

# General Education Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan



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## **General Education at RIT**

RIT is a nationally respected leader in professional and career-oriented education. As a major technical university, RIT offers academic opportunities that provide a strong foundation in the humanities and social sciences. The RIT educational experience is a unique blend of rigor and imagination, of specialization and perspective, of intellect and practice.

### **General Education Student Learning Outcomes**

After highly collaborative and extensive reviews, the General Education Student Learning Outcomes and assessment schedule were originally finalized and approved in May 2009 and then revised in 2013 and 2015. The General Education curriculum is a signature learning experience with outcomes focused on the core knowledge and skills that support student success and complement more specialized learning in the degree programs.

To determine the extent to which the university is achieving its student learning outcomes, a comprehensive, coordinated, and data-driven system of assessment was developed and implemented. RIT's commitment to guide the development and implementation of that system includes:

- A persistent focus on student learning and success
- The use of data to inform planning and decision-making and to improve student learning
- The use of education and information technologies to systematically collect and analyze student and program data
- Recognition that assessment is essential to teaching and learning

The RIT mission and learning goals drive the General Education student learning outcomes assessment system as viewed in the Assessment System figure in Appendix A.

### **RIT Mission**

Through a unique blend of curricular, experiential, and research programs delivered within a student-centric culture, Rochester Institute of Technology prepares its students for successful careers in a global society.

### **The General Education Framework**

The General Education curriculum was developed to provide a cohesive and meaningful pathway to student achievement of the following student learning outcomes (see Appendix B).

### **Assessment of General Education Student Learning Outcomes: Principles and Guidelines**

RIT is committed to comprehensive, systematic, and meaningful assessment practices. Assessment is more than the collection of data (Palomba and Banta, 1999) and, in order for an assessment system to work, it must be purposeful about the information that is collected. After the data is collected, it must be examined and used to make improvements or changes.

Banta (2002) describes three phases of a successful assessment system: *planning*, *implementation*, and *improving and sustaining*. In the *planning* phase, all stakeholders are involved, including faculty members and administrators. The *implementation* phase includes a clear plan and purpose, objectives, as well as a commitment to improvement. The *improving and sustaining* phase includes the ongoing use of assessment to improve programs and services. This stage includes incorporating evaluation and improvement of the assessment process itself. All of these phases are critical to a successful assessment system at RIT.

## **Phase 1: Planning**

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RIT is dedicated to a thoughtful and purposeful approach to planning the assessment of the General Education student learning outcomes. To this end, a collaboratively developed assessment planning schedule determines which General Education student learning outcomes should be assessed at which critical points (see Appendix C).

Courses are selected using RIT's Student Information System (SIS), which makes it possible to easily map, select, and track courses that are approved as General Education and align to the General Education Student Learning Outcomes.

## **Phase 2: Implementation: A Sustainable Assessment System**

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RIT is committed to the implementation of a comprehensive assessment system that uses:

- Multiple forms of data, including direct and indirect measures
- A combination of internal evaluators, including faculty, employers, and students
- Faculty involvement in every step of the assessment process

In order to sustain the focus on improving student learning, assessment processes, and close-the-loop on the recommendations based on the results each student learning outcome is assessed every three years.

### **General Education Faculty Teams**

Each General Education Student Learning Outcome has its own team comprised of faculty from across the university with expertise in the given discipline. General Education Faculty Teams (re)convene to review, plan, and design or refine methods and instruments, and set or review achievement benchmarks for each General Education Outcome.

The data is collected at the course level and analyzed and shared with participating faculty. The results are used for changes at the course level and examined for larger curricular or instructional implications. The faculty team reconvenes and reviews the entire process, recommending relevant changes to pedagogy, curriculum, and to the assessment process itself. The concept of the General Education Faculty Team is based on the core principle the more faculty are engaged and involved in assessment, the more successful and meaningful the assessment is. See Appendix D for RIT's Faculty Engagement Model.

### **Additional Support for General Education Assessment**

The **General Education Committee** (GEC) helps facilitate and support the assessment of student learning outcomes in General Education. The committee was established to review the General Education curriculum and General Education course proposals from a university-wide perspective and maintain appropriate inter-college relationships with regard to General Education matters. The GEC ensures the ongoing monitoring and assessment of the General Education Student Learning Outcomes.

### **Assessment Instruments and Methods**

The use of multiple measures provides a holistic picture of student learning. Direct methods are used to examine student learning through work products. Indirect methods are used to identify the perception of learning or characteristics associated with learning. Assessment rubrics are developed and reviewed by RIT General Education faculty teams (e.g., rubrics). Faculty with expertise in the content areas serve as consultants, reviewers, statisticians, and mentors in the assessment process. In addition, assessments are

created, implemented, and rated collaboratively by faculty members. Indirect methods include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Alumni Survey, and the Co-op Student Evaluation.

