

# Best Practices in the Assessment of GER Student Learning Outcomes

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In the following report, Hanover Research provides an overview of assessment procedures relating to the student learning outcomes (SLO) of general education programs at a number of higher education institutions.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

In the following report, Hanover Research provides an overview of best practices in GER student learning outcomes (SLO) and assessment at institutions selected by the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). The information that UAA requested can be split into three broad questions:

- What are the General Educational Outcomes of these respective institutions?
- How, specifically, are these GER outcomes assessed (by whom, how, when, and how often)?
- What is done with the GER assessment results (recommendations or actions taken)?

While Hanover attempted to include all information relevant to UAA's research request for all of the institutions identified by UAA, the volume and quality of available information varied markedly by institution. Indeed, it was notable while attempting to compile data for this report that a number of the institutions selected by UAA had not developed their assessment practices in a considerable amount of detail. As a consequence, Hanover focuses the current report on those institutions with particularly well-developed processes for the assessment of student learning outcomes in general education programs. Accordingly, the following institutions are profiled within this report:

- Appalachian State University
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Illinois State University
- Ferris State University
- Clemson University
- Montgomery College

### KEY FINDINGS

- **Most institutions have reasonably similar general education program models.** The model for most of the general education programs in this report allows students to choose from a variety of courses in order to satisfy broader curricular components that form an institution's GER. Only Montgomery College appears to have specific core courses that students are required to take as part of their GER.
- **Certain areas of overlap can be seen within the student learning outcomes of the profiled institutions.** Outcomes that consistently appeared across multiple institutions include those centered on: effective communication (oral, written, and spoken); quantitative/mathematical skills; scientific reasoning; global awareness;

- civic responsibilities; technological competency; aesthetics and art; humanities; and social sciences.
- **There is less commonality in the level of detail that student learning outcomes (SLOs) are defined by institutions.** For example, Clemson University’s SLOs are all described in single sentences by the institution. By contrast, Ferris State describes its SLOs in a considerable amount of detail, with multiple stated sub-goals for each broader area of learning.
  - **Similarly, there is moderate variation with regard to how GER learning outcomes are assessed.** All of the profiled institutions have areas of similarity and difference between their assessment processes, particularly in terms of the following points:
    - **Use of Artifacts.** Most of the institutions assess student “artifacts” in order to gauge whether students are reaching stated learning outcomes. Artifacts include assignments, tests, and student surveys. Clemson University and Illinois State use electronic portfolios of work as a method of assessment. These artifacts are usually drawn from a random sample of students, instead of conducting an assessment of all artifacts produced.
    - **Internally vs. externally devised assessment tools.** Certain institutions only use internally-devised assessment tools and artifacts to measure assessment; others use external testing and/or surveying agencies when conducting assessment. The ETS Proficiency Profile is used at a number of the profiled institutions.
    - **Database software programs** are commonly used as a means of managing the various artifacts that students or faculty submit for assessment.
    - **Rubrics.** Most institutions use rubrics in order to grade artifacts, or to help faculty fill out reports on whether their classes were successful. Certain institutions use faculty-devised rubrics, but several employ the VALUE rubrics produced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, or develop rubrics that are based off these rubrics.
    - **The regularity with which the assessment process takes place varies.** Certain institutions assess SLOs on an annual or biennial basis, while others review SLOs on a cyclical basis, with only certain SLOs under review during each cycle. The frequency with which SLOs are assessed can sometimes influence how often GER SLOs are subsequently altered, especially if potential changes have to be first presented to the provost of an institution.
  - **Most of the profiled institutions have certain minimum admission requirements.** Students are usually required to have studied a certain set of subjects for a minimum number of hours at high school, and submit SAT and/or ACT scores in order to be considered for admission. Of the institutions within this report, only Montgomery College explicitly stated that it had an open admissions policy.
  - **Placement Tests:** Most of the institutions have a limited number of placement tests. These are largely focused on the subject areas of math, reading, and writing,

although foreign language tests are also common if a student intends to ultimately major in a foreign language. In most cases, these placement tests merely determine which level class a student should initially take. However, if an individual has a particularly low score, certain institutions, such as Florida Gulf Coast University, require them to take remedial classes before they can start the general education program.

# INSTITUTIONAL PROFILES

## APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The majority of the information relating to assessment of GER student learning outcomes at Appalachian State can be found on the University’s detailed website dedicated to its “General Education Program.”<sup>1</sup> The current General Education Program at Appalachian State was launched during the 2009-2010 academic year, after a “General Education Task Force” had developed the program between 2005 and 2007.<sup>2</sup>

### GENERAL EDUCATION MODEL

The general education program model at Appalachian State is comprised of 11 curricular components. Two of these curricular components, the Capstone and Junior Writing, are required in the General Education program, but the course hours are counted towards the major, rather than towards general education. Each of the curricular components is aligned with a number of the student learning outcomes (SLO) for general education, which are outlined in the following sub-section. **Each curricular component requires a certain number of semester hours, which are earned via the completion of a choice of eligible courses.**

The model for the General Education Program at Appalachian State is outlined in Figure 1. It shows each curricular component, the required hours for that component, and a sample of the courses that can be taken to earn complete the component. In total, 44 semester hours are required for the General Education Program.

**Figure 1: General Education Program Model at Appalachian State**

CURRICULAR COMPONENT (REQUIRED SEMESTER HOURS FOR GER)	SAMPLE COURSES (HOURS)*
First Year Seminar (3)	UCO 1200; Hon 1515.
Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) First Year Writing (3)	ENG 1000: Expository Writing (3); FL 1000 (3): English for International Students.
WAC Sophomore Writing (3)	ENG 2001 (3): Introduction to Writing across the Curriculum; WGS 2202 (3): Tangents.
Junior Writing in the Major (N/A)	None Stated.
Senior Capstone Experience (N/A)	None Stated.
Perspectives: Aesthetic (6-9)	Students choose courses within one of seven “Themes”, including “Tradition and Innovations,” and “Analyzing Style and Form.” Sample courses within these Themes include “PHL 2013: Philosophy of Art (3)” and “ENG 2050: Studies in British Literature (3).”

<sup>1</sup> “Welcome to the General Education Program.” Appalachian State University. <http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/>

<sup>2</sup> “General Education Task Force: Final Report.” Appalachian State University. May 1, 2007. [http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/sites/generaleducation.appstate.edu/files/Final\\_Report\\_5-9-07\\_0.pdf](http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/sites/generaleducation.appstate.edu/files/Final_Report_5-9-07_0.pdf)

CURRICULAR COMPONENT (REQUIRED SEMESTER HOURS FOR GER)	SAMPLE COURSES (HOURS)*
Perspectives: Historical & Social (6-9)	Students choose courses within one of ten “Themes”, including “Ancient Worlds,” and “Appalachia.” Sample courses within these Themes include “ART 2030: Art from Prehistory to 1400 (3)” and “COM 3118: Communicating Coal in Appalachia (3).”
Perspectives: Local to Global (6-9)	Students choose courses within one of nine “Themes”, including “Empire, Colonialism and Globalization,” and “Global Resources.” Sample courses within these Themes include “ANT 1415: Understanding Culture (3)” and “ECO 3620: Environmental and Resource Economics (3).”
Perspectives: Science Inquiry (8)	Students choose courses within one of eleven “Themes”, including “Biology and Society,” and “Physics with Calculus.” Sample courses within these Themes include “BIO 1101: Biology in Society I (4)” and “PHY 1101: How Things Work (4).”
Wellness Literacy (2)	PE 1700: Swimming for Nonswimmers (1); PE 1721: Backpacking/Orienteering.
Quantitative Literacy (4)	MAT 1010: Introduction to Mathematics (4); MAT 1025: Algebra and Elementary Functions (4)

\*Not all courses have stated semester hours.  
Source: Appalachian State.<sup>3</sup>

### *GER STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES*

The GER at Appalachian State have **four overall “program goals,”** which are split into **twenty-one learning outcomes.** They are as follows:

- **Goal I - Thinking Critically & Creatively<sup>4</sup>**
  - **IA.** Recognize, differentiate, and effectively employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated strategies to collect and interpret information;
  - **IB.** Successfully integrate disparate concepts and information when interpreting, solving problems, evaluating, creating, and making decisions;
  - **IC.** Examine and evaluate how their own personal, historical, and cultural perspectives affect the discovery and generation of knowledge;
  - **ID.** Construct persuasive arguments in increasingly complex contexts;
  - **IE.** Apply theories from a variety of disciplines and advance convincing reasons to connect as well as differentiate theories from different domains of knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> “General Education Program Model.” Appalachian State University.  
<http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/sites/generaleducation.appstate.edu/files/genedmodel.html>

<sup>4</sup> “General Education Goals: Thinking Critically & Creatively.” Appalachian State University.  
<http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/thinking-critically-creatively>

- **Goal II - Communicating Effectively<sup>5</sup>**
  - **IIA.** Articulate and comprehend effectively, using verbal or non-verbal communication suitable to topic, purpose, and audience;
  - **IIB.** Use writing effectively to discover and develop ideas and to articulate positions in contexts of increasing complexity;
  - **IIC.** Make rhetorical decisions appropriate to topic, purpose, and audience while correctly using the conventions of standard written English;
  - **IID.** Determine the scope of information needed in specific research contexts and successfully identify, locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information from various media;
  - **IIE.** Read actively and analytically at the college level and synthesize and apply information and ideas from their reading across disciplines;
  - **IIF.** Know, apply, and communicate college-level quantitative concepts and methods;
  - **IIG.** Select and use hardware, software applications, databases, and other technologies effectively for both inquiry and communication.
  
