



**UNO Guide for the
Assessment of General Education
Student Learning Outcomes**

2017-18



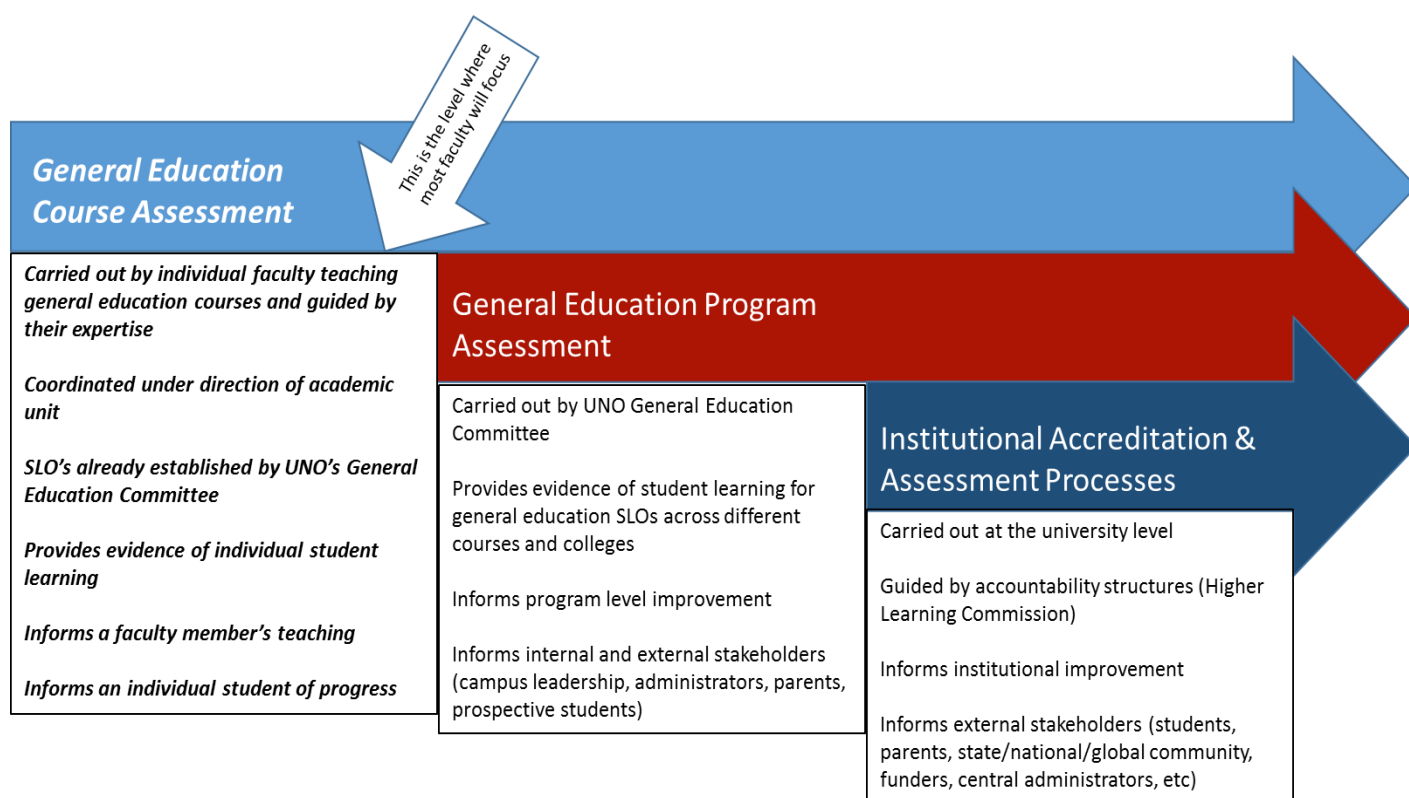
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ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES - OVERVIEW

