2015-2019 University of Florida General Education Academic Assessment Plan

General Education

University of Florida

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University of Florida General Education
2013-17 Academic Assessment Plan

General Education Mission Statement

The general education curriculum supports the mission of the University of Florida by providing undergraduate students with common collective knowledge about the world in which they live. The curriculum enables students to think creatively, reason critically, communicate effectively, and make informed decisions that affect all aspects of their lives. Through general education courses, students gain fresh perspectives and discover new approaches to intellectual inquiry that promote understanding of both the traditional and the newly discovered. To achieve these outcomes, the general education curriculum encompasses a breadth of knowledge in composition, diversity studies, international studies, humanities, mathematics, physical and biological sciences, and social and behavioral sciences. Ultimately, competence in these areas enables students to better understand themselves, their neighbors, other cultures and times, and the principles governing the natural world and the universe; and to participate fully and responsibly as informed citizens in local, national, and global matters.

Introduction

Changes to the General Education Program

Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, the general education program will be substantially modified by revisions to the State of Florida Statute 1007.25 in 2012-2013 regarding general education. These revisions were intended to "improve articulation and reduce excess hours" for students entering the State University System (SUS) and Florida College System (FCS). The bill revisions apply to students initially entering the SUS or FCS in the 2015-2016 academic year and thereafter. The bill in its current form requires that 15 of the 36 general education credits for all SUS and FCS students be chosen from a determined set of 23 courses (the General Education Core) in five categories. All SUS and FCS institutions must accept these courses for transfer credit.

The UF general education program will be further transformed beginning in the 2016-2017 academic year by Preeminence Bill SB 1076, which allows UF to require 9 – 12 credits of unique coursework in all undergraduate programs that cannot be earned through any acceleration mechanism. These will be implemented as three required UF Grand Challenges Core courses that will be part of the general education program.

Therefore, as of Fall 2016, the general education program will require students to complete a total of 36 credit hours of general education courses in five areas of: Composition (C), Mathematics (M), Humanities (H), Natural Sciences (B/P), and Social Sciences (S). These credits must be obtained by taking 15 credits in the Statewide Core; 9 credits in the UF Grand Challenges Core; 3 credits in Composition and 3 credits in Mathematics. The remaining 6 credits must be distributed across the areas of Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. These 36 credit hours must also include 3 credit hours of courses with the Diversity designation, 3 credit hours with the International designation, and students must complete a Writing Requirement of 24,000 words.

Development of the Assessment Plan

With the advent of substantial changes to the general education program resulting from the State Core and UF Grand Challenges Core, the General Education Committee's Assessment Subcommittee (see Appendix A) met frequently throughout the fall 2014 and spring 2015 semesters to refine the existing assessment plan. The subcommittee's activities included the following: reviewing results from the prior General Education Program assessment; reviewing the VALUE rubrics from the Association of American Colleges & Universities; meeting with David Miller, Andrew Wolpert, and Andrew Zimmerman, as the directors of the three existing courses in the UF Grand Challenges Core, to help design general education SLO assessment into the structure of the UF Core courses; and meeting with Jennifer Smith, Director of the Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence, to develop centrally-managed strategies for exporting assessment results from within the Canvas learning management system.

The Assessment Subcommittee recommendations to the General Education Committee included a revision of the Student Learning Outcomes, replacement of the SLO Rubrics with Performance Indicators, revision of the assessment cycle, and new methods and procedures for the assessment cycle implementation. These recommendations were accepted by the General Education Committee at the April and May 2015 meetings.

Student Learning Outcomes

The committee approved new Institutional Student Learning Outcomes at its May 8, 2012 meeting, and these were subsequently refined, with the current version approved at the May 1, 2015 meeting. The current Student Learning Outcomes and the Category definitions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. General Education Program Student Learning Outcomes

Category	Definition	UF Student Learning Outcome *At the University of Florida, all students will:*
Content	Content is knowledge of the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the subject area.	Identify, describe, and explain the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the general education subject area*.
Communication	Communication is the development and expression of ideas in written and oral forms.	Communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written or oral forms appropriate to the general education subject area*.
Critical Thinking	Critical thinking is characterized by the comprehensive analysis of issues, ideas, and evidence before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.	Analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, and develop reasoned solutions to problems using methods appropriate to the general education subject area*.

*General education subject areas at the University of Florida are composition, diversity studies, international studies, humanities, mathematics, physical and biological sciences, and social and behavioral sciences.

