical for all courses across the institution, particularly General Education courses.

SLOs

Transfer vertically.

Articulate a course's role within its program (degree/certificate).

ELOs

Transfer horizontally

Articulate a course's role within the entire institution.

UAS Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Alaska Southeast is student learning enhanced by faculty scholarship, undergraduate research and creative activities, community engagement, and the cultures and environment of Southeast Alaska.

<http://www.uas.alaska.edu/chancellor/mission.html>

UAS Values

1. **Excellence** – Continuous improvement and innovation in teaching, community engagement, and research, scholarship, and creative expression.
2. **Diversity** – Respect for individuals' culture, talents and abilities, and educational goals with specific attention to Alaska Native heritage.
3. **Access** – Program and service access through technology, innovation, and personalization.
4. **Collaboration** – Partnerships internally (within university) and externally (outside entities).
5. **Sustainability** – Contributions to economic, social, and ecological sustainability.
6. **Stewardship** – Responsible use of resources, recognize contributions of all.

UAS Core Themes

- 1. Student Success** – Provide the academic support and student services that facilitate student access and completion of educational goals.
- 2. Teaching and Learning** – Provide a broad range of programs and services resulting in student engagement and empowerment for academic excellence.
- 3. Community Engagement** – Provide programs and services that connect with local, state, national, and international entities on programs, events, services, and research that respond to the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs and resources of Southeast Alaska.
- 4. Research and Creative Expression** – Provide programs and services that support research, scholarship, and creative expression by faculty and students.

UAS Core Competencies

1. Communication
2. Information Technology
3. Critical Thinking
4. Information Literacy
5. Professional Behavior
6. Quantitative Skills

At UAS...

It is important for us to think about our university's mission and vision in concrete, measurable terms.

General Education Courses

- Support students within a single program (vertical transferability).
- Support students across all disciplines (horizontal transferability).
- Help students develop the knowledge and skills to lead engaged, productive, and meaningful lives.

Next Steps...

How to develop general education according to easily accessible and assessable learning outcomes in order to ensure the highest quality of education for our students?



GER assessment at UAS

We assess our programs, but we do not directly assess GERs.



NWCCU Accreditation Report

The affirmation of UAS' institutional accreditation in 2014 recommended improving our assessment data:

“The evaluators recommend that UAS focus on data points and data analysis. Some indicators for the core theme objectives need to be more specific, and the assessment data-gathering and analysis procedures need to be more specifically delineated (Standards 1.A.2 and 2.C.5).”

http://www.uas.alaska.edu/provost/docs/accreditation/FINAL--UAS%20Accreditation%20BOR%20Report_%202014%208%2028%2014.pdf

Plans from the past....

In 2012 a group of faculty and two administrators, Marsha Sousa and Priscilla Schulte, attended a similar AACU conference and developed a 3 year plan to integrate Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) into the GERs and develop a way to assess general education.

Year 1: Compare UAS competencies to ELOs; create a task force through Faculty Senate, etc.

Year 2: Map the GER curriculum to the ELOs to identify areas for improvement

Year 3: Incorporate assessment into programs

Where do we go from here?

We should make a plan that will work for our campus, will focus on learning and teaching, and will meet the requirements for NWCCU.

The plan needs to be feasible, and we need faculty and administrators to commit to the plan's implementation--the 2012 plan was never carried out.

UAA is currently assessing GERs and, since faculty are working to align GERs across campuses (with English and Math complete), we might look at the reports and rubrics that they've developed to guide us.



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What are Other Universities Doing?

The Goal: A GER Assessment Process that is...

- Meaningful
- Practical
- Not too time-consuming
- Fits institutional needs
- Faculty driven / led
- Dynamic
- Sustainable

How to Assess

- Student Artifact: student-created object, such as a written assignment, recorded oral presentation, film, major test
- Specific artifact should be based on specific SLOs
- Artifacts are then rated
- How they are rated depends on the specific assessment approach

Multiple GER Assessment Approaches

1. Standardized National Assessments
2. Course-Based Assessments: Individually Scored
3. Course-Based Assessments: Collaboratively Scored
4. Collaborative Institutional Assessments

1. Standardized National Assessments

- Tests and assessments designed to provide institutions with nationally normed scores and comparability statistics.
- Examples: National Institution for Learning Outcomes Assessments (NILOA), Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), ETS Proficiency Profile

1. Standardized National Assessment

Advantages

- Nationally normed
- Standardized definitions
- Comparisons across institutions
- Creates “bridges”
- Doesn’t require extensive local faculty involvement

Disadvantages

- Costly
- Disconnected from local curriculum
- May be too general / not applicable
- No local faculty ownership
- Limited incentive for student participation
- Questionable comparability across institutions

2. Course-Based Assessments: Individually Scored

- Assessments done by faculty within their GER classes, ideally using an institutionally-developed rubric for their course GER learning outcomes.

