

General Education Assessment Strategy
University of Idaho – 2020 to 2025
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This plan was developed in consultation with the University Committee on General Education and Division of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation and updated in May of 2020.

Synopsis:

This proposal outlines a new overall assessment strategy for General Education, as well as a process to create faculty engagement in scoring assessment artifacts as part of the academic assessment process. This proposal also articulates the resources to collect, interpret findings, render recommendations and make curricular and pedagogical modifications based on that assessment.

Context and Rationale:

General Education is the single largest “unit” within the University of Idaho, providing up to 28% of the baccalaureate degree curriculum for well over 10,000 students. It is a curriculum for all undergraduate students, regardless of major, and contributes to degree plans in eight different colleges: Agriculture and Life Sciences; Art and Architecture; Business and Economics; Letters, Arts and Social Sciences; Education, Health and Human Sciences; Engineering; Natural Resources; and Sciences. Each semester approximately 160 University of Idaho faculty members offer over 200 General Education courses. The General Education curriculum has a significant impact on the success of University of Idaho graduates as adaptive, lifelong learners.

General Education at the university exists in two distinct areas: Idaho State Board of Education (SBOE) content areas and credit minimums (a.k.a. State Board Core) and institutionally designated general education (American Diversity, International and Capstone courses). Policies are outlined for State Board core in: [Board Policy III.N.](#) - Statewide General Education and for institutionally designated courses in the University [Catalog](#) sections J-3-e & J-3-f.

State Board courses fall into the six areas of written communication, oral communication, mathematical ways of knowing, scientific ways of knowing, humanistic and artistic ways of knowing, social and behavioral ways of knowing, and utilize the state GEMs Learning outcomes for general education (GELO’s) and are mapped to “Learning Matters” University Learning Outcomes (ULO’s). Institutional designated courses reflect the institution’s mission, vision, and values and utilize the University Learning Outcomes (ULO’s) exclusively.

General Education Assessment Strategy:

The general education assessment strategy is designed to focus on evaluating the student learning competencies relative to the SBOE General Education Learning Outcomes and University of Idaho Learning Outcomes. It is designed to be embedded, integrated, sustainable and meaningful: Embedded into ongoing the regular ongoing teaching and learning process of the instructor, integrated into the curriculum, transparent, easy to accomplish and viewed as a

meaningful scholarly activity connected to teaching and learning. As a two-fold assessment strategy, this plan is designed to assess:

1. Specific General education courses (e.g., ENGL 102) or SBOE GEM areas (e.g., Humanities) in response to addressing both SBOE purpose and to assess the overall SBOE learning competencies.
2. Determine the progress of individual students (utilizing disaggregated data) from their first year (initial) through their third year (mid-point) and culminating with the senior year educational experience through the institutionally designated core requirements.

The General Education assessment strategy for both areas (Board Core & Institutionally Designated Courses) will entail a combination of four primary assessment tools:

1. Disaggregated assessment of artifacts/signature works by individual faculty (direct).
2. Rotating Syllabi Review by area conducted by GEAC (indirect).
3. Satisfaction data from the Graduating Senior Survey & NSSE conducted by IEA (indirect)
4. Senior focus groups, Alumni post surveys, or other survey data as conducted by either UCGE or UAAC (indirect).

Faculty Led Assessment

Over-arching Process:

Individual faculty evaluation of either artifacts or signature works that are tied to learning outcomes in support of program learning outcomes which are self-benchmarked, and which utilize and report on disaggregated student data. The criteria are Exceeds, Meets, Partially Meets or Does not Meet Expectations for the associated course learning outcomes. Reflection on changes to be made from the data, or changes that have been made previously, 'closes the loop'. Once established, this is an ongoing process. The director of general education will monitor this process and report on the results for all GEM areas annually to UCGE and Senate for discussion and action.

Specific assessment of artifacts/signature works by individual faculty:

This assessment model is designed for all general education courses under Regulation J-3-a to J-3-e. (State Board Core) and for institutionally designated core curriculum as outlined in J-3-f. & J-3-g. (American Diversity, International, and Senior Experiences / Capstones). It is meant to be meaningful, informed and reflective. It relies on faculty led engagement.

There are three primary steps to this process:

- Faculty teaching in general education will select a signature assignment or artifact defined as containing two or more course learning outcomes.
- Faculty will enter the disaggregated data into Anthology (AMS) and reflect on the findings.
- Oversight will be provided by the University Committee on General Education (UCGE) and the Director of General Education for compliance and analysis of the evaluative process.
- Where appropriate, these will be further reviewed by specific discipline (e.g. Chemistry, English, or Communication) or at the college level (e.g. College of Science)

The steps in this process are fully outlined here:

At the beginning of each semester, faculty will identify the course and signature assignment or artifact to be assessed. The assessment will be applied and the disaggregated data for that assessment will be entered into the Anthology system (AMS). The criteria used for this assessment are Exceeds, Meets, Partially Meets or Does Not Meet Expectations for the associated course learning outcomes. Faculty determine the rate of success for accomplishing each criterion and for the aggregate rate of acceptable accomplishment of the course learning outcomes for the applied assessment. After entry of the data, reflections are made as to potential changes to either instructional methodology or the assessment tool to reach self-determined instructor benchmarks. If previous changes have been made for this assessment tool, reflections on the success of the changes, or further corrections 'closes the loop' on the assessment process. UCGE and the Director of General Education will monitor the completion rate and efficacy of the assessment. Any course not participating in this process will be subject to further investigation and possible removal from general education at the discretion of the Vice Provost of Academic Initiatives.

