



# General Education

**Educational Program Structure and content**

**Assessment of student Learning outcomes**

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A. PROGRAM  
STRUCTURE  
/CONTENT

## 9.3: General education requirements [CR]

The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the **undergraduate level** that:

- (a) Is based on a coherent rationale.
- (b) Is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program.
  - For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.
- (c) **Ensures breadth of knowledge.**
  - **These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics.**
  - **These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.**

## 9.3: Key Compliance Components

### Rationale

- ◇ Coherent

### Level

- ◇ Post-secondary

### Curricular Weight

- ◇ Substantial component
  - ◇ Minimum # of hours

### Course Distribution

- ◇ 3 subject areas
- ◇ Non-specific to a profession/occupation

## Common Non-Compliance Factors

- ◆ **Treating “skills” courses as *pure humanities* general education courses**
  - ◆ Not including at least one *pure humanities* course
  - ◆ Course options for students do not ensure that a student takes a course in each of the required areas

Courses in **basic composition** that do not contain a literature component, courses in **oral communication**, and **introductory foreign language** courses are skill courses and not pure humanities courses. Therefore, for purposes of meeting this standard, none of the above may be **the one course** designated to fulfill the humanities/fine arts requirement. (SACSCOC Executive Council interpretation, February 2010)

- ◆ Note that this does not preclude these courses from being part of the general education program beyond the required courses in the three areas prescribed

## Evaluators' Challenges

- ◆ **Evaluation of “coherence”** of the general education rationale (i.e., evaluating the criteria for course inclusion)
- ◆ **Failure to address all key compliance components** embedded in the requirement in the committee report narrative



## **B. STUDENT OUTCOMES**

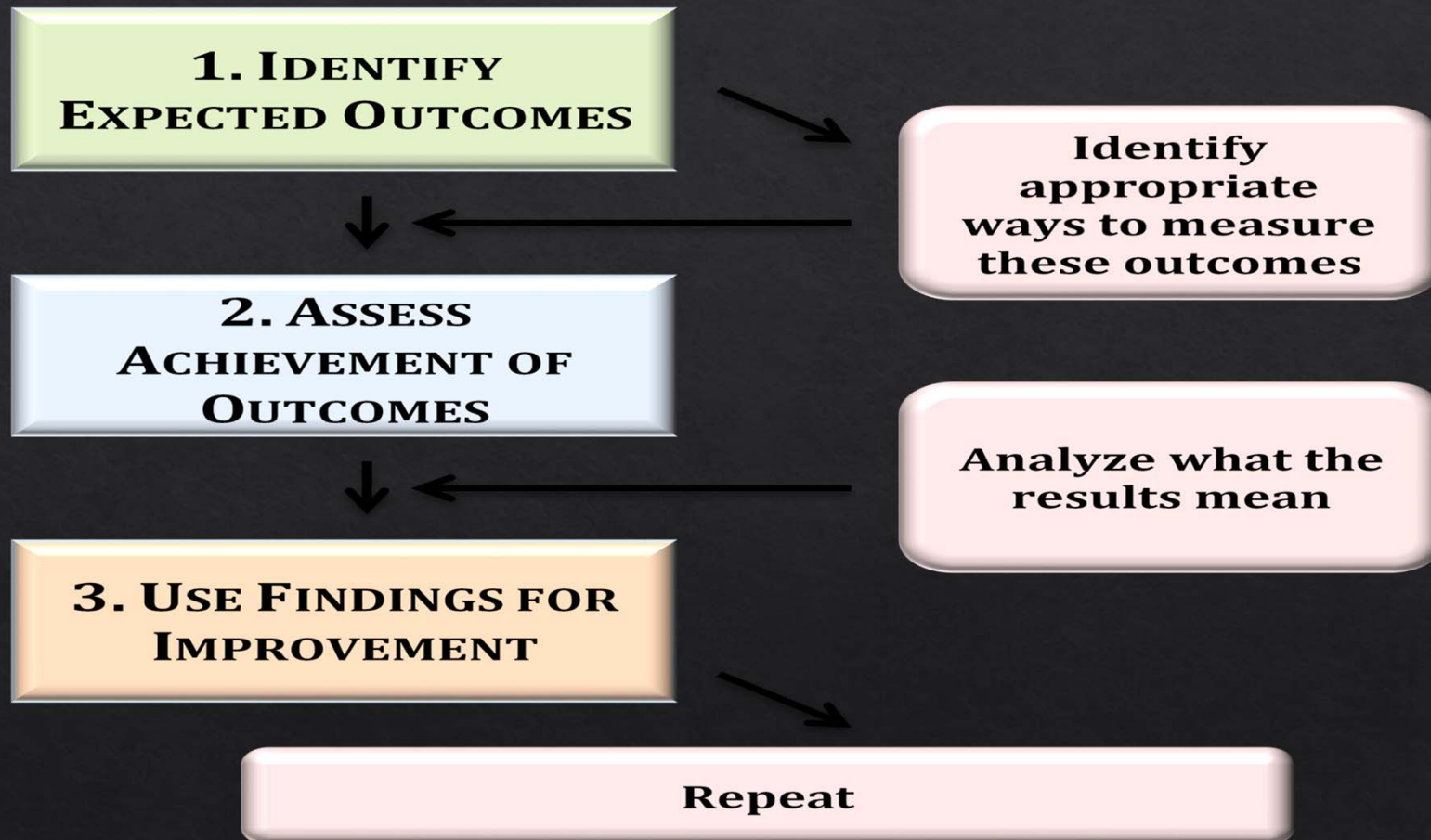
8.2. The institution identifies **expected outcomes**, assesses **the extent to which it achieves these outcomes**, and provides evidence of seeking improvement **based on analysis of the results in the areas below:**