2. Course-Based Assessments: Individually Scored

Advantages

- Relatively easy to manage
- Workload is distributed across GER program
- Data comes from authentic assignments

Disadvantages

- Inconsistent data sources and scoring
- Difficult to aggregate
- Focused on individual courses
- Focus is primarily on sophomore-level achievement

3. Course-Based Assessments: Collaboratively Scored

- Assessments done based on work products generated within courses, ideally near graduation, and collaboratively scored with institutional rubrics for GER learning outcomes.

3. Course-Based Assessments: Collaboratively Scored

Advantages

- Data is from authentic assignments
- Reasonable to assume high-quality student work
- Yields outcome-level information
- Collaborative scoring creates opportunity for analysis, debriefing

Disadvantages

- Requires a high level of management, faculty cooperation
- Difficult to collect outcomes-level work products for some goals (e.g., quantitative literacy)

4. Collaborative Institutional Assessments

- Assessments based on student work from across campus, with the work coming from a single locally-developed “task” that is then scored collaboratively by GER program faculty.

4. Collaborative Institutional Assessments

Advantages

- Consistent data source; normed scoring process
- Outcomes assessable across majors
- Assesses effects near the time of graduation
- Faculty involvement – instrument design and student work scoring

Disadvantages

- Student recruiting challenges
- Sampling
- Possible data integrity concerns; potential student work quality issues
- May require significant logistical coordination

More
Scoring Consistency
Less

	> Standardized National Assessments > Collaborative Institutional Assessments
> Course-Based Assessments: Collaboratively Scored	
> Course-Based Assessments: Individually Scored	

Course-by-Course

Scope

GE Program-wide

Presentations on Rubrics for Assessment

Compilation of AAC&U presentations, related to institutions using rubrics in their assessments, Phoenix, AZ, February, 2017

and

Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics, Edited by Terrel L. Brooks, AAC&U. 2010

VALUE Rubric=
Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate
Education rubric

*Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for
Using Rubrics, Edited by Terrel L. Brooks, AAC&U. 2010*

AAC&U has produced a VALUES rubric approach as
—an approach to defining and assessing student learning
at the national level that is based on the values and
practices of the academy itself (p. 5)

Rubrics offer regular milestones by which students can
gauge their own progress. (P. 7)

Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics, Edited by Terrel L. Brooks, AAC&U. 2010

Rubric Development statements:

- Do not reinvent the wheel (20 samples at www.openedpractices.org)
- Many hands make light work
- Begin with the end in mind
- Kick the tires
- Cast a wide net

Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics, Edited by Terrel L. Brooks, AAC&U. 2010

- Over 100 universities input, “shorter, concise, and simpler” (p.12)

Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics, Edited by Terrel L. Brooks, AAC&U. 2010

Tips and Tricks for Making the VALUE — Rubrics Work at Every Level of Assessment

Kate McConnell, Sr. Director Research and Assessment, AAC&U
(VA Tech, ED Psych background)

What is a rubric?

- Tool to measure outcome
- Criteria to measure performance
- Every faculty measures with a rubric, it may be in their heads. It is a simple concept. What is it I expect to see.
- Data can be distilled into numbers

Why all the hype with rubrics?

The assessment must be related to the what, who, and how of teaching and learning. (McConnell and Doolittle, 2012)

TIPS

- Pilot
- Set benchmarks
- Collaborate

“Using VALUE Rubrics to Design an NEH-funded GEN ED Course on Discovery”

Presenters: John Koolage (Philosophy professor and Dariene Leifsen (communications and media), Eastern Michigan University (Liberal Arts focused)

AND

“Legitimacy and Validity”

Danielle Larke and March Lehman, Grand Valley State University, Liberal Studies

A student perspective on community project:

“This project and class made me feel alive. I hope I never take it for granted.”

Faculty comment:

Collaboration, integration and problem solving is how they fit this into their GEN ED's.

— It Takes a Village: Key Strategies for Engaging More Faculty in Assessment

**Jill Kinzie, Indiana University
and Nathan Lindsay, University of Montana**


Starting out with rubrics:

- Began with student work discussion
- Faculty, across depts. Student affairs directors involved


“We are using this process to get better,
not using it for scientific data.”

