



McNeese State University
GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PLAN

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I. General Education Governing Policies

A. SACSCOC Requirements – The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the regional accrediting body for McNeese State University. The SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation is a guide for continuing accreditation, and certain Principles deal directly with General Education:

1. Standard 8.2.b – 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 – both within the classroom and outside of the classroom – are the heart of the higher education experience. Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support appropriate student outcomes for its educational programs and related academic and student services that support student success. To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution is always asking itself whether it has met those goals, and how it can become even better.

Even though the concept of institutional effectiveness may not be explicitly referenced in all of the standards, the accreditation process assumes that all programs and services wherever offered within the context of the institution’s mission and activity are reviewed as part of the institutional effectiveness process.

2. Core Requirement 9.3 – 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 sciences/mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.

General education is an integral component of an undergraduate degree program through which students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge. This Core Requirement establishes four key principles regarding the general education component of undergraduate degree programs:

- The General education component is based on a coherent rationale.
- General education courses are college-level.
- In order to promote intellectual inquiry, general education courses present a breadth of knowledge, not focusing on skills, techniques, and procedures specific to the student's occupation or profession, and are drawn from specific academic areas.
- The general education component constitutes a minimum number of semester hours, or its equivalent, and comprises a substantial component of each undergraduate degree.

It is essential to understand the general education component of the degree program within the context of the institution's mission and within the expectations of a college-level institution. Through general education, students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge: humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics. Courses in each of these specific areas introduce a breadth of knowledge and reinforce cognitive skills and affective learning opportunities for each student. Such courses may also include interdisciplinary courses. It is important, however, that courses selected by students as "general education" do not focus on skills, techniques, and procedures specific to that student's occupation or profession.

B. Louisiana Board of Regents Requirements - The Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) is the governing board for public higher education in Louisiana. BOR articulates policies and evaluates institutional compliance with state mandates. The policy regarding general education is as follows:

- 1. Academic Affairs Policy 2.16** - The Board of Regents recognizes that all undergraduate academic credentials should contain a broad-based common educational experience that enhances students' ability to describe, interpret, and analyze their world. In addition to building awareness of a wide range of material and enriching the academic experience, general education should promote intellectual inquiry through basic content and methodology and contribute to the graduate's ability to communicate effectively in oral and written English.

General education courses should provide an introduction to a discipline, as in a survey course that covers a wide range of material within a specific discipline or area of inquiry and acquaints students with a broad section of the information or skills available in that area, or an appreciation course that introduces students to a creative field and leads to a general understanding and appreciation of work by others.

Depending on the level of the academic credential awarded, education in composition, mathematics and analytical reasoning, natural sciences, humanities, social/behavioral sciences, and fine arts is required as part of undergraduate degree and certificate curricula at state colleges and universities. Specific course offerings may vary from one institution to another as the faculty at each campus

designates courses that are to be included in the General Education Inventory, but such courses share common characteristics essential to the study of academic disciplines.

- **English Composition** - Effective written communication skills are essential to prepare students to effectively and intelligently communicate in a variety of contexts.
- **Mathematics/Analytical Reasoning** - As a cornerstone for the liberal arts, engineering, and sciences, mathematical/analytical reasoning skills are an essential component of all disciplines.
- **Natural Sciences** - Natural sciences study both life and physical sciences in an approach to understanding the universe by studying objects, phenomena, laws of nature and the physical world.
- **Humanities** - Humanities offer a broad-based study of cultural traditions and the human condition, including everything from language, literature and religion to history, philosophy and communication.
- **Social/Behavioral Sciences** - Social and Behavioral Sciences study human behavior and the relationship between individuals and their societies.
- **Fine Arts** - The Fine Arts provide an opportunity to explore and to value aesthetic creation and form as an essential means of conceiving and expressing the human experience.

In addition to specifics of this policy, all applicable general education requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges shall apply.

C. General Education Course Policies and Procedures

1. **General Education Core Curriculum Mission Statement** – McNeese State University’s general education curriculum consists of coursework from six broad disciplinary areas: Writing, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Fine Arts. The mission of this core curriculum is to provide students with a foundation of knowledge, skills, and methods of inquiry that support advanced study in their chosen degree program and constitute the characteristics of an informed, college-educated citizen.

Institutional Mission Reference – The broad, skills-based curriculum supports the university’s mission to offer an array of programs with foundations in these disciplinary areas that serve the students and community of the Southwest Louisiana region and beyond.