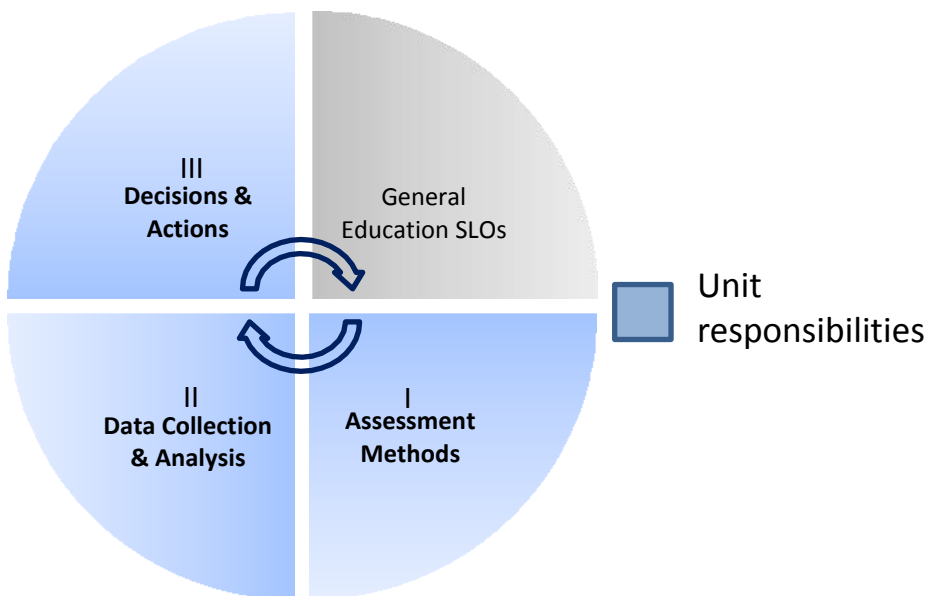
The UNO General Education Committee is responsible for assessing the student learning outcomes of courses it endorses as providing general education credit. It conducts regular reviews of student learning outcome (SLO) assessment in each of these courses. Assessment of student learning occurs at different levels (e.g., task level, course level, program level). The focus of this guide is on course level assessment with an emphasis on end-of-course student learning outcomes and objectives pertinent to general education. This guide is intended to help reporting units develop an assessment plan for each of their general education courses and organize the relevant information in an assessment report.

Levels of General Education Assessment



Course assessment of general education SLOs provides the foundation for assessment of the broader general education program and provides essential data for institutional assessment processes. However, the main purposes for assessing general education SLOs in your courses are to inform the teaching and learning that occurs, and foster continuous improvement within the course and the general education curriculum. General education assessment is both an opportunity and responsibility of all faculty teaching these courses.

General Education Assessment for Continuous Improvement



General education assessment is a cyclical process that includes four components. UNO's General Education Committee determines the SLOs, but academic units define the **assessment methods** used to determine if students have met these learning outcomes. General education assessment efforts at the course level must also document and describe the process of data **collection and analysis** and how this information guides **decisions and actions** related to the course.

Academic units are required to prepare assessment reports summarizing components I, II, and III of this cycle for their general education courses in accordance with the instructions in this guide and the timelines of the general education [assessment schedule](#)¹. The General Education Committee will review this report and provide feedback to units based on a common Rubric (see Appendix 1).

Next Steps and Getting Started

Academic units offering courses that fulfill General Education [humanities & fine arts requirements](#)² are required to submit an assessment report to the General Education Committee by **May 11th, 2018** using the template at the end of this document. Please email these reports to mtracy@unomaha.edu and ddevney@unomaha.edu. This template is also located on [UNO's General Education Assessment](#)³ website. If needed, detailed step-by-step instructions for completing the assessment template are included in the following pages of this guide.

¹ <https://www.unomaha.edu/general-education/assessment/index.php>

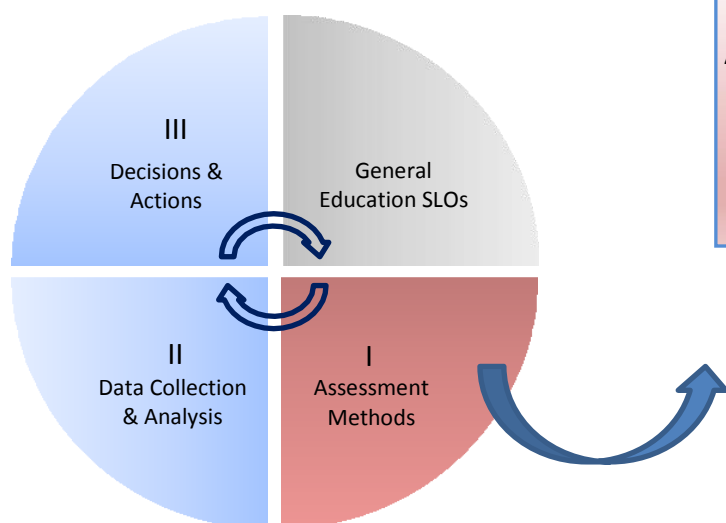
² <https://www.unomaha.edu/general-education/approved-courses/humanities-and-fine-arts.php>