- **Goal III - Making Local to Global Connections<sup>6</sup>**
  - **IIIA.** Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment;
  - **IIIB.** Evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability;
  - **IIIC.** Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems;
  - **IIID.** Demonstrate knowledge of contemporary issues related to cultural diversity in the United States and other areas of the world;
  - **IIIE.** Employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated means for communicating with people of other cultures.
  
- **Goal IV - Understanding Responsibilities of Community Membership<sup>7</sup>**
  - **IVA.** Identify potential consequences that personal choices as well as political, economic, and other social forces may have on individual, societal, and environmental health;
  - **IVB.** Apply moral reasoning skills to an array of ethical issues confronted by individuals, groups, and communities;
  - **IVC.** Collaborate effectively with others in shared processes of inquiry and problem-solving;
  - **IVD.** Apply principles of responsible community membership within and beyond the campus community.

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<sup>5</sup> "General Education Goals: Communicating Effectively." Appalachian State University.  
<http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/communicating-effectively>

<sup>6</sup> "General Education Goals: Making Local to Global Connections." Appalachian State University.  
<http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/making-local-global-connections>

<sup>7</sup> "Understanding Responsibilities of Community Membership." Appalachian State University.  
<http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/understanding-responsibilities-community-membership>

## GER ASSESSMENT

### **Overall GER Assessment Approach**

As previously mentioned, students are expected to achieve the 21 SLOs outlined above via 11 curricular components. Not every curricular component covers all 21 SLOs, but there is a degree of overlap between certain curricular components and the learning outcomes that they address. A matrix demonstrating the link between general education curricular components and learning outcomes is contained within the University's Academic Program Assessment Handbook.<sup>8</sup>

**It appears that outcomes are assessed on a rotating basis;** every three years, seven of the 21 learning outcomes are assessed. For the period 2009-2012, the seven learning outcomes chosen for assessment are: IA, IB, IIC, IIF, IIIC, IIID, and IVD.<sup>9</sup> For the 2012-2013 academic year, seven different learning outcomes have been tentatively identified for assessment.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Assessment Process – Artifact Collection**

Faculty teaching General Education courses are expected to participate in the process of artifact collection for the General Education Program. According to Appalachian State, "artifacts are the samples of student work produced in response to faculty-developed assignments."<sup>11</sup> As such, Appalachian State asserts that the assessment method for the General Education program is based on "course embedded assignments,"<sup>12</sup> although students also complete surveys in which they identify the student learning outcomes their courses addressed.<sup>13</sup> Artifacts are randomly selected from a pool of artifacts during the assessment review process, with only a small number of artifacts actually reviewed.

Artifacts are reviewed according to faculty-developed rubrics. The scores from these rubrics are used to evaluate the effectiveness of achieving SLOs across the General Education program.

Artifacts are largely collected via "AsULearn" – Appalachian State's course management system that is based upon the Moodle software platform.<sup>14</sup> Faculty can also submit hard copies of artifacts to the General Education Office at Appalachian State, or fill-out a "faculty

<sup>8</sup> "Assessment at Appalachian." Appalachian State University. Fall, 2009, pp. 19-21.  
[http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/sites/generaleducation.appstate.edu/files/Assessment\\_Handbook092309b.pdf](http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/sites/generaleducation.appstate.edu/files/Assessment_Handbook092309b.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> "Outcomes Selected for Assessment 2009-12." Appalachian State University.  
<http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/outcomes-selected-assessment-2010-12>

<sup>10</sup> "General Education Program Assessment 2010-2012, Executive Summary." Appalachian State University.  
<http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/sites/generaleducation.appstate.edu/files/Exec%20Summary%202010-2011%20General%20Education%20Assessment%20Summary.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> "Assessment at Appalachian." Appalachian State University. Op cit., p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> "Program Assessment." Appalachian State University. <http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/program-assessment>

<sup>13</sup> Untitled Document, p. 2. [http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/sites/generaleducation.appstate.edu/files/2010-2011\\_Assessment\\_Overview.pdf](http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/sites/generaleducation.appstate.edu/files/2010-2011_Assessment_Overview.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> "AsULearn." Appalachian State University. <http://lts.appstate.edu/resources/asulearn>

analysis of student learning” form, which allows them to detail the success with which certain courses have reached SLOs.<sup>15</sup>

### ***The Assessment Process – Artifact Review and Reporting***

ASU has stated that during the artifact review process, “groups of faculty recommended by the General Education Faculty Coordinating Committees will review collected artifacts using the LASSO online interface and **AAC&U** (Association of American Colleges and Universities) **Value Rubrics**.” Appalachian State is currently testing the AAC&U Value Rubrics with its general education learning outcomes for two years. Once faculty have used the AAC&U rubrics for artifact review, they will provide feedback on the rubrics’ applicability to ASU’s general education program.<sup>16</sup>

Scores that are compiled in AsULearn are analyzed according to one of nine general education components. These results are then compared to predetermined criteria, shared with the faculty of various programs, and, where required, an action plan is constructed to improve student performance.

### ***ENROLLMENT POLICIES***

Appalachian State has put forth the following “minimum course requirements,” which vary somewhat according to age:

“To be considered for admission, students under the age of 24 must meet the minimum course requirements, as established by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system. Meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to Appalachian. Applicants who are at least 24 years of age may be exempted from the minimum course requirements.”<sup>17</sup>

Along with the minimum course requirements, “a combination of high school achievement and SAT or ACT score” is also required.<sup>18</sup> Specific minimum course requirements are outlined in Figure 2:

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<sup>15</sup> “Program Assessment.” Appalachian State University. Op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> “Minimum Course Requirements” Appalachian State University. <http://admissions.appstate.edu/minimum-course-requirements>

<sup>18</sup> “Admissions: Freshmen.” Appalachian State University. <http://admissions.appstate.edu/freshmen>

**Figure 2: Admission Requirements for Appalachian State**

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES OF 2006 OR EARLIER	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES OF 2006 OR LATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A high school diploma or its equivalent;</li> <li>■ Four English courses;</li> <li>■ Three mathematics courses, including Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, or a higher level mathematics course for which Algebra II is a prerequisite;</li> <li>■ Three science courses, including at least one in a life or biological science (biology); at least one course in a physical science (physical science, chemistry, physics) and at least one laboratory course;</li> <li>■ Two courses in social studies including one in US History; and</li> <li>■ Two consecutive courses of a second language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A high school diploma or its equivalent;</li> <li>■ Four English courses;</li> <li>■ Four mathematics courses, including Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, a higher level mathematics course for which Algebra II is a prerequisite; or any one of the following courses: AP Calculus, AP Statistics, Pre-Calculus (formerly Advanced Math), Discrete Mathematics, IB Mathematics Level II, Integrated Mathematics IV and Advanced Functions and Modeling</li> <li>■ Three science courses, including at least one in a life or biological science (biology); at least one course in a physical science (physical science, chemistry, physics) and at least one laboratory course;</li> <li>■ Two courses in social studies including one in US History; and</li> <li>■ Two units of a second language</li> </ul>

Source: Appalachian State University.<sup>19</sup>

### *PLACEMENT TESTING*

The following placement tests are required at Appalachian State:<sup>20</sup>

- **Math** - Students are required to take a placement test in Math if they have score less than 520 on a SAT Math Test.
- **English Writing Skills Placement Test** – “Selected students will write an essay during their Orientation program. The written sample will be used to ensure that students register for the appropriate freshman writing course.”
- **Language Placement Test** - Placement tests in French, German and Spanish are required for those individuals who wish to plan to take coursework in these languages.

<sup>19</sup> “Minimum Course Requirements” Appalachian State University. Op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> “ASU Placement Testing.” Appalachian State University. <http://testing.appstate.edu/pagesmith/20>

**FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY**

*GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MODEL*

The General Education Program model at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) follows Florida state law, which mandates that students must complete **36 credit hours** of General Education Program coursework “within the subject areas of **communication, mathematics, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.**” The model is organized as follows:

**Figure 3: General Education Program Model, FGCU**

SUBJECT AREA (REQUIRED HOURS)	DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS
<b>Communication (6)</b>	Each student must complete a two-semester sequence (ENC 1101-1102) in English Composition.
<b>Mathematics (6)</b>	All students must successfully complete either STA 2023 (Statistical Methods) or STA 2037 (Statistics with Calculus), and an additional 3 credit hours of approved coursework at the level of college algebra or higher.
<b>Humanities (9)</b>	Students are required to complete HUM 2510 (Understanding Visual & Performing Arts), plus 6 additional semester hours of humanities coursework, which may include literature, philosophy, religion, and the fine arts.
<b>Social Sciences (6-9)</b>	Students must successfully complete 6 to 9 semester hours of approved coursework in the social science disciplines. Social sciences courses include the disciplines of history, economics, anthropology, sociology, area studies, geography, political science, and psychology.
<b>Natural Sciences (6-9)</b>	Students must successfully complete a minimum of two courses, totaling 6 to 9 semester hours, of approved coursework in the natural sciences that include biology, chemistry, geology, environmental studies, marine science, and physics. At least one course must include a laboratory or field component.

