

## MISSION STATEMENT

The General Education requirement is at the heart of the educational mission of The City College of New York (CCNY); CCNY faculty intend for students to graduate not only with essential reading, writing and quantitative skills, but with the excitement of academic discovery in a variety of disciplines, a strong foundation in critical reasoning and a firm grounding in ethics. The educational mission of The City College of New York is to provide a diverse student body with opportunities to achieve academically, creatively, and professionally in their chosen fields. In particular, it provides that

*“The College will graduate students who, in addition to demonstrating knowledge and skills in their chosen majors, are able to:*

1. Demonstrate critical thinking and levels of oral and written communication that will serve them well during their university years and in their postgraduate, professional, and personal lives;
2. Demonstrate the skills necessary for quantitative reasoning and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis that will enable them to integrate new information and become lifelong learners;
3. Demonstrate an appreciation of arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences, regardless of their fields of concentration, and an awareness of values, cultures, languages, religions, and histories other than their own.
4. Demonstrate the creativity, flexibility, and problem solving ability needed to succeed in the ever changing work and educational environment of the 21 st century.”

## GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS

The new General Education curriculum was drafted by a Core Committee and adopted by the CLAS Faculty Council in November of 2006 with an amendment in March 2007.

The curriculum was partially implemented in Fall 07 and fully implemented in Fall 08. The implementation of the new General Education requirement was assigned to the General Education Implementation Committee.

### **The Proficiency requirements of the General Education are:**

- written communication skills
- critical thinking skills
- information literacy skills
- quantitative reasoning skills

### **In addition to acquiring/mastering these proficiencies, students will explore “Perspectives” in the following areas of knowledge:**

- Artistic (A)
- Global History and Culture (CG)
- Literary (L)
- Logical-Philosophical (LP)

- Natural Scientific (S)
- Natural Scientific with Interactive Component (SI)
- Self and Society (SS)
- U.S. Society (H)

## GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES

*N.B. Subject to revision due to the Pathways initiative*

### PROFICIENCIES

#### **Written Communication Skills**

*The student will be able to:*

- formulate a clear, arguable thesis
- develop the thesis in an organized fashion, with clearly formed paragraphs that unfold systematically
- provide well selected evidence in support of the thesis and conclusion that takes into account opposing points of view
- use standard diction, grammar and mechanics of English

#### **Critical Thinking skills (adapted from AACU Critical Thinking VALUE rubric)**

*The student will be able to:*

- clearly frame an issue or problem and consider it critically
- select, use, and evaluate information to investigate a claim or point of view
- analyze his or her and others' assumptions and evaluate relevance of contexts when presenting a position
- present a position taking into account its complexities and limits as well as others' points of view
- develop logical conclusions based on evaluation of evidence

#### **Information Literacy skills**

*The student will be able to:*

- demonstrate a clear understanding of information needs and the ability to search efficiently for information
- effectively evaluate information sources
- articulate credibility of sources
- use information ethically

#### **Quantitative Reasoning skills**

*Under discussion*

**Artistic (A)** - Students should have an awareness of artistic issues from a critical perspective.

**Global History and Culture (CG)** - Students should become familiar with the belief systems, history, and social dynamics of at least one non-Western society and be able to compare and contrast the society or societies with dominant patterns in the West.

**Literary (L)** - Students should have an introduction to the methods and concerns of literary analysis, complementing close reading with attention to historical context.

**Logical-Philosophical (LP)** – Students should have experience with a course that emphasizes analytic and/or philosophical reasoning, sometimes in conjunction with case studies, to examine fundamental questions of ethics, justice and epistemology.

**Natural Scientific (S) and Natural Scientific with Interactive Component (SI)** - Students should have an experience with the techniques and methodologies of science including an experience gathering and interpreting data.

**Self and Society (SS)** - Students should also (1) have an awareness of individual and societal issues as including, minimally, individual ethical and societal justice issues and (2) learn about theories and methods in the study of individual/social as well as comparative societal questions as they are related to race, ethnicity, class, and gender/sexual orientation. This Perspective will give due attention to the mutual influences of the local, the national, and the global.

**Perspectives on U.S. Society (H)** - Students should have a knowledge of selected events and key topics in the development of U.S. society and become familiar with the various tools and analytic approaches for the study of U.S. society.

**300 level courses** - Students should have an experience in depth in a discipline other than their major. This requirement requires an upper division course in a department or program other than the student's major. A prerequisite of one course that is not included in the course count may be required.