³ <https://www.unomaha.edu/general-education/assessment/index.php>

Detailed Step-by-Step Instructions for Completing Gen Ed Assessment Reports

The following pages contain detailed instructions and examples that can assist units as they prepare their assessment reports. The following pages are organized into three areas that correspond to the three main sections of the general education assessment template. These sections include the following: (I) Assessment Methods, (II) Data Collection and Analysis, and (III) Decisions and Actions. A description of each section is provided, and the required elements for the assessment report are highlighted in bold text. Additionally, criteria are highlighted in a red box in each section that the General Education Committee will use to evaluate unit assessment reports.

I. Assessment Methods



Rubric Evaluation Criteria

Assessment methods should:

- Be direct
- Be valid representations of the SLOs
- Include clearly defined proficiency targets that are distinct from course grades

Assessment methods are the means by which student performance is measured. Courses can have multiple measures for an individual Gen Ed SLO. Measures can be categorized into three **domains**: examinations, products, or performances. Measures within each of these domains can be **direct or indirect**. Indirect measures include self-assessments, course evaluations, feedback from graduates, etc. At least one direct measure should be employed for each SLO. Examples of *direct* measures include:

- Examination: standardized tests, portions of exams, quizzes, final exams, etc.
- Product: Research papers, posters, original creative works, software, apps or programs, etc.
- Performance: presentations, recitals, exhibits, speeches, demonstrations, field experiences, etc.

Gen Ed Student Learning Outcome Domains – End of Course



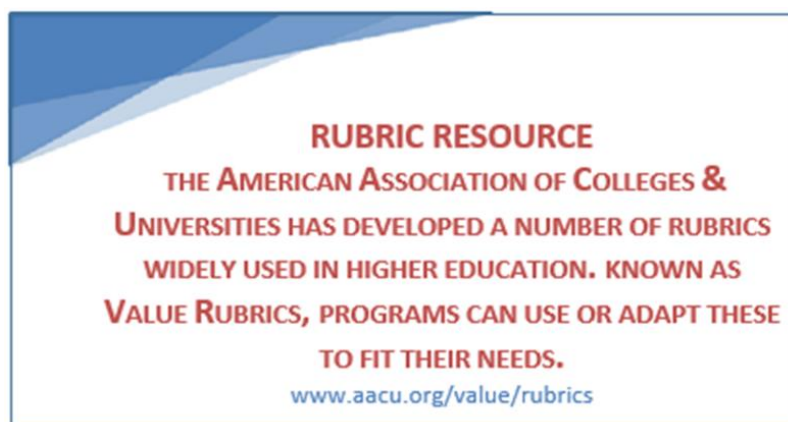
Each assessment measure should **align** or match the construct addressed in the corresponding SLO. The emphasis is on validity. To an informed observer, is the assessment measuring what is specified in the SLO? Units are not required to provide documentation or data related to validity tests.

The **population** of students assessed should be clearly identified. The **frequency of data collection** should be specified for each measure.

Proficiency for each measure must be established. There are two targets related to proficiency which are both determined by the faculty:

