

Shawnee State University General Education Program Assessment Plan

Through participation in the HLC Assessment Academy, Shawnee State University’s HLC Assessment Academy Team submits the following assessment plan for SSU’s General Education Program (GEP) for approval to the General Education Advisory Council (GEAC). This plan will satisfy Higher Learning Commission requirements for assessing SSU’s common learning outcomes. Most importantly, it will provide GEAC and faculty teaching in the GEP with a sustainable approach to collecting, sharing, and using data about student learning.

The plan begins a cycle of reviewing and revising assessment processes in the GEP clusters and focuses assessment efforts on one GEP cluster in each of the next five academic years (2021-2025). Efforts will be spearheaded by the GEP Assessment Fellow, a faculty member who regularly teaches in the cluster, who will coordinate assessment efforts and work with faculty to facilitate a revision of the learning outcomes and to develop a plan for assessment activities in the cluster. Once cluster plans are approved through the governance process, the Director of Assessment and Accreditation will add that language to this overall assessment plan and ensure those changes are communicated to the Provost, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the GEP Director, GEAC, and add the revised document to the SSU website.

Beginning in AY 2021-22, the Natural World Inquiry GEP cluster will undergo the initial Assessment Review cycle in which it revisits its learning outcomes, develops an assessment plan to assess those outcomes, and implements its plan in the Spring of 2022. In subsequent years, one additional GEP cluster will undergo its review cycle each year until all five GEP clusters have developed and implemented their assessment plans (see below). After a cluster has undergone its Assessment Review, the point person for that cluster works with faculty in the cluster categories to collect data to monitor student learning in the cluster.

| Academic Year | GEP Cluster |
|---------------|---|
| 2021-22 | Natural World Inquiry (Cluster 3) |
| 2022-23 | Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts (Cluster 2) |
| 2023-24 | Critical Thinking and Communication (Cluster 1) |
| 2024-25 | Historical and Cultural Inquiry (Cluster 4) |
| 2025-26 | Human Nature and Flourishing (Cluster 5) |

The following describes consistencies between the assessment plans developed in the five GEP clusters.

- GEP Assessment Fellow.** Every cluster will have a person tasked with overseeing assessment efforts in that cluster. This person will serve as the GEP Assessment Fellow for the cluster and will receive a course release when their cluster undergoes its Assessment Review. The GEP

Assessment Fellow must be a full-time, tenured/tenure-track faculty member who regularly teaches classes in the cluster.

- During the initial Assessment Review, the GEP Director issues a call among eligible faculty members. The Assessment Fellow for a cluster will be chosen by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Director of the General Education Program, the Director of Assessment and Accreditation, and two GEAC members, one from CAS and another from CPS.
- The GEP Assessment Fellow is selected by the middle of the Spring semester preceding the start of their Cluster's review.
- The GEP Assessment Fellow continues to serve as a point person for assessment efforts in the cluster after the cluster undergoes its initial review. If the GEP Assessment Fellow resigns, the GEP Director begins the process anew by issuing a call among eligible faculty members.
- **Learning Outcome Review.** When a cluster enters its Assessment Review, the Assessment Fellow for that cluster convenes faculty in the categories to review their learning outcomes. If a category has a significant percentage of courses from multiple departments (approximately 25%), the Assessment Fellow for that cluster convenes a small committee of faculty representing courses in that cluster. If a category has a smaller percentage of courses from multiple departments (less than 25%), the department informs faculty members of potential changes to the learning outcomes, seeks input from those faculty members, considers their feedback, and communicates proposed changes to them. The learning outcomes should reflect what students should know or do by the time they complete that category of the General Education Program. Learning outcomes should not be comprehensive of *all* learning in the category, but should reflect what the faculty see as essential learning outcomes for students completing that category. Any revisions to the learning outcomes must be approved through the shared governance process.
- **Cluster Student Success Data.** The Office of Assessment and Accreditation will coordinate with Institutional Research and Data Analytics to furnish the Assessment Fellow, the GEP Director, and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences with data for categories in the cluster by the beginning of the academic year. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation along with the Assessment Fellows share this data with GEAC at its September meeting. The Assessment Fellow presents this data to faculty in the cluster, and the faculty decide how they might use the data. The data should include the following:
 - Grade distribution by course (not by section or individual faculty),
 - Data on GEP courses requiring repeated attempts,
 - Data about when in their degree students take GEP courses,
 - Grade data for students taking courses in different delivery modes.
- **Budget.** Available funds for faculty scoring of student artifacts will be managed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