Source: FGCU.<sup>21</sup>

*GER STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES*

The SLOs of FGCU’s General Education Program were devised by the Faculty Senate General Education Council working with representatives from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and FGCU’s Office of Planning and Institutional Performance. FGCU describes the SLOs of its General Education program as “clear, nationally-recognized, and measurable skills that all university graduates should be able to demonstrate.”<sup>22</sup> They have only recently been devised, having been approved in April 2011. The learning outcomes are as follows:

<sup>21</sup> “General Education Requirements 2012-2013 Catalog Year.” FGCU. <http://www.fgcu.edu/Catalog/genedreq.asp>

<sup>22</sup> “Learning Goals and Competencies.” FGCU. [http://www.fgcu.edu/General\\_Education/learninggoals.html](http://www.fgcu.edu/General_Education/learninggoals.html)

- **Competency 1: Quantitative Reasoning**
  - Solve mathematical problems;
  - Analyze and interpret quantitative data:
  - Summarize data into graphic and tabular formats;
  - Make valid inferences from data;
  - Distinguish between valid and invalid quantitative analysis and reasoning.
- **Competency 2: Written Communication**
  - Employ the conventions of standard written English;
  - Select a topic, and develop it for a specific audience and purpose, with respect for diverse perspectives;
  - Organize and present relevant content with coherence, clarity, and unity;
  - Develop research skills including the ability to collect, analyze, synthesize, and accurately present and document information;
  - Use appropriate language to convey meaning effectively;
  - Apply critical reading skills.
- **Competency 3: Critical Thinking**
  - Define an issue or problem using appropriate terminology;
  - Select, organize, and evaluate information;
  - Identify and analyze assumptions made by oneself and others;
  - Synthesize information, and draw reasoned inferences;
  - Develop and clearly state a position, taking into account all relevant points of view;
  - Formulate an informed and logical conclusion, and test it for viability.

### *GER ASSESSMENT*

In March 2010, the Provost of FGCU gave the General Education Assessment Task Force the mission of producing a new five-year assessment plan designed to increase the likelihood of students achieving the general education learning competencies outlined in the above subsection.

The assessment process is split into two overall parts – internal and external – and is described below.

#### ***Internal Assessment Process***

Each overall competency (quantitative reasoning, written communication, and critical thinking) has a separate five-year assessment plan. An example of one of these plans is displayed in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Five-Year Assessment Plan for the Written Communication Competency at FGCU**

TIMEFRAME	ACTION
Summer 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Evaluate 100 essays gathered from students at the end of Composition II in the spring 2010 year.</li> <li>■ Complete a rubric-based scoring session using the Written Communication VALUE rubric developed by the AAC&amp;U in order to assess student learning in the areas provided on the rubric.</li> </ul>
Fall 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Present the data gathered in the summer to the Composition Steering Committee.</li> <li>■ Discuss and then set a specific improvement goal for the academic year based on the data.</li> <li>■ Determine whether FGCU can assess the specific goal with our regular yearly process or if we wish to adopt additional assessment measures.</li> <li>■ Identify and share resources with faculty to facilitate work on the goal.</li> <li>■ Plan and present a professional development opportunity to help faculty member's work on the improvement goal in Composition I and II classes.</li> <li>■ Share data review and improvement plan, including inter-rater reliability and exemplars, with the General Education Program Director.</li> </ul>
Spring 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gather 100 essays from students nearing completion of Composition II from a random selection of sections taught by faculty other than those who scored the essays in the pilot year (Spring 2010).</li> <li>■ Use the same group of scorers as in the pilot year to score the 100 essays, along with two new scorers.</li> <li>■ Have the students in those classes complete an indirect assessment of their work using the same rubric that the faculty will use to score the essays.</li> <li>■ At the end of the 2010-2011 academic year, the Director of Composition will review all assessment data for the Written Communication competency in conjunction with the General Education Program Director, and will offer suggestions for curricular revision or for future assessment plans</li> </ul>
Summer 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Repeat assessment of essays procedure to determine if an improvement in attainment of student learning outcomes has occurred.</li> <li>■ Determine if a continued focus on the area of improvement is warranted or if a new area for improvement will be defined.</li> </ul>
Academic Year 2011-12	Complete a second round of assessment.
Academic Year 2012-13	Complete a third round of assessment.
Post-2013	After 2013, assessment will be performed biennially. Assessment procedures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and adapted as necessary.

Source: FGCU.<sup>23</sup>

The two other competencies are assessed in a generally similar manner – direct assessment of a sampling of assignments from students, as well as some indirect survey-based assessment. **All rubrics used for assessment are adapted from the AAC&U's VALUE project.**

<sup>23</sup> Taken from "2010-2015 General Education Assessment Plan." FGCU, pp. 2-3.  
[http://www.fgcu.edu/General\\_Education/files/Gen\\_Ed\\_Assessment\\_Plan\\_9-27-10.pdf](http://www.fgcu.edu/General_Education/files/Gen_Ed_Assessment_Plan_9-27-10.pdf)

### ***External Assessment Processes***

As previously mentioned, external assessment of General Education SLOs also occurs. External assessment is based around the use of the **Educational Testing Service (ETS) Proficiency Profile**. This assessment tool is a two-hour test comprised of questions that evaluate student skills in reading/critical thinking, writing, and mathematics. The test is administered each year to a selection of entering freshmen students, who are then tested again at 60-70 credit hours, and 100-120 hours. Students are not compelled to participate in testing; instead **a representative sample of students is invited to participate**. These students are also asked to participate in **focus groups and surveys**. The benchmark standard for external assessment is “to achieve mean scores equivalent to the national norms in the areas of Reading/Critical Thinking, Writing and Mathematics.”<sup>24</sup>

External assessment results are collected from participating faculty members by the General Education Program Director, who then reports their findings to the Academic Deans, Assessment Council, General Education Council, and the Associate Provost for Planning and Institutional Performance. Assessment results are distributed to relevant faculty members in the subsequent academic year to help them make curricular improvements to the General Education Program. From 2013 onwards, FGCU has planned to undertake this form of assessment on a **biennial basis**.

### ***ENROLLMENT POLICIES***

FGCU requires that an “applicant have an acceptable cumulative high school grade point average in the following academic units as computed by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions”:<sup>25</sup>

- Four units of English (at least three with substantial writing requirements)
- Four units of Mathematics (Algebra 1 and above)
- Three units of Natural Science (at least two with laboratory)
- Three units of Social Science
- Two units of the same Foreign Language
- Two elective units preferably from English, Mathematics, Natural Science, Foreign Language, Humanities, or Social Science area.

In addition, all freshman applicants must submit either ACT or SAT scores. Admission is then adjudicated on the following basis for “first-time-in-college” (FTIC) students.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>25</sup> “Freshman Admission Requirements.” FGCU. <http://www.fgcu.edu/Admissions/Prospective/freshmancriteria.html>

<sup>26</sup> Taken verbatim from Ibid.

- A FTIC student may be admitted if he/she has a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or higher on a 4.00 scale as calculated by the University, paired with one of the standardized admission tests. A student must achieve the minimum scores for each SAT Reasoning Test or ACT section as outlined below:
  - SAT - Critical Reading  $\geq$  440 or ACT - Reading  $\geq$  18 and ACT - English  $\geq$  17; and
  - SAT - Mathematics  $\geq$  440 or ACT - Mathematics  $\geq$  19; and
  - SAT - Writing  $\geq$  440 or ACT - Combined English/Writing  $\geq$  18

**OR**

- A FTIC student may be admitted if he/she has a high school GPA of 2.50 - 2.99 on a 4.00 scale as calculated by the university. In addition to achieving the minimum GPA, a student must achieve the minimum scores for each SAT Reasoning Test or ACT section as outlined below:
  - SAT - Critical Reading  $\geq$  460 or ACT - Reading  $\geq$  19 and ACT - English  $\geq$  17; and
  - SAT - Mathematics  $\geq$  460 or ACT - Mathematics  $\geq$  19; and
  - SAT - Writing  $\geq$  440 or ACT - Combined English/Writing  $\geq$  18.

### *PLACEMENT TESTING*

If students do not meet the minimum SAT or ACT scores outlined above, they are required to take “preparatory coursework” at a local community college prior to attending FGCU.<sup>27</sup>

Dependent on ACT or SAT scores, certain students who are eligible to enroll at FGCU will be required to take a math placement test when they enroll. Students with SAT math scores of above 550 or ACT scores of above 24 are eligible to enroll in advanced math classes, while students admitted without math remediation are allowed to enroll in Intermediate Algebra.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> “Remediation Policy: First Year Advising Services Handbook.” FGCU.