2. **General Education Learning Competencies** – The General Education competencies of McNeese State University align with those described in Academic Affairs Policy 2.16 published by the Louisiana Board of Regents. Upon completion of the general education curriculum, students will be able to:

- 1) Communicate effectively in written English. (Area A – English Composition)
 - 2) Apply mathematical reasoning and analytical skills to solve problems. (Area B – Mathematics/Analytical Reasoning)
 - 3) Demonstrate knowledge of scientific concepts. (Area C – Natural Sciences)
 - 4) Demonstrate abstract reasoning and critical thinking. (Area D – Humanities)
 - 5) Develop the ability to recognize fine and performing arts as expressions of human experience and to make informed judgments about them. (Area E – Fine Arts)
 - 6) Learn independently by applying concepts from social and behavioral sciences to a variety of situations. (Area F – Social/Behavioral Sciences)
- 3. General Education Assessment Council** – The General Education Assessment Council (GEAC) is responsible for ongoing review of the general education core curriculum and related outcomes assessment. The GEAC determines what courses should be certified for inclusion or removal from the core, establishes general education policies, and makes its recommendations to appropriate University curriculum committees and the provost and vice president for academic affairs and enrollment management. Additionally, the GEAC reviews and tracks attainment of general education competencies and recommends changes to assessment methods as needed.
- a. **Annual Review of Curriculum** – The GEAC annually reviews general education curriculum courses to determine appropriateness for inclusion in the curriculum. This review includes, but is not limited to, a review of course enrollments, number of completers, and demand for the course by other programs.
 - b. **Review of Assessment** – The GEAC reviews course-level and other appropriate assessment data to determine the level of student attainment of competencies and to recommend action or policy, as appropriate, to facilitate improvement of student learning.
 - c. **Membership** – The membership of the GEAC includes at least one person from each of the following areas: English Composition, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Humanities, Fine Arts, Social/Behavioral Sciences, Institutional Effectiveness, Faculty Senate, Business, Nursing, and one member at-large.
- 4. Criteria for Course Inclusion in Core Curriculum** - The GEAC adheres to the following criteria for certifying and de-certifying courses as part of the General Education curriculum:

- 1) All courses in the core curriculum should be at the 200-level or below;
- 2) Courses should be broad, general introductions to concepts, methods, and skills associated with the disciplinary area.
- 3) Courses should be offered regularly.
- 4) Average enrollment in a course should be sufficient to justify ongoing inclusion in the curriculum.
- 5) Courses should not be included based solely for support of one program.
- 6) Courses should administer assessments that measure student achievement of the applicable General Education Competencies.

5. Process for General Education Course Deletion/Addition/Alteration

1. A [Curriculum](#) proposal should be submitted with the following attachments:
 - a. Syllabus for the new course that meets all requirements as stated in the [University Syllabus Policy](#); and
 - b. Memo to be sent to other departments whose courses, degrees, or faculty would somehow be impacted by the course addition.
2. Once the proposal has been launched, the steps to approval are as follows:
 - a. Department Head
 - b. Dean
 - c. University Curriculum Committee Representative
 - d. Coordinator of Assessment and Curriculum Development
 - e. Institutional Research (if a new course to verify CIP codes for faculty credentialing)
 - f. General Education Assessment Council
 - g. University Curriculum Committee
 - h. Academic Advisory Council
3. Once approved, the necessary changes will be made in the Academic Catalog, Banner, and Degree Works.

6. Additional General Education Course Policies

- a. Full-time students seeking the baccalaureate degree should successfully complete 3 credit hours of Mathematics/Analytical Reasoning, 6 credit hours of English Composition, and 3 credit hours of Natural Sciences prior to enrolling in upper-level (300 and 400) courses. Additional prerequisites may be required depending on specific degree program requirements. Students should meet with their faculty advisor to discuss optimal course scheduling according to the degree plan.
- b. In the general education core, students must take 12 credit hours of coursework with the WE (writing enriched) designation.
- c. Each department has a Program Coordinator who oversees the general education courses offered by their department. The Program Coordinator will complete the Course Summary Forms each semester and collect

student artifacts from General Education courses from instructors as requested.

- d. General Education course instructors should keep student artifacts for 3 years. GEAC will directly assess these artifacts on a rotating schedule, and instructors need to be prepared to submit student artifacts upon request. The assessment schedule of General Education Competencies is described in Appendix 2.
- e. All capstone instructors should keep student artifacts for 3 years. GEAC will directly assess these artifacts on a rotating schedule as described in Appendix 2.

7. Additional Applicable University Policies – available at www.mcneese.edu/policy

- a. Curriculum and Course Development Policy
- b. Exams or Student Learning Assessment Policy
- c. Responsibilities of Academic Staff
- d. University Syllabus Policy

II. Assessment Procedures

A. General Education Course Summary Forms

- a. **Collection Process** – Several General Education courses are tagged for assessment based on high enrollment numbers (Appendix 2). Each semester, the department head or program coordinator responsible for these tagged courses must complete the General Education Course Summary Form (https://www.mcneese.edu/ire/form/general_education_course_summary_form) no later than 3 weeks following the final grading date of the fall and spring semesters.
- b. **Evaluation Process** – Information from the Course Summary Forms are recorded in the annual Academic Program Progress Report for the General Education Core Curriculum. The GEAC annually reviews completed Course Summary Forms to evaluate the effectiveness of course-level assessments.

