

Students' Ability to Identify and Understand How Diverse Contextual Factors Impact Human Experiences
Academic Affairs – General Education (GE)

Step 1: Student Learning Outcomes

GE Learning Goal 5 (Students will develop and apply critical awareness, intercultural skills, and informed appreciation that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in their immediate and larger communities) was assessed in 2023-24 with a focus on Outcomes; 1) Students will identify and understand complex cultural, geographical, historical, and social contexts, and articulate how human experiences, including their own, are influenced by these contexts and 4) Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of how the intersections of power, privilege, and oppression play out in local communities and global context.

Step 2: Methods and Measures

Led by the Senate GE Committee, the Office of Undergraduate Studies and General Education and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, CSUF has piloted and implemented a multi-year assessment plan for the General Education Program since the 2015-16 academic year. The intention is to assess GE as an integral program as opposed to assessing individual courses. The assessment plan is guided by the CSUF General Education: Programmatic Student Learning Goals and Learning Outcomes (UPS 411.203), which were approved by the CSUF Academic Senate in spring 2015. Revisions were made to the GE goals and outcomes in July 2023.

Following the Faculty Learning Community model, a group of full-time and part-time faculty who teach a representative sample of upper-level GE courses work collaboratively throughout the year. The faculty review each other's assignments, develop a comparable assignment, and create a Rubric. Indirect measures are also used to capture students' perceptions of learning. Specific direct and indirect measures used, with accompanying rubric, may vary across reporting cycles, as they are dependent on the Faculty Learning Community's work.

Step 3: Criteria for Success

Direct: 75% of students score 3 ("Developing") or higher on all rubric criteria.

100% of students score 2 ("Beginning") or higher on all rubric criteria.

Indirect: 75% of student's self-report 3 or higher (1 = low, 5 = high) on "Comfort" and "Confidence" level for each rubric criterion.

Step 4: Results

Data were collected from 5 courses (out of 229 upper division GE courses offered in spring 2024) from 5 colleges. Six faculty participated in assessing 214 (out of 220) unduplicated students taking the selected courses.

Direct Measure: A rubric with five criteria was used by faculty to score comparable assignments; A) Multiplicity of different context, B) Complexity of different contexts, C) Understanding of power, privilege, and oppression, D) Engagement with heterogeneous perspectives, E) Self-awareness and reflection. A four-point rubric scale was employed: 1) Minimal evidence of learning, 2) Beginning, 3) Developing, 4) Accomplished

Overall, 75% of students achieved a “3” (Developing) or higher on 3 out of 5 rubric criteria, however, 100% achievement of at least a “2” (Beginning) across all rubric criteria was not met. Mean scores of rubric ratings ranged from 2.8 to 3.3.

Further analysis was performed to determine any differences based on student demographic characteristics. GPA was found to be a significant positive predictor for all criteria. No statistically significant differences were found based on first-generation or Pell status, though differences based on gender, UR status, and class level were observed.

Indirect Measure: A student Self-Reflection Survey with 5 questions that mirrored the faculty rubric criteria was used, with 30 students (14%) responding from 1 (low) to 5 (high) their level of “Comfort” and level of “Confidence” in performing tasks aligned to the faculty rubric criteria. Overall, 100% of students reported “3” or higher on both elements. Data were also collected on students’ responses regarding where they gained the skills for each criterion. Results indicated the highest percentage gained from “Non-Academic Experiences”, followed by “GE at CSUF”, then “Major Classes at CSUF”, and finally, “non-CSUF Classes” received the lowest percentage of responses.

Step 5: Improvement Actions

Future assessment will consider a portfolio approach to include more than one assignment, which could present a more comprehensive picture of student mastery of the outcome, as one of the challenges noted was selecting only one assignment that did not fully capture what faculty know about their students’ learning. Additional improvement actions include focus groups or interviews to learn more about student learning experiences with the outcome and considering a pre/post approach to assess students at the beginning of the class and at the end of the class to capture learning gained during the semester.