The General Education Committee aligned the institutional student learning outcomes with the established student learning outcomes for each general education subject area. This alignment is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Subject Area Student Learning Outcomes

Subject Area	Content	Critical Thinking	Communication
Mathematics	Employ computational strategies in fundamental mathematics, including at least one of the following: solving equations and inequalities, logic, statistics, algebra, trigonometry and inductive and deductive reasoning.	Reason in abstract mathematical systems and use mathematical models to solve problems. Apply mathematical concepts effectively to real-world situations.	Formulate mathematical models and arguments. Communicate mathematical solutions clearly and effectively using oral, written and/or graphic forms.
Diversity (co-designation)	Identify, describe, and explain the roles of social structure and status of different groups within the United States.	Analyze and evaluate their own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures. Identify, evaluate and compare their own social status, opportunities, and constraints with those of other persons and groups.	The diversity designation is always in conjunction with another category. Communication outcomes are listed in those subject areas.
International (co-designation)	Identify, describe, and explain the values, attitudes and norms that shape the cultural differences of peoples who live in countries other than the United States. Identify, describe, and explain the roles of geographic location and socioeconomic factors on the lives of citizens in other countries.	Analyze and evaluate their own cultural norms and values in relation to those held by citizens in other countries.	The international designation is always in conjunction with another category. Communication outcomes are listed in those subject areas.
Humanities	Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used within the subject area.	Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.	Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the subject area, individually and/or in groups.

Subject Area	Content	Critical Thinking	Communication
Physical and Biological Sciences	Identify, describe, and explain the basic concepts, theories and terminology of natural science and the scientific method within the subject area. Identify, describe, and explain the major scientific developments within the subject area and the impacts on society and the environment. Identify, describe, and explain relevant processes that govern biological and physical systems within the subject area.	Formulate empirically-testable hypotheses derived from the study of physical processes or living things within the subject area. Apply logical reasoning skills effectively through scientific criticism and argument within the subject area. Apply techniques of discovery and critical thinking effectively to solve experiments and to evaluate outcomes	Communicate scientific findings clearly and effectively using oral, written and/or graphic forms. Write effectively in several forms, such as research papers and laboratory reports.
Social and Behavioral Sciences	Identify, describe, and explain key themes, principles, and terminology within the subject area. Identify, describe, and explain the history, theory and/or methodologies used within the subject area. Identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures and processes within the subject area.	Apply formal and informal qualitative and/or quantitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.	Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the subject area, individually and in groups.

Assessment Map for General Education

The committee considered a variety of assessment methods and instruments appropriate for measuring the institutional outcomes relevant to the size and scope of the University of Florida. In order to obtain a comprehensive, balanced assessment system, the committee selected course-embedded direct assessment and one indirect assessment. These are described here.

Direct assessment: Course-embedded assessments

In order to address achievement of the student learning outcomes in the context in which they are achieved in the university's general education courses, course-embedded assessments serve as a direct measure of student work within the general education curriculum. Course-embedded assessments are specific to the general education subject areas of composition, diversity, internationalism, humanities, mathematics, physical and biological sciences, and the social and behavioral sciences. These assessments are measured using rubrics based on the performance indicators, as presented in the Methods and Procedures section of this plan.

Indirect assessment: Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey

The SERU is administered by the Office of Institutional Planning and Research biennially to all undergraduate students at the University of Florida in the spring semester of the odd-numbered years. The survey addresses student perceptions and experiences at the

university. SERU data has been collected in the spring semesters of 2009, 2011, and 2013, and existing data are available to university faculty, staff, and administrators. There is no sampling procedure used for the SERU survey; this is sent to all University of Florida undergraduates. The University of Florida response rates are the highest among our peer institutions, so the General Education Committee decided this biennial survey was an appropriate vehicle for disseminating questions about General Education to the undergraduate student body. The questions approved by the General Education Committee for the 2015 SERU are shown in Appendix C.

Table 3 presents the Assessment Map for general education. The map aligns the Student Learning Outcomes with the type of assessment selected to address the outcomes.

Table 3. General Education Assessment Map

SLO Category	Student Learning Outcome	Direct Assessment	Indirect Assessment
Content Knowledge	Identify, describe, and explain the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the subject area.	Course-embedded assessments	SERU
Critical Thinking	Analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using methods appropriate to the subject area, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.	Course-embedded assessments	SERU
Communication	Communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written or oral forms appropriate to the discipline.	Course-embedded assessments	SERU

Assessment Cycle for General Education

The complete assessment cycle for general education is biannual. The course-embedded assessments and the SERU will be administered biannually in the odd years. In the intervening years (the even years), the committee will review the data from the assessments and take appropriate actions based on their analysis. The committee meets monthly, but not in June, July, or August. Data collected at the end of the academic year are analyzed and evaluated in the following Fall semester. Table 4 presents the Assessment cycle.

All UF students who did not transfer to UF with an AA degree from a Florida state institution will be required to complete three courses in the UF Grand Challenges Core. Therefore, by assessing the general education program in these UF Core courses, data will be obtained for the complete cross-section of students who are enrolled in at least one of the courses. This assessment strategy is predicted to capture about 40% of each entering class of students in at least one UF Core course.