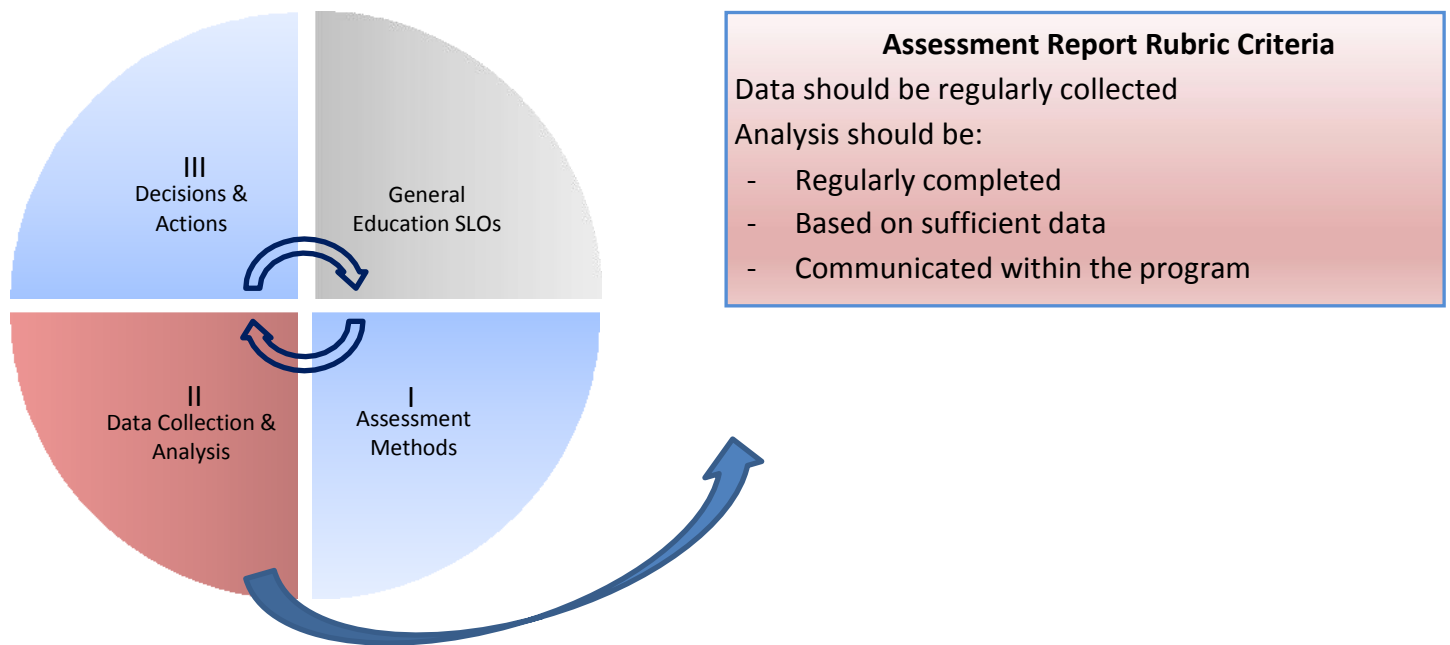
1. **Individual Proficiency Threshold:** The score which determines if an individual student has met the outcome.
2. **SLO Proficiency Target:** The percentage of students expected to meet or exceed the individual proficiency target noted in #1.

Units are encouraged to use rubrics to document proficiency if they are not already doing so. There are numerous approaches to rubrics. Some rubrics simply evaluate criteria as met or not met. Others outline progressive performance (e.g., emerging, developing, proficient, below, etc.). The General Education Committee does not recommend a specific rubric format, although examples of humanities rubrics are located on the General Education and Faculty Development websites.



When submitting assessment reports, programs should attach any rubrics they use. Doing so provides a great deal of clarity related to the alignment of measures to SLOs.

II. Data Collection and Analysis



Continuous improvement involves regular and systematic data collection and analysis. The amount of data included in the assessment report must support a reasonable examination of continuous improvement efforts in a particular course. Frequency of data collection is determined by the unit, although annual data collection is strongly recommended.

Data does not need to be collected on every student, but should be collected on a sufficient number of students for analysis to yield useful results. For example, data may be collected from 1) more than one administration of a measure, 2) most students who complete the course, 3) a purposeful representation or representative sample of students who complete the course, and/or 4) more than one measurement of a single SLO.

It is important for results to be reported in the table found in Section II of the Assessment Report template. Programs should provide the **timeframe** in which the data represented in the table were collected (e.g., 2014-2017, Fall & Spring 2017, Fall Semesters of 2015- 17, etc.).

Reporting results includes two steps corresponding to the proficiency targets outlined in the assessment methods and should be applied to each SLO. The steps include:

- Reporting the **number of students** assessed by each measure AND the **percentage of students** who met the individual proficiency target.
- Determining if the percentage of students who met the individual proficiency target met or exceeded the SLO proficiency threshold.

