

General Education Assessment

Background

In keeping with the Committee's stated functions, the General Education Committee was charged with developing a plan to assess on an on-going basis Augustana's general education program as well as individual courses that carry a general education designation. The result was an assessment [plan](#) that was approved by faculty in 2018-2019.

In 2019-2020, thirteen faculty members volunteered to participate in a Gen Ed Assessment Pilot during the fall semester or J term. Courses from each of the six learning perspectives and the Q suffix were represented in the pilot program. Participating faculty submitted an assessment proposal to the Gen Ed Committee, the Committee provided feedback, and faculty implemented their assessment and subsequently submitted a report to the Gen Ed Committee. Reports from the pilot program helped the Gen Ed committee develop implementation plans for future assessment.

Purposes of Gen Ed Assessment

Program-wide and course-level assessment of Augustana's general education is necessary for numerous reasons:

- It parallels campus-wide departmental assessment efforts to improve continuously our efforts for ensuring student success
- It is required by our accrediting body
- Augustana's general education program has undergone numerous revisions over the past decades and assessment provides an opportunity to maintain consistency by focusing on common performance indicators and IDEA objectives that are central to each Learning Perspective or Suffix
- It may allow us to make data-informed decisions about future general education decisions

Assessment Overview

Beginning in 2020-2021, assessment of general education courses will begin and will allow for renewal of general education status. Participating instructors will work with the General Education Committee to develop and implement an assessment plan to demonstrate how their general education course addresses the following Performance Indicators:

- **Perspective on the Arts:** Students will learn to appreciate the ideas behind the creative process or be able to use the creative process to express ideas.
- **Perspective on Human Values and Existence:** Students will demonstrate understanding of differing perspectives on questions related to human values or meaning.
- **Perspective on Individuals and Society:** Students will use theories, data and/or research methods to understand human behavior, social structures, or differences.

- **Perspective on Literature and Texts:** Students will analyze textual artifacts and/or form arguments based on their analysis of texts.
- **Perspective on the Natural World:** Students will infer, test, and apply theories/laws of the natural world.
- **Perspective on the Past:** Students will critically evaluate evidence from the past and interpretations of the past.
- **Quantitative Reasoning:** Students will use mathematical and/or statistical methods to interpret and solve problems in a specific context.
- **D Suffix:** Students will critically analyze concepts of privilege, power, discrimination, and bias and how related systems impact social functioning in the United States
- **G Suffix:** To be determined

Assessment Plans and Assessment Reports Schedule

At the beginning of the fall semester of each academic year, the Gen Ed Chair will contact Department Chairs and individual faculty members who teach in the Learning Perspective or Suffix courses that will be taught for the applicable assessment cycle. Instructions for submitting assessment plans to measure performance indicators and/or follow-up reports and a related schedule for the year will be provided. The Gen Ed Committee will host information sharing sessions focused on strategies for designing, implementing, and reporting for Gen Ed assessment.

By week 7 of the fall semester in the first year in the 5 year assessment cycle for the Gen Ed course, participating faculty will be asked to submit an assessment proposal. The prompts that will appear on the proposal form follow:

- The Performance Indicator is: [Performance Indicator for the applicable Gen Ed designation will be listed here]. Describe the assignment you plan to use and include rubrics or scoring schemes. How, specifically, do you expect students to demonstrate this indicator in your assignment and how, relative to the performance indicator, will you measure student performance?
- If you plan to use a scoring scheme or other grading criteria, which part of the criteria connects directly to the Performance Indicator?

The Gen Ed Committee will provide feedback for the proposal and faculty will submit revisions, as requested.

During years 1-4, participating faculty will assess their courses and make modifications, as needed, to ensure that the course is providing students the opportunity to achieve the Performance Indicator. Faculty will gather data and/or examples of student work during these years. to use in their report in year 5. They will not be required to provide evidence from every iteration of the course in their report. Gathering a representative sample from one or more iterations of the course will suffice.

An assessment report will be due to the Gen Ed Committee week 4 of the Fall semester of Year 5 of the Assessment Cycle. This report will include the following elements:

- The exact proposal that was approved in year 1 of the cycle (or revision(s) that followed).
- A statement that summarizes performance of students in the course (e.g., percentage of students who had strong, acceptable and unacceptable demonstration of the performance indicator).
- A sample of student work to serve as examples of strong, acceptable, and unacceptable performance. Faculty should provide a brief explanation about why student performance was assessed the way it was, citing specific passages from students' work.
- A clear explanation/narrative of how the evidence presented relates to the Performance Indicator.
- Faculty may choose to address reflection questions such as the following in their report, especially if the instructor foresees the need for changes to the assessment plan in the future:
 - Having worked through this formal exercise of providing an assessment report for this class, what are your thoughts about further developing the course?
 - Do you believe that the course and/or this assignment successfully addressed the performance indicator?
 - As a result of your assessment findings, what changes might you make to your course to better address the performance indicator?

Participants and Measurement at the Course-level

Professional faculty, continuing lecturers, and tenure-track faculty will participate in Gen Ed assessment. Instructors with other designations are not expected to participate.

