

Assessment of General Education at Binghamton University  
Program and Guidelines  
Revised April 23, 2002

The Faculty Senate has endorsed the following revised program for the assessment of general education at Binghamton University.

1. The Faculty Senate creates assessment category teams (ACTs), one for each category of Binghamton University's GE program: composition, oral communication, foreign languages, pluralism in the United States, global interdependencies, laboratory science, social science, mathematics/reasoning, aesthetics, humanities, and physical activity/wellness. Each team will consist of regular faculty members, the majority of whom have been actively and recently involved in teaching GE courses in the category. The Faculty Senate and/or its committees will re-evaluate the number of ACTs at the end of the first cycle of assessment (i.e. after three years) with the intent of producing a smaller number of committees (perhaps one for each of the categories in the General Education program).
  - a. Procedural Guidelines:
    - i. Each ACT will have 3 members, serving up to 3 years.
    - ii. The annual general solicitation for interest on committees will include a request for interest in serving on ACTs, specifying each of the assessment areas.
    - iii. Establishment of ACT membership will need to be done differently in the first year than in subsequent years. For first-year ACT membership, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will establish an Ad Hoc committee to nominate members for the ACTs. In subsequent years, the ACC nominates members for the ACTs.
    - iv. The term "actively and recently involved" refers to regular faculty who have taught at least one GenEd course in that area in the current and/or last 5 semesters (3-year window).
2. An Assessment Coordinating Committee (ACC) will be established by the Faculty Senate to oversee the assessment of general education. Membership will include the chairs of the individual ACTs (chosen by their membership), the chair of the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC), and the chair of the (EPPC). The duties of the ACC are to: select members of the ACTs for the following year; oversee and coordinate the process of general education assessment as outlined in the following paragraphs; and ensure feedback and action on assessment reports.
  - a. Procedural Guidelines:
    - i. The ACC will develop a list of members for the ACTs for the next year and submit it to regular faculty members who have been "actively and recently involved" (as defined above) for a vote. Faculty will be asked to approve the membership of the ACT unless they see a compelling reason not to approve this slate.
3. The UUCC drafts a statement of the learning outcomes to be assessed in each category. Using BU's General Education guidelines, written to describe course content, the team forms learning outcomes describing desired student competencies, knowledge, understandings, skills, and habits of thought. These draft statements of learning outcomes are circulated to

faculty for information and response. The revised statements are then submitted to the Faculty Senate for approval, preferably before the 2002-2003 academic year.

4. The Assessment Coordinating Committee creates a sequence whereby all ten categories are assessed over a 3-year period; active assessment work will occur every year, involving compilation and analysis of selected courses, leading to written reports at 3-year intervals. This will start in the first year with selection of the most easily assessed areas and progress through all 11 areas during the first three years of the assessment program. The ACC and UUCC will meet annually to review the progress of General Education courses.
5. In order to teach general education courses instructors must agree to provide the information listed in the next section for the assessment process.
  - a. Procedural Guidelines:
    - i. In the case of refusals to cooperate, the ACC will identify such courses to the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for consideration of action, such as removal of the GenEd designation in the future for that course taught by that instructor.
6. A sampling of faculty members teaching GE courses is requested and given assistance to create a “course portfolio.” The portfolio is submitted to the appropriate ACT at the end of the semester. It contains:
  - A course syllabus.
  - A brief description of how the course fulfills the content requirements and meets the learning objectives of the GE category (same document submitted to the Curriculum Committee to earn the GE designation).
  - Examples of student work (with names and any other identifying information removed) for assignments that measure student achievement of relevant learning objectives in the category. Examples of work may be graded or not, but should identify levels of achievement including the best work, a representation of “average” or median work, and a representation of the worst work in the class with respect to the relevant learning outcomes. If any work by students fails to meet the outcomes, an example should be included as well. The faculty member will be asked to estimate the proportion of students in the course who fall into each of these categories.
  - The portfolio may contain other material at the discretion of the faculty member or the ACT.
  - a. Procedural Guidelines:
    - i. For purposes of identifying courses to be assessed, each section of a course having multiple sections taught by different instructors of record will be considered as a separate course. A particular course number taught by a different instructor of record would count as a separate course.
    - ii. A minimum of 4 courses is to be assessed each semester in each assessment category, up to a maximum of 10% of the courses being offered, at the discretion of the ACT.
    - iii. Courses to be assessed in a given category will be chosen randomly from the pool of courses being offered in that category, though a course-instructor combination cannot be chosen more than once in a three-year cycle.

- iv. A course fulfilling more than one Gen Ed category (for example, P and C) can be assessed in only one category during a given semester.
  - v. It is understood that there is no necessary correlation between grades in a course and the relative ranking of examples provided for assessment, since course grades in many courses depend on more criteria than those involved in the General Education component of the course.
  - vi. A short reflective statement of the student outcomes written by the faculty member will be included with each course portfolio to guide the ACT in its review of the course portfolio. The statement should be brief, generally no more than a page.
7. Working from criteria for learning outcomes approved by the Faculty Senate, each Assessment Category Team will evaluate course portfolios in relation to achievement of the goals for student learning. Each team evaluates success, considers students' needs and faculty suggestions, weighs changes over time, and explores areas for improvement. Issues involving individual faculty or student experiences are treated as confidential within the process of evaluating course portfolios. Data should be aggregated, and individual students or faculty members should not be identifiable in any reports. Teams may also review aggregate data on grades for all courses in the category, as well as anonymous data from web surveys of faculty and students, or other relevant data from campus-wide surveys and focus groups of students.
- a. Procedural Guidelines:
    - i. Course portfolios will be maintained in an archive for limited access and data analysis.
    - ii. All permanent records, including final ACT reports and all archived materials, will be anonymous, identifying neither students nor instructors.
8. Other information may be added through survey and focus groups. A short survey should be developed eliciting opinions from faculty and students about how each GE course satisfied the learning outcomes of that category of GE. Assessment category teams may also use focus groups to gather more information about the success of the GE program in that category.
- a. Procedural Guideline:
    - i. ACTs will decide what other data they might need for completion of assessment reports.
9. Each ACT makes a written report to the campus every three years; it may suggest improvements or communicate issues arising in the category as a whole to any appropriate body, including departments, the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC), and the EPPC. Teams would meet during summer, intersession, and/or at other times as the team deems appropriate for reviewing portfolios and preparing reports. This would constitute extra service and therefore require additional compensation.
10. The ACC reports to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee through its designate, the EPPC.