

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them. **(College-level competencies)**

Compliance Status: Compliance

The College of Coastal Georgia is committed to academic excellence in the teaching and learning of all students. The faculty places emphasis on teaching methods that encourage students to take active roles in their own learning. In the USG, general education consists of a group of courses known as the Core Curriculum, as well as other courses and co-curricular experiences specific to each institution. General education includes opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and experiences that increase intellectual curiosity, providing the basis for advanced study and a strong foundation for the College's baccalaureate degree programs.

The comprehensive review of general education at the College has undergone several enhancements. Prior to Fall 2008, institutional level assessment of general education was largely limited to annual compilation of data in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness from the ETS Proficiency Profile (formerly known as the AP and the MAPP), the Graduating Student Satisfaction with College Programs and Services Survey, and Regents' examination. Academic departments have reported more specific assessments such as standardized competency testing for introductory chemistry, course specific pass rates, and pre-post testing as evidence of the attainment of general education and course specific learning outcomes. Data results from these assessments have been used to make curricular changes.

In Fall Semester 2008, the Offices of Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness examined the then current general education assessment practices and found them lacking, particularly efforts to use them systematically to improve teaching and learning. Therefore, a concerted general education outcome and assessment endeavor was implemented. As an integral part of this initiative, the Vice President for Academic Affairs charged the faculty as a whole to develop general education outcomes aligned with those of the USG Core Curriculum Outcomes, the mission of the College and previously developed course specific learning outcomes.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

General education outcomes are statements that define the knowledge, skills, and perspectives acquired by students who satisfy the prescribed general education requirements of a particular institution within higher education. The procedural flow adopted by the College for the assessment of general education follows these steps: 1) develop measurable learning outcomes, 2) specify curricular opportunities for students to meet learning outcomes, 3) devise or use pre-existing assessment instruments in the courses, 4) administer assessment instruments, 5) collect and summarize data, 6) analyze data and report findings to faculty and the General Education subcommittee of the Committee on Institutional Effectiveness, 7) use findings to evaluate current practices, 8) make adjustments (as needed) to improve teaching, learning and the assessment process, and 9) feedback loop.

The College has established the following institutional learning outcomes for the general education core curriculum completed by the College's graduates. Upon successful completion of the degree requirements, students will exhibit the following competencies:

- **Critical-Creative Thinking / Problem Analysis** - Students will demonstrate higher levels of critical-creative thinking by analyzing problems, identifying viable solutions when possible, and defending choices of solutions
- **Communications** - Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively (in written, oral, visual, electronic and non-verbal forms)
- **Informational Access/Literacy** - Students will demonstrate the ability to access, retrieve, evaluate, and utilize information from various sources
- **Mathematical** - Students will demonstrate mathematical competencies and problem-solving skills
- **Scientific** - Students will demonstrate an understanding of basic scientific concepts and the scientific method and utilize laboratory procedures to observe natural phenomena
- **Global Awareness** - Students will identify important ideas, persons, and paradigms within the humanities and social sciences in a global environment

Evidence of Attainment of Learning Outcomes

The College systematically and intentionally assesses all of its general education outcomes in a select number of relevant courses. Assessment progress reports are issued annually to review the state of student learning outcomes within the General Education Program.

A comprehensive assessment of all general education outcomes will continue through Spring Semester 2011 (thereafter two of the six learning outcomes will be assessed annually as part of a three-year assessment cycle) in an expansive effort to include relevant general education courses in Areas A-E and G, as well as Area F courses that are specific to a given major. Assessment reports are submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Faculty Senate and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness through the Committee on Institutional Effectiveness. Each assessment report details the assessment results and how they have been used to make improvements to student achievement of general education competencies, enhance the competencies, and change assessment methodologies.

To illustrate how general education outcomes and competencies are incorporated into courses at the baccalaureate degree level, two sample curriculum maps show course associations in the [Schools of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences](#) and [Mathematics & Natural Sciences](#). Additionally, two communications outcome rubrics ([presentation](#) and [written](#)) are provided as samples.

In Fall Semester 2011, as part of the next stage of general education assessment, the College will transition to a comprehensive three-year assessment plan for the General Education Core

Curriculum. This plan will identify a variety of means by which the College assesses student achievement of its learning outcomes. The USG Board of Regents instituted a comprehensive review of the core curriculum in Fall Semester 2010.

USG institutions were asked to prepare learning goals for the existing areas of the core curriculum (Areas A-E) as well as for three new overlay outcomes - U.S. Perspectives, Global Perspectives, and Critical Thinking. A College Core Curriculum Committee was formed to address this revision of the core curriculum. Since this work will impact the College's General Education outcome assessment process, the Core Curriculum Committee is working closely with the General Education Subcommittee to accomplish this revision of the core while maintaining the six core learning outcomes. The implementation date for the revised core curriculum is Fall Semester 2012.

Supporting Documentation

Sample outcome-competency matrix

- [School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum map](#)
- [School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences curriculum map](#)

[Communications Outcome – Presentation rubric](#)

[Communications Outcome – Written rubric](#)