



# General Education Transfer

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## Statewide General Education Assessment Plan

Unit/Department: Academic Affairs

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## **STATEWIDE GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PLAN**

### **Background**

Increasing attention is being paid to the results of assessment activities, including activities focused on general education assessment. Assessment of student learning has been a focus of regional accreditation criteria since the late 1980s. Currently, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) requires postsecondary institutions to provide evidence of institutional effectiveness, including the effectiveness of general education programs:

SACS-COC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

3.3.1.1. educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

SACS-COC Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them.

Additionally, assessment has been a focus of legislative action. Kentucky statute regarding the transferability of general education courses acknowledges the necessity of ongoing assessment:

KRS 164.2951 (2 (c)) The Council on Postsecondary Education, in collaboration with the public universities and community and technical colleges, shall establish a statewide course classification system and procedures to monitor the transfer and crediting of lower-division coursework, including a system of ongoing assessment that ensures comparability for transfer purposes.

In response to this legislation, the General Education Transfer Policy and Implementation Guidelines were revised in June 2011, with an effective date of Fall 2012. Major revisions to the policy involved the creation of a transfer structure founded on the competencies and student learning outcomes of courses rather than on the comparisons of individual general education course titles and descriptions:

“All Kentucky public universities and KCTCS colleges are expected to assess, in accordance with SACS-COC *Principles of Accreditation* and based upon nationally accepted standards, the student learning outcomes associated with their general education programs, indicate the relationship to the faculty-generated Statewide General Education Student Learning Outcomes, and

provide evidence of ongoing assessment that ensures comparability for transfer purposes on a three-year cycle.”

Ongoing, systematic assessment of student learning does not simply serve external reporting requirements and legislative mandates, however. Assessment of student learning enables institutions to gauge their success in facilitating students’ achievement of learning goals and in their efforts towards continuous quality improvement.

### **Statewide General Education Student Learning Outcomes**

Agreed-upon general education categories and corresponding student learning outcomes were included in the General Education Transfer Policy and Implementation Guidelines (revised June 2011). These categories and student learning outcomes (SLOs) are listed below.

#### Written & Oral Communication

1. Write clear and effective prose in several forms, using conventions appropriate to audience (including academic audiences), purpose, and genre.
2. Listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts, which may include public, interpersonal, and/or small-group settings.
3. Find, analyze, evaluate, and cite pertinent primary and secondary sources, including academic databases, to prepare speeches and written texts.
4. Identify, analyze, and evaluate statements, assumptions, and conclusions representing diverse points of view; and construct informed, sustained, and ethical arguments in response.
5. Plan, organize, revise, practice, edit, and proofread to improve the development and clarity of ideas.

#### Quantitative Reasoning

1. Interpret information presented in mathematical and/or statistical forms.
2. Illustrate and communicate mathematical and/or statistical information symbolically, visually, and/or numerically.
3. Determine when computations are needed and to execute the appropriate computations.
4. Apply an appropriate model to the problem to be solved.
5. Make inferences, evaluate assumptions, and assess limitations in estimation modeling and/or statistical analyses.

#### Arts & Humanities

1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the Arts and Humanities.
2. Distinguish between various kinds of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.
3. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.
4. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.
5. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.

### Natural Sciences

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the methods of science inquiry.
2. Explain basic concepts and principles in one or more of the sciences.
3. Apply scientific principles to interpret and make predictions in one or more of the sciences.
4. Explain how scientific principles relate to issues of personal and/or public importance.

### Social & Behavioral Sciences

1. Demonstrate knowledge of at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences.
2. Apply knowledge, theories, and research methods, including ethical conduct, to analyze problems pertinent to at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences.
3. Understand and demonstrate how at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences conceptualizes diversity and the ways it shapes human experience.
4. Integrate knowledge of at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences into issues of personal or public importance.
5. Communicate effectively using the language and terminology germane to at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences.

### **Institutional Means of Assessment and Timeframes**

Kentucky's public postsecondary education institutions use a number of assessment strategies to evaluate attainment of general education SLO goals. All institutions employ direct means of assessment, including assignments, exams, and presentations. These direct means of assessment are most often embedded within general education courses.