## CURRICULUM

### The City College General Education Requirement:

**FIQWS:** Freshman Inquiry Writing Seminar is a 6 credit course that combines one of a variety of subjects with intensive writing (FIQWS Engineering, FIQWS 10026, is a 4 credit course for students in the School of Engineering)

#### Math

**Perspectives:** a selection of courses taken from a list of areas of study, such as: artistic, literary, scientific, historical, logical-philosophical, US Society, and self and society

In the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), there are variations in the General Education Requirement depending on the degree pursued i.e., BA, BFA, or BS. Other variations are followed by students pursuing different degrees in the School of Architecture, School of Education, the School of Engineering or students in the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education. The Division of Worker Education, DWE, formally a division of CLAS, also has a distinct General Education Curriculum, independently assessed by DWE.

## CURRICULUM MAP

**A** Proficiency: WRITING

**B** Proficiency: CRITICAL THINKING

**C** Proficiency: INFORMATION LITERACY

**D** Proficiency: QUANTITATIVE SKILLS

**E** Artistic Perspective: An Awareness of Artistic Issues from a Critical Perspective

**F** Global History and Culture Perspective: Familiarity with belief systems, history, social dynamics of a society outside of the Euro-American tradition

**G** Literary Perspective: An introduction to the methods and concerns of literary analysis, with close reading and attention to historical context

**H** Logical/Philosophical Perspective: Experience with analytic and/or philosophical reasoning, to examine fundamental questions of ethics, justice and epistemology

**I** Natural/Scientific and Natural/Scientific Perspective with an interactive component: Two courses, one with a hands-on, interactive component. Experience with the techniques and methodologies of science including experience gathering and interpreting data.

**J** Self and Society Perspective: An awareness of ethical and societal justice as well as theories and methods in the study of individuals and society and issues

**K** US Society Perspective: Knowledge of selected events and key topics in the development of US society, through various tools and analytic approach

		Learning Outcomes										
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Courses												
FIQWS		X		X			X					
FQUAN		X	X				X					
ARTISTIC	ART 100	X	X				X					
	MUS 101		X		X							
GLOBAL HISTORY AND CULTURE	THTR 131	X	X									
	ANTH 101	X	X				X					
	WCIV 101	X	X				X					
	WCIV 102	X	X			X						
	HIST 31310 E	X	X			X						
	HIST 341	X	X									
	HIST 312	X	X									
	HIST 31623		X			X						
	HIST 31422		X		X							
	ASIA 202		X		X							
	ASIA 205		X		X							
	ASIA 101		X		X							
	LITERARY	WHUM 101		X		X						
WHUM 102		X	X		X							

		Courses	Learning Outcomes									
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
LITERARY	THTR 211	X	X	X				X				
	THTR 212	X	X	X				X				
	THTR 213	X	X	X				X				
	THTR 450.06 C	X	X	X				X				
LOGIC PHIL	PHIL 102	X	X	X					X			
	PHIL 201	X	X	X					X			
	PHIL 305	X	X	X					X			
NAT-SCI	EAS 100									X		
	ASTR 305									X		
INT	BIO 100									X		
SELF-SOCIETY	ECO 100										X	
	ECO 103										X	
	PSY 102	X	X	X							X	
US SOCIETY	USSO 101	X	X	X								X
	AMST 202	X	X	X								X
	HIST 332	X	X	X								X
	PSC 101	X	X	X								X

## METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

### A. Overview of the Assessment Plan

- It includes both direct and indirect methods of assessment.
- Assessment is conducted at multiple points in time.
- Faculty involvement in participating is key.
- Assessment includes evidence at the course, program and institutional levels.
- Assessment is systematic, ongoing and the evidence informs decisions about curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and instructional resources.
- Assessment results are available to appropriate constituents including students.

