**GENERAL EDUCATION CORE**

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT FORMS**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Assessment reports for each general education core course offered in an academic year are due in the Assessment Office by October 1 of the next academic year. If a course was not taught during the academic year, please let the Assessment Coordinator know that you will not be submitting a report for that course since it was not taught. (If your department has not offered a particular general education core course within the last five years, it may be time for your faculty to reconsider the inclusion of that course in the general education core. Keep in mind that courses in the general education core are reviewed by the Faculty Senate Committee on Instruction. This review includes a review of assessment reports for each course. A lack of assessment reports over a five-year period may be viewed negatively by the Committee on Instruction and could result in a recommendation that the course be removed from the general education core.)

Normally, each assessment report will receive feedback from the Faculty Senate Committee on Instruction at some point in the Fall semester. It is imperative that you submit your assessment report by October 1 so that we can get your report(s) to the committee members for feedback.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

***Heading:*** Please complete the heading on each report form (Course discipline, number, and name; Date; Department; and Department Chair).

***Combining Data:***Use one report form for each course (NOT each section). Combine data from all sections of a course to provide an overview of student learning within each course. Fall and spring data should be combined into one report. Summer data may also be included if collected.

Course data should ONLY be provided for individual sections or individual semesters when an analysis of your data shows significant variation from one section to another or from one semester to another (for example, when students in one section perform particularly better or particularly worse than students in other sections; when comparing on-site to off-site to ensure that off-site sections are held to the same standards and/or are receiving the same level of instruction; when a change/intervention is conducted in one section as a controlled experiment to compare results to sections where an intervention has not been conducted; or when there is a significant difference in performance among students enrolled in fall semesters vs. in spring semesters).

***Naming Your File:*** When you are ready to submit your assessment file to the Assessment Coordinator, please name your file with the discipline code, course number, and year in which it is submitted. For example, if you are submitting a report on the Basketweaving 201 course containing data from 2017-18, your file name would be:

BSKT 201 2018.

**COMPLETING THE ASSESSMENT REPORT TABLE**

***Student Learning Outcome:*** This column contains the student learning outcomes for the general education core in the particular category in which your course resides. **Under no circumstances should you change the outcomes in this column.** All courses in each category must assess all learning outcomes for that category. If and when student learning outcomes are changed for a particular category, the Assessment Coordinator will provide updated templates for you to use for your assessment reports.

***Assessment Cycle*:** Indicate when and how often this student learning outcome will be assessed. Examples: Every semester; Fall semesters; Spring semesters; Fall of odd-numbered years; Fall of even-numbered years; Spring of odd-numbered years; Spring of even-numbered years. **EVERY STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME SHOULD BE ASSESSED A MINIMUM OF ONE SEMESTER EVERY TWO YEARS IN EACH COURSE.**

***Assessment*:** Indicate the assessment and the assignment used to assess student achievement of this student learning outcome. Examples: Designated questions on a multiple choice exam or on the final; selected homework assignments; selected writing assignments graded using a rubric; selected lab reports; selected student presentations graded by a rubric; etc. Be as specific as possible.

**RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES:**

* Whenever possible, use more than one assessment.
* If you are using multiple choice exam questions, use a minimum of THREE questions.
* You do not have to provide the specific wording of questions or a copy of the assignment. However, it would be helpful to provide a brief description of the question/assignment. For example, you could tell the reader that you are going to use 5 questions related to calculating probability (rather than providing a copy of the questions) or that you are going to use the research paper on military strategies in World War II and assess it using a rubric (rather than providing a copy of the assignment you give your students). We also recommend that you include copies of any rubrics you use in your departmental Assessment Guidebook as a resource for your department.
* If you are using a rubric, make sure your rubric is aligned to the outcome. (For example, if you are assessing written research papers for correct grammar, use a rubric that has at least one component that specifically focuses on grammar.) If you are using a portion of a rubric as your assessment tool, make sure that portion of your rubric is NOT used to assess more than one outcome.
* You may use a random sample for courses with multiple sections and a large total enrollment. Make sure that your sample includes students from ALL sections of the course—*including off-campus, dual enrollment, and online courses.* One way to do this is to use a random number generator (there are several available on the web) and choose students from each section based on the numbers generated.
* When using a random sample, a minimum of 20%-25% of all students who participated in the assessment should give you a good sample.

***Benchmark*:** Faculty in the department should set the benchmark for student achievement for each student learning outcome. Examples: “80% of students enrolled in this course will score 75% or better on this set of designated questions”; “75% of students enrolled in this course will score 10 or higher on this written essay using this rubric.”

**RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES:**

* Please make sure your benchmark aligns with your assessment. For example, if you are using three multiple choice questions on a final, your students can get 0%, 33%, 66%, or 100% correct, so it does not make sense to expect them to answer 50% or 75% correctly. You CAN state your benchmark as “at least 70% of the students will get at least 66% of the questions correct” OR “at least 66% of the questions will be answered correctly by at least 70% of the students.”
* Do not set your benchmark too low. For example, expecting only 40% of your students to be successful will appear to outsiders as if you either have very low expectations or your assessment/subject/teaching strategy is so difficult or ineffective that students are expected to fail rather than to succeed. Expected success rates near 70% or higher are reasonable.
* If your current success rate is discouraging (say, less than 50%), it is still OK to set a high benchmark, but you might want to discuss some intermediate benchmarks. For example: “Our benchmark is that 70% of our students will be successful on this assessment. However, our baseline data shows that only 34% of our students were successful. The faculty have discussed these results and [insert description of change here]. We hope this change will improve our success rate to at least 50% within two years, at which time we will reevaluate the [course, assessment, intervention] to determine further changes.”

***Data results*:** Report the number of students who meet or exceed the benchmark, the total number of students assessed, and the percentage. (Example: “74 of 120 (61.7%) students met or exceeded the benchmark score on this assessment.”) Providing just the percentage can be misleading. For example, suppose your benchmark is that 70% of your students will “be successful” on your assessment, but only 57% were actually successful. If you have a lot of students enrolled, this could be a big issue. But, if you only have 7 students enrolled, 57% means that 4 of the 7 students were successful—and if *one more* student had been successful, you would have met your benchmark, so you probably don’t need a major intervention for the time being.

In addition, be sure to indicate whether you are assessing all students enrolled or a random sample (you may have already indicated this as part of your assessment description). If you are using a random sample, tell us how you are choosing that sample.

***Decision/Improvement made*:** Report any decisions/improvements made based on the data collected. Example: “The benchmark of 75% was not met (your conclusion based on data). Faculty have developed materials to address [topic] to be used in subsequent courses in order to ensure that students can [learning outcome] (your change/intervention).” Be sure to compare post-intervention data to pre-intervention data as part of your discussion to document that student learning really did improve. If there is not a positive change in your student data, it is fine to report that there was no change (or a negative change). The point is that you are attempting to intervene and provide students with better learning experiences (and documenting your successes and failures along the way).

Remember: All general education courses should assess all student learning outcomes at least once every two years. Assessment should occur every semester; however, not all student learning outcomes must be assessed every semester. Faculty may decide how often and on what cycle the assessment of each student learning outcome occurs.

ALL assessment reports and feedback reports are stored on the UT Martin Assessment SharePoint site. To access these reports, please go to <http://www.utm.edu/assessment/assessment.php>, scroll to the bottom of the page, and log in using your UTM credentials. You may access and view any assessment report stored here.

If you have any questions about completing this form or about assessment in general, please contact us:

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