



Institutional Learning Outcomes/General Education Program Assessment Framework FY2015-FY2020

The Bowie State University Institutional Learning Outcomes and General Education Program Assessment Framework describes: 1) how the University assesses the general education core competencies to demonstrate achievement of institutional learning outcomes 2) how the University utilizes indirect and direct assessment results associated with the core competencies 3) how the Framework's implementation strategies support the strategic plan and academic innovation and 4) how the mechanisms in place produce results that can be shared both internally with the University community as well as externally with appropriate constituents.

Mission

As Maryland's first historically black public university, Bowie State University empowers a diverse population of students to reach their potential by providing innovative academic programs and transformational experiences as they prepare for careers, lifelong learning, and civic responsibility. Bowie State University supports Maryland's workforce and economy by engaging in strategic partnerships, research, and public service to benefit the local, state, national and global communities.

Vision

Bowie State University will be widely recognized as one of the nation's best public comprehensive universities that is a model for academic excellence, innovation, and student success.

General Education Core Competencies

Written and Oral Communication

Competency in written and oral communication includes the ability to communicate effectively in verbal and written language, the ability to use a variety of modern information resources and supporting technologies, the ability to differentiate content from style of presentation, and the ability to suit content and style to the purpose of communication.

Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning

Competency in scientific and quantitative reasoning includes the ability to locate, identify, collect, organize, analyze and interpret data, and the ability to use mathematics and the scientific method of inquiry to make decisions, where appropriate.

Critical Analysis and Reasoning

Competency in critical analysis and reasoning includes the ability to arrive at reasoned and supportable conclusions using sound research techniques, including inference, analysis and interpretation.

Technological Competency

Technological competency includes the ability to use computer technology and appropriate software applications to produce documentation, quantitative data presentations, and functional graphical presentations appropriate to various academic and professional settings.

Information Literacy

Information literacy includes the ability to identify, locate and effectively use information from various print and electronic sources.

Assessing General Education Program Core Competencies and Institutional Learning Outcomes

The General Education Program core competencies and their associated institutional learning outcomes are assessed throughout the general education courses as well as within the major at the undergraduate



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level at Bowie State University. Numerous external and internal assessments are used to document student learning and performance in the core competencies at the institutional, program, and course levels.

External Assessments

The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report (SLOAR) is required by MHEC and provides an overview of the institution's assessment activities. The second part of the report documents adherence with COMAR and MSCHE standards for each general education competency. The following are required elements for each general education competency: the institution's definition of the competency, the level at which the competency is measured (institutional, program, course), the assessment approach (es) including direct and indirect measures, assessment results, and improvements. The Assistant Vice President for Assessment is the primary author of the report. The SLOAR report is on a three-year cycle.

As an institutional member of the University System of Maryland (USM), Bowie State is required to complete Academic Periodic Program Reviews every seven years and submit reports for evaluation by the Board of Regents. Preparation for program review begins with the Assistant Vice President for Assessment meeting with deans, department chairs, and faculty members to examine the program review expectations that include guiding principles, outcomes, timelines and responsibilities, internal and external reporting requirements, and the standard reporting template. The program review process generates valuable information regarding the effectiveness of academic programs, general education core competencies, the assessment of student learning outcomes, and recommendations that aid in advancing the program.

Internal Assessments

In addition to the external assessment reports above, the University systematically collects assessment results and feedback from faculty, staff, and students and triangulates findings across various instruments and assessment practices to document student performance within the general education core competencies and to highlight areas for further review.

Direct assessment of general education competencies is guided by the AVP for Assessment and the General Education Committee (GEC). The core competencies are assessed within the academic departments and are reported annually by academic program through the BSU Annual Assessment Report. The findings from the annual assessment reports are reviewed by CASTLE and the AVP for Assessment and shared with key campus constituents as appropriate.

Currently, direct assessment of general education core competencies is gathered using the following national standardized assessments: Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+), Proficiency Profile, HEIghten Assessment Suite, and the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS). All core competencies are scheduled to be assessed at least once every seven years, and the results provide an institutional snapshot on student performance related to the core competencies. The schedule for testing and the most recent results are available on the Center for Academic Programs Assessment webpage.