<http://enrollment.fgcu.edu/advising/fashandbook/remediation.html>

<sup>28</sup> “Math Enrollment Information.” FGCU. <http://enrollment.fgcu.edu/advising/mathtest.htm>

## ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

### *GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MODEL*

The General Education Program model at Illinois State University (ISU) is comprised of an “integrated set” of **14 courses**, and is structured as follows:<sup>29</sup>

- **Inner Core (IC) - Five courses in three course categories:**
  - 2-course sequence integrating composition, communication, critical thinking, and information literacy;
  - Mathematics – one course required;
  - 2 Natural Sciences (or Natural Science Alternatives).
- **Middle Core (MC) - Five required courses, one in each of the following five course categories:**
  - Quantitative Reasoning;
  - Language in the Humanities;
  - United States Traditions;
  - Individuals and Civic Life;
  - Individuals and Societies.
- **Outer Core (OC) - Four courses, one in each of the following four course categories:**
  - Science, Mathematics, and Technology;
  - Fine Arts;
  - Humanities;
  - Social Sciences.

### *GER STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES*

The General Education Program at ISU has **12 specific goals**. Based on these goals, and the numerous skills and abilities they entail, **four overall “Shared Learning Outcomes”** were determined for ISU students. The Shared Learning Outcomes are described as follows by ISU:<sup>30</sup>

- **Share Learning Outcome #1: Critical Inquiry and Problem Solving**
  - Students will develop and communicate a range of interests and curiosities, engaging those interests and curiosities through critical thinking, reasoning, and problem solving.

<sup>29</sup> “Program Structure.” ISU. [http://gened.illinoisstate.edu/program\\_structure/](http://gened.illinoisstate.edu/program_structure/)

<sup>30</sup> “The Goals of the General Education Program at Illinois State University and the Shared Learning Outcomes.” ISU. [http://assessment.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/gened/Goals\\_SharedLearningOutcomes073007.pdf](http://assessment.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/gened/Goals_SharedLearningOutcomes073007.pdf)

- **Shared Learning Outcome #2: Public Opportunity**
  - Students will identify the resources and subsequent value of civic and community engagement.
- **Shared Learning Outcome #3: Diverse and Global Perspectives**
  - Students will be exposed to diverse and global perspectives by developing and communicating an appreciation for the impact made in personal and professional lives.
- **Shared Learning Outcome #4: Life-Long Learning**
  - Students will utilize the skills indicative of an effective life-long learner actively pursuing knowledge and applying new information and skills in interdisciplinary approaches.

Figure 5 demonstrates how the 12 goals of the ISU General Education Program relate to the four overall Shared Learning outcomes.

**Figure 5: General Education Program Goals and Shared Learning Outcomes at ISU**

SHARED LEARNING OUTCOME	RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM GOALS
<b>1. Critical Inquiry and Problem Solving</b>	<b>2.</b> Provide for the systematic development of critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and communication skills. As a result, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Critically evaluate a wide variety of ideas and express that analysis in both writing and speaking.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Use quantitative reasoning appropriate to the particular problems they address.</li> </ul>
	<b>4.</b> Provide for student involvement in learning that is active and continuous. As a result, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Articulate their position on a variety of issues, understanding the context of others’ viewpoints.</li> </ul>
	<b>5.</b> Develop the ability to make informed, well-reasoned moral and ethical judgments. As a result, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Recognize moral issues and apply relevant principles and arguments to their resolution.</li> </ul>
	<b>11.</b> Develop and understanding of the earth’s environment, including the natural forces and specific human activities that impinge upon it. As a result, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Evaluate the real and potential consequences of natural, ideological, and social forces that affect life.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Demonstrate an understanding of the interactive links between the development and use of technology and the biosphere.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Public Opportunity</b>	<b>7.</b> Develop the ability to function as a responsible participant in the social, economic, technological, and political dimensions of life within local, national, and global communities. As a result students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Describe different ways in which the social, economic, technological, and political dimensions of life are known and conducted.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Analyze the meaning and purpose of individual and social life, focusing on such concepts or institutions s family, religion, business, and the state.</li> <li><b>c.</b> Formulate a critically informed position on participation in civic life.</li> </ul>
	<b>12.</b> Foster an understanding of the social and collaborative nature of knowledge and learning. As a result, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Account for the influence of context upon the creation and use of knowledge.</li> </ul>

SHARED LEARNING OUTCOME	RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM GOALS
<b>3. Diverse and Global Perspectives</b>	<p><b>6.</b> Develop a critical appreciation of a wide range of aesthetic experiences. As a result, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Formulate interpretations of diverse forms of creative expression.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Understand the role of the individual as creator in diverse depth of human creativity.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>10.</b> Develop an acquaintance with the civilizations of the world, the many ethnic traditions that create American culture, and the emerging common civilization of the contemporary world community. As a result, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Identify and critically reflect upon the major institutions, movements, ideas, and values which characterize the past and present of culture in the United States.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Identify and critically reflect upon the major institutions, movements, ideas, and values which characterize the past and present of culture in Western cultures.</li> <li><b>c.</b> Identify and critically reflect upon the major institutions, movements, ideas, and values which characterize the past and present of world cultures.</li> <li><b>d.</b> Investigate cross-cultural issues, including human nature, human rights, gender, race and religion globally.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Life-Long Learning</b>	<p><b>1.</b> Focus on the acquisition and application of a common core of knowledge, drawn from the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. As a result, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Assess the relative value of literacy and artistic works for themselves and for contemporary society.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Recognize the significant events, ideas, individuals, artifacts, and institutions that have shaped our knowledge of the world.</li> <li><b>c.</b> Describe principle scientific and mathematical concepts used to understand both the natural world and the technologies that modify it.</li> <li><b>d.</b> Illustrate the relevance of science and technology to problems connected with the quality of life for individuals and communities.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>3.</b> Integrate general education with the major through the identification, exploration, and development of common dimensions. As a result, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Develop skills that can be incorporated within their majors.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>4.</b> Provide for student involvement in learning that is active and continuous. As a result, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Articulate their position on a variety of issues, understanding the context of others’ viewpoints. The Goals of the General Education Program at Illinois State University and the Shared Learning Outcomes</li> </ul>
	<p><b>8.</b> Provide opportunities to explore connections among ideas from the perspectives of different disciplines. As a result, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Discuss how and why different fields may legitimately develop various formulations of a single issue.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Explore the ramifications of knowledge across disciplinary fields.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>9.</b> Provide learning experiences on issues and themes that transcend the boundaries of traditional disciplines. As a result, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Contribute to collaborative efforts involving two or more disciplines.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>12.</b> Foster an understanding of the social and collaborative nature of knowledge and learning. As a result, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Account for the influence of context upon the creation and use of knowledge.</li> </ul>

Source: ISU.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

## GER ASSESSMENT

At ISU, the main unit of evaluation within the SLO assessment process is an “Institutional Portfolio” [IAP]. An IAP is a “**collection and subsequent review of student work** (i.e. artifacts) produced for each of four shared learning outcomes based upon the 12 goals of General Education.” Once the artifacts have been collected and analyzed, an annual report is produced “based upon a pre-determined assessment cycle.”<sup>32</sup> ISU describes the overall process by which GER SLOs are assessed as follows:<sup>33</sup>

The collection and compilation of artifacts will be organized and managed by University Assessment Services, per the Provost’s charge. Each fall and spring semester, faculty teaching courses in the Inner, Middle, or Outer cores and the targeted Shared Learning Outcome [Public Opportunity, Diverse and Global Perspectives, Critical Thinking and Inquiry and Lifelong Learning] under review will be invited to submit student artifacts that address the assessment items as outlined by a rubric which has been designed for each of the four Shared Learning Outcomes. **This is a voluntary system** with no penalty for not participating and faculty retain the autonomy to select the assignment for review.

A more detailed description of the assessment cycle is contained within Figure 6:

**Figure 6: General Education Assessment Process at ISU**

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
<b>1: Invitation to Participate</b>	During the first week of the Fall and Spring semesters faculty teaching general education courses in a targeted Shared Learning Outcome will receive a letter inviting them to participate in the semester’s General Education assessment. Included in the letter will be the rubric representing the Shared Learning Outcome for which the assessment is targeted and for which the faculty member can identify an assignment that meets the criteria. Faculty will receive instructions on how they should proceed if they choose to participate, and have to reply within a certain timeframe.
<b>2: Faculty Elect to Participate and Submit Required Information</b>	After reviewing the rubric, faculty may elect to participate in the assessment process by identifying one (1) assignment [discovery activity, paper, speech, exam, etc.] that addresses the majority of the criteria outlined. Faculty will be instructed to complete an on-line Intent to Participate Form.
<b>3: Artifact Preparation by Faculty/Students</b>	Students will submit the designated assignment to faculty as usual. Faculty will collect the assignment to be submitted and bundle it for pick-up. Faculty will be provided an e-mail reminder regarding their participation in the Gen Ed assessment process.
<b>4: Artifact Pick-Up and Return</b>	A member of the University Assessment Services (UAS) staff will collect all artifacts on the confirmed date/time/location. The artifacts will be taken directly to the UAS office where they will be duplicated and returned within one (1) business day. All artifacts will be returned to the Department/School Office in a secured envelope which is labeled for the faculty member.