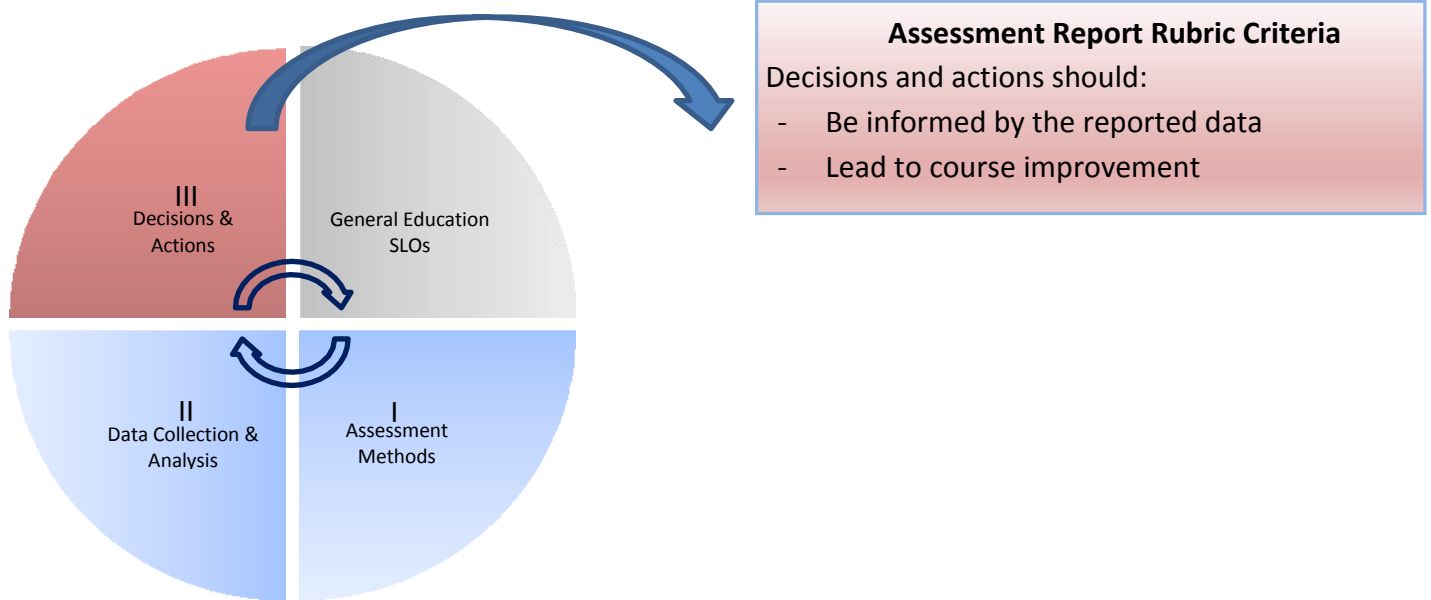
These steps allow programs to determine the overall **status** of each SLO as either:

- Met: percentage of students who met the individual proficiency target was equal to or exceeded the SLO proficiency threshold
- Not Met: Percentage of students who met the individual proficiency target was below the SLO proficiency threshold
- Partially Met: Results from multiple assessments or items on an assessment provide conflicting results in regard to students who met the individual proficiency target
- Unknown: Available data are insufficient to make a determination

SLOs represent *general education* outcomes. As such, assessment results related to SLOs should be disseminated to all faculty within the unit/department with an interest in general education. Programs should have a process that includes the routine **communication** of assessment results to faculty and a means to have discussions of the results. Some departments have designated committees which review data, summarize results, and then share their analysis at departmental meetings or data retreats. Others disseminate complete data sets to the entirety of the department faculty. It is important for the results to be shared with adjunct faculty as well full- time faculty. Programs may wish to share results with students, advising or other staff members, campus administrators, and/or external stakeholders.



III. Decisions and Actions



A variety of possible improvement **decisions** promote the continuous cycle of assessment and course improvement. Decisions can be related to the course curriculum, assessment measures, proficiency targets, advising, or communication strategies (e.g., develop a common rubric, increase individual proficiency target, revise materials, update course websites, etc.). Valid decisions may lead to relatively minor or significant changes and can also include the determination to make no changes. Decisions should be informed by specific **data** gathered from the measures for each SLO.

In order to operationalize decisions, units should identify specific **actions** to be initiated. It can be helpful to create a **timeline** outlining goals, target dates, and responsible parties. This can be used to guide and monitor the implementation of course improvement and subsequently sustain those efforts.



Frequently Asked Questions about General Education Assessment

I. Which SLO's should be measured and assessed in each General Education Area?

The SLO's for each general education area have been determined by the UNO General Education Committee and all are examined as part of the regular assessment cycle. A particular course should measure all general education SLOs for the general education area (eg. Fundamental Academic Skills, Distribution, or Diversity) it is associated with (eg. all four applicable SLOs for the social science distribution requirement).

