Course portfolios serve three purposes:

- **General Education Assessment**: Taken together across courses and categories, the portfolios will provide a clear picture of the overall effectiveness of the General Education program at Mason.

- **Learning Outcomes Assessment**: The portfolios will provide direct evidence of student achievement in general education through samples of student work.

- **Course Review**: The portfolios will provide the most updated information about what is being taught in approved courses, what kind of learning experiences are offered to students, and what assessment strategies faculty use.

Five of these areas have a corresponding category in Mason’s general education program and the sixth area, critical thinking, has been assessed in synthesis courses. Faculty committees have identified explicit learning outcomes for these areas and the assessment is embedded in relevant general education courses and carried out cyclically.

### Course Portfolios

A course portfolio based assessment approach applies to the remaining general education categories, which are not included in the SCHEV assessments:

- Arts
- Literature
- Western civilization
- Social and behavioral sciences
- Global understanding
- Synthesis

The complete General Education Assessment Guideline can be found on our website at:

https://assessment.gmu.edu/Genedassessment/index.html

**On March 18, there will be a course portfolio workshop for participating faculty. Please register at:**

https://assessment.gmu.edu

---

**To learn more about assessment, or to register for one of our workshops, visit:**

https://assessment.gmu.edu

Please submit feedback to Karen Manley, Eye on Assessment Editor
kmanley@gmu.edu 703-993-8834  MSN 3D2
Upcoming Assessment Workshops*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcomes for Graduate Programs</td>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>10:00-11:30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcomes for Graduate Programs</td>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>10:00-11:30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Assessment</td>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>1:00-3:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Institutional &amp; OIA Data for Assessment</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>2:00-3:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAVEonline Technology</td>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>10:00-11:30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAVEonline Technology</td>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>1:00-2:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Register online for our workshops @ https://assessment.gmu.edu/workshops.cfm

Ask Assessment about General Education at Mason

Q. Why is Mason concerned about direct assessment of General Education?
A. 1. SACS - Since our last accreditation in 2001, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has put increasing emphasis on student learning outcomes. For general education, it explicitly requires institutions to “identify college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them”
2. SCHEV - Requires state institutions to directly assess six areas of core competency: written communication, quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning, critical thinking, oral communication, and information technology.
3. Mason - One of the hallmarks of assessment activities at Mason is the extent to which we use the data to implement improvements in the form and content of academic programs. (For more information, visit our website at https://assessment.gmu.edu/Results/InFocus/2007/CompetenciesSummary_FINAL.pdf.)

Q. Which faculty members will need to submit a course portfolio?
A. When a general education category is under review, all faculty (regardless of appointment status, full-time or adjunct) who teach an approved course or a section of the course during fall and spring semesters may be required to submit a course portfolio. Participating faculty are notified in the semester preceding the assessment.

Data Quotes

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) was conducted among Mason’s incoming first-time freshmen in the summer of 2008. It had a response rate of 55% and included the following highlights:

- 30% indicated that neither parent had completed a 4-year degree program.
- 80% had taken at least one AP and/or Honors course in high school.
- After receiving their baccalaureate degree, 41% plan to pursue a Master’s degree while 22% plan to pursue a doctoral degree.
- Respondents plan to spend more hours per week preparing for class in college than they did in high school, with the median study hours expected to increase from 6-10 hours to 16-20 hours.
- 75% plan to work for pay during their first year in college.
- On a scale of 1-6, 63% responded that it was of high importance (5 or 6) for the university to provide opportunities to interact with students from different backgrounds.

For more results and reports (including customized reports for degree programs), go to: https://assessment.gmu.edu/Results/index.html.