<sup>32</sup> “General Education Assessment: Procedures Manual.” ISU.

<http://assessment.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/GenEdAssessmentProceduresManualrevAug2011.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> “General Education Assessment Process.” ISU. <http://assessment.illinoisstate.edu/generaleducation/process.shtml>

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
<b>5: Artifact Review</b>	The Gen Ed Assessment Review Teams will be populated by tenure track and 50% or greater appointment non-tenure track faculty and administrative professionals with teaching responsibilities. The review teams will be comprised of 2-3 persons who will review each artifact based upon the rubric for the Shared Learning Outcome. The team must reach a consensus since an “average” score is not possible based upon the rubric’s design.
<b>6: Data Compiled</b>	The data derived from the review teams will be compiled in conjunction with institutional background data to provide the most accurate results regarding student performance among the Shared Learning Outcomes.
<b>7: Data Reported to Council for General Education</b>	Results of the annual Institutional Artifact Portfolio assessment will be reported by University Assessment Services directly to the Council for General Education (CGE). The results will be reported by academic year and provided to the CGE on or before September 30th. The CGE will then evaluate the assessment results to make informed decisions about the General Education Program. A summary of CGE’s response to the annual results will be published in the Spring issue of University Assessment Services’ newsletter Progressive Measures.

Source: ISU.<sup>34</sup>

***Use of Rubrics within the Assessment Process at ISU***

Within the above process, the use of rubrics is mentioned on several occasions. As can be seen, these rubrics are used to assess artifacts of student work. Unlike the rubrics used by Appalachian State University and FGBU, which are based upon models devised by AAC&U, **ISU produces its own rubrics**. A rubric is produced for each of the four shared learning outcomes. An example of one of these rubrics is included in Figure 7:

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 7: Rubric Used to Assess the Public Opportunity Shared Learning Outcome at ISU**

PRIMARY TRAITS	DEVELOPING	ESTABLISHED	ADVANCED	GEN ED GOAL
Critically Informed Position on Civic Life	<b>Describes</b> the value of contributions to civic life in the dimensions of their own life	<b>Compares</b> the value of contributions to civic life from multiple, critically informed perspectives	<b>Defends or refutes</b> the value of contributions to civic life	7.c
Influence of civic participation on the social and collaborative nature of <b>knowledge</b>	<b>Identifies</b> how civic participation can change the social and collaborative nature of knowledge	<b>Explains</b> how civic participation can change the social and collaborative nature of knowledge	<b>Applies</b> new knowledge in the context of civic participation	12
<b>Contributions to the public affecting individual life</b> aspects – such as family, religion, business and/or the state	<b>Identifies</b> at least one contribution related to family, religion, business and/or the state as affecting individual life	<b>Explains</b> how at least one contribution related to family, religion, business and/or the state affects individual life	<b>Compares</b> multiple interrelated contributions and their affect on individual life	7.b
<b>Contributions to the public affecting social and community life</b> aspects – such as family, religion, business and/or the state	<b>Identifies</b> at least one contribution related to family, religion, business and/or the state as affecting social and/or community life	<b>Explains</b> how at least one contribution related to family, religion, business and/or the state affects social and/or community life	<b>Compares</b> multiple interrelated contributions and/or their affect on social and/or community life	7.b
<b>Resources</b> for civic engagement	<b>Identifies</b> where various resources for civic engagement can be found	<b>Explains</b> how various resources for civic engagement can be utilized	<b>Compares</b> the impact of utilizing various resources for civic engagement	Inner Core
<b>Civic participation</b> in the social, economic, technological, and/or political dimensions of community development	<b>Identifies</b> how civic participation supports community development	<b>Explains</b> a process for civic participation in community development	<b>Evaluates</b> the implementation of a process for civic participation in community development	7.a
Self-Reflection (Elective)	<b>Identifies</b> their own experience(s) with civic engagement	<b>Explains</b> a lesson which was learned from their own experience(s) with civic engagement	<b>Predicts</b> how their own experience(s) with civic engagement will be expanded upon	N/A
Discipline knowledge (Elective)	<b>Identifies</b> discipline knowledge relevant to a civic engagement topic	<b>Explains</b> how discipline knowledge supports the civic engagement topic	<b>Compares</b> various sources of discipline knowledge as related to the civic engagement topic	N/A

Source: ISU.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Public Opportunity Rubric. ISU. [http://assessment.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/PublicOpportunityRubric\\_2010\\_rev.pdf](http://assessment.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/PublicOpportunityRubric_2010_rev.pdf)

### *ENROLLMENT POLICIES*

ISU takes the following into account when considering the admission of students:<sup>36</sup>

- High school transcript (including grade trends and rigor of courses completed);
- Grade point average;
- ACT/SAT scores;
- Optional academic personal statement.

While minimum ACT and SAT scores are not stated, ISU stated that the median ACT and GPA scores of students offered admission in fall 2012 were:

- ACT Score: 22-26
- Grade Point Average: 3.1-3.79.

When applicable, a minimum GED score of 401 on each of the five tests, and an average battery score of 450 is required to be admitted to ISU.

Applicants must also have completed the following **areas of study** prior to admission:

- English – 4 years
- Mathematics – 3 years (algebra, geometry, algebra II - trigonometry or higher)
- Natural science – 2 years with laboratories
- Social Science – 2 years
- Foreign language – 2 years of one language OR Fine arts – 2 years of fine arts
- Electives – 2 years

### *PLACEMENT TESTING*

ISU only has placement tests in Math and certain languages, and not all students are required to undertake the evaluations:<sup>37</sup>

- **Math Placement** - The COMPASS math test is used to place certain students. If a student's ACT math score is 27 or greater, or their SAT math score is 620 or greater, they do not need to take the test. Students with ACT or SAT scores at or below 26 or 620 respectively have to take the COMPASS Math Placement Exam.

<sup>36</sup> "Admission Requirements." ISU. <http://admissions.illinoisstate.edu/freshman/requirements/>

<sup>37</sup> "Placement Tests." ISU. <http://ucollege.illinoisstate.edu/preview/placement/>

- **French, German and Spanish Self-Placement Tests** - These tests are designed to help students select course best suited to their ability within these programs. These tests are not required.

**FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY**

*GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MODEL*

The model for the General Education program at Ferris State is as follows:

**Figure 8: General Education Program Model for Bachelor’s Degrees at Ferris State**

AREA (REQUIRED CREDIT HOURS)	DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS
<b>Communication Competence (12)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ English Composition Requirement – 6 Credit Hours;</li> <li>■ Speech Communication Requirements – 3 Credit Hours;</li> <li>■ Advanced English/Speech Requirement – 3 Credit Hours.</li> </ul>
<b>Quantitative Skills (N/A)</b>	<p><b>Five options:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pass MATH 115 or higher</li> <li>2. Pass a course proficiency exam for MATH 115 or higher</li> <li>3. Submit an ACT math subtest score of 24 or higher, plus 1 year of high school algebra with a grade of C- or better</li> <li>4. Submit a Compass Algebra score of 61 or higher, plus 1 year of high school algebra with a grade of C- or better</li> <li>5. Submit an SAT math score of 560 or higher, plus 1 year of high school algebra with a grade of C- or better</li> </ol>
<b>Scientific Understanding (7)</b>	Choose two Scientific Understanding courses, one of which must have a lab.
<b>Cultural Enrichment (9)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Choose three cultural enrichment courses;</li> <li>■ At least ONE course at the 200-level or higher;</li> <li>■ No more than 5 credit hours in cultural enrichment activities courses may apply to this requirement.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Awareness (9)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Choose three Social Awareness courses, in at least two different subject areas;</li> <li>■ One of the Social Awareness courses must be a Foundations course;</li> <li>■ One of the Social Awareness courses must be at the 200-level or higher.</li> </ul>
<b>Race-Ethnicity-Gender (N/A)</b>	One course (NB - many Race/Ethnicity/Gender courses also meet Social Awareness or Cultural Enrichment requirements)
<b>Global Consciousness (N/A)</b>	One course (NB - many Race/Ethnicity/Gender courses also meet Social Awareness or Cultural Enrichment requirements)

Source: Ferris State.<sup>38</sup>

The General Education Program Model for associate’s degrees is a modified version of the above, with slightly fewer credit hours required in certain areas.

