

8.2.b Student outcomes: general education

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 for student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

In keeping with the [mission](#) ^[1] of USC Aiken, the undergraduate [general education requirements](#) ^[2] create a common core of collegiate-level competencies expected of a comprehensive liberal arts and science institution. As a member of the [Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges](#) ^[3], the goals and student learning outcomes of undergraduate programs at USC Aiken are aligned with the [LEAP objectives of the Association of American Colleges and Universities](#).^[4]

Specific student learning outcomes associated with 10 general education goals have been articulated and are used to drive assessment activities at both the institutional and unit levels. The institution employs several direct and indirect measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the general education program including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), alumni surveys, portfolios, ETS Proficiency Profile, course embedded assessments, pre-post tests, and the use of evaluative rubrics on sampled artifacts. Academic units are responsible for assessing learning outcomes in general education courses delivered by their unit. Each academic unit submits a full report of its assessment activities on an annual basis to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, & Compliance. Assessment activities associated with the general education goals are reviewed on a [three year cycle](#) ^[5] by the [General Education Committee](#).^[6] The Committee is a standing committee of the Faculty Assembly that serves in an advisory capacity to ensure that assessment efforts adhere

to best practices. The committee employs an [evaluative rubric](#) ^[7] to facilitate a consistent review of goals and objectives across academic years and academic units.

As shown in Table 8.2.b, the general education curriculum has been mapped onto the student learning outcomes for general education, allowing faculty, staff, and administrators to quickly ascertain areas of curricular strength or limitation based upon assessment data. Table 8.2.b also provides links to the assessment plan, assessment data, and actions based upon an analysis of those data for each college- level competency.

Table 8.2.b. General Education Assessment Reports

Goal & Learning Outcomes	Curriculum Map	Assessment Report
American Political Institutions ^[8]	2019-20 Map ^[9]	Assessment Reports ^[10]
Cross Cultural ^[11]	2019-20 Map ^[12]	Assessment Reports ^[13]
Foreign Languages ^[14]	2019-20 Map ^[15]	Assessment Reports ^[16]
Humanities ^[17]	2019-20 Map ^[18]	Assessment Reports ^[19]
Mathematics, Statistics & Logic ^[20]	2019-20 Map ^[21]	Assessment Reports ^[22]
Natural Sciences ^[23]	2019-20 Map ^[24]	Assessment Reports ^[25]
Oral Communication ^[26]	2019-20 Map ^[27]	Assessment Reports ^[28]
Social and Behavioral Sciences ^[29]	2019-20 Map ^[30]	Assessment Reports ^[31]
World Civilizations ^[32]	2019-20 Map ^[33]	Assessment Reports ^[34]
Written Communication ^[35]	2019-20 Map ^[36]	Assessment Reports ^[37]

Illustrative Use of Assessment Data to Effect Improvement in General Education. Most changes to General education are informal adjustments within a class wherein a faculty member emphasizes areas where students seem to be having difficulty. An illustration of such modifications occurs each year when the Foreign Language faculty meet to discuss the previous year’s assessment data and to make decisions for the upcoming year. Examples of the examination of student performance data are provided for the [2017-18 assessment cycle](#) ^[38] and the [2018-19 cycle](#).^[39] Informal action based upon these data are noted in the Foreign Languages Assessment reports such as provide more in-class activities that would increase the listening skills of the students.

Occasionally, more formal adjustments to general education are adopted. The learning outcomes provided in Table 8.2.b document changes to the learning outcomes over time – these changes were typically driven by assessment data.

As another illustration of a formal change, student performance data in mathematics has been used to implement a Math placement strategy. The case is illustrative of the continuing efforts to effect improvement in student outcomes based on assessment data. Early assessment data had indicated students were having difficulty with Math A104 - Math for Practical Purposes; the class has consistently had a high DFW rate. Early work from a Retention, Progress, and Graduation Committee had suggested that various versions of Math could be developed and students placed in the classes based upon assessed need. An [initial plan](#) ^[40] was developed based upon data to place students in either Math 102, 103, or 104 depending upon the student's major. Entering freshmen would also be placed in an appropriate math class based upon SAT or ACT scores. A [second report](#) ^[41] was created after Fall 2019 to detail what was working with the plan and where adjustments had to be made. The data resulted in an [adjusted plan for the Spring 2020 session](#) ^[42] that included capping classes at 20 students and standardizing syllabi across sections. Students would also be required to attend a Math lab. [An analysis](#) ^[43] was conducted to examine performance data before and after some of the changes. Data indicated a significant drop in DFW rates as a result of the changes. [Key personnel recently met](#) ^[44] after the Spring 2020 session to discuss the analysis and to make recommendations for the Fall 2020 session.

Supporting Documentation

1. [USC Aiken Mission Statement](#)
2. [Academic Bulletin: General education requirements](#)
3. [Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges Website](#)
4. [LEAP Objectives of the Association of American Colleges and Universities](#)
5. [General Education three-year Assessment Cycle](#)
6. [Faculty Manual: General Education Committee](#)
7. [Assessment Plan Evaluative Rubric](#)

8. [American Political Institutions Goal and Outcomes](#)
 9. [American Political Institutions 2019-20 Map](#)
 10. [American Political Institutions Assessment Reports](#)
 11. [Cross Cultural Goal and Outcomes](#)
 12. [Cross Cultural 2019-20 Map](#)
 13. [Cross Cultural Assessment Reports](#)
 14. [Foreign Languages Goal and Outcomes](#)
 15. [Foreign Languages 2019-20 Map](#)
 16. [Foreign Languages Assessment Reports](#)
 17. [Humanities Goal and Outcomes](#)
 18. [Humanities 2019-20 Map](#)
 19. [Humanities Assessment Reports](#)
 20. [Mathematics, Statistics & Logic Goal and Outcomes](#)
 21. [Mathematics, Statistics & Logic 2019-20 Map](#)
 22. [Mathematics, Statistics & Logic Assessment Reports](#)
 23. [Natural Sciences Goal and Outcomes](#)
 24. [Natural Sciences 2019-20 Map](#)
 25. [Natural Sciences Assessment Reports](#)
 26. [Oral Communication Goal and Outcomes](#)
 27. [Oral Communication 2019-20 Map](#)
 28. [Oral Communication Assessment Reports](#)
 29. [Social and Behavioral Sciences Goal and Outcomes](#)
 30. [Social and Behavioral Sciences 2019-20 Map](#)
 31. [Social and Behavioral Sciences Assessment Reports](#)
 32. [World Civilizations Goal and Outcomes](#)
 33. [World Civilizations 2019-20 Map](#)
 34. [World Civilizations Assessment Reports](#)
 35. [Written Communication Goal and Outcomes](#)
 36. [Written Communication 2019-20 Map](#)
 37. [Written Communication Assessment Reports](#)
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38. [Languages, Literatures and Cultures 2017-18 Assessment Data Review](#)
39. [Languages, Literatures and Cultures 2018-19 Assessment Data Review](#)
40. [Report 1 - Initial Math Placement Plan](#)
41. [Report 2 – Assessment after Implementation](#)
42. [Report 3 – Adjustments in Strategy for the Spring 2020 Session](#)
43. [Report 4 – A Before and After Analysis of the Data to Assess Effectiveness](#)
44. [Report 5 – Further Adjustments for the Fall 2020 Session](#)