

ORIGINAL PLAN WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS

Diversification Social Science (DS) Assessment Plan

Overview

Selected faculty who teach a Diversification Social Science course will assign a common short-answer writing assignment. The assignments will be collected and sorted into levels of achievement by a faculty committee. The results will guide us as we make improvements in course designation processes, hallmarks, and pedagogy.

Background

UHM is slowly moving from a *teacher-centered* culture to a *student-centered* culture. We are not solely looking at traditional measures of student achievement such as grade point averages, retention rates, and course evaluations. We have turned our attention to direct measures of student learning.

The Diversification Social Science Assessment Plan will provide us with information about how well our students are meeting our DS learning objectives. It will guide efforts to increase the likelihood that students meet our learning goals. The plan meets WASC requirements.

The Diversification objectives are aligned with two points of the UH Mānoa *Strategic Plan*:

- Evaluate and expand General Education course offerings
- Create a culture of evidence whereby every academic program is improved or discontinued based on measurement of student outcomes

The Diversification Social Science objectives are aligned with UH Mānoa's General Education Program which states that the Diversification requirement will "assure that every student has a broad exposure to different domains of academic knowledge."

Assessment Plan

STEP 1—ESTABLISH EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

STATUS: COMPLETED

Learning Outcomes. After completing the DS requirement, students will be able to

1. use the terminology of theories, structures, or processes in the social or psychological sciences
2. identify the concepts, models, practices, or issues of concern in the scientific study of these structures, or processes
3. understand the quantitative and/or qualitative methods employed in the scientific study of structures, or processes of these sciences

STEP 2—CREATE LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT & CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

STATUS: DRAFT COMPLETED; NEEDS TESTING

The DS Assessment Committee will identify levels of achievement through a scoring rubric (1=below expectations, 2=meets expectations, 3=exemplary) and representative samples of student work

Criterion for success=90% of students score “2-meets expectations” or “3-exemplary” in the three areas

STEP 3—IDENTIFY INDICATORS (EVIDENCE)

STATUS: NOT COMPLETED

Create a common assignment for DS courses that address the desired educational objectives. The assignment will likely include three short-answer questions tied to the objectives. For example:

- 1) Describe one concept or issue that is important to the field of _____ [psychology].
- 2) Describe a method or strategy that researchers in the field of _____ [psychology] use to study _____ [psychological] issues or concepts.

STEP 4—USE OF RESULTS

STATUS: NOT COMPLETED

Possible uses of results:

- Revise hallmarks
- Revise how courses are designated
- Increase communication with faculty teaching DS courses through newsletters, mailings, department meetings
- Faculty development workshops and materials

DS Assessment Plan: Timeline of Activities, January 2005-February 2006

When	What	Why	Who
JANUARY- FEBRUARY 2005	Form the Diversification Social Science Assessment Committee (DSAC) of at least 6 faculty members DSAC creates a common assignment	Qualified faculty members are best suited to fine-tune rubric and judge student work Begin with one area of Diversification to keep the project manageable and feasible given financial restraints A common assignment will make scoring more efficient and reliable	GenEd Assessment Coordinator, VCAA representative, and GEC chairperson work together to recruit faculty members
MARCH	25 faculty members are randomly selected to pilot test the common assignment & generate student responses Collect and summarize student data from faculty members' classes (e.g., DS courses completed, transfer/non-transfer, major)	Pilot testing needed to determine validity and reliability of the common assignment and scoring methods Prepare student data so thorough analysis can be done	DSAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, graduate student worker
APRIL	Faculty give the assignment. Student responses collected and copied	Prepare for assessment by DSAC	GenEd Assessment Coordinator and graduate student worker
MAY	DSAC reviews student responses and uses rubric to sort student work. The rubric will be a simple, 3-level rubric (below expectations, meets expectations, and exemplary).	Create clear standards and expectations; provide samples of student work of different quality Confirm the common assignment is valid	Diversification Social Science Assessment Committee (DSAC) and GenEd Assessment Coordinator
SEPTEMBER & NOVEMBER	Randomly select classes (75) in September and notify instructors of project Collect student responses (300) in November	Prepare for assessment of student work	GenEd Assessment Coordinator and graduate student worker
NOVEMBER- DECEMBER	Introduce additional faculty to the rubric; train them to apply the rubric; assess student work	Determine how well students are meeting objectives; confirm that faculty find the rubric easy to understand and useful	DSAC and GenEd Assessment Coordinator

