

General Education Assessment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q. What are ASU-Jonesboro's general education goals for students?

A. ASUJ's general education goals are the following:

1. **Communicating effectively.** Students should be able to communicate effectively and correctly, in writing and in speech, for a variety of purposes, using appropriate forms of discourse, organizational strategies, and vocabulary.
2. **Thinking critically.** Students should develop the skills necessary to digest, assimilate, and evaluate critically what they read, see and hear. They should employ rational argument and deduction routinely in their own work.
3. **Using mathematics.** Student should be able to use, understand and apply basic mathematical skills in practical applications.
4. **Using technology.** Students should be able to use appropriate technologies to locate, process and evaluate information in an effective and ethical manner.
5. **Understanding global issues.** Students should be aware of the social, political, economic and cultural dimensional of a diverse national and world community. They should have the intellectual and interpersonal skills needed to participate and succeed in a dynamic global society.
6. **Developing a life-long appreciation of the arts and humanities.** Students should develop an appreciation for the arts and humanities. They should be aware of the role of art and literature in human civilization and contemporary culture.
7. **Developing a strong foundation in the social sciences.** Students should be aware of the diverse systems developed by humans to manage and structure our relationships with one another. Students should prepare for the full range of public and private roles they are expected to fulfill as citizens, decision-makers, and human beings in a democratic America and in a global society.
8. **Using science to accomplish common goals.** Students should understand how science is conducted and the criteria for scientific evidence so that they will be able to make informed decisions about the health and wellbeing of their communities & the natural environment. They should be aware of ethical/political issues raised by science.
9. **Providing foundations necessary to achieve health and wellness.** Students should have a knowledge and appreciation of the scientific bases of physical and mental health and their contribution to overall wellness.
10. **Understanding interdependence.** Students should grasp how the many spheres of human knowledge are interrelated as they address problems and issues in their professional, civil, and personal lives. They should acknowledge the responsibilities of informed citizenship and the impact of their decisions and actions on others.

Q. Our major is regularly reviewed for accreditation, will that meet the need to assess student learning and general education in the major?

A. Does your accreditation review require that you assess actual student learning? If you do assess student learning for a major program, then it probably does meet what is expected when we assess student learning in our academic programs. Regarding general education, does your accreditation and

assessment of the major also assess general education competencies or learning outcomes? For example, do you assess your students' ability to write or solve problems or use technology as part of their learning? If you do, then your assessment of the major may indeed be a way to assess general education.

Q. I don't understand how the assessment of the major can also serve as an assessment of general education. Aren't we assessing very different competencies?

A. To a great extent, what we expect students to learn from the major program is different from what we expect them to learn from general education. However, we can find ways to assess general education learning outcomes within the major by choosing to assess those learning outcomes that are of most value to the major. For example, do we want students to be able to write well within the students' disciplines. If so, we can use the writing projects that they do for the major to assess student writing ability. But, what has that to do with general education? If students still have major weaknesses in their writing, even after they are in the major, perhaps the writing program can be modified to address those weaknesses. Or the faculty may decide upon a different solution or solutions. Some institutions, for example, have implemented a junior or senior level writing course for each major. Some have devised "writing intensive" courses within the majors. Some have writing-across-the curriculum or writing-across the disciplines workshops for faculty who want to improve students' abilities to write. Although such solutions are not part of the general education program, the assessment of a general education competency (in this case, writing) can lead to program changes to improve writing skills of students within a major.

Q. How does classroom assessment relate to program/discipline assessment, and how does program/discipline assessment fit in with the college's overall assessment efforts?

A. Classroom assessment involves assessing student learning in a particular course. This can be accomplished using **Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)**, which are quick, ungraded, classroom assignments used to provide feedback for determining student understanding of particular lessons. It is an ongoing process with the primary purpose of improving course-level instruction and student learning. This is accomplished through an annual process where each program/discipline designs and implements an assessment plan, measures learning outcomes, analyzes the data collected, communicates the information, and uses these results to develop an action plan aimed at improving student learning. College assessment efforts include classroom assessment, program/discipline assessment, and assessment of general education. The primary goal of assessment of student learning is to improve student learning. Assessment provides evidence of how well the college and university is meeting its mission and helps identify areas for improvement.

Q. What is "embedded assessment"?

A. Embedded assessment is an assessment process that involves using the regular work that students produce in their classes as the material that is assessed or evaluated. The student work may be a final research paper, a set of questions embedded in a final exam, a lab project, or anything that the professor would regularly use to evaluate the students in the class. One of the advantages of this type of assessment is that the students do not know that their efforts are being used for assessment and therefore do not have any additional pressure or effort required of them. The work they produce is more indicative of their normal work rather than being something produced just for assessment purposes. So, for example, one might assess the general education competencies of students when they reach the junior or senior year and are in the major by selecting specific assignments in specific courses and sending them to a team of faculty to evaluate.