

# WSU General Education Program

Many GTAs teach Gen Ed courses and support lead faculty as part of the General Education Program. The General Education Program serves as a foundation for academic achievement, preparing undergraduate students to participate effectively in a competitive global economy and to contribute as citizens in a diverse and engaged democracy. General Education presents a unique and powerful opportunity to realize our university mission by helping students develop the skills necessary for long-term academic success.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### General Education Oversight Committee

- Implement the Gen Ed Program, as laid out in Board of Governors statute
- Review proposed courses
- Assess student learning outcomes at the program level
- Revise curriculum and clarify policy
- Provide support to instructors and departments

### Departments

- Propose courses
- Verify that Gen Ed learning outcomes are on syllabi
- Fulfill the guidelines set out by the GEOC
- Offer approved courses on a regular basis
- Encourage instructor participation in assessment
- Communicate concerns and questions to the GEOC
- Help connect instructors with support resources

### GTAs

- Work with lead instructors to implement assessments and activities that engage the learning outcomes for relevant Gen Ed designations
- Clarify responsibilities for Gen Ed assessment with lead instructors
- Pursue support resources through the GEOC and the OTL, ask questions, and reach out for help with concerns

## Resources Available to Instructors & GTAs

- Gen Ed Assessment Workshops (available through the OTL calendar)
- Departmental assessment workshops
- One-on-one assessment coaching
- Videos and other support material on the GEOC website: <https://provost.wayne.edu/assessment-support>
- Contact: General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) at [gened@wayne.edu](mailto:gened@wayne.edu)

# General Education Assessment

## What is assessment?

The assessment data that you submit for Gen Ed courses is part of **program assessment**.

Program assessment is a process of articulating goals (i.e. learning outcomes), collecting data on student performance that help you determine how well you are supporting those goals, and using that information to improve program quality. The Gen Ed assessment data that you submit is part of a continuous cycle of improvement of student learning

## Why do assessment?

As members of an institution of higher education, student learning is central to Wayne State's mission. Program assessment helps us to carry out that mission to the best of our ability by encouraging ongoing, evidence-based decision-making that enhances students' success.

## Why should I care about assessment as a grad student?

Assessment at both the program and course level are an increasingly important part of instructor responsibilities at institutions across the country and around the world. Being conversant in the language and processes of assessment can open up new career and research opportunities and aid in your development as an instructor.

## How is this different from student assessments in my course?

Sometimes we use the word assessment in different ways. Assignments that we ask students to complete in our courses are designed to assess student learning. **Formative assessments** provide feedback to instructors and learners to help them improve during the learning process.

**Summative assessments** provide evidence of completed learning to evaluate achievement, programs, or qualifications. **Program assessments** generally utilize summative assessments that demonstrate program level outcomes to get a broader picture of student learning across an entire program rather than within a single course.

## What does this mean for me?

The data from program-level assessment can be a useful tool for reflection on the effectiveness of your course. It is not, however, an evaluation of you as an instructor and should not be used in evaluation processes. Data remains confidential at the course/instructor level. The GEOC provides resources to support reflection on assessment data for the purposes of program improvement, and we encourage you to participate in those processes.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I know if my course is Gen Ed?

Are you a GTA in a 1000- or 2000-level course in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, business, or arts? If so, this information about the General Education program is for you. Check the Undergraduate Bulletin to see if your course is in the Gen Ed program.

## What is the purpose of Gen Ed?

The General Education Program reflects the commitment of the university and our instructors to a set of learning objectives and experiences that serve as a foundation for academic achievement. The range of courses required as part of the General Education Program are designed to prepare students to participate effectively in a competitive global economy and to contribute as citizens in a diverse and engaged democracy. General Education presents a unique and powerful opportunity to develop the competencies necessary for long-term academic success. We encourage students to pursue General Education courses with both curiosity and intentionality, exploring different ways to see and understand the world and developing new skills that will serve as the foundation for their Wayne State education during their time in the university and beyond.

## What is my responsibility as a GTA in a Gen Ed course?

In consultation with your supervising faculty member or graduate director, you are responsible for teaching the Gen Ed learning outcomes that correspond to your course's Gen Ed designation.

- Learning outcomes (LOs): statements of what students should know or be able to do when they finish your course ([Competency LOs](#), [Inquiry LOs](#), [Wayne Experience LOs](#))
- Gen Ed designation: the focus area of the Gen Ed program for your course (for example, Basic Composition, Natural Scientific Inquiry, Global Learning)

Your Gen Ed course syllabus should include the Gen Ed learning outcomes plus at least one assignment that you can use to assess them. If you do not create your own syllabus for the course, you should ensure that you are helping prepare students to achieve the Gen Ed learning outcomes associated with your course through class activities and assignments.

## Am I responsible for Gen Ed assessment as a GTA?

Gen Ed assessment is a process for collecting evidence of student learning outcomes that is separate from grading. Learning outcomes assessment focuses on improving the program's design and delivery, whereas grading focuses on individual student performance. The goal is to use that evidence to help the university and individual instructors improve student learning in the program.

On a rotating schedule, a few of the Gen Ed designations submit assessment data each year. Check the timeline to see when your designation is in a Data Submission year, and watch your inbox for email from [gened@wayne.edu](mailto:gened@wayne.edu) for more information.

If it is your designation's year, talk with your supervisor to see if your course already has a plan for Gen Ed assessment, [attend a Gen Ed workshop](#), use the resources on the Gen Ed assessment website or in the Canvas Gen Ed Training Course, or reach out to [gened@wayne.edu](mailto:gened@wayne.edu) for help.

## Am I eligible for the General Education Teaching Award?

This award recognizes instructors at any rank for innovative, effective, and engaging teaching in any Gen Ed course. Once you've taught three semesters in the Gen Ed program, you are eligible to apply for this award! We encourage you to read the application materials carefully and reach out to [gened@wayne.edu](mailto:gened@wayne.edu) if you have any questions or need clarification. You can self-nominate or nominate one of your colleagues.

## What should I do if I need help with my Gen Ed course?

Your supervising instructor or graduate director is always the first point of contact, but there are other resources available to support teaching and learning on campus that are available to you. In particular, we encourage you to pursue [resources offered through the Office for Teaching and Learning](#), including workshops and guides on a wide range of topics. You can also contact them directly at [otl@wayne.edu](mailto:otl@wayne.edu) to set up an individual consultation.

## What should I do if I need help with Gen Ed Assessment?

Again, your supervising instructor or graduate director is always the first point of contact, but they might also need support in completing Gen Ed assessment. The GEOC regularly offers assessment workshops, available on [the OTL calendar](#), and you are welcome to attend those.

We also run workshops for labs and instructors teaching the same course and provide individual consultations for instructors. If you are interested in setting up a session or if you have any questions, please email [gened@wayne.edu](mailto:gened@wayne.edu) at any time. We're happy to support you.