



General Education

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND CONTENT
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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A. PROGRAM STRUCTURE /CONTENT

9.3: General education requirements [CR]

The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the **undergraduate level** that:

- (a) **Is based on a coherent rationale.**
- (b) **Is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program.**
 - For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.
- (c) **Ensures breadth of knowledge.**
 - These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics.
 - These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.

9.3: Key Compliance Components

Rationale

- ▶ Coherent

Level

- ▶ Post-secondary

Curricular Weight

- ▶ Substantial component
 - ▶ Minimum # of hours

Course Distribution

- ▶ 3 subject areas
- ▶ Non-specific to a profession/ occupation

Common Non-Compliance Factors

- ▶ **Treating “skills” courses as *pure humanities general education courses***
 - ▶ Not including at least one *pure humanities* course
 - ▶ Course options for students do not ensure that a student takes a course in each of the required areas

Courses in **basic composition** that do not contain a literature component, courses in **oral communication**, and **introductory foreign language** courses are skill courses and not pure humanities courses. Therefore, for purposes of meeting this standard, none of the above may be **the one course** designated to fulfill the humanities/fine arts requirement. (SACSCOC Executive Council interpretation, February 2010)

- ▶ Note that this does not preclude these courses from being part of the general education program beyond the required courses in the three areas prescribed

Evaluators' Challenges

- ▶ **Evaluation of “coherence”** of the general education rationale (i.e., evaluating the criteria for course inclusion)
- ▶ **Failure to address all key compliance components** embedded in the requirement in the committee report narrative