b. Student learning outcomes for **collegiate-level general education competencies** of its undergraduate degree programs.

(Student outcomes: general education)



## 8.2: Key Compliance Components



# Most Common General Education Assessments

## Course-embedded assessments

- Exam questions
- Pre-/post-assessments

## Locally-developed, stand-alone tests

## Standardized tests

- ETS Proficiency Profile assessment
- CLA+
- Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)
- ATI Critical Thinking Assessment
- ETS HEIghten
- Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS)

# Most Common General Education Assessments

Locally-developed, stand-alone rubrics

Standardized rubrics

- AAC&U's VALUE rubrics
- Pathways of Writing Rubric (PoWR Rubric)
- Rubric for Oral Communication (ROC Rubric)
- Rubric of Critical Thinking (RoCKeT Rubric)
- Intercultural Understanding Rubric (Intercultural Understanding Rubric)

# Most Common General Education Assessments

## Locally developed surveys

## Standardized surveys/inventories

- HERI's freshman (CIRP) and senior (CSS) surveys
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
- Spiritual Transformation Inventory (STI)

## Other

- Focus groups

# Common Non-Compliance Factors

- ◇ Absence of a **description/overview of the institution's assessment process** provided *either*
  - ◇ in the narrative (with sample artifacts from the assessment process as a good practice, but not a requirement), or
  - ◇ in supporting evidence (i.e., detailed assessment reports that document the process)
- ◇ **Use of sampling**
  - ◇ Sampling does not apply due to limited number of competencies
  - ◇ However, it is acceptable for a subset of competencies to be assessed in any given year

## Common Non-Compliance Factors

- ◇ **Course-embedded assessments that do NOT include *either***
  - ◇ a mechanism for aggregation of course-level data, or
  - ◇ an infrastructure for general education embedded assessments (i.e., oversight by an institutional general education committee/faculty group, curriculum mapping of outcomes to courses, etc.)
- ◇ **NOTE: May not rise to the level of non-compliance if this is the sole concern of the committee**

## Common Non-Compliance Factors

- ◆ Concerns about **general appropriateness/face validity of assessment**
  - ◆ Outcomes, assessments, and results are **not aligned** (i.e., outcome is about student learning, but results collected describe instructor behavior)
  - ◆ **KEY QUESTION:** Do the assessment methods yield some type of actionable data and are they aligned with the institution's stated outcomes?
- ◆ Over-reliance on **vague improvements** plans (i.e., faculty will “continue to refine” courses, or “continue to monitor” because no improvement is needed because benchmark has been met)

## Evaluators' Challenges

- ◇ IE systems and **processes are multifaceted and complex**
- ◇ Must **integrate *micro level* observations and analyses with *macro level (holistic)* evaluation** and judgment of compliance with the standard
- ◇ Institutional reports and supporting documentation vary in **format and presentation** (even within a single institution)
- ◇ IE/assessment is a relatively young, still **evolving**, field of practice and research



Questions?