II. How is student performance on the SLOs measured?

Measures should be aligned with the General Education SLOs, and direct measures should be used. Examples of *direct* measures include samples of student work (e.g., exam, essay, portfolio, paper) and observations of skills or creative activity (e.g., speech, presentation, theatre performance). Examples of *indirect* measures include student self-assessments (e.g., student surveys about what or how much they have learned, course evaluations) or feedback from community partners on the preparedness of graduates for the work force. Both types of measures can provide useful data. Academic units have flexibility in determining assessment mechanisms that best capture the content of the SLOs. In many cases, it may be possible to employ an assessment mechanism that is already in use.

For direct measures, units are also asked to indicate whether their general education SLO assessment practice falls into the domain of Examination, Product, or Performance. In addition to any indirect measures, each unit should identify an assessment activity in *at least one of the three domains*, and may opt to report results of assessment activity in more than one domain.

- **Examination:** includes standardized tests or qualifying exams, content exams, pre- and post- test comparisons, oral defenses, comprehensive exams, exit exams, etc.
- **Product:** includes refereed student portfolios, theses, publications, capstone projects, original creative works, software, apps or programs, etc.
- **Performance:** includes presentations, recitals, exhibits, speeches, demonstrations, field experiences, internships, etc.

III. What/how much data should be collected and reported?

Results (data) should be sufficient for meaningful analysis and collected for each course. While not every section of each course will necessarily be involved in the sampling, the data gathered should be a reasonable representation of all sections, students and faculty. The frequency of data collection and analysis is determined by the faculty, but at a minimum, annual data collection is highly recommended regardless of the timing of the assessment cycle. Data does not need to be collected on every student, but should be collected on enough students that analyses yield useful results.

IV. How should the unit/program use the results to inform decisions and actions?

The unit/program should review the results and develop action steps as needed based on the review. Data-informed decisions and actions taken should be documented. Consider exploring differences in the abilities of students to meet the various general education student learning outcomes (e.g. 90% of students sampled met/exceeded proficiency score for SLO #1, but only 25% of students met/exceeded proficiency score for SLO #4). Consider evaluating student performance relative to SLOs across different delivery methods (e.g. in-class, online, day/night, etc.). Include information on the process within the unit for reviewing and sharing assessment results with faculty (e.g., results initially reviewed by assessment committee, and then shared with full faculty along with recommendations at last faculty meeting of the spring semester). Also include a summary of any decisions or actions taken (e.g., curriculum revision, no changes recommended, explore new assignments within courses to better align with learning outcomes). The data you provide relative to general education courses can also be used later to aid in the completion of academic program reviews for academic units.

V. What will the General Education Program do with the data?

- 1) The General Education Committee will provide feedback to individual units on the strengths and weaknesses of their assessment of general education courses.
- 2) The General Education Committee will aggregate information from individual academic units to produce summary reports for campus stakeholders about the overall status of UNO's General Education Program.
- 3) The General Education Committee will consider any proposed changes to the Gen Ed Curriculum.

GENERAL EDUCATION HUMANITIES/FINE ARTS ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Course (Please Identify the course): e.g. HUMN 1200

I. Assessment Methods (Examples only provided for SLO 1)

Complete a table for each general education SLO. If SLOs are assessed by more than one measure, complete tables for each measure used to assess the SLO.

GEN ED SLO #1: Demonstrate an understanding of the theories, methods, and concepts used to comprehend and respond to the human condition	
A. Title of Measure	<i>e.g. Term Paper</i>
B. Alignment of Measure <i>Describe how measure aligns to the SLO</i>	<i>e.g. This paper requires students to explain how socio-cultural, psycho-social, and philosophical perspectives account for the formation and development of their character and personality.</i>
C. Domain of Measure <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Exam <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Product <input type="checkbox"/> Performance
D. Type of Measure <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct (e.g. exam, presentation) <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect (e.g. self-assessment, course evaluation)
E. Measurement Tool <i>Check all that apply and attach rubrics where appropriate</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Subset of questions on exam <input type="checkbox"/> Exam <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Product evaluated w/rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Product evaluated w/o rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluated w/rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluated w/o rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):
F. Population of Students Assessed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All students in a course <input type="checkbox"/> Sample of students – Describe below
G. Frequency of Data Collection	<input type="checkbox"/> Every semester <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Every academic year <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Describe below:
H. Proficiency threshold (e.g. the score which determines if an individual student has met the outcome)	Describe: <i>e.g. Student must achieve a 3 or a 4 on the assignment based on a faculty developed rubric</i>
I. SLO Proficiency Target (e.g. percentage of students who must meet/exceed proficiency target for the course to meet the SLO)	Describe: <i>e.g. at least 80% of all students assessed will meet or exceed the proficiency threshold noted above.</i>