### **Data Analysis**

After the student work is collected and scored, the results are summarized and presented to faculty. There are key questions that guide the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

- To what level did the students achieve the student learning outcome?
- Did the students meet the established benchmark?
- How will the results be used to impact future course refinements (curriculum, instruction, or assessment)?

### **Phase 3: Improving and Sustaining**

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The biggest challenge in assessment is the need to demonstrate that data are used to improve student learning, curriculum, and instruction. The following processes are in place to ensure the closing of the loop at RIT.

#### **Improving the Learning Experience**

A key focus for RIT's assessment plan is examining and highlighting how the results are used to improve the student learning experience. The majority of our improvements involve making changes to curriculum, revising individual General Education courses, adding or revising instructional strategies, and directly addressing student learning needs.

#### **Systems for Data Analysis**

RIT uses multiple methods and systems to analyze data from the assessment of General Education Student Learning Outcomes and to improve the data collection, analysis and reporting process. RIT's Student Information System (SIS) is used to select courses for assessment. Additional systems include RIT's Co-op Evaluation database and custom dashboards for survey items from the National Survey of Student Engagement. Each of these systems and methods are refined and improved, based on assessment findings and data needs.

#### **Reporting Strategies**

The assessment of RIT's General Education Student Learning Outcomes includes collecting, analyzing, using, and sharing the results annually to appropriate audiences. The General Education Assessment Reports also share how findings are used to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Results are also presented to various RIT governing bodies and the Board of Trustees.

#### **Reflection on the Process**

The assessment process is reviewed annually to determine which aspects worked, which didn't work, and how to improve effectiveness and efficiency. An examination of the goals, instruments, and methodology are part of the annual review. Faculty consider how to make assessment more meaningful and useful and discuss changes to teaching practices or the curriculum.

## **RIT General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment System**



## Appendix B: RIT's General Education Student Learning Outcome Alignment

### Essential Elements of General Education Courses

*Communication and critical thinking are essential to the general education of every student at RIT. Every general education course will provide learning experiences designed to achieve at least one student learning outcome from each of these domains (Communication and Critical Thinking).*

<b>Communication</b>	Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms using standard American English
	Revise and improve written products
	Express oneself effectively in presentations, either in American English or American Sign Language
	Demonstrate comprehension of information and ideas accessed through reading
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods and properly acknowledge sources of information
	Analyze or construct arguments considering their premises, assumptions, contexts, and conclusions, and anticipating counterarguments
	Reach sound conclusions based on logical analysis of evidence
	Demonstrate creative or innovative approaches to assignments or projects