-Dr. Jill Kinzie, Indiana U. and Dr. Nathan Lindsay, U. of Montana

General Education and the Majors



"One of the fundamental purposes of general education programs is to prepare students for further studies in their major by developing a broad knowledge base, foundational intellectual skills, and dispositions for lifelong learning" (Cuevas, Matveev, & Miller, 2010).



Cuevas, N.M., Matveev, A.G., & Miller, K.O. (2010). Mapping general education outcomes in the major: Intentionality and transparency. *PeerReview* 12(1). Retrieved March 14, 2017 from <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/mapping-general-education-outcomes-major-intentionality-and>

UAS Business Faculty/Advisor Comments

- What is the relevance of the UAS General Education to our business majors?
 - "GERs are a key part of the process that rounds out a student's education. They provide the foundation for any degree and standardize the learning experience across basic functions."
 - "I rely on GERs to improve students writing skills, to broaden student perspectives on global and societal issues, and to help students become tolerant and productive world citizens."
 - "In my opinion these are very relevant. Especially math for accounting majors. Math needs to come "naturally" to them by the time they are in their upper division accounting courses. And of course English - I appreciate even the small things - like an email from a student with proper grammar! :) Many of the other courses provide for a well-rounded graduate."
 - "Marginal in some areas.... My AAS, BBA folks are more about "I want to learn to do my taxes more than master the Pythagorean Theorem".... Some are key, though, be it communicating (ENG, COMM) and ECON has perceived relevance. It could help them see how the GER is applicable to their goals more than just a box to check off. Maybe more selection could help."

Gen Ed Learning Outcomes Example

General Education Learning Outcomes from Agnes Scott College (they refer to them as "Liberal Education Goals"):

1. Think critically.
2. Communicate effectively through writing and speaking.
3. Undertake systematic inquiry for learning and problem solving.
4. Act as a responsible citizen.
5. Develop or appreciate creative expressions.
6. Appreciate and respond to the achievements of others.
7. Integrate knowledge and perspectives from a broad range of disciplines.
8. Develop a set of values.
9. Pursue the development of the whole person.

General education assessment: Agnes Scott College (2017). Retrieved March 21, 2017 from <https://www.agnesscott.edu/assessment/assessment-handbook/general-education-assessment.html>

Homa, D., Harvey, L., Kohn, R., & Rein, N. (2017, March). *Revise, implement, assess: Building assessment into general education revision*. Presented at AAC&U's General education and assessment: Design thinking for student learning, Phoenix, AZ.

Key Takeaways on GE Assessment

- Doesn't have to be confined solely within General Education courses
- Doesn't have to end when students complete their General Education courses
- Can be done in multidisciplinary teams
- Can be done at multiple levels (both lower and upper division)

What does GE Assessment Look Like?

- Faculty from across disciplines work to develop GE learning outcomes (see AAC&U's Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs))
- Collaboratively develop a rubric for each GE learning outcome
- Multidisciplinary assessment team assesses student work samples against the rubrics (potentially at an annual Assessment Day event*)
- Assessment Management Systems can be used to gather, aggregate, and disaggregate the data, and to create reports*

* Ideas based on topics covered in the following session:

Martin, E., Curry, G., & Pride, C. (2017, March). *Leveraging your assessment management system to strengthen and expand assessment*. Presented at AAC&U's General education and assessment: Design thinking for student learning, Phoenix, AZ.

Links to Assessment Resources

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

2017 General Education and Assessment: Student Learning Conference

The conference was held over two and half days and provided the attendees a wealth of information. Below are links to the AAC&U conference homepage and conference presenter handouts:

<https://www.aacu.org/meetings/generaleducation/gened2017>

<http://www.aacu.org/session-materials-2017-general-education-and-assessment>



The screenshot displays the AAC&U website header with the logo and tagline "A VOICE AND A FORCE FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY". A navigation menu includes links for Home, About, Meetings, Publications & Research, Programs & Partnerships, and Press. The breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Events > 2017 General Education and Assessment: Design Thinking for Student Learning > Session Materials: 2017 G. Below the navigation is a photograph of students in a collaborative learning environment. A text overlay on the photo reads "General Education and Assessment: Design Thinking for Student Learning" with a small credit "photo courtesy Texas A&M University System". To the right of the photo, the text "Session Materials: 2017 General Education and Assessment" is displayed. Below the photo, a section titled "OTHER PAGES IN THIS SECTION" contains a link for "2017 General Education and Assessment".

