ASSESSMENT

The Faculty Senate built assessment into the Gen Ed program through

- a stipulation that the Gen Ed program be periodically assessed;
- time limits on Gen Ed designations (no “forever” designations);
- faculty board review of course proposals and/or syllabi;
- a recommendation that the GEC establish an Assessment Committee.

This chapter is based on the Faculty Governance document Appendix A and GEC policies (available online, see Web Sites in this handbook’s appendix; GEC policies provided in chapter 8).

Program-Level Assessment

Appendix A, Section I of the Faculty Governance document details the responsibilities and procedures for Gen Ed program-level assessment:

- The GEC will periodically review Gen Ed goals and devise criteria and procedures for monitoring effectiveness.
- Foundations and Focus Boards will conduct global assessment of their areas and make recommendations to the GEC.
- In addition to the GEO and GEC, many other units will be involved in Gen Ed assessment and will provide information on outcomes: Center for Instructional Support (CIS), Office of Faculty Development and Academic Support (OFDAS); Colleges of Arts & Sciences; Office of Admissions; Office of the Registrar; Mānoa Institutional Research Office (MIRO); Assessment Office (AO); first-year programs.

During 2007-08, all Gen Ed committees participated in drafting a broad General Education assessment policy statement. In May 2008, the policy statement was forwarded for possible Faculty Senate action during the 2009 academic year.

After its review of issues, the GEC also forwarded to the Faculty Senate its conclusion that adoption of any specific assessment instrument (e.g., CLA) was premature.
More recently, Gen Ed has been partnering with the Assessment Office to assess WASC’s Core Competencies (critical thinking, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and oral and written communication), many of which align with Gen Ed’s core requirements.

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**Course-Level Assessment**

The *Faculty Governance* document lists the group(s) responsible for the assessment of courses being proposed for, or already designated with, a Gen Ed designation:

- All Gen Ed Core courses and Focus courses are under the purview of the GEC.
- Numerous sources of information on student and course performance will be available from various academic and administrative units.
- Foundations and Focus Boards will review course proposals in order to make recommendations on course additions and designation renewals.

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**Previous Efforts and Accomplishments**

### Student Objectives Assessment

Assessment plans, Student Learning Objectives, and assessment study results for the General Education program are available on the Assessment Office website: manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/reports/gened.htm

- **Diversification.** GEC subcommittees have created several plans to assess student learning in the Core Diversification component. None of the plans have been approved by the GEC. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) were last updated in 2008.

- **Foundations.** From Fall 2002 to Spring 2003, the English Department completed an assessment of English 100 and English 101, evaluating student writing portfolios at the end of each semester. In Fall 2007, the F Board drafted Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for all areas. Studies have been conducted on several of the FW SLOs, including audience & purpose, information literacy, and writing process.

- **Focus.** In AY 2008, all of the Focus Boards drafted SLOs for their respective Focus areas. The E, O, and W Boards, in conjunction with Mānoa’s Assessment Office, also developed rubrics and have conducted several small assessment studies.

- **Hawaiian/Second Language.** The language faculty has conducted various assessment projects in language courses and continues to do so. SLOs for the requirement were drafted in 2006.
Course Designation & Renewal

- All Faculty Boards review course proposals, syllabi, and/or Catalog descriptions to ensure that Hallmarks are met (Fall 2002-present).
- The Foundations Board conducted its first renewal of Foundations course designations in Spring 2006. The review and renewal process is initiated when a course nears the end of its 3- or 5-year approval period.
- The Diversification subcommittee conducted its first five-year review of Diversification courses between Fall 2006 and Fall 2008. Plans for the next review are currently being developed.

Student Perceptions: End-of-Course Student Evaluations

- Focus Boards have previously distributed voluntary end-of-course student surveys. Survey results are posted on the Gen Ed website: www.hawaii.edu/gened/assessment.htm
- To better survey students, the GEC has recommended that
  - each Board write relevant items for inclusion as CAFÉ options;
  - CAFÉ be modified so that pre- and post-course estimates can be recorded;
  - OFDAS provide Boards with composite data from their CAFÉ items;
  - collaboration between administration and faculty increases so that direct learning-outcomes assessment of Focus classes can take place.

The W Focus Board has written CAFÉ questions. The other recommendations have not been acted upon.

Assessment Efforts in AY 2016-17

Improving GEO assessment efforts was a major goal for AY 2016-17. While continuing to support the Assessment Office in its assessment efforts, the GEO laid plans to launch a new assessment model to better evaluate the effectiveness of the General Education program.

Using Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) as the assessment tool, work began in Fall 2016 to determine whether SALG data can be used to effectively gauge Gen Ed effectiveness. Using the HAP Focus requirement as an entry point, this multi-phase, multi-year process will ultimately result in the implementation of an assessment process that applies to all Gen Ed designations.

SALG is a free, online instrument designed around two principles:
1. assessment of a course should relate to the explicit learning goals of that course;
2. students have something valuable to tell us about what helps them learn.
Unlike other end-of-course surveys, SALG instruments do not ask for student feedback on factors such as instructor behavior, likeability, and competency. While the tool is customizable, it retains a basic format of 10 question stems – 4 focusing on learning goals and 6 focusing on the effectiveness of particular pedagogical practices. A promising feature of SALG is the system’s ability to provide data synthesis and analysis of results; instructors can utilize this data to make pedagogical changes in the interest of better meeting the learning objectives.

For more information on SALG, please visit their website: http://www.salgsite.org/

Assessment Efforts in AY 2017-18

Continuing SALG Efforts
The GEO will build upon AY 2016-17 efforts:

Because SALG is a tool focused on student learning, the GEO can receive data for the purpose of examining whether Gen Ed learning objectives and Hallmarks are being met. Over time, it will be possible to determine whether any learning objectives or Hallmarks require revision for clarity.

The GEO would also like to provide faculty an alternative means of renewing their course designations. It is possible that SALG data demonstrating that Gen Ed learning objectives are being met can be submitted and used to streamline the renewal process. Pilot data will be examined to determine the feasibility of implementing an alternative means of renewing Gen Ed course designations.

Program Review
The current General Education model was adopted in 2001. Since its inception, there has been no comprehensive review conducted on the program and its requirements. The program also lacked a long-term assessment plan. The GEC, which is responsible for setting policies with regard to the general education curriculum, and the GEO, which is responsible for implementing these policies, share the belief that it is important to conduct a review of the General Education program before any recommendations for reform can be made.

In Spring 2017, the GEC, in coordination with its Boards and the GEO, established a steering committee to oversee Gen Ed review in AY 2017-2018. The review will be staged in two parts: 1) an internal review via a self-study; and 2) an external review conducted by a team coordinated by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and comprised of members from other universities. The steering committee will utilize the findings from the self-study and external review to finalize its own recommendations. If the recommendations determine that reform efforts should be explored, the steering committee will develop a plan of action regarding reform efforts and a new phase of work will begin. Moving forward, General Education will undergo programmatic review every five years so that assessment and improvement is an iterative process.