Resources:

With a curriculum entirely developed and sponsored by the faculty from eight colleges, and unlike other university units, general education does not have a dedicated set of faculty lines from which to draw faculty resources and time to implement this assessment strategy. This makes it wholly dependent on established committee work (UCGE, UAAC, UCC, etc.), which is problematic at this scale. However, if utilized in tandem with a faculty self-reported module in our new administrative management system (AMS) **Anthology** and imbedded in **Canvas** our new learning management system (LMS) then that data could be added to both our student satisfaction and course surveys from our instructional management system (IMS) **Banner** and the additional surveys of seniors and alumni by GEAC. With all of this information we will be able to accomplish these goals for the assessment of general education. Reward structures for exemplary work and policies regarding recognition that this is part of teaching will need to be established. Policies for non-participation in assessment of general education will need to be addressed as well.

Syllabi Review Rotation Schedule (Approved 01/14/2021)

	Announce Review	Begin Review	Conclude Review
Am. Diversity International	Fall 202	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
Social Sciences	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022
Science / Math	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Fall 2023
Humanities	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Fall 2024

SBOE GEM Competencies (2022) Mapped to University Learning Objectives:

Written Communication

Upon completion of a course in this category, students are able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- Use flexible writing process strategies to generate, develop, revise, edit, Proofread, and edit texts. **(Communicate)**
- Adopt strategies and genre appropriate to the rhetorical situation. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Use inquiry-based strategies to conduct research that explores multiple and diverse ideas and perspectives, appropriate to the rhetorical context. **(Think & Create)**
- Use rhetorically appropriate strategies to evaluate, represent, and respond to the ideas and research of others. **(Think & Create)**
- Address readers' biases and assumptions with well-developed evidence-based reasoning. **(Think & Create)**
- Use appropriate conventions for integrating, citing, and documenting source material. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Read, interpret, and communicate key concepts in writing and rhetoric. **(Learn & Integrate) + (Communicate)**

Oral Communication

Upon completion of a course in this category, students are able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- Research, discover, and develop information resources and structure spoken messages to increase knowledge and understanding. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Research, discover, and develop evidence-based reasoning and persuasive appeals for ethically influencing attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. **(Think & Create)**
- Adapt spoken messages to the diverse personal, ideological, and emotional needs of individuals, groups, or contexts. **(Communicate)**
- Employ effective spoken and nonverbal behaviors that support communication goals and illustrate self-efficacy. **(Communicate)**
- Listen in order to effectively and critically evaluate the reasoning, evidence, and communication strategies of self and others. **(Communicate)**
- Demonstrate Knowledge of key theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts in the Communication discipline, as applied to oral communication. **(Learn & Integrate)**

Mathematical Ways of Knowing

Upon completion of a course in this category, a student is able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- Interpret mathematical concepts. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Represent information/data. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Use appropriate strategies/procedures when solving mathematical problems. **(Think & Create)**
- Draw and support appropriate conclusions. **(Think & Create)**

Scientific Ways of Knowing

Upon completion of a non-lab course in this category, a student is able to demonstrate The first four competencies. A student is able to demonstrate all five competencies upon completion of a lab course.:

- Apply foundational knowledge and models of a discipline in the physical or natural sciences to analyze and/or predict phenomena. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Apply scientific reasoning to critically evaluate assertions. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Interpret and communicate scientific information via written, spoken and/or visual representations. **(Think & Create) + (Communicate)**
- Describe the relevance of specific scientific principles to the human experience. **(Think & Create)**
- Test a hypothesis in the laboratory or field using discipline-specific tools and techniques for observation, data collection and analysis to form a defensible solution. **(Think & Create)**

Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing

Upon completion of a course in this category, students are able to demonstrate at least five (5) of the following competencies:

- Recognize and describe humanistic, historical, or artistic works within problems and patterns of the human experience. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Distinguish and apply methodologies, approaches or traditions specific to the discipline. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Differentiate formal, conceptual, and technical elements specific to the discipline. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Analyze, evaluate, and interpret texts, objects, events, or ideas in their cultural, intellectual or historical contexts. **(Think & Create)**
- Interpret artistic or humanistic works through the creation of art, language, or performance. **(Communicate)**
- Develop critical perspectives or arguments about the subject matter, grounded in evidence-based analysis. **(Create Purpose & Perspective)**
- Demonstrate self-reflection, widened perspective, and respect for diverse viewpoints. **(Create Purpose & Perspective)**

Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing

Upon completion of a course in this category, students are able to demonstrate all five (5) of the following competencies.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of a particular Social Science discipline. **(Learn & Integrate)**
- Describe self and the world by examining the dynamic interaction of individuals, groups, and societies as they shape and are shaped by history, culture, institutions, and ideas. **(Think & Create)**
- Utilize Social Science approaches, such as research methods, inquiry, or problem-solving, to examine the variety of perspectives about human experiences. **(Think & Create)**
- Evaluate how reasoning, history, or culture informs and guides individual, civic, or global decisions. **(Think & Create) + (Create Purpose & Perspective)**
- Identify the impact of the similarities and differences among and between individuals, cultures, or societies across space and time. **(Create Purpose & Perspective)**