In cases where multiple sections of a Gen Ed course are taught by different instructors, the department would be responsible for selecting one section, or preparing a representative sample from multiple sections, to represent the individual course assessment review. To encourage consistency across multi-section offerings taught by different instructors, Department Chairs would facilitate communicating performance indicator expectations to all faculty teaching the same multi-section Gen Ed course, including new faculty and those with short-term contracts.

Assessment Cycle

2020-2021: PH and D faculty submit course proposals with assessment plans

2021-2022: SI and G faculty submit course proposals with assessment plans

2022-2023: PA and Q faculty submit course proposals with assessment plans

2023-2024: PL and PN faculty submit course proposals with assessment plans

2024-2025: PP and PS faculty submit course proposals with assessment plans

2025-2026:

- PH and D faculty submit assessment reports
- PH and D faculty gather to discuss practices
- PH and D courses found to be demonstrating student achievement on the performance indicator are granted a 5-year continuance
- Courses for which student achievement on the performance indicator was not sufficiently demonstrated will be given probationary status and an assessment report will be re-submitted in 2026-2027 or the next time the course is taught; following reassessment, courses on probation either will be granted continuance until 2030-2031 or the general education designation will be revoked

2026-2027:

- SI and G faculty submit assessment reports
- SI and G faculty gather to discuss practices
- SI and G courses found to be demonstrating student achievement on the performance indicator are granted a 5-year continuance
- Courses for which student achievement on the performance indicator was not sufficiently demonstrated will be given probationary status and an assessment report will be re-submitted in 2027-2028 or the next time the course is taught; following reassessment, courses on probation either will be granted continuance until 2031-2032 or the general education designation will be revoked

2027-2028:

- PA and Q faculty submit assessment reports
- PA and Q faculty gather to discuss practices
- PA and Q courses found to be demonstrating student achievement on the performance indicator are granted a 5-year continuance
- Courses for which student achievement on the performance indicator was not sufficiently demonstrated will be given probationary status and an assessment report will be re-submitted in 2028-2029 or the next time the course is taught; following reassessment, courses on probation either will be granted continuance until 2032-2033 or the general education designation will be revoked

2028-2029:

- PL and PN faculty submit assessment reports
- PL and PN faculty gather to discuss practices
- PL and PN courses found to be demonstrating student achievement on the performance indicator are granted a 5-year continuance
- Courses for which student achievement on the performance indicator was not sufficiently demonstrated will be given probationary status and an assessment report will be re-submitted in 2029-2030 or the next time the course is taught; following reassessment, courses on probation either will be granted continuance until 2033-2034 or the general education designation will be revoked

2029-2030:

- PP and PS faculty submit assessment reports
- PP and PS faculty gather to discuss practices

- PP and PS courses found to be demonstrating student achievement on the performance indicator are granted a 5-year continuance
- Courses for which student achievement on the performance indicator was not sufficiently demonstrated will be given probationary status and an assessment report will be re-submitted in 2030-2031 or the next time the course is taught; following reassessment, courses on probation either will be granted continuance until 2034-2035 or the general education designation will be revoked

2030-2031:

- PH and D faculty submit assessment reports
- PH and D faculty gather to discuss practices
- PH and D courses found to be demonstrating student achievement on the performance indicator are granted a 5-year continuance
- Courses for which student achievement on the performance indicator was not sufficiently demonstrated will be given probationary status and an assessment report will be re-submitted in 2031-2032 or the next time the course is taught; following reassessment, courses on probation either will be granted continuance until 2035-2036 or the general education designation will be revoked

Cycle continues.

Examples of Methods to Assess Performance Indicators at the Course-level

Faculty are encouraged to be creative and to design an assessment plan that is feasible, makes sense for their course and teaching approach, and that is clearly focused on the performance indicator. Examples of successful Gen Ed Assessment Pilot participants included the following:

- Pre and post assessment
- Multi-draft assignment that builds from the beginning to the end of the semester
- Rubrics or grading schemes (generated by faculty or adapted from resources such as AACU)
- Faculty-generated checklists or observation tools

A Moodle site will be developed in collaboration with the Assessment for Improvement Committee that will include example reports and other general education assessment resources.

Designation-level Assessment

In addition to course-level assessment, broader general education designation-level assessment also will be completed in the same years that each designation's course-level assessment will be completed. Data collection for designation-level assessment will be derived by the Office of Institutional Research. Designation-level assessment will be based on aggregate data derived from students' feedback from the following IDEA form objectives. Note that faculty will not need to select these objectives on their IDEA forms and data will not be examined for individual courses.

- **Perspective on the Arts:** Developing creative capacities (inventing, designing, writing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.) OR gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.). *Faculty who teach Perspective on the Arts courses will be asked to select which of the preceding objectives best aligns with their course.*
- **Perspective on Human Values and Existence:** Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures
- **Perspective on Individuals and Society:** Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
- **Perspective on Literature and Texts:** Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
- **Perspective on the Natural World:** Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)
- **Perspective on the Past:** Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
- **Quantitative Reasoning:** Learning appropriate methods for collecting, analyzing and interpreting numerical information
- **D Suffix:** To be determined
- **G Suffix:** To be determined