Table 4. Assessment Cycle for General Education Through 2019

Analysis and Interpretation:	September-October
Improvement Actions:	Completed by October-November
Dissemination:	Completed by December

Semester	Assessment Type/Instrument
Spring 2015	Indirect (SERU and GE module)
Fall 2015	Direct (Course-embedded, UF Core)
Spring 2017	Indirect (SERU and GE module)
	Direct (Course-embedded, UF Core and State Core)
Spring 2019	Indirect (SERU and GE module)
	Direct (Course-embedded, UF Core and State Core)

Methods and Procedures

In this section we address the assessment expectations for faculty who teach general education courses, sampling procedures, the selection of course-embedded assessments and measurement procedures, the correlation process for general education direct and indirect assessment data, and the institutional review and approval process for this plan.

Assessment Expectations for Faculty Teaching General Education Courses

Faculty members who wish to develop and teach courses with general education classifications are notified that there are the following conditions for such classification. These conditions clarify the expectations for institutional assessment of the general education curriculum. The conditions are:

1. Courses in the UF Grand Challenges Core and State General Education Core will be assessed at least biannually.
2. All other non-Core courses in the general education program may be randomly selected for assessment.
3. The faculty who teach non-Core courses that have been selected for assessment will be notified of this selection in the semester prior to the assessment administration. Selected faculty are expected to participate fully.

General Education Performance Indicators

The general education performance indicators, shown in Table 5, are actions the student should be able to perform as a result of completing general education courses at the University of Florida. By focusing on specific expectations of the general education program, the performance indicators facilitate assessment procedures of general education courses and the general education program.

Table 3. General Education Program Performance Indicators

Category	MASTERY	NON-MASTERY
Content	The student interprets and applies the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the subject area.	The student does not interpret or apply the terminology, concepts, methodologies or theories used within the subject area.
Communication	The student expresses ideas in a convincing, organized, clear, coherent manner that is nearly error free and uses a style and language appropriate to the subject area.	The student does not express ideas in a convincing, organized, clear, coherent manner that is nearly error free, or uses a style and language that is not appropriate to the subject area.
Critical Thinking	The student considers the issues from multiple perspectives, logically analyzes evidence from credible, relevant sources, and develops reasoned conclusions.	The student does not consider the issues from multiple perspectives, does not logically analyze evidence from credible, relevant sources, or does not develop reasoned conclusions.

Procedures for the Course Embedded Assessment

Faculty and course directors for the UF Grand Challenges Core and State General Education Core, as well as any faculty in non-Core courses selected for assessment, will receive specialized training on the university's general education assessment processes. For each course being evaluated, the faculty and course directors will identify at least one assignment to be used for assessing the General Education Program SLOs. If a single assignment is selected, it must allow all three SLO categories to be assessed. The course instructors will create appropriate rubrics to score the assignment(s). These rubrics should be coherent with the GE Student Performance Indicators, and must be reviewed and approved by the General Education Committee. If any rubric has more than two levels (i.e., more than mastery and non-mastery), the course director (or the instructors of the sections being assessed) will identify to the GEC the cutoff level (or score) that indicates mastery. For example, if a multiple choice test is used to assess content knowledge, and it is scored from 0-100, the director may indicate that a cutoff of 60 indicates mastery of content knowledge.

Data Collection and Analysis

Course-embedded assessments will be scored by the faculty using the rubrics developed for these assignments, based on the general education performance indicators. Faculty will enter the rubric data into the university's course management system. The data will be acquired by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and then provided to the General Education Committee under the guidance of the Director of Institutional Assessment. The General Education Committee will analyze the data and provide compiled results to the Academic Assessment Committee in the academic year following the spring assessment.

Correlation of Direct and Indirect Assessment Data

For the course embedded assessment, we set the criterion for success at 80% of students who achieve mastery. We examine direct assessment data and correlate these data with the SERU data biennially. We examine the data for cross-correlation of the direct assessments with the indirect

survey data. Program modifications are based on the committee's analysis and interpretation of these findings, and estimates of the potential effects of program modifications on expected outcomes.

Program Review and Approval Process

The size and scope of the University of Florida faculty and student body requires that institutional programs be reviewed and approved by representation. Two joint university committees, the General Education Committee and the Academic Assessment Committee, collaborated on the review and approval of this plan. The General Education Committee may revise this plan as necessary to maximize the value of the assessment for the university, and the Academic Assessment Committee maintains responsibility to review and approve any modifications. The 2014-15 membership of these committees is shown in Appendices A and B.