Indirect methods such as survey instruments, syllabi audits, and general education course grade distributions are reviewed to gather additional data on student performance but are triangulated with



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direct assessment data to provide a more holistic view of student learning and performance in regard to the core competencies. Two survey instruments - student course evaluations and graduating student surveys - collect student feedback on their academic experiences. Student course evaluations are administered in the fall and spring semesters. The internally developed student course evaluation instrument collects student opinions on general education competencies as well as overall satisfaction with instruction. Graduating students are surveyed each term to gather timely feedback on their academic experiences, which includes the general education program.

Furthermore, syllabi audits are conducted approximately every five years to thoroughly review where, when, and how the general education core competencies are assessed in the curriculum. The syllabi audits ensure that all core competencies are being assessed across the curriculum with various assessment measures that are adequate in providing assessment results on student performance. This multi-pronged approach with both external and internal direct and indirect assessment practices assists the Division of Academic Affairs and the University in better understanding student proficiency levels within the core competencies.

Utilizing Assessment Results to Support the Strategic Plan and Academic Innovation

The direct and indirect assessment results correlated to the general education core competencies and institutional learning outcomes are instrumental in guiding practice and improving academic course offerings. The BSU general education program forms the foundation for academic excellence and student success, which are institutional priorities and are embedded throughout the Strategic Plan. Continuous assessment guides practice and provides direction for academic innovation, which are most frequently manifested in general education course redesigns, new general education courses, curriculum revisions, and/or new or transformed academic support services.

Communicating Goals and Institutional Effectiveness

The general education core competencies and institutional learning outcomes are available on the University's website, and in the undergraduate catalog. Results of institutional level core competencies assessments are available on the Center for Academic Programs Assessment (CAPA) and OPAA websites. These results are also shared with the Cabinet, CASTLE, GEC, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs staff. OPAA provides specialized reports upon request.

Academic program assessment results are shared annually within the department and with CASTLE. This includes both general education courses, as appropriate, as well as major courses within the curriculum. An academic assessment summary report is prepared annually by the AVP for Assessment and shared with the Provost as well as the campus community during the Faculty Institute. Results from general education program assessments are shared with the GEC and the Provost.

Coordinating General Education Core Competencies Assessment

Colleges and Departments – The four colleges and their respective departments that are responsible for general education courses routinely assess general education core competencies within the service courses in the disciplines. The assessment of general education core competencies is embedded within the student learning outcomes of the general education courses and results are regularly shared through the annual assessment report process.

General Education Committee – The General Education Committee (GEC) is a standing committee of Faculty Senate. GEC is responsible for leadership in developing the general education program (GEP),



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for reviewing and recommending courses for the GEP, recommending policies to support the GEP, and for assessing the GEP core competencies in conjunction with the Assistant Vice President for Assessment.

Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning and Experience – Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning and Experience (CASTLE) is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. CASTLE is responsible for supporting academic departments in the development and revision of academic program learning goals, assessment plans, assessment reports, and the use of results to improve programs. CASTLE also works with the Assistant Vice President for Assessment to review and evaluate assessment related reports and activities.

Office of Planning, Analysis and Accountability – The Office of Planning, Analysis and Accountability (OPAA) serves as a resource to the University community by providing systematic, timely, official data, and research that can be used to enhance decision making, prepare mandatory reports, and measure institutional effectiveness. This would include indirect assessment data such as grade distributions for general education courses. In addition, OPAA receives and consolidates annual reports from the Cabinet, Academic Departments, and Colleges and monitors institutional effectiveness indicators.

Assistant Vice President for Assessment – The Assistant Vice President for Assessment (AVPA) develops and implements a systematic assessment approach for all academic programs as well as the general education program, in collaboration with CASTLE and GEC. The AVPA provides assessment professional development and training to faculty and academic administrators and coordinates the USM academic program review process for the institution.