- **Plan.** The Assessment Fellow for the GEP cluster is tasked with working with faculty in the cluster GEP categories to produce a plan for assessing the revised outcomes in that cluster. During the first iteration of this plan, the Assessment Fellow plans in the Autumn semester of the academic year and implements the plan in the Spring semester. This initial plan and subsequent revisions are approved through the shared governance process and are kept on file with the Office of Assessment and Accreditation.
 - *Sampling Threshold.* When each cluster undergoes its review, the assessment project should make all reasonable efforts to collect and assess student learning artifacts from at least 25% of students in each of the cluster’s categories. The 25% selected should come from all students taking GEP courses in each category. If there are courses in a category that are not offered during the review year, the cluster assessment plan describes a process for assessing student learning in those courses.
 - *Random Sampling.* Regardless of how students are chosen to participate in the assessment plan, their selection should not be more or less likely if they are in a particular program or from a particular background. The selection schema should include students from *all* backgrounds, including CCP students.
 - *Quality Criteria.* To ensure consistency between clusters and categories, all rubrics or other assessment tools should include the following quality criteria.
 - Exceeds expectations for the learning outcome,
 - Meets expectations for the learning outcome,
 - Nearly meets expectations for the learning outcome,
 - Fails to meet the learning outcome,
 - No Response.
 - *Learning Outcome Performance.* The assessment plan should indicate acceptable student learning performance for courses to remain in a GEP category. At a minimum, the assessment plan should stipulate that 60% of students should “meet” or “exceed” learning outcomes for over 50% of the outcomes in the category.
 - *Collection and Analysis.* The assessment plan will indicate how student work will be collected and analyzed during its Assessment Review. Faculty collect student work throughout the Autumn and score that work during the Spring or Summer or embed rubrics within Blackboard shells and collect data from faculty when they grade student work meeting the category’s learning outcomes.
 - *Timeline.* The plan should include a timeline of when assessment activities in the cluster will take place. The plan should include information about when outcomes will be reviewed and revised; when instruments will be developed, tested, and used; when data collection will take place; when and how faculty will score student work; when data will be shared with faculty; when faculty will make decisions about how they will use the data.

- *Post-Review Data Collection.* The plan will also include a discussion about the kinds of data that will be collected and used after the Assessment Review. Some kind of “maintenance” data will need to be collected and can include a smaller sampling of student learning artifacts and/or indirect forms of assessment, such as surveys of faculty and/or students, data mentioned above in “Cluster Student Success Data,” or other forms of data. The plan should indicate what kind of data will be collected and how it will be shared and used. The analysis and use of post-review data will need to be reported annually to GEAC (see “Report” section below).
- **Report.** At the end of the summer after the GEP cluster implements its revised learning outcomes and assessment plan, the Assessment Fellow produces a report of assessment activities for the past academic year, including information about how assessment data were used. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation will develop an assessment report template of this report for approval by GEAC. The completed report is delivered to GEAC and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation along with any raw data. This data is presented to GEAC at its September meeting.
 - Data for post-review assessment activities in other GEP clusters are submitted by the end of the Autumn semester for the preceding academic year and are presented to GEAC. These assessment activities should be presented to faculty teaching in those categories and the report should include any underlying data and a discussion about how the data were used.
- **Initial GEP Course Alignment.** After the first Assessment Review, faculty will reaffirm that their course(s) meet the revised GEP learning outcomes.
 - The decision to keep a course in the GEP Category for this initial recertification will be based solely on the assertion of faculty members that teach the course that it meets the revised learning outcomes.
 - No courses will be removed in the first year based on any past performance of students meeting the Learning Outcomes under the prior Assessment Plan.
 - GEAC will assume all courses within the GEP Category wish to remain in their GEP Category.
 - If faculty wish to remove their courses from the GEP Category they should initiate Shared Governance paperwork to have the course removed before the start of the subsequent academic year.
- **Outcome Alignment.** If the learning outcome data indicate that students in GEP courses fail to meet the category’s learning outcomes and the department wishes to keep the course in the GEP Category, an improvement plan will need to be developed by the department housing the course and shared with GEAC and the Department Chair. The plan will describe the conversations and actions the department will take to improve student learning in the course. If a course is taught by multiple instructors, the plan should address the professional development and resources needed to improve instruction in the course. The plan will describe what

assessment processes that will take place between review cycles. By the next review cycle, the departments provide evidence of student learning improvement to the GEP Director.