When	What	Why	Who
JANUARY 2006	Interpret results and use the results to improve student learning <i>First cycle of assessment completed</i>	Using results to improve course designation processes, assessment methods, and/or pedagogy creates a cycle of continual renewal and a culture of evidence	DSAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, General Education Committee, Center for Teaching Excellence
JAN 2006	Create master plan to assess all Diversification areas Follow through on DS results to ensure that recommendations are implemented	Assessing a different main area of Diversification every two years keeps the assessment burden manageable and allows time for changes to be implemented before the next assessment cycle	GenEd Assessment Coordinator, General Education Committee Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. DSAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, Center for Teaching Excellence
FEB 2006	Begin the process used for DS assessment with the next main area of Diversification (either Arts, Humanities, & Literatures or Natural Sciences)		

Resources Needed to Assess General Education and Create a *Culture of Evidence*

Administration: Support and Promote

National experts and faculty from institutions at which general education assessment is taking place agree that the chief executive and chief academic officers need to support and promote assessment efforts.

Coordination & Education

General Education assessment committees need a resident expert to serve as a consultant, facilitator, coordinator, and disseminator of information. The resident expert also makes sure the assessment plan is carried out. The expert will also serve as a consultant to departments that are carrying out departmental-based assessment.

GenEd Assessment Coordinator Position (APT Pay Band B or Faculty Specialist, annual salary approximately \$60,000)

Logistics

Logistical and staff support are needed because every semester UHM offers over 2,000 general education sections; over 30,000 general education seats are filled; and over 700 faculty members are assigned to teach general education sections.

1 graduate student worker (\$10,000 per year)

Faculty Involvement

General education assessment requires two types of faculty involvement:

- (1) all faculty teaching general education courses need to be willing to give the common assignment and to participate in discussions about assessment results and how to use those results to improve student learning;
- (2) a small group of faculty members who teach general education courses need to serve on assessment committees

The first type of involvement can be secured through support of the Office of the Chancellor. The second type will initially require a significant amount of faculty input and expertise for each assessment plan (e.g., DS assessment plan). Committee members will be responsible for creating rubrics, training faculty members, assessing student work, making recommendations based on assessment results, and participating in faculty development workshops. The faculty members willing to engage in assessment efforts at this level will be compensated during the development stage.

6 faculty experts who teach a DS course (\$1,600/faculty member; total of \$9,600 January-June 2005)

6 faculty experts (\$800/faculty member; total of \$4,800 August-December 2005)

Assignment Scoring

Faculty members can be hired to score the common assignment once the process and methods have been established (2006 and beyond).

Faculty Readers (\$20/hour; estimated \$1,200 annually as each Diversification area is assessed)

ALTERNATIVE PLAN

Diversification Assessment Plan: A Pre-Test/Post-Test Design

Overview

Entering first-time students will take an exam during their first semester at UHM (0-16 credits earned); they will take the same exam during their senior year (108+ credits). Faculty committees will create the exam questions and assess the student responses. The GenEd Assessment Coordinator and Institutional Analyst will oversee the tracking of individual student progress. The results will guide us as we make improvements in course designation processes, hallmarks, and pedagogy.

Background

UHM is slowly moving from a *teacher-centered* culture to a *student-centered* culture. We are not solely looking at traditional measures of student achievement such as grade point averages, retention rates, and course evaluations. We have turned our attention to direct measures of student learning.

The Diversification Assessment Plan will provide us with information about how well our students are meeting our Diversification learning objectives. It will guide efforts to increase the likelihood that students meet our learning goals. The plan meets WASC requirements.

The Diversification objectives are aligned with two points of the UH Mānoa *Strategic Plan*:

- Evaluate and expand General Education course offerings
- Create a culture of evidence whereby every academic program is improved or discontinued based on measurement of student outcomes

The Diversification objectives are aligned with UH Mānoa's General Education Program which states that the Diversification requirement will "assure that every student has a broad exposure to different domains of academic knowledge."

