

Compliance with the WSCUC Standards and Federal Requirements

Response to CFR 2.2a: Program Descriptions; Description of General Education; Assessment of the Five Core Competencies

Baccalaureate programs engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and life-long learning. These programs ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking. In addition, baccalaureate programs actively foster creativity, innovation, an appreciation for diversity, ethical and civic responsibility, civic engagement, and the ability to work with others. Baccalaureate programs also ensure breadth for all students in cultural and aesthetic, social and political, and scientific and technical knowledge expected of educated persons. Undergraduate degrees include significant in-depth study in a given area of knowledge (typically described in terms of a program or major).

Program descriptions. Up to one page description of the General Education program. Up to one page description of the results of the assessment of each of the five core competencies (not to exceed five pages).

Program Descriptions: [UHM Catalog Degree & Certificate Listing](#)

UH Mānoa provides an environment where both faculty and students can discover, examine, preserve, and transmit the knowledge, wisdom, and values that will enrich present and future generations. Alongside the major, UH Mānoa's General Education (Gen Ed) program facilitates student achievement of **Institutional Learning Objectives** to Know (breadth and depth of knowledge), Do (intellectual and practical skills), and Value (personal and social responsibility).

General Education at UH Mānoa involves a [flexible and diverse multidisciplinary curriculum](#). This includes a core curriculum shared by all ten UH campuses, as well as special graduation requirements for Manoa undergraduates. Core curricular requirements include a Foundations level written communication course (which includes information literacy among its learning objectives), Foundations quantitative reasoning, and two Foundations global and multicultural perspectives courses. Our Diversifications requirements ensure broad exposure to disciplinary approaches and methodologies across the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences. Specific learning objectives were developed for each curricular area between 2018 and 2020, and are the basis for a rigorous program of institution-wide [assessment](#) of student achievement (see [Gen Ed assessment plan](#)). Finally, special graduation requirements include writing-intensive, oral communication, ethical reasoning, and Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific issues courses (and a Hawaiian/second language competency requirement for majors in some of our schools/colleges). Many of these courses are integrated into major programs of study, focusing on disciplinary-specific oral and written communication modalities and ethical issues.

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Thus, through Gen Ed coursework, students are exposed to different domains of knowledge and modes of scholarly inquiry. Students develop skills in written and oral communication, ethical and quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and information literacy that are transferable across the curriculum. Gen Ed coursework also fosters a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, Hawaiian culture and history.

In 2017-18, we undertook a comprehensive [general education program review](#) and as a result, investigated interdisciplinary general education models and moved forward on thematic pathways that still ensure the breadth of knowledge required by this CFR.

Mission: The General Education curriculum provides all undergraduates at UH Mānoa with opportunities to build foundational knowledge, develop essential skills, and gain appreciation for disparate areas of knowledge, ways of reasoning, and human experiences. General Education, together with the major, facilitates student achievement of the UH Mānoa Institutional Learning Objectives to Know (gain breadth and depth of knowledge), Do (build intellectual and practical skills), and Value (develop personal and social responsibility).

Values: General Education promotes scholarship and fosters values that are the heart of what it means to be a graduate of UH Mānoa. General Education helps UHM graduates to be:

- Familiar with the culture and history of Hawai'i and the Asia-Pacific region
- Respectful members of multicultural communities
- Effective communicators in diverse settings including cross-cultural or international contexts
- Critical, truth-seeking, and interdisciplinary thinkers
- Informed, responsible, and ethical decision makers
- Prepared for the workplaces of the present and the future

Assessment (core competencies). The WASC five core competencies are integrated into our general education outcomes and undergraduate institutional learning objectives (ILOs). In addition, as mentioned in an earlier section, degree programs indicate the alignment between their program learning outcomes and the ILOs in their biennial assessment report. We use both direct and indirect assessment methods to collect information on student learning.

Direct assessment: In collaboration with the General Education Office and General Education Committee, the Assessment and Curriculum Support Center (ACSC) coordinated assessment projects in which it collected student work from randomly-selected students in general education courses, except when collecting quantitative reasoning evidence from seniors. We selected seniors for all core competency assessment projects and also selected first-year students for two projects: quantitative reasoning and information literacy. Faculty (some UHM and some external to UHM as part of the now-called VALUE Institute by Association of American Schools and Colleges) were trained and then they evaluated students' work using rubrics. The results were aggregated to provide program and institutional learning assessment results.

Indirect assessment: The ACSC collaborated with the Institutional Learning Objectives Implementation Committee to identify questions on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that provided information on the core competencies and the ILOs. The ACSC aggregated the results from those

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questions to create an overview of student perceptions on their amount of exposure—the opportunities to learn—and amount learned.

Each core competency has been evaluated at least once and the use of the results is ongoing. Reports on student achievement (direct) and student perceptions (indirect) are available on the Assessment and Curriculum Support Center's [summary reports website](#). A [2018 report provides a snapshot](#) (PDF) of the direct and indirect (NSSE) assessment results for each core competency and select ILOs. In addition, 1-page learning achievement reports by core competency are also available that include results by each rubric dimension:

- [critical thinking](#),
- [information literacy](#),
- [oral communication](#),
- quantitative reasoning, [report on seniors](#) and the [3-page report with results from first-year and upper-division students](#),
- [written communication](#).

Indirect assessment results. About half (51% to 55%) of senior respondents on the NSSE reported frequent participation or substantial learning in three of the five core competencies: information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and written communication. In the remaining two areas—oral communication and critical thinking—a greater percentage of seniors reported frequent participation and substantial learning, 64% and 72% respectively.

Direct assessment results. The percentage of students who are near graduation that met learning achievement expectations ranged from a low of 32% to a high of 74%:

- Quantitative reasoning (QR), 32%
- Critical thinking (CT), 44%
- Information literacy (IL), 51%
- Oral communication (OC), 63%
- Written communication (WC), 74%.

It is important to place these percentages in context. The three assessment projects with the lowest percentages (QR, CT, and IL) were conducted with a minimum of faculty development before data collection. While participating faculty members indicated that their course directly addressed the core competency and they received information (e.g., the rubric), no systematic professional development plan ensued. On the other hand, the faculty teaching in the areas of OC and WC had more robust development opportunities on assignment design and effective pedagogy.

There have been two primary uses of these results: procedure changes for the general education course designations and professional development opportunities. For example, procedural changes include the following: the revised and recently implemented general education quantitative reasoning courses have elements from the rubric included in the course application process to increase alignment; the oral

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communication general education course application process now asks faculty to include an evaluation rubric and to indicate which research-based pedagogical method they will incorporate (see example of the [use of results for oral communication](#)). The ACSC and the General Education Office ([resources page](#)) have both increased their pedagogical and curriculum support workshops and teaching resources for the core competencies and other areas, including an intentional integration of teaching support into assessment projects (e.g., see [assessment schedule](#) on General Education Office website and the [oral communication assessment project page](#) on the ACSC website).