If there is no improvement of student learning after a second review cycle and/or no reasonable explanation for the course's performance is provided to GEAC by a Department Chair or departmental representative, GEAC will take a vote to remove the course from the category and the GEP Director initiates a shared governance proposal to remove the course from the GEP category. If a department fails to produce an improvement plan or does not engage in the assessment process, the GEP Director initiates a shared governance proposal to remove the course from the GEP category.

- Courses to be removed from their GEP Category under the GEP Cluster Review cycle should ensure that the course completes its journey through Shared Governance before the start of the subsequent academic year.
- After a course has been removed from the category, a department can resubmit a course to GEAC for readmission into the GEP category after addressing issues identified in the data.

Assessment Plan Review

Shawnee State University's GEP Assessment Plan will undergo review every five years, and its next review will begin in AY 2025-26. In AY 2025-26, GEAC provides feedback about the assessment plan to the GEP Director. The Director then convenes a meeting of all GEP Assessment Fellows, the CAS Dean, and the Director of Assessment and Accreditation to review GEAC's feedback. Proposed changes are submitted to GEAC for approval by the end of the Autumn of 2026 in time for the review cycle to repeat.

Sample Timeline

The following is a sample timeline for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster of the GEP, the second GEP Cluster to undergo an Assessment Review. The timeline covers what activities should take place the academic year before, during, and after its Assessment Review.

| Task | AU 21 | SP 22 | AU 22 | SP 23 | AU 23 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Collect, score, and analyze data under current GEP Assessment Plan. | | | | | |
| GEP Director issues a call among eligible faculty members in the Critical Thinking and Communication (CT&C) cluster to serve as the cluster's GEP Assessment Fellow. GEP Director also forms and convenes group that chooses the Assessment Fellow. The GEP Assessment Fellow is selected by the middle of the Spring 2022 term. | | | | | |
| Faculty member who will serve as the GEP Assessment Fellow for the CT&C cluster of the GEP works with GEP Director, Director of Assessment, Dean of CAS, and Natural World Inquiry Assessment Fellow to plan for AY 22-23. | | | | | |
| CT&C Assessment Fellow convenes meeting of faculty to review learning outcomes as described in the "Learning Outcome Review" section of the GEP Assessment Plan (page 2 of this document). Director of Assessment provides support during this process, and the revised learning outcomes are submitted through the governance process. | | | | | |
| CT&C Assessment Fellow reviews data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics and shares data with faculty in each of the cluster's categories. Decisions and changes based on the data are recorded for report due at end of AY 22-23. | | | | | |
| The GEP Assessment Fellow for the CT&C cluster works with faculty in the cluster categories to draft an assessment plan for the categories. The category plans address the criteria described in the "Plan" section of the GEP Assessment Plan (page 2 of this document). The category plans are approved through department approval processes and shared governance. | | | | | |
| The GEP Assessment Fellow for the CT&C cluster works with faculty in each cluster category to implement the assessment plan. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation provides support during this process. | | | | | |
| The Director of Assessment and Accreditation shares the assessment data with faculty and the faculty | | | | | |

| Task | AU 21 | SP 22 | AU 22 | SP 23 | AU 23 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| analyze and contextualize the data. Any use, recommendations, or decisions made as a result of the analysis are recorded for the annual assessment report. | | | | | |
| The GEP Assessment Fellow for the CT&C cluster prepares a report on assessment activities conducted throughout the review year. | | | | | |
| The GEP Assessment Fellow for the CT&C cluster coordinates with the person who will serve as Assessment Fellow for the next cluster to undergo review (Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts). | | | | | |
| The GEP Director will verify with faculty in the cluster’s category that they wish to retain their courses in the GEP. Faculty wishing to remove their course from the category should initiate shared governance proposals to remove their classes by the end of the 2023-24 academic year. Courses in the cluster that do not meet the learning outcomes prepare an improvement plan and submit it to the GEP Director and the Department Chair. | | | | | |
| The GEP Assessment Fellow for the CT&C cluster will submit the final report on assessment activities in the cluster and present it to GEAC at the September 2023 GEAC meeting. | | | | | |
| The Director of Assessment presents cluster student success data and any other data called for in the cluster assessment plan to faculty in each category. The faculty analyze the data and any decisions or changes made as a result of the data are recorded by the Director of Assessment and reported to the GEP Director. | | | | | |
| The GEP Assessment Fellow for the CT&C cluster will oversee post-review assessment activities called for in the cluster assessment plan. | | | | | |

Cluster 1: Critical Thinking and Communication

This cluster is currently assessed through the original GEP Assessment Plan passed by GEAC in 2018 (see Appendix B).