Assessment Plan

STEP 1—ESTABLISH EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

STATUS: COMPLETED

Learning Outcomes. After completing the Diversification requirement, students will be able to

1. use the terminology of theories, structures, or processes in the different areas of the Diversification requirement
2. identify the concepts, models, practices, or issues of concern in the study of these structures, or processes

3. understand the quantitative and/or qualitative methods employed in the study of structures, or processes of these areas

STEP 2—CREATE LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT & CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

STATUS: DRAFT COMPLETED; NEEDS TESTING

Three Faculty Assessment Committees (one for each main area of the Diversification requirement) will identify levels of achievement through a scoring rubric (1=below expectations, 2=meets expectations, 3=exemplary) and representative samples of student responses

Criterion for success=90% of students score “2-meets expectations” or “3-exemplary” in the three areas

STEP 3—IDENTIFY INDICATORS (EVIDENCE)

STATUS: NOT COMPLETED

Faculty Assessment Committees create the GenEd Diversification Exam. The exam will likely include short-answer questions tied to the Diversification objectives.

STEP 4—USE OF RESULTS

STATUS: NOT COMPLETED

Possible uses of results:

- Revise hallmarks
- Revise how courses are designated
- Increase communication with faculty teaching Diversification courses through newsletters, mailings, department meetings
- Faculty development workshops and materials

Assessment Plan: Timeline of Activities

When	What	Why	Who
JAN-FEB 2005	Form the Diversification Assessment Committees (DAC) for main areas; at least 6 faculty members on each committee (minimum of 18 faculty members) Create system to coordinate student admissions data with assessment plan needs (e.g., system to obtain list of first-time new students entering in the fall semester; identify students who reach 108 credits)	Qualified faculty members are best suited to create the assessment instrument and to assess student work. Allows individual students to be tracked	GenEd Assessment Coordinator, VCAA representative, and GEC chairperson work together to recruit faculty members GenEd Assessment Coordinator, student workers, Institutional Analyst, Admissions & Records
MAR- APR	DAC creates GenEd Diversification Exam consisting of primarily short-answer questions	An exam given at the entry and exit points allows for conclusions about developmental changes	DAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, resident testing experts as consultants
MAY	Identify freshmen (20) and seniors (20) to pilot test exam. Administer exam. DAC reviews exam responses; sorts responses into levels of achievement (below expectations, meets expectations, exemplary)	Create clear standards and expectations; identify responses as examples for each levels of achievement; confirm validity and reliability of exam Revise exam and scoring rubric	DAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, student workers
SEPT	Randomly select incoming first-time students (40) and exiting seniors (40) to pilot test the revised GenEd Diversification exam. Contact students. Administer exam	Prepare for assessment of student exams	GenEd Assessment Coordinator, student workers, Admissions & Records, Institutional Analyst
OCT	Introduce additional faculty to the rubric; train them to apply the rubric; assess exam responses	Determine how well students are meeting objectives; confirm that faculty find the exam valid and the rubric easy to understand and useful	DAC and GenEd Assessment Coordinator
NOV- DEC	Interpret results and use the results to improve assessment methods	Establishing a reliable and valid method of assessment is needed before full-scale implementation can occur	DAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, A & R, Institutional Analyst

When	What	Why	Who
Spring 2006	<p>During Spring 2006, complete another small-scale implementation of the GenEd Diversification Assessment.</p> <p>Plan for full-scale implementation of GenEd Diversification Exam</p>	<p>Full-scale implementation can take place after the bugs have been worked out. Students and faculty need to be notified of the full-scale implementation</p> <p>Prepare to track incoming students through their academic careers to provide developmental data on the educational objectives</p>	<p>DAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, A & R, Institutional Analyst, student workers</p>
Fall 2006	<p>GenEd Diversification Exam will be given to all first-time freshmen and seniors every September, starting in 2006</p> <p>Faculty Assessment Committees create GenEd Diversification Exam questions for the upcoming year; pilot testing will take place in Spring 2007; exam to be used in Fall 2007</p>	<p>Full implementation</p>	<p>DAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, Institutional Analyst, student workers</p>
Spring 2007	<p>Interpret results and use results</p> <p><i>Spring 2007 will mark the completion of the first cycle of Diversification Assessment</i></p>	<p>Using results to improve assessment methods, course designation processes, and/or pedagogy creates a cycle of continual renewal and a culture of evidence</p>	<p>DAC, GenEd Assessment Coordinator, General Education Committee, Center for Teaching Excellence</p>

Resources Needed to Assess General Education and Create a *Culture of Evidence*

Administration: Support and Promote

National experts and faculty from institutions at which general education assessment is taking place agree that the **chief executive and chief academic officers need to support and promote assessment efforts.**

Coordination & Education

General Education assessment committees will need a resident expert to serve as a statistician, consultant, facilitator, coordinator, and disseminator of information. The expert can also serve as a consultant to departments that are carrying out departmental-based assessment.