<sup>38</sup> “Ferris State University: General Education Requirements for Bachelor’s Degrees 2012-2013.” Ferris State. <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/courses/GenEd-bachelor.pdf>

*GER STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES*

The General Education Program at Ferris State has detailed learning outcomes, organized by overall learning outcome areas. The SLOs for the program are detailed in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: General Education Program Learning Outcomes, Ferris State**

LEARNING OUTCOME AREA	LEARNING OUTCOMES
<p><b>Communication Competence: Writing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Awareness and knowledge of audience:</b> College graduates should be able to analyze and define the needs of their intended audience</li> <li>■ <b>Purpose for writing:</b> College graduates should be able to analyze and define the purpose of their writing</li> <li>■ <b>Problem solving and researching:</b> College graduates should be able to analyze the writing situation, identify needed information, and locate the appropriate information for their writing;</li> <li>■ <b>Organizing:</b> College graduates should be able to analyze the writing situation and choose appropriate methods of organizing effectively</li> <li>■ <b>Editing:</b> College graduates should be able to produce effective written communication demonstrating appropriate use of language, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics</li> <li>■ <b>Collaborating:</b> College graduates should be able to work effectively with others to produce and/or revise written materials;</li> <li>■ <b>Written products:</b> College graduates should be able to adapt to the workplace and produce a variety of written documents as required;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication Competence: Speech</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify and describe the components of the human communication process;</li> <li>■ Identify and describe the literal message content and the relationship variables between communicators in interpersonal, small group or presentational contexts;</li> <li>■ Select, present, interpret and respond appropriately and effectively to verbal and nonverbal messages in interpersonal, small group or presentational contexts;</li> <li>■ Use verbal and nonverbal messages to achieve personal, interpersonal, small group, or presentational goals, while developing and maintaining relationships with other.</li> </ul>

LEARNING OUTCOME AREA	LEARNING OUTCOMES
<p><b>Quantitative Skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Perform basic operations (e.g., addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) in the context of both arithmetic and algebra;</li> <li>■ Solve a variety of equations (e.g., linear, quadratic, radical, exponential, logarithmic, or trigonometric equations);</li> <li>■ Estimate and approximate answers to a variety of problems (i.e., recognize both the range of possible answers and when an "answer" is outside the range of possible answers);</li> <li>■ Demonstrate a conceptual understanding of mathematics (e.g., represent mathematical information using symbols, graphs, tables and verbal explanations);</li> <li>■ Demonstrate a procedural understanding of mathematics (i.e., carry out the steps required to arrive at a final answer or conclusion);</li> <li>■ Explain and demonstrate the relevance of mathematics to the real world (e.g., give examples of how mathematics is used in the real world);</li> <li>■ Represent real-world problems using mathematics (i.e., model real-world problems);</li> <li>■ Solve both real-world problems and problems that exist within the context of mathematics itself;</li> <li>■ Select an appropriate formula for a given real-world problem, and use it to solve the problem;</li> <li>■ Demonstrate the appropriate use of computing technology to solve quantitative problem</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scientific Understanding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have a working knowledge of the fundamental principles of a natural science discipline;</li> <li>■ Be able to use appropriate scientific reasoning skills to interpret and analyze content in the natural sciences;</li> <li>■ Have a basic understanding of the scientific method, scientific concepts, and the evolution of scientific ideas;</li> <li>■ Have a more positive attitude toward science and an increased confidence in their ability to understand science.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Awareness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have increased knowledge of some aspects of human development and behavior, group dynamics, social institutions, social change, and cultural diversity;</li> <li>■ Know several methodologies employed to understand the above;</li> <li>■ Be able to employ such knowledge and methodologies to better understand public issues and to act effectively as a citizen;</li> <li>■ Be able to employ such knowledge and methodologies to enhance their ability to function competently in their profession;</li> <li>■ Be able to employ such knowledge and methodologies to enhance their interpersonal interactions.</li> </ul>

LEARNING OUTCOME AREA	LEARNING OUTCOMES
<b>Cultural Enrichment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have an increased ability to interpret cultural works as a part of a culture;</li> <li>■ Be able to justify those interpretations with an understanding of the interpretive process;</li> <li>■ Be able to look at works or historical events from different perspectives;</li> <li>■ Be better able to make and justify valuing (aesthetic and ethical) distinctions;</li> <li>■ Exhibit improved distinctions in perception, craft, and/or life choices;</li> <li>■ Have increased knowledge of the techniques or methodology of a discipline in the humanities;</li> <li>■ Have increased knowledge about some aspects of cultures;</li> <li>■ Better understand themselves as part of cultures with rich historical perspectives;</li> <li>■ Be able to gain increased self-understanding through works of culture;</li> <li>■ Have an increased inclination to engage in the humanities (whether reading a work of literature, attending a play, reading a biography, or listening to quality music) as a way of better understanding themselves and their world or enhancing the quality of their lives.</li> </ul>
<b>Global Consciousness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify various regions, features or countries other than North America;</li> <li>■ Describe distinctive geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic, or historical features of a region, culture, or society other than North America;</li> <li>■ Articulate geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic and/or historical relationships among diverse nations and peoples;</li> <li>■ Comment accurately about current events in at least one country or region other than North America;</li> <li>■ Describe a method for developing an understanding of geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic, and/or historical contexts of a country or region anywhere in the world;</li> <li>■ Ferris graduates should develop a more positive perspective and understanding of the importance of global consciousness.</li> </ul>
<b>Race/Ethnicity/ Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify various regions, features or countries other than North America;</li> <li>■ Describe distinctive geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic, or historical features of a region, culture, or society other than North America;</li> <li>■ Articulate geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic and/or historical relationships among diverse nations and peoples;</li> <li>■ Comment accurately about current events in at least one country or region other than North America;</li> <li>■ Describe a method for developing an understanding of geographic, economic, cultural, linguistic, and/or historical contexts of a country or region anywhere in the world;</li> <li>■ Ferris graduates should develop a more positive perspective and understanding of the importance of global consciousness.</li> </ul>

Source: Ferris State.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Links to these Learning Outcomes areas can be found via “Learning Outcome Areas.” Ferris State.  
<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/academics/gened/Learningoutcomes.html>

*GER ASSESSMENT*

At Ferris State, assessment of SLOs is divided into “local” (i.e., institution-based) and “national” (i.e., external) efforts. Responsibility for coordinating national/external assessment falls to the General Education Coordinator, one of the nine members of the General Education Committee. The coordinator works with the Provost’s office to administer national assessments of SLOs “**about every other year.**”<sup>40</sup>

The responsibility for local assessment falls under the remit of subcommittees established for each learning outcome area, who are ultimately answerable to the General Education Coordinator. Internal assessment also occurs on a **roughly biennial basis**. These subcommittees are composed of the following individuals:

**Figure 10: Learning Outcome Area Subcommittees, Ferris State**

LEARNING OUTCOME AREA	COMPOSITION OF SUBCOMMITTEE
<b>Communication Competence: Writing</b>	3 faculty from Languages and Literature and 2 faculty from Colleges other than Arts and Sciences (subcommittees may be formed in Languages and Literature for specific areas of assessment).
<b>Communication Competence: Speech</b>	3 faculty from the speech communication area and 2 faculty from Colleges other than Arts and Sciences.
<b>Quantitative Skills</b>	3 faculty from Math and 2 faculty from Colleges other than Arts and Sciences.
<b>Scientific Understanding</b>	2 faculty from the physical sciences and 2 faculty from the biological sciences and 2 faculty from Colleges other than Arts and Sciences.
<b>Social Awareness</b>	4 faculty from Social Sciences, 1 faculty from Accountancy, Economics and Applied Stats in the College of Business, and 2 faculty from Colleges other than Arts and Sciences.
<b>Cultural Enrichment</b>	2 faculty from Languages and Literature, 3 faculty from Humanities and 2 faculty from Colleges other than Arts and Sciences.
<b>Global Consciousness</b>	1 faculty from Social Science, 1 faculty from Languages and Literature, and 1 faculty member from Humanities and 3 faculty from Colleges other than Arts and Sciences.
<b>Race/Ethnicity/ Gender</b>	2 faculty from Social Sciences, 1 from humanities, 1 faculty from Languages and Literature and 2 faculty from other departments and/or colleges.

Source: Ferris State.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> “General Education Program Map.” Ferris State. <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/concept-content-map/index.html>

<sup>41</sup> “General Education Learning Outcomes Area Committees.” Ferris State University. <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/outcomescomm.html>

Assessment is performed via the following means for the various learning outcome areas.

**Figure 11: Assessment Methods for General Education Learning Outcome Areas, Ferris State**

LEARNING OUTCOME AREA	ASSESSMENT METHODS
<b>Communication Competence: Writing</b>	<b>Local:</b> Rubric evaluation of writing samples from courses taken to fulfill the learning outcome. <b>National:</b> 1. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) <sup>42</sup> 2. ETS Proficiency Profile (Standardized Assessment)
<b>Communication Competence: Speech</b>	<b>Local:</b> Tests taken in courses required for the learning outcome. <b>National:</b> 1. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2. ETS Proficiency Profile (Standardized Assessment)
<b>Quantitative Skills</b>	<b>Local:</b> Tests developed by the Mathematics department. <b>National:</b> 1. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2. ETS Proficiency Profile (Standardized Assessment)
<b>Scientific Understanding</b>	<b>Local:</b> Test developed by Scientific Understanding Subcommittee <b>National:</b> 1. ETS Proficiency Profile (Standardized Assessment)
<b>Social Awareness</b>	<b>Local:</b> Test developed by Social Awareness Subcommittee <b>National:</b> 1. ETS Proficiency Profile (Standardized Assessment)
<b>Cultural Enrichment</b>	<b>Local:</b> Survey developed by Cultural Enrichment Subcommittee <b>National:</b> 3. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 4. ETS Proficiency Profile (Standardized Assessment)
<b>Global Consciousness</b>	<b>Local:</b> Survey developed by Global Consciousness Subcommittee <b>National:</b> 1. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
<b>Race/Ethnicity/ Gender</b>	<b>Local:</b> Survey developed by Race/Ethnicity/Gender Subcommittee <b>National:</b> 1. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Source: Ferris State.<sup>43</sup>

The **NSSE survey** mentioned within the above table is a survey which measures “five benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment.” Each benchmark represents an “index of responses to several NSSE questions.” The results of an NSSE survey undertaken at one school can be compared against local and national data collected by the firm.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> For an example of an NSSE report, see: “NSSE 2012 Benchmark Comparisons.” NSSE. [http://nsse.iub.edu/Institutional\\_Report/NSSE%20Benchmark%20Comparisons%20Report%20%28NSSEville%20State%29.pdf](http://nsse.iub.edu/Institutional_Report/NSSE%20Benchmark%20Comparisons%20Report%20%28NSSEville%20State%29.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> “General Education Program Map.” Ferris State. Op. Cit.