Assessment Oversight

Name	Dept. Affiliation	Email Address	Phone Number
Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, General Education Committee Administrative Co-Chair	Office of the Provost		846-1761
David Julian, Director, Curriculum and Chair, General Education Assessment Subcommittee	Office of the Provost	djulian@ufl.edu	846-1761
Timothy S. Brophy, Director, Institutional Assessment and Chair, Academic Assessment Committee	Office of the Provost	tbrophy@aa.ufl.edu	273-4476

Appendix A. General Education Committee Members 2014-15

The names of Assessment Subcommittee members are underlined.

Last Name	First Name	Title	Department	Committee Title
Mair	Bernard	Associate Provost	Undergraduate Affairs	Chair
Reynolds	Alison	Associate Director	University Writing Program	Co-Chair-S
Akcali	Elif	Associate Professor	Industrial and Systems Engineering	Member
Brophy	Timothy	Director, Institutional Assessment and Professor	Provost's Office	Liaison
Cochrane	Shannon	Student	Student	Student
Colon	Elayne	Assistant Scholar	Special Education, School Psychology and Early Childhood Studies	Member
Czarnecka-Verner	Eva	Associate Research Scientist	Microbiology and Cell Science	Member-S
Greer	Creed	Program Director	University Writing Program	Member-S
Hass	Christopher	Associate Professor	Applied Physiology / Kinesiology	Member
Julian	David	Director, Curriculum and Associate Professor	Undergraduate Affairs	Member
Koropeckyj-Cox	Tanya	Associate Professor	Sociology and Criminology & Law	Member
Krigbaum	John	Associate Professor	Anthropology	Member
O'Sickey	Lynn	Associate Director	Academic Advising Center	Liaison
Ogram	Andrew	Professor	Soil and Water Science	Member
Poceski	Mario	Associate Professor	Religion	Member-S
Radunovich	Heidi	Associate Professor	Family, Youth and Community Sciences	Member-S
Rea	Jennifer	Associate Professor	Classics	Member-S
Sarajedini	Vicki	Associate Professor	Astronomy	Member-S
Smith	Brenda	Associate Professor	School of Music	Member
Spiryda	Lisa	Associate Professor	Obstetrics and Gynecology	Member-S

Appendix B. Academic Assessment Committee Members 2014-15

Last Name	First Name	Title	Department	Committee Title
Brophy	Timothy	Director, Institutional Assessment and Professor	Provost's Office	Chair
Chiang	Vivian	Student	Student	Student
Douglas	Elliot	Associate Professor	Materials Science and Engineering	Member-P
Emihovich	Catherine	Professor	School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education	Member-S
Fields	Margaret	Associate Dean	Dean's Office-Liberal Arts and Sciences	Member-S
Freund	Leilani	University Librarian	Library West	Member-P
Gater	Cheryl	Director, SACS Accreditation	Provost's Office	Liaison
Julian	David	Director, Curriculum and Associate Professor	Undergraduate Affairs	Gen Ed Liaison
Mair	Bernard	Associate Provost	Undergraduate Affairs	Liaison
Miller	David	Professor	Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education	Member-S
Murphy	Suzanne	Director of Assessment	Health Education and Behavior	Member-P
Qi	Xin (Cindy)	Assistant Professor	Medicinal Chemistry	Member-P
Reynolds	Alison	Associate Director	University Writing Program	Member-S
Zeglen	Marie	Assistant Provost and Director	Institutional Planning and Research	Liaison

Appendix C. SERU General Education Questions for 2015

The General Education Program at UF consists of specific courses in the following subject areas: biological (B) and physical (P) sciences, composition (C), diversity (D), humanities (H), international (N), mathematics (M) and social and behavioral sciences (S). Of the courses you have taken, could you identify which ones met the general education requirement?

❍ 1: I don't know which of my courses met the general education requirement

□□2

□□3

❍ 4: I could identify all of my courses that met the general education requirement

To what degree did the following contribute to your current proficiency in critical thinking?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	□	□	□	□	□
Courses other than general education	□	□	□	□	□

To what degree did the following contribute to your current ability to be clear and effective when writing?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	□	□	□	□	□
Courses other than general education	□	□	□	□	□

To what degree did the following contribute to your current ability to appreciate, tolerate, and understand racial and ethnic diversity?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	□	□	□	□	□
Courses other than general education	□	□	□	□	□

To what degree did the following contribute to your current ability to read and comprehend academic material?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	□	□	□	□	□

Courses other than general education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what degree did the following contribute to your current proficiency in quantitative (mathematical and statistical) skills?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Courses other than general education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what degree did the following contribute to your current ability to speak clearly and effectively in English?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Courses other than general education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what degree did the following contribute to your current ability to understand international perspectives (economic, political, social, cultural)?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Courses other than general education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what degree did the following contribute to your current ability to appreciate the fine arts (e.g., painting, music, drama, dance)?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Courses other than general education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what degree did the following contribute to your current ability to appreciate cultural and global diversity?

	Not at All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Significantly	Extremely
General education courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Courses other than general education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