### Perspective Domains

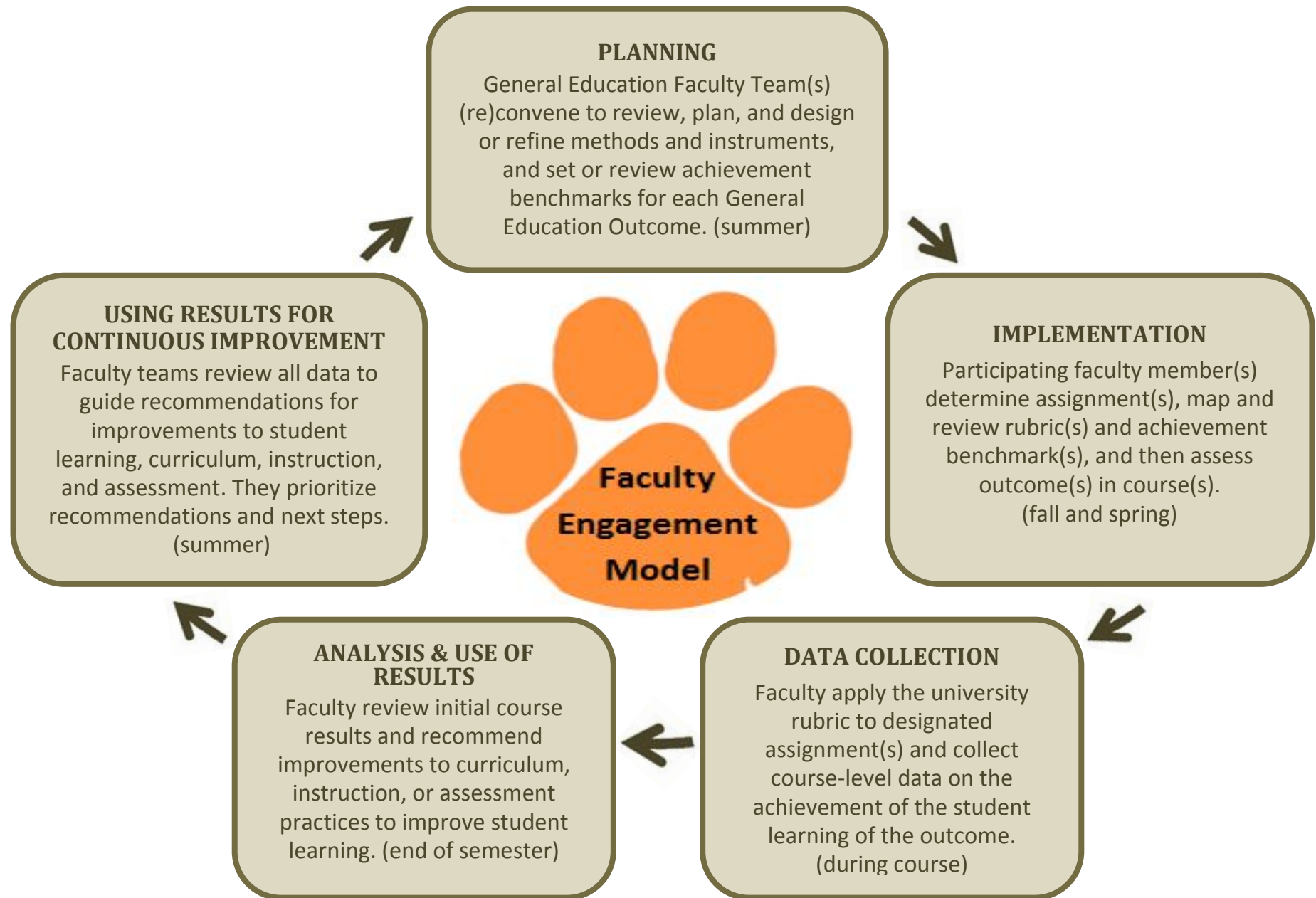
*The seven Perspective categories promote different ways of knowing about the world. Courses in these categories will introduce students to fundamentals of liberal arts and sciences (methods, concepts, and theories) while emphasizing General Education student learning outcomes.*

<b>Ethical</b>	Identify contemporary ethical questions and relevant positions
<b>Artistic</b>	Interpret and evaluate artistic expression considering the cultural context in which it was created
<b>Global</b>	Examine connections among the world's populations
<b>Social</b>	Analyze similarities and differences in human experiences and consequent perspectives
<b>Scientific Principles</b>	Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles and concepts of one of the natural sciences OR Apply methods of scientific inquiry and problem solving to contemporary issues
<b>Natural Science Inquiry</b>	Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles and concepts of one of the natural sciences AND Apply methods of scientific inquiry and problem solving to contemporary issues
<b>Mathematical</b>	Comprehend and evaluate mathematical or statistical information AND Perform college-level mathematical operations or apply statistical techniques



## General Education Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Schedule 2016-2022

Framework	General Education Student Learning Outcome	2016.17 Assessment		2017.18 Assessment		2018.19 Assessment		2019.2020 Assessment		2020.21 Assessment		2021.22 Assessment	
		Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
<b>Communication</b>	Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms using standard American English						X						X
	Revise and improve written products		X						X				
	Express oneself effectively in presentation, either in spoken standard American English or sign language			X						X			
	Demonstrate comprehension of information and ideas accessed through reading				X						X		
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods and properly acknowledge sources of information				X						X		
	Analyze or construct arguments considering their premises, assumptions, contexts, and conclusions, and anticipating counterarguments	X						X					
	Reach sound conclusions based on logical analysis of evidence					X						X	
	Demonstrate creative or innovative approaches to assignments or projects						X						X
<b>Social</b>	Analyze similarities and differences in human experiences and consequent perspectives					X						X	
<b>Global</b>	Examine connections among the world's populations						X						X
<b>Ethical</b>	Identify contemporary ethical questions and relevant positions	X						X					
<b>Scientific Principles</b>	Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles and concepts of one of the natural sciences		X						X				
<b>Natural Inquiry of Science</b>	Apply methods of scientific inquiry and problem solving to contemporary issues and scientific questions		X						X				
<b>Mathematical</b>	Comprehend and evaluate mathematical or statistical information			X						X			
<b>Mathematical</b>	Perform college-level mathematical operations or apply statistical techniques			X						X			
<b>Artistic</b>	Interpret and evaluate artistic expression considering the cultural context in which it was created	X						X					



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