GenEd Assessment Coordinator Position (APT Pay Band B or Faculty Specialist; annual salary approximately \$60,000)

Logistics

Logistical and staff support are needed because over 2,200 first-time students enter every year. 2,300 students graduate with a bachelor's degree every year. An institutional analyst is needed to create Banner reports and extract student information. Student workers needed to enter exam results and update databases. Admissions & Records liaison needed to coordinate the distribution of exam materials in first-year packet and to coordinate data transfer. Exam proctors needed to administer exams (because of space limitations on campus).

3 undergraduate student workers (\$21,000 per year)

Admissions Liaison: modification of duties to include assisting with the GenEd Assessment Plan (cost??!!); coordinate the distribution of exam information to new students; assist the institutional analyst as needed to gather accurate new student information and senior information

Institutional Analyst Pay Band B (annual salary approximately \$52,000)

Faculty Involvement

General education assessment requires two types of faculty involvement:

- (1) undergraduate faculty need to be willing to give up one day of classes during which the GenEd Diversification exam will be administered; they need to be willing to participate in discussions about assessment results and how to use those results to improve student learning;
- (2) a small group of faculty members who teach general education courses need to serve on assessment committees

The first type of involvement can be secured through support of the Office of the Chancellor. The second type will initially require a significant amount of faculty input and expertise: DAC members will be responsible for creating the exam and scoring rubrics, training faculty members, assessing student work, making recommendations based on exam results, and participating in faculty development workshops. The faculty members willing to engage in assessment efforts at this level will be compensated.

18 faculty experts who teach undergraduate Diversification courses (\$1,600/faculty member; total of \$28,800 January-December 2005); responsible for initial creation of GenEd Diversification Exam

18 faculty experts (\$800/faculty member; total of \$14,400 annually); responsible for creating new questions each year for the GenEd Diversification Exam

Exam Scoring

Once full implementation of the GenEd Diversification Exam is underway (starting in 2006), faculty readers will score the first-year students' and seniors' exams. The training will be done by DAC members and the GenEd Assessment Coordinator.

Faculty Readers (\$20/hour; estimated total of \$36,000 annually starting in 2006)

NOTE: The Writing Placement Exam costs about **\$9 per student**. This cost includes materials, student worker cost, and reader costs. (Readers are paid \$20/hour to assess exams). It does not include the costs associated with the academic support personnel who are responsible for test development, reader training, statistics, reports, website updates, etc.

Assessment takes time and effort. Regardless of the assessment plan selected, faculty members are responsible for creating the assessment tool, setting standards, and assessing student work.¹ After results are available, the faculty are responsible for making changes to improve student learning. The pre/post-test design and the common assignment design both require faculty and staff involvement. The pre/post-test design requires more faculty and staff time because test development is difficult and individual student tracking requires constant attention by dedicated personnel and coordination across offices.

Issues Involved with a Pre/Post-Test Design

- The financial cost and human resources required are substantially more than a phase-in assessment project that targets different areas of GenEd each year
- UHM faculty need to decide whether the additional effort is worth the results. That is, given the number of transfer student and retention rates, should resources be spent on tracking individual students
- Tracking of individual students has not previously been done at UHM; the effort required for individual tracking and data analysis is substantial
- The GenEd Diversification Exam must be given during classes (not prior to the semester or during breaks because many students do not reside on Oahu) to ensure that students are tested: will faculty be willing to give up one day of classes or part of one day?
- Test development is difficult and time consuming: will faculty be willing to participate in test creation?
- Student motivation to perform on the GenEd Diversification Exam may be low: how can we increase motivation? How can we require students to take the exam?
- Only 1/3 of the graduating seniors began at UHM
- UHM retention rates: 19% drop out after one year; 7% during the second year, and 9% in the third year or later. 54% graduate within 6 years [IRO, 2001 Graduation and Retention Rates report]
- If all students need to be tested, the registrar will need to find a way to coordinate room assignments
- If faculty members are not willing to proctor exams, proctors must be hired
- Potential resistance by faculty to giving up instructional time to have a “test day”

¹ Alternatively, the faculty can decide to purchase a commercial test such as ETS’s Academic Profile. This transfers the burden of test creation and scoring to an outside entity. However, two main challenges will exist: (1) student motivation issues and (2) faculty resistance to “teaching to a test” that they did not create.