Guide for Instructors: GER Assessment

Both [Criteria 4b](#) from the Higher Learning Commission and APCC GER [guidelines](#) require the ongoing assessment of general education courses, and evidence that assessment is actively **used** to improve course content.

To help meet these expectations:

1. Make sure your GER course is meeting the APCC's **syllabus** requirement. UWM's APCC requires that your syllabus "explicitly articulates how the course meets UWM General Education Requirements by integrating [UW System Shared Learning Goals](#) with [divisional learning outcomes;](#) syllabi will **identify the assignment**(s) intended to help students achieve specific Shared Learning Goals and divisional criteria, including **how such assignments will be assessed**" (APCC GER Composite Document, p. 12-13.) For more information about GER and syllabus requirements, including examples of appropriate syllabus language, see the [APCC's webpage](#).

2. Decide how you will **assess the GER component** of your course, *apart* from other disciplinary content or learning outcomes your course may have. The assessment should narrowly measure student learning for a GER outcome at or near the end of the course. While many faculty or instructional staff will be doing this on their own, some departments or programs may opt to create a standardized GER assessment approach for their courses. (Note: *Course grades are never acceptable as assessment data.* See "[GER Assessment Best Practices](#)" for more information about acceptable measures.)

   Options for assessment measures:

   - **Option 1: Embedded Measures:** If your syllabus follows the policy above, you likely already have assignment grades, or exam scores, tied to the outcome being measured that can serve as assessment data. If an assignment grade, exam, or other graded activity combines multiple outcomes, then a *sub-score* specific to the outcome is preferred.
   - **Option 2: Add-On Measures:** Using a separate rubric, specific to the GER outcome, to collect assessment data that is not tied to the grading process.

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- Some departments have developed rubrics for assessing specific GER divisional criteria. We need more examples of these, so if you have such a rubric, please share it with the Assessment Coordinator at andrewsa@uwm.edu.
- The College of General Studies has shared a set of [rubrics](#) that can be used to assess UWS Shared Learning Goals. Directions for using those rubrics in Canvas can be found [here](#).

3. **Teach** your course and **collect** the necessary assessment data along the way. Typically, assessment data is collected at or near the end of the semester. Rubric data can be holistic (accounting for student work throughout the semester), or based on evaluating a specific assignment or project in which the student is expected to demonstrate their learning for the outcome.

4. **Analyze and reflect** on your assessment data. Make sure to break down student performance to at least 4 levels (e.g., Unsatisfactory, Minimal, Meeting, Exceeding) so that your data can show patterns of strong or weak performance related to the outcome(s) measured.

5. **Consider** how the results speak to the success of previous changes you've made to the course, and whether or not they suggest any needed areas of improvement or attention.

6. At the end of the semester, each instructor is asked to complete **the [GER Assessment Data Reporting form](#)**, which documents:
   - The outcome assessed
   - How it was assessed
   - The results
   - Your interpretation of the meaning of the results, in the context of your course
   - Any action plan or course changes you are thinking about as a response to these results.

7. Alternatively, a single program coordinator or authorized person in your department can complete the GER reporting form with data for multiple courses or sections within a department or program. The forms include options to upload **departmental assessment reports**,

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rubrics, **meeting minutes** where faculty discussed the assessment results, etc.

8. The GER assessment data reported in this way will be available upon request to you or your department in order to facilitate broader faculty discussions about GER courses, and to satisfy requirements for the APCC's GER Review process. It will also be available to help the campus document UWM's ongoing GER assessment processes for accreditation.

Links included in this document:

- Criteria 4B (HLC): https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html#4
- APCC GER Guidelines: https://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2014/07/GER-Audit-and-Review-V4-REVISED-KMP.pdf
- UW System Shared Learning Goals: https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/download/Shared-Learning-Goals.pdf
- UWM Divisional GER Learning Outcomes: https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2020/02/GERLearningOutcomes.pdf
- APCC Committee: https://uwm.edu/secu/faculty/standing/apcc/
- GER Assessment Best Practices: https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2020/02/GERassessment_BEST_Practices.pdf
- CGS Rubrics for UWS Shared Learning Goals: https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2020/04/CGS_Assessment-rubrics.pdf
- Using GER Rubrics in Canvas: https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2020/10/GER_CanvasDirections.pdf
- The **GER Assessment Data Reporting Form**: https://milwaukee.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3kobtG0xwEAH85D