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ASSESSMENT

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) mandated that GenEd at UHM be reviewed and assessed in a fashion similar to other units and programs. Therefore, just as developed for programs and units in the Faculty Senate Handbook on Departmental Assessment, General Education at Mānoa is subject to periodic review and revision, in an assessment of the achievement of its goals as measured by student learning outcomes and other measures obtained by UHM when appropriate.

The GenEd outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, and competencies that all UHM undergraduates should attain regardless of major in support of UHM's mission and Institutional Learning Objectives. These outcomes are currently achieved through courses that have received GenEd Foundations, Diversification and Focus designations. Student learning assessment is essential for enabling the UHM GenEd Program to continuously improve while adapting to changing learning needs and educational approaches.

Transparency of Assessment Principles and Procedures for the GenEd Program

Appendix A, Section I of the *Faculty Governance* document states the GEC will conduct global assessments of the GenEd areas. Assessment of the GenEd areas began as early as 2008; however, a formal and comprehensive plan had not been devised.

In Spring 2019, the GEC Chair formed an Assessment Working Group to create an assessment plan. The General Education Assessment Plan was approved by the GEC in May 2019. The plan provides an overview of the ways in which assessment of the GenEd Program will be used exclusively to determine the effectiveness of the General Education Program.

The plan lists the following principles and guidelines that will guide assessment of the GenEd program:

Principles of the GenEd Assessment program:

- 1) The GenEd assessment program strives to be systematic, comprehensive, unifying, ongoing, and based on evaluations of student learning.
- 2) Assessment strategies and activities are selected and developed to promote the mission of the GenEd program, increase institutional effectiveness, and enhance student learning and development.

- 3) Assessment requires clearly defined parameters and benchmarks for student performance for which educational and institutional outcomes can be measured.
- 4) Effective assessment is a collaborative effort and requires coordinated efforts both within and across departments, programs, units, and divisions.
- 5) Faculty have primary responsibility for developing and conducting learning outcomes assessment at the course and at the program level.
- 6) Assessment activities are conducted for program improvement; the results of assessment are not to be used in the evaluation of individual faculty or staff members. Faculty members who contribute assessment data from their courses will remain anonymous.

Guidelines for the use of assessment data and results in making recommendations for changes to the GenEd Program:

- 1) Assessment results do not dictate decisions; professional judgment will be used to interpret assessment results and make appropriate recommendations for changes to the GenEd Program.
- 2) Recommendations are made using multiple sources of data.
- 3) An assessment result is not an end in itself.
- 4) GenEd program-level assessment results are not used for student course grades, individual faculty evaluation, or individual student evaluation.
- 5) Results are used fairly, ethically, and responsibly with a focus on student learning and specific learning objectives.
- 6) Should there be any recommendations for changes to students' GenEd requirements, the recommendations will be made to the UHM Faculty Senate via the GEC.

The *Faculty Governance* document states that the GEC will not be responsible for units' program assessment, or the regular assessment of individual courses, beyond its specific duty of approval of courses within areas of GenEd. The assessment of GenEd will not be used to assess or evaluate pedagogical practices used, or the ability of courses or programs to meet the discipline-specific learning objectives. The results will be used only in the aggregate and only to guide decisions by the GEO, GEC, and faculty about the GenEd program.

The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (OVCAA) requires academic programs, which includes GenEd, to undergo a comprehensive program review every five years. The assessments and processes detailed in the GenEd assessment plan will be incorporated into the program review for GenEd. Additionally, data collected through GenEd assessment projects may be included in the institutional-level assessment of the WASC Core Competencies. The UHM Assessment Office (AO) and OVCAA will notify the GEO of needed information and data for reaffirmation.

Assessment Procedures

Assessment of student learning within the GenEd curriculum will occur on a staggered multi-year cycle. The assessment will include the following areas: Global and Multicultural Perspectives; Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues; Critical Thinking; Contemporary Ethical Issues; Oral Communication; Quantitative Reasoning; Information Literacy; Written Communication (Foundations); Writing Intensive (Focus); and Diversification. Critical Thinking and Information Literacy are two of the five Core Competencies for WASC, and their assessment is required for reaccreditation. In 2012, the UHMFS Critical Thinking Working Group recommended that Critical Thinking be assessed through the GenEd curriculum. In 2013-14, the UHMFS Information Literacy Working Group (ILWG) recommended the GEC adopt a definition and standards for Information Literacy.

The assessment process for each component of the curriculum will occur over five semesters.

Assessment as a process includes the following:

- Collaborative project planning
- Faculty professional development on teaching, learning, and assessment
- Collection and evaluation of student work
- Interpretation and discussion of the evaluation results
- Identification of strategies to enhance and maintain high levels of accomplishment and strategies to decrease any areas in which accomplishment is below expectations
- Implementation and monitoring of the strategies and their effectiveness in preparation for collaborative project planning

The full General Education Assessment Plan can be viewed at:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/gov/assessment/>

Previous Efforts and Accomplishments

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment plans, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), and assessment study results for the General Education program are available on the AO website:
manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/reports/gened.htm

- *Diversification.* SLOs were last updated in 2008.
- *Foundations.* In Fall 2007, the F Board drafted SLOs for all areas. In 2017-18, the Board revisited the original SLOs, and revised SLOs were developed and adopted. Studies have been conducted on several of the FW SLOs, including audience & purpose, information literacy, and writing process.

The Assessment Plan that was approved in Spring 2019 begins with the assessment of learning in FG designated courses in Fall 2019.

- *Focus.* In AY 2008, all of the Focus Boards drafted SLOs for their respective Focus areas. The E, O, and W Boards, in conjunction with Mānoa's Assessment Office, also developed rubrics and have conducted several small assessment studies. In AY 2018, the Boards revisited the original SLOs, and revised SLOs were developed and adopted.
- *Hawaiian/Second Language.* SLOs for the requirement were drafted in 2006.