Critical Thought (Currently not a GEP category but outcomes in this area are included with current GEP outcomes in this cluster)

Information Literacy (Currently not a GEP category but outcomes in this area are included with current GEP outcomes in this cluster)

English Composition Category

Under “Written communication” in current GEP outcomes

Oral Communication Category

Under “Oral and interpersonal communication” in current GEP outcomes

Cluster 2: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts

This cluster is currently assessed through the original GEP Assessment Plan passed by GEAC in 2018 (see Appendix B).

Fine and Performing Arts Category

Under “Aesthetics” in current GEP outcomes

Literature Category

Under “Interpretation” in current GEP outcomes

Cluster 3: Natural World Inquiry

GEP Assessment Fellow: Erik Larson, PhD

Below are the plans for assessing student learning in each of the categories in the Natural World Inquiry Cluster.

Quantitative Reasoning Category

Natural Sciences Category

Cluster 4: Historical and Cultural Inquiry

This cluster is currently assessed through the original GEP Assessment Plan passed by GEAC in 2018 (see Appendix B).

Technological Literacy (Currently not a GEP category but outcomes in this area are included with current GEP outcomes in this cluster)

Engaged Citizenry Category

Under “Engaged Citizenry” in current GEP outcomes

Historical Perspectives Category

Under “Historical Perspectives” in current GEP outcomes

Global Perspectives Category

Under “Contemporary Global Perspectives” in current GEP outcomes

Cluster 5: Human Nature and Flourishing

This cluster is currently assessed through the original GEP Assessment Plan passed by GEAC in 2018 (see Appendix B).

Ethical Insight and Reasoning Category

Under “Ethical Insight and Reasoning” in current GEP outcomes

Human Behavior Category

Under “Human Behavior” in current GEP outcomes

Appendix A: Full Sample Timeline

The following is a sample timeline for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster of the GEP, the second GEP Cluster to undergo an Assessment Review. The timeline covers what activities should take place before the cluster enters its Assessment Review and what activities should take place the year after it completes its second Assessment Review.

1. Academic Year 2021-22 (Year Preceding First Assessment Review)

- 1.1. The cluster operates under the previous GEP Assessment Plan. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation randomly selects 100 students and contacts department chairs and/or faculty to collect student work that is then rated by other faculty members. The data is then shared with faculty and any decisions made after reviewing the data are documented and shared with the Office of Assessment and Accreditation.
- 1.2. GEP Director issues a call among eligible faculty members in the Critical Thinking and Communication (CT&C) cluster to serve as the cluster's GEP Assessment Fellow. GEP Director also forms and convenes group that chooses the Assessment Fellow. The GEP Assessment Fellow is selected by the middle of the Spring 2022 term.
- 1.3. In the Spring of 2022, the faculty member who serves as the GEP Assessment Fellow for the following year's Assessment Review works with the current GEP Assessment Fellow for the Natural World Inquiry cluster to share plans and strategies for completing the Assessment Review. The faculty member also meets with the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the General Education Program Director, and the Director of Assessment and Accreditation to set expectations and develop a plan and list of deliverables for the following year.

2. Academic Year 2022-23 (First Assessment Review)

- 2.1. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster convenes faculty teaching in each of the cluster's categories to review their learning outcomes (see "Learning Outcome Review" on page 2). The GEP Assessment Fellow ensures representation from other department in accordance with the GEP Assessment Plan in each of the cluster's categories (English Composition and Oral Communication). The CT&C Assessment Fellow also works with faculty to review learning outcomes for the cluster that are not embedded in a specific category (Critical Thinking and Information Literacy). Proposed changes to the Learning Outcomes are communicated with faculty in other departments before submission to the governance process. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation provides support and feedback through this process and shares good assessment practices with faculty.
- 2.2. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster reviews data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics and shares data with faculty in each of the cluster's categories. Any decisions or feedback on the data are documented and included in the Assessment Fellow's report which is due at the end of the academic year.
- 2.3. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster drafts an assessment plan for conducting assessment activities in the cluster and the cluster's categories. This plan should be reviewed by faculty teaching in the clusters, formally approved by the

department(s) represented in the category, and submitted through the governance process. The plan should adhere to the guidelines described in pages 2 and 3 of this document. Once the plan receives approval through the governance process, the Director of Assessment and Accreditation updates the overall GEP Assessment plan with the plans for each category.