GEN ED SLO #2: Recognize, articulate, and explore how various humanists/artists have responded to the human condition	
A. Title of Measure	
B. Alignment of Measure <i>Describe how measure aligns to the SLO</i>	
C. Domain of Measure <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Product <input type="checkbox"/> Performance
D. Type of Measure <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
E. Measurement Tool <i>Check all that apply and attach rubrics where appropriate</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Subset of questions on exam <input type="checkbox"/> Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Product evaluated w/rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Product evaluated w/o rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluated w/rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluated w/o rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):
F. Population of Students Assessed	<input type="checkbox"/> All students in a course <input type="checkbox"/> Sample of students – Describe below
G. Frequency of Data Collection	<input type="checkbox"/> Every semester <input type="checkbox"/> Every academic year <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Describe below:
H. Proficiency Threshold (e.g. the score which determines if an individual student has met the outcome)	Describe:
I. SLO Proficiency Target (e.g. percentage of students who must meet/exceed proficiency target for the course to meet the SLO)	Describe:

GEN ED SLO #3: Comprehend and evaluate how humanistic/artistic expression contributes to individual and/or socio-cultural understanding, growth, and well-being

A. Title of Measure	
B. Alignment of Measure <i>Describe how measure aligns to the SLO</i>	
C. Domain of Measure <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Product <input type="checkbox"/> Performance
D. Type of Measure <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
E. Measurement Tool <i>Check all that apply and attach rubrics where appropriate</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Subset of questions on exam <input type="checkbox"/> Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Product evaluated w/rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Product evaluated w/o rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluated w/rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluated w/o rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):
F. Population of Students Assessed	<input type="checkbox"/> All students in a course <input type="checkbox"/> Sample of students – Describe below
G. Frequency of Data Collection	<input type="checkbox"/> Every semester <input type="checkbox"/> Every academic year <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Describe below:
H. Proficiency Threshold (e.g. the score which determines if an individual student has met the outcome)	Describe:
I. SLO Proficiency Target (e.g. percentage of students who must meet/exceed proficiency target for the course to meet the SLO)	Describe:

GEN ED SLO #4: Use relevant critical, analytic, creative, speculative and/or reflective methods	
A. Title of Measure	
B. Alignment of Measure <i>Describe how measure aligns to the SLO</i>	
C. Domain of Measure <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Product <input type="checkbox"/> Performance
D. Type of Measure <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
E. Measurement Tool <i>Check all that apply and attach rubrics where appropriate</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Subset of questions on exam <input type="checkbox"/> Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Product evaluated w/rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Product evaluated w/o rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluated w/rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Performance evaluated w/o rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):
F. Population of Students Assessed	<input type="checkbox"/> All students in a course <input type="checkbox"/> Sample of students – Describe below
G. Frequency of Data Collection	<input type="checkbox"/> Every semester <input type="checkbox"/> Every academic year <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Describe below:
H. Proficiency Threshold (e.g. the score which determines if an individual student has met the outcome)	Describe:
I. SLO Proficiency Target (e.g. percentage of students who must meet/exceed proficiency target for the course to meet the SLO)	Describe:

II. Data Collection and Analysis (Samples only provided for SLO 1)

A: Results Table – Report results for each SLO. If an SLO was assessed by multiple measures, report data for each measure. Add rows as needed to accommodate the number of SLOs and measures.

	Data Collection Date Range	Number of Students Assessed	Percentage of Students who Met/Exceeded Threshold Proficiency
SLO 1 – Measure one	Fall 2015 – Fall 2017	120	86%
SLO 1 – Measure two <i>(if applicable)</i>			
SLO 2 – Measure one			
SLO 2 – Measure two <i>(if applicable)</i>			
SLO 3 – Measure one			
SLO 3 – Measure two <i>(if applicable)</i>			
SLO 4 – Measure one			
SLO 4 – Measure two <i>(if applicable)</i>			

B: SLO Status Table

Based on the results reported in the above table, indicate the status of Gen Ed SLOs as Met, Partially Met, Not Met, or Unknown for your course.

SLO 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
SLO 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
SLO 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
SLO 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown

C: Describe how results are communicated within the unit.

SLO 1: Research paper grades (rubric scores) are routinely shared between faculty members who teach the course. These faculty members meet at the end of each academic year to review the data and summarize their discussion at a committee meeting.