Institutions assess each general education SLO at least once every three years. It is recognized, however, that the schedules for assessment implementation vary across our campuses. The timeframes for each four-year institution's general education assessment plan, organized by general education SLO content area, can be found below.

The colleges of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System share a common general education curriculum. However, assessment schedules vary across the system's 16 colleges. In order to better coordinate the efforts across the system, KCTCS will provide one report each year on those colleges that underwent SACS-COC reaffirmation or fifth-year review the previous academic year.

### Written & Oral Communication

Institution	Means of Assessment	Assessment Schedule
Eastern Kentucky University	Random sample of papers, video-taped oral presentations	Every other year
Kentucky State University	CAAP	Annually (rising juniors)
	Course-level assessments	Every semester
	Capstone thesis defense	Every semester
Morehead State University	Course-embedded assessments (sampling utilized only in English core courses)	Every semester/Annually (depending on specific SLO)
Murray State University	Representative sample of embedded assessments	Every three years, beginning in 2014-15
Northern Kentucky University	Random sample of papers	Annually
	Course-level assessment (common departmentally-developed rubrics)	Every two to three years (depending on specific SLO)
University of Kentucky	Random sample of course-embedded assessments of written, oral and visual communication artifacts	Every two years
University of Louisville	Random sample of course-embedded assignments using a common university-wide rubric	Every three years
Western Kentucky University	Representative sample of embedded assessments (common committee-developed rubric applied)	Every one to three years (depending on specific SLO)

### Quantitative Reasoning

Institution	Means of Assessment	Assessment Schedule
Eastern Kentucky University	Random sample of exams	Every other year
Kentucky State University	CAAP	Annually (rising juniors)
	Sample exam or project questions	Annually
Morehead State University	Course-embedded assessments	Every semester/Annually (depending on specific SLO)
Murray State University	Representative sample of embedded assessments	Every three years, beginning in 2012-13
Northern Kentucky University	Course-embedded assessments	Every two to three years (depending on specific SLO)
University of Kentucky	Random sample of course-embedded assessments	Every two years beginning in Spring 2013
University of Louisville	Random sample of course-embedded assignments using a common university-wide rubric	Every three years
Western Kentucky University	Representative sample of embedded assessments (common committee-developed rubric applied)	Every one to three years (depending on specific SLO)

### Arts & Humanities

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Means of Assessment</b>	<b>Assessment Schedule</b>
<b>Eastern Kentucky University</b>	Random sample of exams and/or papers	Every other year
<b>Kentucky State University</b>	Sample exams, papers, and presentations	Every semester
<b>Morehead State University</b>	Course-embedded assessments	Every semester/Annually (depending on specific SLO)
<b>Murray State University</b>	Representative sample of embedded assessments	Every three years, beginning in 2014-15
<b>Northern Kentucky University</b>	Course-embedded assessments	Every two – three years
<b>University of Kentucky</b>	Random sample of course-embedded assessments	Every two years beginning in Spring 2013
<b>University of Louisville</b>	Random sample of course-embedded assignments using a common university-wide rubric	Every three years
<b>Western Kentucky University</b>	Representative sample of embedded assessments (common committee-developed rubric applied)	Every one – three years

### Natural Sciences

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Means of Assessment</b>	<b>Assessment Schedule</b>
<b>Eastern Kentucky University</b>	Random sample of exams	Every other year
<b>Kentucky State University</b>	Sample of embedded assessments	Annually
<b>Morehead State University</b>	Course-embedded assessments	Every semester/Annually (depending on specific SLO)
<b>Murray State University</b>	Representative sample of embedded assessments	Every three years, beginning in 2014-15
<b>Northern Kentucky University</b>	Course-embedded assessments	Every two to three years (depending on specific SLO)
<b>University of Kentucky</b>	Random sample of course-embedded assessments	Every two years beginning in Spring 2013
<b>University of Louisville</b>	Random sample of course-embedded assignments using a common university-wide rubric	Every three years
<b>Western Kentucky University</b>	Representative sample of embedded assessments (common committee-developed rubric applied)	Every one to three years (depending on specific SLO)

