

General Education Fall 2024 Executive Summary

Report of the

General Education Council

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

The General Education Council members analyzed data from the Fall 2024 assessment of general education courses for all 16 general education learning goals of Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania. Each general education learning goal has 3-4 student learning objectives, and assessment data was submitted for each student learning objective.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

For each general education learning goal, data on the number and percent of courses assessed was submitted and varied widely. Table 1 shows the total number of courses assessed, including 323 out of 715 potential general education courses, which was a 45% submission rate and remained the same as the overall spring 2024 rate. Differences in submission rates show that with the written communication, the percent of courses assessed was only 24% (down from 32% last spring) while, with oral communication, 74% were assessed (up from 55% last spring). The number of courses assessed also varied by learning goal ranging from three (3) courses assessed for ethical reasoning to 42 courses assessed for natural world (39% same as in the spring) and quantitative reasoning (69% down from 84% in the spring). While some goal areas experienced a significant increase in submissions, others decreased just as much. The far three rightmost columns show the percent assessed over the past three semesters.

Table 1: Number and Percent of Courses Assessed					
Learning Goal	# Courses Assessed FA 2024	Grand Total FA 2024	Percent Assessed FA 2024	Percent Assessed SP 2024	Percent Assessed FA 2023
Arts	4	15	27%	54%	59%
Citizenship	18	32	56%	52%	58%
Creativity	22	52	42%	38%	81%
Critical Reasoning	38	55	69%	44%	48%
Diversity	24	36	67%	93%	96%
Ethical Reasoning	3	9	33%	33%	20%
First Year Seminar	21	73	29%	9%	37%
Foreign Language	5	15	33%	14%	56%
Global Perspectives	24	62	39%	22%	64%
History	11	38	29%	42%	33%
Literature	9	29	31%	37%	42%
Natural World	42	108	39%	39%	24%
Oral Communication	32	43	74%	55%	62%
Quantitative	42	61	69%	84%	84%
Technologies	17	42	40%	67%	67%
Writing	11	45	24%	32%	44%
Grand Total	323	715	45%	45%	51%

The method of assessment was determined by the individual instructor and included the options of exam or quiz objective questions, exam or quiz essay questions, projects, essays, reports and written reflections, and other categories. The assessment method appears to depend on the nature of the general education learning goal and types of learning activities and assessments that match well with the content and ways of demonstrating knowledge and skill.

For all learning goals and courses, Table 2 shows that the aggregate percent of students scoring competency at the Proficient or Mastery levels was 68.40% (up from 67.96% in the spring). In each general education learning goal for each student learning outcome, the percentage of students who scored unsatisfactory, emerging, developing, proficient, and mastery differed. For each SLO, it was determined whether students met (i.e., scoring proficient or mastery on the SLO) or did not meet expectations. The competency data was provided overall and for each modality, if applicable. In the assessment of various general education learning goals, different modalities included F2F, asynchronous DE, blended hybrid, mixed remote, multi-classroom synchronous, simultaneous modalities, and synchronous DE. This allowed for a comparison of outcomes based on these different modalities. A [GE Dashboard](#) also was created following the drafting of the individual reports to make the data available and easily accessible, but please note that the fall 2024 data has not yet been uploaded.

Table 2: Number and Percent of Students Assessed and Meeting Expectations								
	Submissions	Students Assessed	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery	Met and Exceeded
Totals	237	26,823	1392	1931	5152	8706	9642	68.40%

Note: The number of submissions may differ from (< than) the number of courses assessed due to multiple courses included in one submission

Finally, for most general education learning goals, faculty quotes described action plans to move general education assessment forward. While we appreciate the actions listed by faculty, the responses to this section of the submission form were few or none (n=3) for various learning goals, especially in comparison to the number of submissions for some goals

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations were documented on methods, observations about the results, and discussion and recommendations.

Methods Used

For Fall 2024, the Qualtrics platform again was utilized to gather information from 16 general education learning goals. Adjustments were made from spring to request “department” in case the GEC chooses to sort data by department. Email reminders were sent to faculty about GE data submissions at semester end. An October assessment session was held to cover academic program assessment which included a segment on GE assessment (e.g., timelines, web resources, etc.). In addition, a November CTL session and a GEC-sponsored Q&A session were held. Technical assistance was provided by OIE to assist faculty with the Qualtrics submission form and related questions. OIE also pulled data to populate the charts and tables in the reports. A data dashboard was also created to chart trend data.

Results

The analysis of outcomes of general education learning goals provided an understanding of student performance overall and by modality, e.g., F2F, asynchronous DE, blended hybrid, mixed remote, multi-classroom synchronous, simultaneous modalities, and synchronous DE. Table 3 shows the number of submissions (may include multiple sections) by learning goal, number of students assessed for each learning goal/SLO, and percent of the students that met or exceeded expectations. Similar to 2023-24, a 70% benchmark for competency was used as a baseline. Overall results show that learning goals such as creative, diversity, global, historical themes, critical analysis, technology, and oral communication met expectations for all or most SLOs.

Based on Table 3, learning goals/SLOs that returned lower results on all or met SLOs (<60%) include foreign languages, ethical reasoning, arts, and written communication. These learning goals and SLOs appear to present the greatest opportunities for improvement.