III. Decisions and Actions

Briefly describe decisions and actions related to these SLOs. Include the decision making process to include who made the decision, when was the decision made, what data informed the decision, and a timeline for actions taken or to be taken.

SLO 1: At the May 2016 department retreat, faculty discussed the results of the term paper. Based on overall results, the SLO was met by the majority of students. However, faculty indicated that students failed to fully incorporate appropriate philosophical perspectives in their papers. A small committee was subsequently formed to develop strategies to address this shortfall. The team's recommendations will be presented at the 2017 department retreat.

APPENDIX 1: Sample of worksheet used by Gen Ed Assessment Committee members to provide feedback to units.

	(Does Not Meet / Did Not Include)	(Meets with Concerns)	(Meets)
Student Learning Outcomes			
General Education SLOs are the focus of assessment efforts	None of the general education SLOs are explicitly assessed or reported on during the reporting cycle.	Some SLOs are explicitly assessed during the reporting cycle and analyzed as part of the unit's general education report.	All general education SLOs are explicitly assessed during the reporting cycle and analyzed as part of the unit's general education report.
I. Assessment Methods and Proficiency Definitions			
Each student learning outcome has at least one <i>direct</i> measure.	No direct measures are identified and indirect measures such as course grades, perceptions, or self-evaluations may or may not be identified.	Some SLOs are measured by direct evidence of student knowledge or skills and others are measured by indirect means such as course grades, perceptions, or self-evaluations.	All SLOs are measured by direct evidence of student knowledge or skills and may be substantiated by indirect means such as course grades, perceptions, or self-evaluations (or measures are dictated by accreditation body).
Measures of student learning outcomes are <i>valid</i> .	Measures provide data that does not reflect the constructs represented in the SLOs.	Some measures provide data that reflect the constructs represented in the SLOs.	All measures provide data that reflect the constructs represented in the SLOs (or measures are dictated by accreditation body).
Proficiency definitions are clearly articulated	No proficiency definitions provided for any SLO.	Proficiency definitions are articulated and explained for some SLOs; Distinctions, if necessary, are not made between levels of proficiency	Proficiency definitions are articulated and explained for all SLOs; distinctions, if necessary, are made between levels of proficiency
Proficiency definitions are distinct from grades	Unit uses overall course grades to determine proficiency	Unit uses grades on individual assignments (or parts of assignments) to measure proficiency, but grades are not disaggregated in sufficient detail to fully measure achievement of SLOs	Proficiency is evaluated separately from grades OR grading is disaggregated to an adequate level where proficiency in meeting SLOs can be determined
II. Data Collection and Analysis			
Data are <i>regularly collected</i> against the measures (at least annually).	Data have not been collected or have been collected sporadically. Plans for on-going, systematic collection have not been outlined.	Data collection is sporadic. Plans for on-going, systematic collection have been outlined.	Data collection is routine. Plans for systematic collection are operationalized.
Data are <i>regularly analyzed</i> against the measures (at least annually)	Data have not been analyzed or have been analyzed sporadically. Plans for on-going, systematic analysis have not been outlined.	Data analysis is sporadic. Plans for on-going, systematic analysis have been outlined.	Data analysis is routine. Plans for systematic analysis are operationalized.
Results are <i>sufficient for analysis</i> .	Data is limited by insufficient sample or only a single cycle of data is available.	For some SLOs: data represent all students in program (or reasonable sample); multiple data cycles are reported.	For all SLOs: Data represent all students in program (or reasonable sample); multiple cycles of data are reported.
Results are <i>communicated</i> to stakeholders.	Results of program-level assessments are available if/when requested by stakeholders.	Results of program-level assessments are published (as appropriate) on a variety of program documents such as brochures or annual reports. Results are not consistently presented throughout the program.	Results are published (as appropriate) on a variety of program documents such as brochures or annual reports and are publically available (as appropriate) on the program website. Results are consistently and intentionally presented throughout the program.

III. Decisions and Actions Based on Results			
Evidence of <i>data-informed decisions</i> is provided.	No evidence of data-informed decisions is provided.	General statements related to data informed decisions are provided.	Specific examples of data-informed decisions are provided.
Action has been <i>determined</i> as result of decision.	No evidence of program-improvement actions is described nor are future actions outlined.	Future program-improvement actions are described and/or are under consideration.	Specific program-improvement actions have been initiated.
General Comments			