<sup>44</sup> “Ferris State University: Benchmark Comparisons.” NSSE. August 2012, p.1. <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/academicaffairs/assessment/nsse/2012/NSSE12-Benchmark-Comparisons-Report-Ferris-State.pdf>

The **Proficiency Profile administered by ETS** (a national testing company) is the same test employed by FGCU (described previously).<sup>45</sup>

**All assessment information**, whether collected via internal or external means, is **entered into TracDat by the General Education Coordinator**. TracDat is a software program developed by the firm Nuventive, which is specifically designed to help institutions manage assessment.<sup>46</sup>

Any changes to the General Education program curriculum must occur via the General Education Coordinator and the University General Education Committee. However, only the Provost has the ability to make “major changes to general education” based on the recommendations of the coordinator and the committee.<sup>47</sup>

### *ENROLLMENT POLICIES*

Ferris State requires that students submit official high school transcripts, along with SAT or ACT scores, in order to be considered for admission. They do not specifically state what scores are required for enrollment, but do state that:

Any student with a 2.5 High School Cumulative GPA or a 17 ACT Composite will be given serious consideration for general admission. Every student application is evaluated individually, so all students are encouraged to apply. Individual programs may have additional criteria for direct admission. Transfer students must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of a 2.0 or higher to be eligible for general admissions.<sup>48</sup>

### *PLACEMENT TESTING*

Ferris State does not appear to have any mandatory placement tests for the courses which comprise its General Education Program.

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<sup>45</sup> “ETS Proficiency Profile Overview.” ETS. <http://www.ets.org/proficiencyprofile/about/>

<sup>46</sup> “TracDat.” Nuventive. [http://nuventive.com/products\\_tracdat.html](http://nuventive.com/products_tracdat.html)

<sup>47</sup> “Changes in General Education.” Ferris State University.  
<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/changes.html>

<sup>48</sup> “Ask us a Question: Admission Requirements.”

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY**

*GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MODEL*

There are three elements to the Clemson General Education Program: (1) general education coursework; (2) coursework specific to the discipline; and (3) examples of student work that document the student’s achievement of general education competencies in an ePortfolio.<sup>49</sup> The ePortfolio will be described in greater length later in this profile. The first two parts of the General Education Program Model for Clemson is shown in Figure 12. The third part “documentation of general education competencies” is included in the next sub-section, as it relates to student learning outcomes.

**Figure 12: General Education Program Model at Clemson University**

CURRICULUM AREA	DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS
<b>General Education Coursework</b>	
<b>A. Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ English Composition – 3 Credits;</li> <li>■ Oral Communication – 3 Credits.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Mathematical, Scientific and Technical Literacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mathematics – 3 Credits</li> <li>■ Natural Science with Lab – 4 Credits</li> <li>■ Mathematics or Natural Science – 3 Credits</li> </ul>
<b>C. Arts and Humanities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Literature – 3 Credits</li> <li>■ Non-Literature – 3 Credits</li> </ul>
<b>D. Social Sciences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Selected from two different fields – 6 Credits</li> </ul>
<b>E. Cross-Cultural Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Choice from multiple courses; not stated how many credits required.</li> </ul>
<b>F. Science and Technology in Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Choice from multiple courses; not stated how many credits required.</li> </ul>
<b>Discipline-Specific Coursework</b>	
<b>A. Academic and Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “Departmental Course approved by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee addressing the general academic and professional development of the student.” (2 Credits)</li> </ul>
<b>B. Distributed Competencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “Each degree program has integrated into its program of study distributed competencies in Communication (written and oral); Critical Thinking; and Ethical Judgment.” – number of required credits not specified.</li> </ul>

Source: Clemson University.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> “General Education.” Clemson University.  
[http://www.clemson.edu/academics/advising/documents/3\\_genedandcoursespecificinfo.pdf](http://www.clemson.edu/academics/advising/documents/3_genedandcoursespecificinfo.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

*GER STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES*

The SLOs for the General Education Program at Clemson are outlined in Figure 13. As can be seen, and in contrast to the detailed SLOs of an institution like Ferris State, the SLOs of Clemson’s General Education Program are relatively succinct.

**Figure 13: General Education SLOs at Clemson University**

GENERAL EDUCATION COMPETENCY AREA	REQUIREMENTS
<b>Arts and Humanities</b>	Demonstrate an understanding of the arts and humanities in historical and cultural contexts.
<b>Mathematics</b>	Demonstrate mathematical literacy through solving problems, communicating concepts, reasoning mathematically, and applying mathematical or statistical methods, using multiple representations where applicable.
<b>Natural Sciences</b>	Demonstrate scientific literacy by explaining the process of scientific reasoning and applying scientific principles inside and outside of the laboratory or field setting.
<b>Social Sciences</b>	Demonstrate an understanding of social science methodologies in order to explain the consequences of human actions.
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze the quality and utility of knowledge gained throughout the undergraduate experience and apply this knowledge to a wide range of problems.
<b>Cross-Cultural Awareness</b>	Demonstrate the ability to critically compare and contrast world cultures in historical and/or contemporary contexts.
<b>Ethical Judgment</b>	Demonstrate an ability to identify, comprehend, and deal with ethical problems and their ramifications in a systematic, thorough, and responsible way.
<b>Science and Technology in Society</b>	Demonstrate an understanding of issues created by the complex interactions among science, technology, and society.

Source: Clemson University.<sup>51</sup>

*GER ASSESSMENT*

At Clemson, assessment of student learning outcomes occurs via ePortfolio. Hanover contacted Clemson’s Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, who confirmed that this was the main method by which assessment took place in the General Education Program. Each of the General Education Competency Areas above has a **faculty facilitator**, who takes a “**stratified sample of graduates each summer**” in order that assessment can take place.<sup>52</sup>

Clemson describes the ePortfolio as “a collection of a student’s work in electronic format.” The University states that it can contain “all or some of the following”:<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Taken verbatim from Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Email correspondence with the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Clemson University, 11/29/2012.

<sup>53</sup> “What is an ePortfolio?” Clemson University. <http://www.clemson.edu/academics/programs/eportfolio/about/>

- Supporting files of various formats (text, pictures, video, etc.);
- Evaluations, analysis and recommendations;
- Evidence of General Education competencies;
- Writing samples (which might include several drafts to show development and improvement);
- Projects prepared for class or extracurricular activities;
- Evidence of creativity and performance;
- Evidence of extracurricular activities, including examples of leadership.

### *ENROLLMENT POLICIES*

Clemson states that the following five factors are taken into consideration in terms of freshman applicants: (1) class standing; (2) Standardized test scores (SAT or ACT); (3) High School curriculum; (4) Grades; and (5) Choice of Major. While Clemson does not appear to require minimum ACT or SAT scores, it does state that “the middle 50 percent of admitted students” have SAT scores of 1160-1310 and 26-30 for the ACT.<sup>54</sup>

Clemson recommends that applicants have completed the following high school courses:

**Figure 14: High School Course Prerequisites for Clemson Freshman**

<b>COURSE AREAS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>English (4 credits)</b>	All four courses must have strong grammar and composition components with at least one English literature and at least one American literature. College preparatory English I, II, III and IV will meet these requirements.
<b>Mathematics (4 credits)</b>	These include algebra I (for which applied mathematics I and II might count together as a substitute if a student successfully completes algebra II), algebra II and geometry.
<b>Laboratory Science (3 credits)</b>	Two must be selected from biology I, chemistry I or physics I. Physical science does not typically count as a lab science.
<b>Foreign Language (3 credits)</b>	All credits must be earned in the same language. Students who have completed fewer than three credits of the same foreign language are still encouraged to apply. Any documentation provided by the high school guidance staff explaining the reason(s) this requirement could not be fulfilled will be considered when reviewing the student’s application.
<b>Social Sciences (3 credits)</b>	American history is required. A half credit of government and a half credit of economics are also recommended.

<sup>54</sup> “Frequently Added Questions.” Clemson University. <http://www.clemson.edu/admissions/undergraduate/faq.html>

COURSE AREAS	DESCRIPTION
<b>Other (2 credits)</b>	One of these must be a fourth year of mathematics, laboratory science or foreign language. Students interested in engineering are strongly encouraged to take a fourth year of mathematics. This course should be selected from precalculus, calculus, statistics or discrete mathematics. The second credit must be in advanced mathematics, computer science or a combination of these; or one unit of world history, world geography or Western civilization.
<b>Physical Education/ROTC (1 credit)</b>	No description
<b>Fine Arts (1 credit)</b>	One unit in appreciation of, history of, or performance in one of the fine arts.

