**Assessment of Student Learning: Courses with General Education Status**

***Goals of the Assessment Process***

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the General Education Curriculum Committee GECC) are committed to reviewing courses approved for the General Education curriculum on a five-year cycle, with the review accomplishing four primary goals.

* The review provides an analysis of student achievement of the GE outcomes (stated below) and of how a GE course facilitates that achievement. The review is not an evaluation of the instructor or of the entire course content but of how well the course supports student achievement of specific GE outcomes.
* The purpose of the review is also to consider if any improvements are needed in the course in order to foster better achievement of the GE learning outcomes by students, no matter their level of preparation.
* The review also helps to educate instructors about the purpose of the GE Program and the role of their courses within it, encouraging dialog among faculty.
* Assessment provides the GE Curriculum Committee with a comprehensive overview of the GE requirements and their outcomes from many perspectives, encouraging changes to outcomes or other areas to improve the program, if needed, while ensuring continual revision and renewal to the program.

Please see this link for more information on the General Education Program: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/proposing-ge-status-course-important-information>

***Materials for the Assessment***An analysis of student learning in relation to the GE outcomes of the course should be submitted as a 1-2 page typed summary written by the primary instructor teaching the course. Only one report should be submitted for a course; reports do not need to be submitted for discussion or lab sections associated with the course.

The written analysis should explore student learning in relation to the two outcomes of the Quantitative or Formal Reasoning GE Area, below.

This written analysis should refer to at least two forms of evidence to help provide clarity and examples to support the analysis.

The syllabus for the course and any assignments should be attached, along with supporting evidence for the observations made in the summary statement, such as selected samples of student work or student feedback (see below for more information about forms of evidence to include).

Evidence is an important aspect of assessment and must be used. The University of Iowa is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, and this accreditation in part rests on the institution’s use of evidence while making “continuous improvement”:

Assessment and the processes an institution learns from should be well-grounded in evidence. Statements of belief and intention have important roles in an institution’s presentation of itself, but for the quality assurance function of accreditation, evidence is critical. Institutions should be able to select evidence based on their particular purposes and circumstances. (See item 5 at <http://www.hlcommission.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/guiding-values-new-criteria-for-accreditation.html>.)

***Quantitative or Formal Reasoning Area Outcomes***Courses in the **Quantitative or Formal Reasoning** (QFR) GE category focus on the development of students’ “analytical skills through the practice of quantitative or formal symbolic reasoning.”

There are two primary learning outcomes:

1. In QFR courses, students learn “a method or methods of analytical or formal symbolic reasoning.”
2. Students also learn “to evaluate arguments made in the symbolic system embodied in the course and to become familiar with its major concepts and ways of formulating questions.”

***Guideline for Content of Assessment***

*Audience*

The submitted analysis will explore student learning in relation to the two outcomes of the Quantitative or Formal Reasoning GE Area, above. The audience for the analysis is the faculty members of the GECC and UEPCC, which conducts the review. Keep in mind that GECC and UEPCC members represent many different disciplines and thus the summary should be written for a general audience.

*Key Points*

The statement should analyze how the course supports student progress toward the achievement of the two GE outcomes, independently from students’ final performance (and grade) in the course. That is, what in the class structure has best helped students to better achieve these two outcomes? For example, how does student work reveal which assignments are helping students to solidify their fulfillment of the GE outcomes? How does feedback, homework, collaborative projects, presentations etc help student achievement? Do some activities seem to contribute more than others?

The analysis should also examine why certain students seem not to be achieving one or both of the outcomes. Is there any way a revision of course structure could better encourage student effort and engagement with the material?

*Acceptable Forms of Evidence*

Two forms of evidence must be used in the analysis might include the following:

1. **Samples of student work**, such answers on one or two quiz or exam questions or informal class exercises or homework, demonstrating learning in the related GE outcomes. The goal of the committee is not to re-evaluate a student’s work. Rather, the committee wants to know what you see that gives you confidence that the course is effectively supporting student learning.
2. **Student feedback**, such as answers from the ACE evaluation forms or from other forms of student feedback that you have collected, perhaps at different points during the semester to see if students’ perception of their learning have changed. ACE forms this fall will included two GE questions about related outcomes.
3. **Observations from an outside peer reviewer** who visits the classroom and reviews the class materials and their relation to the student learning outcomes in this GE area.

*Additional Guidelines for the Use of Evidence*

1. Evidence should speak directly to the GE student-learning outcomes and not to the other learning outcomes or goals of the course. Note that the goal of the GE Curriculum Committee is *not* to assess teaching or the course as a whole, but only the extent to which the course’s assignments and structure help students to meet the GE outcomes. Thus evidence (student work, student feedback, an outsider’s observations) should be specifically related to those outcomes, not to global assessments of teaching or course quality.
2. At least two forms of evidence should be used in order to capture a wider reflection of divergent points of view.
3. Grades are an evaluation of individual student performance related to specified course goals and are greatly influenced by student effort as well as by other issues. Thus grades are not, in and of themselves, an assessment of the design of the course as a whole. Please do not count grades as a form of evidence.
4. Student perceptions of their own growth can be helpful if used in conjunction with other evidence. Student feedback should be collected anonymously so that a student is assured that grades will not be affected by a response. When giving a survey, stress that its purpose is to improve the course in future semesters. ACE GE questions can also be used as evidence.
5. The analysis by an outside peer reviewer, such as a colleague in the instructor’s department who visits the class, also can be used as external evidence. This analysis should focus on the GE outcomes, student learning, and the course structure, not on whether or not the students are enjoying the course or like the teacher or their peers within the class.

***Summary of Materials Submitted to the GE Curriculum Committee***

Please provide the following information to the committee.

1. An analysis using evidence addressing how the course helps students to reach the GE outcomes.

* The statement should be no more than one to two pages, typed.
* The statement may begin by briefly defining “a method or methods of analytical or formal symbolic reasoning” that the statement will discuss as well as which “arguments” “major concepts” and “ways of formulating questions” students have learned (or have not learned).
* Please analyze how the course’s structure and any of its activities and assignments helped students to learn the above items, citing evidence.
* Please analyze any struggles students might have had achieving either of the two outcomes, citing evidence.
* Suggest one or two changes to the course structure that might help improve student learning in future semesters, regardless of who might teach the course.

1. Also include the course syllabus and any student work or assignments referred to in your statement. Please do not include other materials.
2. If student responses on ACE forms or other feedback are used in your analysis, briefly summarize when these were collected as well as the questions asked of students.

***Due Date***These materials are due by Friday, January 15.

Please send the materials to Kathryn Hall by email in one file labeled with the course number and title (MATH:1340 Mathematics for Business). Do not send materials in separate files.

Instructors interested in meeting with the committee to share insights on the process or to make suggestions for changes to it are welcome to make an appointment with the committee by contacting Kathryn Hall.