**Social & Behavioral Sciences**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Means of Assessment</b>	<b>Assessment Schedule</b>
<b>Eastern Kentucky University</b>	Random sample of exams or papers	Every other year
<b>Kentucky State University</b>	Means of assessment to be determined by 2014-15	To be determined
<b>Morehead State University</b>	Course-embedded assessments	Every semester/Annually (depending on specific SLO)
<b>Murray State University</b>	Representative sample of embedded assessments	Every three years, beginning in 2012-13 for some SLOs and in 2013-14 for other SLOs
<b>Northern Kentucky University</b>	Course-embedded assessments	Every two to three years (depending on specific SLO)
<b>University of Kentucky</b>	Random sample of course-embedded assessments	Every two years beginning in Spring 2013
<b>University of Louisville</b>	Random sample of course-embedded assignments using a common university-wide rubric	Every three years
<b>Western Kentucky University</b>	Representative sample of embedded assessments (common committee-developed rubric applied)	Every one to three years (depending on specific SLO)

**Report Guidelines**

All public universities and KCTCS will submit reports to the Council on Postsecondary Education annually by October 31<sup>st</sup>. Reports will provide information regarding assessment methods, results, and conclusions, and will describe any proposed changes to the institution’s general education program. If a common rubric or other locally-developed assessment tool is employed, it should be attached to the report. The following should be described in the annual report:

Institutional General Education SLO(s). The report should describe the institutional general education SLO(s) assessed the previous academic year. The relationship of each assessed institutional general education SLO to the Statewide General Education SLO(s) should also be described. (For example, an institution may have a general education competency titled, “Critical Inquiry.” This general education competency may map, however, to statewide SLOs in Natural Science or Quantitative Reasoning content areas.)

Means of Assessing Each Assessed SLO. The report should describe the method employed to assess each SLO that had been evaluated in the previous academic year. This description should address whether the means of assessment was direct or indirect, locally-developed or standardized, course-embedded or delivered via another procedure. This description should also include, if appropriate, an explanation of any sampling procedure that was used in collection of artifacts. If a common rubric was

applied, please describe the manner by which the rubric was applied (e.g., “After receiving training to reliably apply the rubric, 15 faculty members who had taught General Education courses provided holistic scores on assignments.”).

**Summary of Data Collected.** The report should describe the results of assessment data analyses. Analyses should highlight the extent to which SLOs met the institution’s established criteria for achievement (e.g., “Only thirty percent of students obtained a score of four or higher; therefore the criterion of 75% of students achieving a score of four or higher was not met.”). Pre-post (value-added) analyses and benchmark comparisons are appropriate.

**Use of Results.** The report should describe clear steps that have been taken as a consequence of the review of assessment results. These steps may refer to changes in instruction (e.g., “A workshop, designed and facilitated by the Teaching and Learning Center, on the topic of innovations in quantitative reasoning instruction is now required for all new faculty teaching courses within the Quantitative Reasoning core area.”), curriculum (e.g., “All sections of Introduction to Psychology now include a graded assignment addressing ethical conduct in the profession.”), assessment procedure (e.g., “Holistic rubric was revised and expanded, thus a new analytic rubric will be used next year.”), etc.

**General Education Designation Changes.** Any planned changes to general education course designations (i.e., the dropping, addition, or category change of a course) that arise from general education assessment findings should be noted. For example, if a course has been or is being planned to be dropped from the Arts & Humanities category, this must be noted in the report.

**Attachments.** Common rubrics and other locally-developed assessment tools should be attached to the report.

### **General Education and Assessment Plan Revision**

The Council on Postsecondary Education acknowledges that the assessment plans of our institutions may change. Indeed, the cyclical nature of assessment, which requires reflection on and revision of assessment practice, will undoubtedly lead to changes in assessment plans. Additionally, it is anticipated that institutions will revise their general education programs, and these changes may affect assessment plans. Therefore, the statewide general education assessment plan, including means of assessment and institutional timeframes, may be periodically adjusted to reflect these institutional changes.

### **Preparation of Executive Summary**

Upon completion of a three-year cycle, the staff of the Council on Postsecondary Education will compile the results of all institutional reports and prepare an executive summary. The primary purpose of this summary will be to document improvements and



changes to general education programs that have resulted from assessment activities and note any curricular changes that will affect credit transferability. The executive summary will be prepared in conjunction with the Committee on Academic Quality, a group of campus representatives with expertise in student learning assessment and general education curricula. The executive summary will provide a means for institutions to share information on best practices and learn from the frameworks and experiences of other institutions.