

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSES

A good place to start in developing a plan for assessing student learning outcomes for general education classes is to first review the outcomes depicted for the principle under which the course qualifies. For example, Scientific Reasoning has the following two required outcomes:

Demonstrate the ability and explain how scientific theories are formulated, tested, and validated

Demonstrate the ability to integrate and apply scientific methods which include defining parameters of problem, seeking relevant information, subjecting proposed solutions to rigorous testing and drawing conclusions based on the process

The next step is to determine the method for assessing student learning outcomes such as test questions, writing assignment, oral presentation, portfolio, etc. If test questions are to be used then the program must describe the type of test question such as objective or subjective. If using objective test questions, then the actual questions must be included in the description of the assessment strategy. In using short answer or essay test questions, writing assignments, presentation or portfolios, a description of the evaluation method must be provided. For example, a rubric could be used in any of these methods. If the plan is to use a rubric for evaluation of student performance then the instrument must be provided with the narrative description of the assessment plan.

The third step is to correlate the assessment method(s) to the general education learning outcome or separate parts of the outcome. For example, the first outcome listed above actually seeks outcomes in three subareas including how scientific theories are (1) formulated, (2) tested, and (3) validated. All parts of an outcome must be addressed in assessment.

The following chart summarizes what steps should be completed in developing strategies for assessing general education learning outcomes:

Task
1. Restate the General Education Learning Outcomes relevant to the course
2. State the assessment method to be used - Objective Test Questions and/or Subjective Assessment Strategy (i.e., short answer or essay test questions, writing/research assignment, oral presentation, lab demonstration, portfolio, etc.) with rubric attached that will be used for performance evaluation
3. Note that all parts of each general education student learning outcome is assessed using one or more of the above strategies