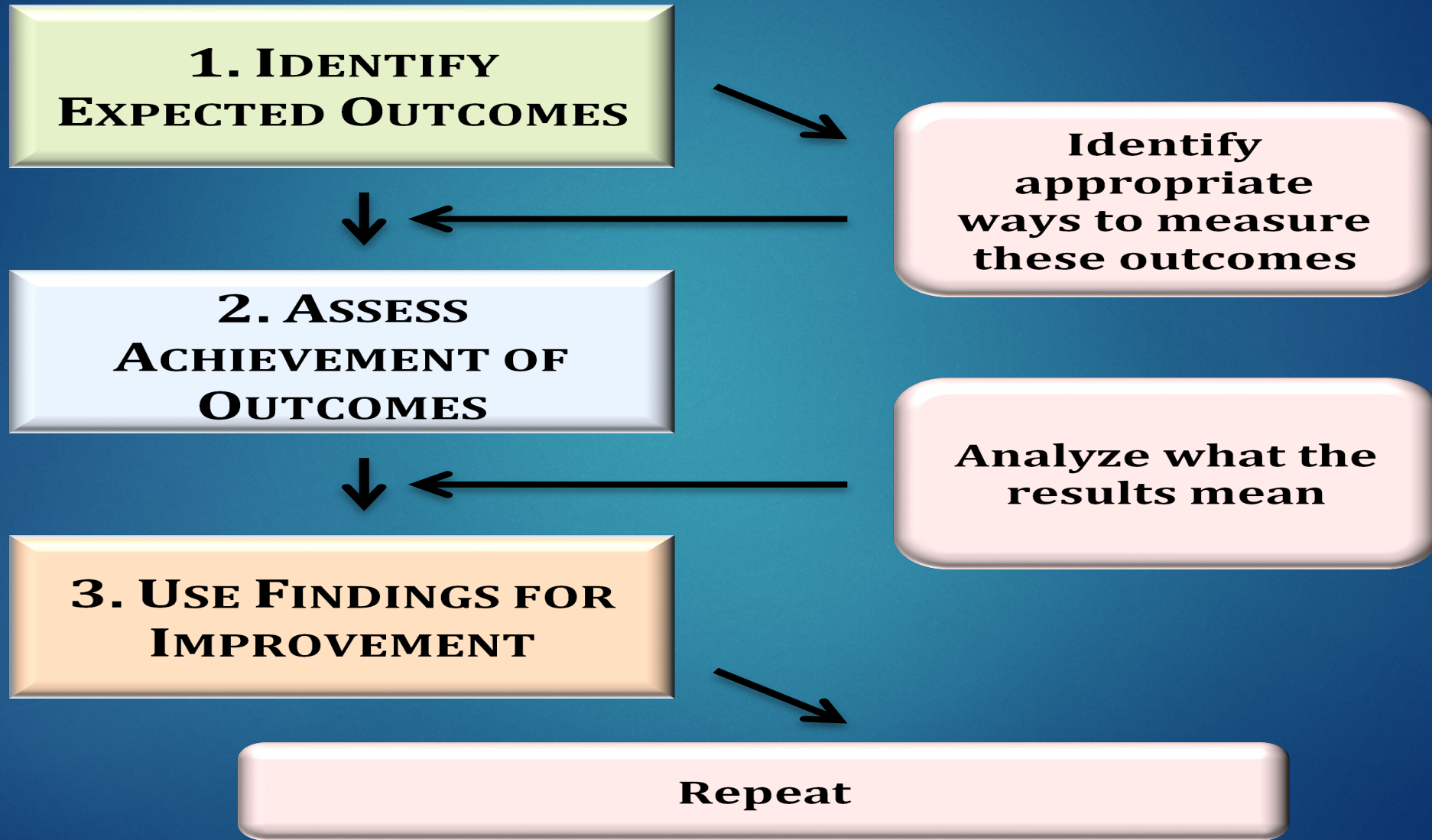
B. STUDENT OUTCOMES

8.2. The institution identifies **expected outcomes**, assesses **the extent to which it achieves these outcomes**, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

b. Student learning outcomes for **collegiate-level general education competencies** of its undergraduate degree programs.

(Student outcomes: general education)

8.2: Key Compliance Components



Most Common General Education Assessments

- ▶ Course-embedded assessments
 - ▶ Exam questions
 - ▶ Pre-/post-assessments
- ▶ Locally-developed, stand-alone tests
- ▶ Standardized tests
 - ▶ ETS Proficiency Profile assessment
 - ▶ CLA+
 - ▶ Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)
 - ▶ ATI Critical Thinking Assessment
 - ▶ ETS HEIghten
 - ▶ Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS)

Most Common General Education Assessments

- ▶ Locally-developed, stand-alone rubrics
- ▶ Standardized rubrics
 - ▶ AAC&U's VALUE rubrics
 - ▶ Pathways of Writing Rubric (PoWR Rubric)
 - ▶ Rubric for Oral Communication (ROC Rubric)
 - ▶ Rubric of Critical Thinking (RoCKeT Rubric)
 - ▶ Intercultural Understanding Rubric (Intercultural Understanding Rubric)

Most Common General Education Assessments

- ▶ Locally developed surveys
- ▶ Standardized surveys/inventories
 - ▶ HERI's freshman (CIRP) and senior (CSS) surveys
 - ▶ National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
 - ▶ Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
 - ▶ Spiritual Transformation Inventory (STI)
- ▶ Other
 - ▶ Focus groups

Common Non-Compliance Factors

- ▶ Absence of a **description/overview of the institution's assessment process** provided *either*
 - ▶ in the narrative (with sample artifacts from the assessment process as a good practice, but not a requirement), or
 - ▶ in supporting evidence (i.e., detailed assessment reports that document the process)
- ▶ **Use of sampling**
 - ▶ Sampling does not apply due to limited number of competencies
 - ▶ However, it is acceptable for a subset of competencies to be assessed in any given year

Common Non-Compliance Factors

- ▶ **Course-embedded assessments** do not include *either*
 - ▶ a mechanism for aggregation of course-level data, or
 - ▶ the infrastructure for general education embedded assessments (i.e., oversight by an institutional general education committee/faculty group, curriculum mapping of outcomes to courses, etc.)
- ▶ NOTE: May not rise to the level of non-compliance if this is the sole concern of the committee

Common Non-Compliance Factors

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- ▶ Concerns about **general appropriateness/face validity of assessment**
 - ▶ Outcomes, assessments, and results are **not aligned** (i.e., outcome stated in percentage, but results reported as averages; outcome is about student learning, but results collected describe instructor behavior)
 - ▶ KEY QUESTION: Do the assessment methods yield some type of actionable data and are they aligned with the institution's stated outcomes?
- ▶ Over-reliance on **vague improvements** plans (i.e., faculty will “continue to refine” courses, or “continue to monitor” because no improvement is needed because benchmark has been met)

Evaluators' Challenges

- ▶ IE systems and **processes are multifaceted and complex**
- ▶ Must **integrate *micro level* observations and analyses with *macro level (holistic)* evaluation** and judgment of compliance with the standard
- ▶ Institutional reports and supporting documentation vary in **format and presentation** (even within a single institution)
- ▶ IE/assessment is a relatively young, still **evolving**, field of practice and research

Questions?