
illinois state university academics

The Shared Learning Outcomes and the Goals of the General Education Program

Illinois State University aspires towards four Shared Learning Outcomes. Within each of these there are several Gen Ed Goals, each of which has one or more assessable learning outcomes.

Shared Learning Outcome #1 - Critical Inquiry and Problem Solving

Students will develop and communicate a range of interests and curiosities, engaging those interests and curiosities through critical thinking, reasoning, and problem solving.

General Education Goals

Provide for the systematic development of **critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and communication skills**. As a result, students will be able to:

- Critically evaluate a wide variety of ideas and express that analysis in both writing and speaking.
- Use quantitative reasoning appropriate to the particular problems they address.

Provide for student involvement in **learning that is active and continuous**. As a result, students will be able to:

- Articulate their position on a variety of issues, understanding the context of others' viewpoints.

Develop the ability to make informed, well reasoned **moral and ethical judgments**. As a result, students will be able to:

- Recognize moral issues and apply relevant principles and arguments to their resolution.

Develop and understanding of the **earth's environment**, including the natural forces and specific human activities that impinge upon it. As a result, students will be able to:

- Evaluate the real and potential consequences of natural, ideological, and social forces that affect life.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the interactive links between the development and use of technology and the biosphere.

Shared Learning Outcome #2 - Public Opportunity

Students will identify the resources and subsequent value of civic and community engagement.

General Education Goals

Develop the ability to function as a **responsible participant** in the social, economic, technological, and political dimensions of life within local, national, and global communities. As a result students will be able to:

- Describe different ways in which the social, economic, technological, and political dimensions of life are known and conducted.
- Analyze the meaning and purpose of individual and social life, focusing on such concepts or institutions as family, religion, business, and the state.
- Formulate a critically informed position on participation in civic life.

Foster an understanding of the **social and collaborative nature of knowledge** and learning. As a result, students will be able to:

- Account for the influence of context upon the creation and use of knowledge.

Shared Learning Outcome #3 - Diverse and Global Perspectives

Students will be exposed to diverse and global perspectives by developing and communicating an appreciation for the impact made in personal and professional lives.

General Education Goals

Develop a critical appreciation of a wide range of **aesthetic experiences**. As a result, students will be able to:

- Formulate interpretations of diverse forms of creative expression.
- Understand the role of the individual as creator in diverse depth of human creativity.

Develop an acquaintance with the **civilizations of the world**, the many ethnic traditions that create **American culture**, and the **emerging common civilization** of the contemporary world community. As a result, students will be able to:

- Identify and critically reflect upon the major institutions, movements, ideas, and values which characterize the past and present of culture in the United States.
- Identify and critically reflect upon the major institutions, movements, ideas, and values which characterize the past and present of culture in Western cultures.
- Identify and critically reflect upon the major institutions, movements, ideas, and values which characterize the past and present of world cultures.
- Investigate cross-cultural issues, including human nature, human rights, gender, race and religion globally.

Shared Learning Outcome #4 - Life-Long Learning

Students will utilize the skills indicative of an effective life-long learner actively pursuing knowledge and applying new information and skills in interdisciplinary approaches.

General Education Goals

Focus on the acquisition and application of a **common core of knowledge**, drawn from the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. As a result, students will be able to:

- Assess the relative value of literacy and artistic works for themselves and for contemporary society.
- Recognize the significant events, ideas, individuals, artifacts, and institutions that have shaped our knowledge of the world.
- Describe principle scientific and mathematical concepts used to understand both the natural world and the technologies that modify it.
- Illustrate the relevance of science and technology to problems connected with the quality of life for individuals and communities.

Integrate general education with the major through the identification, exploration, and development of common dimensions. As a result, students will be able to:

- Develop skills that can be incorporated within their majors.

Provide for student involvement in **learning that is active and continuous**. As a result, students will be able to:

- Articulate their position on a variety of issues, understanding the context of others' viewpoints.

Provide opportunities to explore **connections among ideas** from the perspectives of different disciplines. As a result, students will be able to:

- Discuss how and why different fields may legitimately develop various formulations of a single issue.
- Explore the ramifications of knowledge across disciplinary fields.

Provide learning experiences on issues and themes that **transcend the boundaries of traditional disciplines**. As a result, students will be able to:

- Contribute to collaborative efforts involving two or more disciplines.

Foster an understanding of the **social and collaborative nature of knowledge** and learning. As a result, students will be able to:

- Account for the influence of context upon the creation and use of knowledge.

The Curriculum of the General Education Program

The General Education Program consists of an integrated set of courses (14 total) including:

Inner Core

- A two-course sequence in the first year integrating composition, communication, critical thinking, and information literacy
- Mathematics (one course)
- Natural Sciences (two courses from different disciplines)

Middle Core

- Quantitative Reasoning (one course)
 - BA students complete foreign language competency instead
- Language in the Humanities (one course)
- United States Traditions (one course)
- Individuals and Civic Life (one course)
- Individuals and Societies (one course)

Outer Core

- Science, Mathematics, and Technology (one course)
- Fine Arts (one course)
- Humanities (one course)
- Social Sciences (one course)

Assessment: Institutional Artifact Portfolio (IAP) Process

How does the IAP process work?

The collection and compilation of artifacts will be organized and managed by the University Assessment Office.

Each semester faculty teaching courses in the targeted core and shared outcome under review will be invited to submit student artifacts that address the assessment items as outlined by a rubric which has been designed for each of the four Shared Learning Outcomes.

This is a voluntary system with no penalty for not participating and faculty retain the autonomy to select the assignment(s) for review.

1.) Invitation to participate

Faculty receive a letter inviting them to participate. Included in the letter will be the rubric representing the Shared Learning Outcome for which the assessment is targeted and for which the faculty member can identify an assignment or collection of assignments that meet the criteria.

2.) Faculty elect to participate and submit required information

After reviewing the rubric faculty may elect to participate in the assessment process by identifying one or more assignments that address the majority of the criteria outlined. Faculty complete an on-line Intent to Participate Form.

3.) Artifact preparation by faculty/students

For the purpose of tracking artifacts a standardized cover sheet must accompany each assignment identified. Faculty instruct students where to access this coversheet online.

4.) Artifact pick-up and return

A member of the University Assessment Office staff collects all artifacts on the confirmed date/time/location. The artifacts are directly returned to the UAO office where they are duplicated and returned within one business day.

5.) Artifact review

The Gen Ed Assessment Review Teams will be populated by tenure track and 50% or greater appointment non-tenure track faculty and administrative professionals with teaching responsibilities. The review teams will be comprised of 2-3 persons who will review each artifact based upon the rubric for the Shared Learning Outcome.

6.) Data compiled

The data derived from the review teams are compiled in conjunction with institutional background data to provide the most accurate results regarding student performance among the Shared Learning Outcomes.

7.) Data reported to Council for General Education

Results of the annual Institutional Artifact Portfolio assessment are reported by the University Assessment Office directly to the Council for General Education (CGE). The CGE then evaluates the assessment results to make informed decisions about the General Education Program. A summary of CGE's response to the annual results is published in the Spring issue of the University Assessment Offices' newsletter.