- 2.4. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster works with faculty in each cluster category to implement the assessment plan. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation provides support during this process.
- 2.5. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster prepares a report on assessment activities conducted throughout the review year (see page 3 of this document for details).
- 2.6. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster coordinates with the person who will serve as Assessment Fellow for the next cluster to undergo review (Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts).
- 2.7. The General Education Program Director will verify with faculty in the cluster's category that they wish to retain their courses in the General Education Program. Faculty wishing to remove their course from the category should initiate shared governance proposals to remove their classes by the end of academic year 2023-24. Faculty create an improvement plan for courses not meeting the revised learning outcomes.

3. Academic Year 2023-24 (Year 1 of new assessment cycle)

- 3.1. The GEP Assessment fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster will submit the final report on assessment in the cluster to GEAC at the September GEAC meeting.
- 3.2. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster collects annual data as called for in the category assessment plans on file with the Provost's office.
- 3.3. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster reviews and shares annual data from the Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics.
- 3.4. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster reports to the Office of Assessment and Accreditation on assessment activities that took place that academic year and documents any decisions that were made as a result of the data. The report includes information about courses in the cluster that required an improvement plan as a result of the first Assessment Review.

4. Academic Year 2024-25 (Year 2 of new assessment cycle)

- 4.1. In September, the GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster reports to GEAC and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation on assessment activities that took place that academic year and documents any decisions that were made as a result of the data.
- 4.2. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster reviews and shares annual data from the Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics.

4.3. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster collects annual data as called for in the category assessment plans on file with the Provost's office. The report includes information about courses in the cluster that required an improvement plan as a result of the first Assessment Review.

5. Academic Year 2025-26 (Year 3 of new assessment cycle)

5.1. Repeat process from Academic Year 2024-25

6. Academic Year 2026-27 (Year 4 of new assessment cycle)

6.1. GEP Director issues a call among eligible faculty members in the Critical Thinking and Communication (CT&C) cluster to serve as the cluster's GEP Assessment Fellow. GEP Director also forms and convenes group that chooses the Assessment Fellow. The GEP Assessment Fellow is selected by the middle of the Spring 2027 term.

6.2. Repeat process from Academic Year 2024-25

7. Academic Year 2027-28 (Second Assessment Review)

7.1. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster convenes faculty teaching in each of the cluster's categories to review their learning outcomes (see "Learning Outcome Review" on page 2). The Director of Assessment and Accreditation provides support and feedback through this process and shares good assessment practices with faculty.

7.2. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster reviews data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics and shares data with faculty in each of the cluster's categories. Any decisions or feedback on the data are documented and included in the Assessment Fellow's report which is due at the end of the academic year.

7.3. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster revises the assessment plan for conducting assessment activities in the cluster and the cluster's categories, if necessary. This plan should be reviewed by faculty teaching in the clusters, formally approved by the department(s) represented in the category, and submitted through the governance process. The plan should adhere to the guidelines described in pages 2 and 3 of this document. Once the plan receives approval through the governance process, the Director of Assessment and Accreditation updates the overall GEP Assessment plan with the plans for each category.

7.4. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster works with faculty in each cluster category to implement the assessment plan. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation provides support during this process.

7.5. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster prepares a report on assessment activities conducted throughout the review year (see page 3 of this document for details).

7.6. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster coordinates with the person who will serve as Assessment Fellow for the next cluster to undergo review (Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts).

- 7.7. If courses in the cluster fail to show improvements after a second review and/or if there are no reasonable explanations for a course failing to meet the outcomes, the GEAC will vote on whether or not to keep the course in the GEP Category. If GEAC votes to remove the course, the GEP Director initiates governance processes to remove the course from the GEP Category. Faculty can also elect to remove the course from its GEP category.
- 7.8. At the end of the year a new GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster is selected (or the current one is reaffirmed) to oversee the next review cycle.

8. Academic Year 2028-2029 (Year 1 of new assessment cycle)

- 8.1. The prior GEP Assessment fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster will submit the final report on assessment in the cluster to GEAC at the September GEAC meeting.
- 8.2. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster collects annual data as called for in the category assessment plans on file with the Provost's office.
- 8.3. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster reviews and shares annual data from the Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics.
- 8.4. The GEP Assessment Fellow for the Critical Thinking and Communication cluster reports to the Office of Assessment and Accreditation on assessment activities that took place that academic year and documents any decisions that were made as a result of the data.

Appendix B: 2018 GEP Assessment Plan