Source: Clemson University.<sup>55</sup>

### *PLACEMENT TESTING*

There are two placement tests which form part of the enrollment process at Clemson. The policies with regard to these two tests are quoted below:<sup>56</sup>

#### ■ **Math**

“All accepted students, both freshman and transfer, **MUST** complete the Clemson Mathematics Placement Test (CMPT) in order to register for the first mathematics course required by their major. The CMPT insures proper advising for new students at Orientation. Students who don’t achieve a satisfactory score on the CMPT, or those who don’t take the test, might be required to take a preparatory math course prior to starting the initial math course required for their major.”

#### ■ **Foreign Language**

“If your intended major requires a foreign language and you plan to take French, German or Spanish to meet that requirement, you must take the Clemson Foreign Language Placement Test (FLPT) (scroll down on page) before registering for a foreign language course during summer Orientation. Even if you have taken an AP or IB exam or the SAT II test, you are still required to take the FLPT.”

<sup>55</sup> Counselors.” Clemson University. <http://www.clemson.edu/admissions/undergraduate/counselors.html>

<sup>56</sup> “Step by step.” Clemson University. <http://www.clemson.edu/accepted-students/steps.html>

## MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

### GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MODEL

The General Education Program Model at Montgomery College is split into two components: Foundation Courses and Distribution Courses. The model is structured as follows, for each type of degree offered:

**Figure 15: General Education Program Model**

COMPONENT	AA (CREDITS)	AAS (CREDITS)	AAT (CREDITS)	AFA (CREDITS)	AS (CREDITS)
<b>Foundation</b>					
English	3	3	3	3	3
Health	1-3	1-3	1-3	0	1-3
Mathematics	3	3	3	3	3
Speech	3	3	3	0	3
<b>Distribution</b>					
Arts	3	0	3	3	3
Humanities	3	0	3	3	3
Either Arts or Humanities	3	3	3	3	0
Behavioral and Social Sciences	6*	3	6	3	6*
Natural Sciences	7**	4**	7**	3	8**
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>32-34</b>	<b>20-22</b>	<b>32-34</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>30-32</b>

Source: Montgomery College.<sup>57</sup>

### GER STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Montgomery College has divided its student learning outcomes into two overall areas: “competencies,” and “proficiencies”:

<sup>57</sup> “The General Education Program, 2011-12.” Montgomery College.  
[http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/uploadedFiles/EDU/Departments\\_-\\_Academic/General\\_Education\\_Program/General\\_Education\\_Subpages/GeneralEducationCatalog2011-12.pdf](http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/uploadedFiles/EDU/Departments_-_Academic/General_Education_Program/General_Education_Subpages/GeneralEducationCatalog2011-12.pdf)

**Figure 16: General Education SLOs at Montgomery College**

OUTCOME	DESCRIPTION
<b>General Education Competencies</b>	
<b>Written and Oral Communication</b>	"The ability to communicate effectively in verbal and written language, the ability to use a variety of modern information resources and supporting technologies, the ability to differentiate content from style of presentation, and the ability to suit content and style to the purpose of the communication."
<b>Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning</b>	"The ability to locate, identify, collect, organize, analyze, and interpret data and the ability to use mathematics and the scientific method of inquiry to make decisions, when appropriate."
<b>Critical Analysis and Reasoning</b>	"The application of higher order analytic and creative cognitive processes to arrive at reasoned and supportable conclusions, to synthesize and apply knowledge within and across courses and disciplines, and to develop creative solutions."
<b>Technological Competency</b>	"The ability to use computer technology and appropriate software applications to produce documentation, quantitative data presentations, and functional graphical presentations appropriate to various academic and professional settings."
<b>Information Literacy</b>	"The ability to identify, locate, and effectively use information from various print and electronic sources."
<b>Areas of Proficiency</b>	
<b>Arts and Aesthetic Awareness</b>	"Students will develop skills and acquire experiences that enable them to value, reflect upon, and appreciate the arts and role of the arts in the human experience."
<b>Personal, Social, and Civic Responsibilities</b>	"Students will develop the skills and awareness necessary to live as responsible, ethical, and contributing citizens of the community, state, nation, and world."

Source: Montgomery College.<sup>58</sup>

*GER ASSESSMENT*

Montgomery College has recently undertaken a process by which it has re-evaluated how assessment of General Education Programs should take place. The following sub-section will outline both the six-year General Education Competency Assessment Cycle developed by Montgomery College, as well as the Course Assessment plan that now appears to be in use.

At Montgomery College, **assessment data is collected every three years**, and areas will assess twice in every six-year cycle. General education courses are placed into one of three six-year assessment cycles. Each assessment cycle is structured thusly:<sup>59</sup>

- Year 1 – Data collection/reporting;
- Year 2 – Review data and develop action plan (tentative general education review);

<sup>58</sup> "Montgomery College's General Education Program." Montgomery College. <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Department.aspx?id=12226>

<sup>59</sup> "6-year General Education Competency Assessment Cycle." Montgomery College, February 15, 2012. <http://tinyurl.com/d4sv6gr>

- Year 3 – Implement action plan;
- Year 4 – Data collection/reporting;
- Year 5 – Review data, update action plan;
- Year 6 – Update action plan, review and update course assessment plan.

The assessment process is outlined in greater depth in the following **General Education subcommittee recommendations**:<sup>60</sup>

1. Each General Education course will be expected to develop an assessment plan that incorporates opportunities to practice, as well as assess, the assigned competencies.
2. General Education Assessment plans should reflect discipline agreement on how the competencies are incorporated and assessed every semester (on-going assessment).
3. Assessment data will be systematically collected every three years using the Collegewide General Education Rubrics (periodic data collection).
4. Disciplines will be expected to use assessment data to improve General Education courses by creating recommendation actions based on General Education Data. Discipline Action plans will be updated yearly.
5. Assessment Plans will be reviewed and revised as necessary, by the discipline, every six years.
6. Assessment plans, data and recommendations/action plans will be incorporated into a General Education Course Review Process.
7. Each distribution and foundation area will be expected to emphasize and assess three competencies and/or proficiencies as well as the technology competency.
8. A straightforward, explicit technology competency assessment will be embedded into all General Education rubrics.
9. The Areas of Proficiency will be mandated for assessment in two competency areas, Health and Arts, and will be strongly encouraged for individual course groups within each distribution area.

In recommendation three, Montgomery College mentions the use of “Collegewide General Education Rubrics” in the assessment process. Individual rubrics for each of SLOs outlined in Figure 16 have been developed by Montgomery College. However, **these rubrics have been developed based on the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics**.<sup>61</sup> An example of one of these rubrics, used for the “Technological Competency” SLO, is outlined in Figure 17. Prior to the rubric, the College states that “student performance will generally only be measured in one area of

<sup>60</sup> “Montgomery College General Education Assessment Plan.” Montgomery College.  
<http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=38012>

<sup>61</sup> “General Education Course Assessment.” Montgomery College.  
<http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/outcomes/gened/>

technological competency: use of general software applications; use of discipline or course specific software applications, and/or use of a technological device to complete a task.”<sup>62</sup>

**Figure 17: Sample Rubric Used in Assessment of General Education SLOs at Montgomery College.**

ADVANCED (3)	PROFICIENT (2)	NOVICE (1)	NOT EVIDENT (0)
<b>Standard 1 Content: Student can use general use purpose software applications, discipline specific applications or a technological device to complete tasks.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Uses technology, fluently, to complete advanced tasks, independently;</li> <li>■ Seeks new technological resources to complete tasks;</li> <li>■ Communicates or illustrates ideas clearly and correctly using technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Uses technology for routine tasks with minimal assistance;</li> <li>■ Uses familiar resources;</li> <li>■ Communicates or illustrates ideas, with minimal errors, using technology;</li> <li>■ Relies on limited instructor guidance to complete tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Uses technology for basic tasks with assistance</li> <li>■ May use technology inefficiently</li> <li>■ Uses a minimum of resources</li> <li>■ Communicates or illustrates ideas using technology in a limited way</li> <li>■ Relies heavily on instructor guidance to complete tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does not use technology effectively or correctly</li> <li>■ Does not use appropriate resources</li> <li>■ Does not communicate ideas effectively or clearly</li> </ul>

Source: Montgomery College.<sup>63</sup>

### *ENROLLMENT POLICIES / PLACEMENT TESTING*

Montgomery College has an open-access policy towards admissions.<sup>64</sup>

Montgomery College has placement testing in reading, English, Mathematics, and Chemistry.<sup>65,66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> “Montgomery College General Education Assessment Rubric: Technological Competency.” Montgomery College. <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=41157>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> “Advocacy Points.”

<sup>65</sup> “Who must complete assessment testing?” Montgomery College. <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/plain.aspx?id=21915>

<sup>66</sup> “Welcome to the Department of Chemistry at Rockville Campus.” Montgomery College. <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/chemrv/>

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