B. General Education Course Artifact Assessment

- a. **Assessment Schedule** – Each academic year, the GEAC will directly assess two of the competencies.

Competencies 1-2	2015-2016, 2018-2019, 2021-2022
Competencies 3-4	2016-2017, 2019-2020, 2022-2023
Competencies 5-6	2017-2018, 2020-2021, 2023-2024

- b. **Collection Process** – At the end of the fall and spring semesters, the GEAC will collect course summary forms and samples of student artifacts from program coordinators and professors. These documents will then be uploaded into the GEAC Moodle account. Instructors do not need to submit every artifact from their students, just a representative sample. Students' and professors' names will be removed before assessment.
- c. **Evaluation Process** – The GEAC will convene twice annually (after the spring and fall semesters) to assess student artifacts (general education and capstone artifacts) with the appropriate rubrics. Information from these assessments will be reported on the General Education Assessment Annual Report. If a course reflects low attainment of a general education competency, the GEAC will notify the appropriate Department Head and Dean to develop and implement an improvement plan for the course.

AAC&U Value Rubrics

The Association of American Colleges and Universities developed VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) Rubrics in

response to their Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Initiative. These rubrics are used to assess student competency in a wide range of areas using student artifacts (assignments, tests, writing samples, etc.) and are direct means of assessment. Each General Education Competency is assigned a rubric to assess student attainment of each competency (See Appendix 3):

- A – English Composition – Written Communication Rubric
- B – Mathematics/Analytical Reasoning – Quantitative Literacy Rubric
- C – Natural Sciences – Inquiry and Analysis Rubric
- D – Humanities – Critical Thinking Rubric
- E – Fine Arts – Creative Thinking Rubric
- F – Social/Behavioral Sciences – Integrative Thinking Rubric

C. Other Assessment Methods

a. Exit Survey

Each fall and spring semester, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness administers a Graduate Student Survey at Grad Fest. Grad Fest provides an opportunity for each graduation candidate to complete tasks related to commencement and separation from the university. The first part of the survey consists of seven questions (Appendix 4) that assess student learning of each of the competencies. The students are asked to self-report their perception about their course work. For example, they use a Likert scale to describe the level to which they believe that their coursework and experiences at McNeese have improved their ability to write effectively (Competency 1). Because students are asked to self-report their perceptions of their level of competency, this assessment measure is considered an indirect measure of student attainment.

The goal is for 75% of the student response to each question to be “agree” or “strongly agree.” Each June, the GEAC will analyze the data and provide recommendations to faculty, department heads, and deans as needed.

b. Other measures as available – McNeese will administer other assessment tools as financial resources are available. When possible, McNeese will join the University of Louisiana System in efforts to fund system-wide assessment measures. Potential assessment tools can include the following:

- ACT Student Opinion Survey
- CAAP – Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency
- MAAP – Midpoint Assessment of Academic Progress
- Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (Embedded questions about general education competencies)
- NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement
- VSA – Voluntary System of Accountability

- D. General Education Assessment Annual Report** – Each summer, the Chair of the General Education Assessment Committee works with the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to report on the following:
- a. Program Objective 1** – Core Curriculum will include a breadth of courses appropriate to a university education. Courses will show sufficient enrollment and be no higher than 200-level.
 - i. Semester enrollment data for each General Education Core Curriculum course
 - ii. Analysis
 - iii. Actions
 - b. Student Learning Competency 1** – Communicate effectively in written English.
 - i. Course Summary Form data
 - ii. Biannual artifact assessment
 - iii. Exit Interview Questions
 - iv. Other measures as available
 - v. Analysis
 - vi. Actions
 - c. Student Learning Competency 2** – Apply mathematical reasoning and analytical skills to solve problems.
 - i. Course Summary Form data
 - ii. Exit Interview Questions
 - iii. Other measures as available
 - iv. Analysis
 - v. Actions
 - d. Student Learning Competency 3** – Demonstrate knowledge of scientific concepts.
 - i. Course Summary Form data
 - ii. Exit Interview Questions
 - iii. Other measures as available
 - iv. Analysis
 - v. Actions
 - e. Student Learning Competency 4** – Demonstrate abstract reasoning and critical thinking.
 - i. Course Summary Form data
 - ii. Biannual artifact assessment
 - iii. Exit Interview Questions
 - iv. Other measures as available
 - v. Analysis
 - vi. Actions
 - f. Student Learning Competency 5** – Develop the ability to recognize fine and performing arts as expressions of human experience and to make informed judgments about them.
 - i. Course Summary Form data
 - ii. Biannual artifact assessment
 - iii. Exit Interview Questions

- iv. Other measures as available
 - v. Analysis
 - vi. Actions
- g. Student Learning Competency 6** – Learn independently by applying concepts from social and behavioral sciences to a variety of situations.
- i. Course Summary Form data
 - ii. Biannual artifact assessment
 - iii. Exit Interview Questions
 - iv. Other measures as available
 - v. Analysis
 - vi. Actions

E. GEAC Timeline