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)



Through its VALUE Initiative, AAC&U has developed a set of [rubrics](#) to assess twenty-first-century learning outcomes. The following link provides information on “essential” learning outcomes: <https://www.aacu.org/leap/essential-learning-outcomes>

AAC&U survey of institutions conducting assessment of student learning outcomes

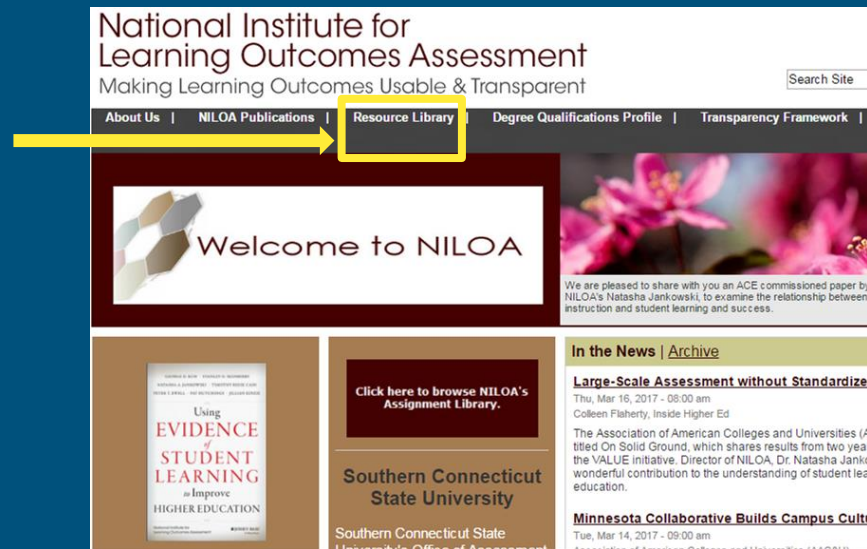
AAC&U surveyed Chief Academic Officers concerning learning outcomes, assessment, general education design, high-impact practices, and data tracking around equity and quality learning. AAC&U conducted interviews with 14 institutions tracking data. Complete findings from the surveys can be found at this link: <https://www.aacu.org/about/2015-membersurvey>



National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

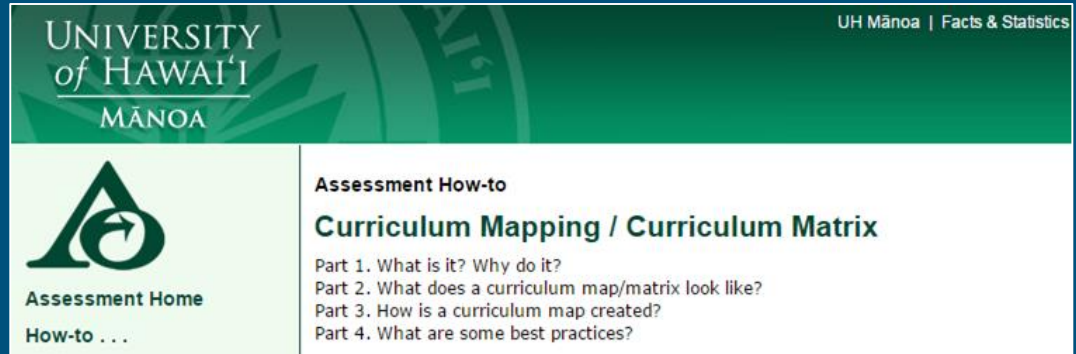
National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) website is an excellent resource for finding examples of assessment practices at universities throughout the country:

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org




University of Hawaii at Manoa

Assessment how-to:



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII
MĀNOA

UH Mānoa | Facts & Statistics


Assessment Home
How-to . . .

Assessment How-to
Curriculum Mapping / Curriculum Matrix

Part 1. What is it? Why do it?
Part 2. What does a curriculum map/matrix look like?
Part 3. How is a curriculum map created?
Part 4. What are some best practices?

<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/mapping.htm>

DQP Assignment Library

The purpose of this website is to provide a searchable online library of collegiate-level course assignments in a wide variety of academic disciplines that link to one or more proficiencies in the [Degree Qualifications Profile \(DQP\)](#).

<http://www.assignmentlibrary.org/>



From the DQP website

The Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP):
Implications for Assessment Peter T. Ewell

<http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/EwellDQPop1.pdf>

Next Steps...

Here's a thought...

“Some advocates of assessment fail to realize that meaningful assessment is an advanced pedagogical practice, one that teachers can only learn to do properly after they have already developed a sufficiently in-depth understanding of what learning is, how it happens, how it doesn't, and so forth. This in-depth understanding cannot be obtained by, say, borrowing rubrics from neighboring institutions but must rather be earned the hard way, as it were, with teachers learning about learning for themselves through intensive reading, reflection, and experimentation.” [June 23, 2013](#) · by [Paul T. Corrigan](#) · in [Perspective](#).