Table 3: Percent of Students Meeting Expectations by Learning Goal / SLO			
Category	Submissions	Students Assessed	Met or Exceeded
Arts - Descriptive Communication	4	488	39%
Arts - Analysis and Context		488	38%
Arts - Interpretation and Response		487	38%
Creative - Creative Competencies	19	387	71%
Creative - Problem Solving and Process		383	69%
Creative - Creativity and Transformation		361	68%
Diversity - Human Diversity	20	777	80%
Diversity - Roots of Inequality		719	81%
Diversity - Awareness		742	80%
Ethical Reasoning - Conceptualization	3	110	56%
Ethical Reasoning - Application		112	58%
Ethical Reasoning - Comparison and Evaluation		110	56%
Foreign Languages - Oral Communication	5	96	52%
Foreign Languages - Written Communication		96	57%
Foreign Languages - Cultural Awareness		92	67%
Global Perspectives - Factors and Interactions	19	663	60%
Global Perspectives - Representation and Sources		668	61%
Global Perspectives - Perspectives		584	73%
Historical Themes - Knowledge and Understanding	8	345	69%
Historical Themes - Sources and Evidence		354	74%
Historical Themes - Application of Language and Critical Thinking Skills in an Historical Context		340	75%
Literature - Comprehension	9	212	68%
Literature - Analysis		212	61%
Literature - Interpretation and Significance		212	64%
Natural World - Scientific Method	27	1445	65%
Natural World - Scientific Principles		1463	64%

Table 3: Percent of Students Meeting Expectations by Learning Goal / SLO			
Category	Submissions	Students Assessed	Met or Exceeded
Natural World - Data and Problem Solving		1419	68%
Oral Communication - Organization	16	616	74%
Oral Communication - Supporting Material		609	67%
Oral Communication - Delivery		601	71%
Quantitative Reasoning - Interpretation	31	773	71%
Quantitative Reasoning - Analysis		771	68%
Quantitative Reasoning - Communication		697	64%
Critical Analysis and Reasoning - Conceptualization	24	1009	78%
Critical Analysis and Reasoning - Analysis		1013	84%
Critical Analysis and Reasoning - Evaluation		959	83%
Citizenship and Society - Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	14	650	66%
Citizenship and Society - Individual and Collective Action		632	68%
Citizenship and Society - Responsibilities of Citizenship		614	69%
Technology - Information Technology	12	384	79%
Technology - Software and Systems		281	72%
Technology - Appropriate Use		369	78%
Written Communication - Logic and Order	7	221	59%
Written Communication - Sources and Evidence		222	55%
Written Communication - Control of Language and Syntax		221	69%
First Year Experience - Cultivate Scholarly and Academic Success	19	534	74%
First Year Experience - Engagement with the University Community		614	62%
First Year Experience - Foster Personal Development and Wellness		594	67%
First Year Experience - Promote Understanding of Diversity and Social Responsibility		542	67%
First Year Experience - Forging Connections Between Course Content and Success Strategies		532	64%
Totals	237	26,823	68.40%

Commonwealth University and its campuses have trended toward offering more distance education courses. Analyzing student performance by modality may provide faculty with a view and great opportunity to consider teaching strategies that align well with specific delivery modes. Still no clear patterns exist, but data collection is still in the initial stages.

There were numerous conclusions and action plans based on the results of the data. While faculty did articulate action plans for course-level adjustments, more longitudinal data and the deep dive analyses will assist the GEC in considering potential changes to GE at the program level and recommendations for various modalities. Such longitudinal analysis could provide clearer insights into the true impact of instructional methods on student learning outcomes, but more training on best practices in DE course delivery and assessment may also positively influence student learning in the DE environment as well as discussions within each learning goal on the rubrics and appropriate levels of competency.

Discussion and Recommendations

Although the data reveals that assessment results for several learning goals / SLOs were low (in some cases well below the 70%) and that mean differences exist based on modalities, results likely reflect a variety of factors. Increased participation in the assessment process and submission rates for many learning goals are still essential, especially to establish longitudinal data. Ongoing evaluation should continue in areas of instructional strategies, assessment approaches, artifacts used to assess performance, and benchmarking criteria for learning goals. This may be particularly important where the majority of students are rated as unsatisfactory and emerging. The following recommendations may assist in the development of the GE assessment approach and process and are similar to those offered after the fall data analysis:

Each learning goals concludes with the following recommendations, some of which are carried over from last year and /or modified.

- Report how the faculty members will use results to a greater degree across all learning goals; some learning goals did not have any reported actions
- Continue to send email reminders about assessment deadlines, expectations, and where to find trend data
- Send department chairs report of courses that have not submitted assessment data or are missing required information
- Discuss results data with faculty to see where students struggle with meeting expectations; continue to reinforce importance of reporting actions to improve student performance on learning goals
- Recommend benchmark criteria and whether expectations proficient and mastered are appropriate for this and all learning goals
- Continue to hold assessment sessions, in collaboration with CTL and the assessment council/committees, and hold GEC Q&A sessions
- Use deep-dive analyses and open forum sessions to share results, collect additional feedback and establish benchmarks for more consistent assessment of SLOs.
- Hold an assessment session with faculty on rubrics within each learning goal or at least theme, but also discuss best practices on learning strategies for the learning goal and appropriate modalities

Follow up discussion at the February 5, 2025, GEC meeting included a decision to designate submission dates for as the contract end date for each session; be specific about instructions to solicit data for each session (e.g., summer, fall, winter, and spring) separately; and analyze data from each session separately to provide comparative data across sessions which would be reported in an annual or bi-annual report.

Appendices:

- A. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Arts
- B. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Citizenship & Society
- C. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Creative
- D. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Critical Analysis and Reasoning
- E. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Diversity
- F. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Ethical Reasoning
- G. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Foreign Language
- H. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – FYS
- I. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Global Perspectives
- J. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Historical Themes
- K. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Literature
- L. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Natural World
- M. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Oral Communication
- N. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Quantitative Reasoning
- O. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Technology
- P. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Summary Report – Written Communication
- Q. GE Fall 2024 Assessment Data