### B. Conceptual Framework

The Gen Ed Assessment Plan uses multiple measures at various points in time to assess student learning outcomes. Multiple measures include:

#### DIRECT FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

##### 1. Embedded Assessment Approaches.

Embedded approaches avoid disrupting the academic environment by collecting random samples of student which are then independently assessed using rubrics. Rubrics to assess proficiencies

have been locally developed (writing and information literacy rubrics) or adopted/annotated from the AACU VALUE rubrics (critical thinking and quantitative reasoning). Random samples of student work (research papers or other projects) from select, high enrollment General Education courses are collected every semester and scored by a team of readers comprised of faculty teaching those courses. (This scoring process is not grading and does not affect or inform the student's grade for the assignment.) The scores are reported as averages by individual rubric categories and include qualitative analysis of the skills assessed, along with specific recommendations for improvement. Student names are replaced by numbers; scores are assigned to the numbers but are not individually reported nor are students ever identified. Every paper is scored by two readers and overall scores are averaged. In addition to using the above mentioned rubrics to assess the proficiencies, a scoring strategy is developed during the assessment process to evaluate student learning in the perspectives. Usually, assessment teams define specific perspectives learning outcomes (CLOs or DLOs) to be assessed and score each paper as a + or – to designate if the student has demonstrated competency in those learning outcomes. The average scores are calculated for each rubric category and are accompanied by a commentary on the strengths and weaknesses in student learning. The purpose of the assessment is not to evaluate any specific course, instructor, or student but to assess how well the General Education program learning outcomes are being met by students. The results of the assessment are used to inform decisions about course content and structure, and about the program itself, as well as to refine the program learning objectives and outcomes. Assessment of student learning is done starting with FIQWS and continued on through the Perspective and Math courses. A need to stage the perspective courses from early to mid to late has been recognized in order to provide an environment where the proficiencies are being taught in a planned and progressive way. Staging the courses will also allow for "cross-sectional" assessment that measures gains in student learning.

## **2. Standardized Testing.**

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) test has been adopted by CUNY to be implemented in Fall 12. The CLA will be administered to samples of 200 students at each level: students who are just beginning their undergraduate studies (0 credits), students who are in the midst of their studies (60 credits) and to students who are nearing the end of their undergraduate career (120 credits). The sampling will be done randomly to produce representative results. The CLA is designed to evaluate student skills through cognitively challenging and realistic tasks. It consists of a Performance Task and two types of Analytic Writing Tasks. Student responses are evaluated according to analytic rubrics that can be scored by outside readers or computer. The design of the CLA tasks requires students to demonstrate the higher-order critical thinking and analysis skills reflected in the VALUE rubrics. The CLA also employs scoring rubrics that are similar in range and scaling to those of the VALUE rubrics. This test was developed by the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) as an alternative to multiple-choice tests of critical thinking and written communication skills, but it is important to recognize that it assesses a limited domain and should not be regarded as a comprehensive measure of general education outcomes. The test is not intended to evaluate all aspects of institutional effectiveness and is not designed to assess individual student or faculty performance.

For ten years, the CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE) served as a means of assessing individual student

proficiency in writing and quantitative reasoning. Implemented in 2001, the CPE was designed to certify that students who had reached the 45th credit were ready for upper division course work. The use of the CPE was discontinued in November 2010 for several reasons: it had become redundant as nearly every student who was eligible to take the exam— by completing 45 credits with a 2.0 GPA or better— passed the exam; it was designed and administered only within CUNY, and could not be used to benchmark achievements of CUNY students against those of students at comparable institutions; it was administered only at a single point in time, thus not measuring learning gains over time; and, finally, the development and administration of the test had become prohibitively expensive.

### **3. Syllabi analysis**

Syllabi of all FIQWS, Perspectives and FQUAN courses are collected and reviewed every semester to ensure their adherence to the program goals. They are evaluated with respect to the presence/quality of the following information: course goals, course learning outcomes, general education program learning outcomes, alignment of assignments with the learning outcomes, ways to demonstrate learning/grade breakdown, types of writing assignments (for W courses), guidance included for the writing assignments, academic integrity statement, and practical course information.

### **4. Midterm progress reports**

The goal of the midterm progress reports and intervention project is (a) to effectively identify first year students who are not meeting minimum academic requirements and provide appropriate assistance to them and (b) to analyze summative data to identify key areas of weakness and develop effective intervention strategies for them. For effective data collection and analysis, “Midterm software” was developed by the City College IT department and successfully implemented in Fall 10 semester. Select Freshmen classes participate in the project: FIQWS, FQUAN, and PSY 102. Each student is evaluated for the following: class participation, written assignments and homework submission, performance on exams/quizzes, time management & attendance, need for tutoring, need for ESL support, need to improve attendance, need to meet with an advisor (for students in danger of failing), need to attend a workshop on college skills, and grade to date. The following interventions are provided: tutoring (writing, math, and psychology), ESL support, college skills workshops, and advising. The analysis of the midterm forms and interventions is used to improve services and information dissemination to the students, including modifications of the new student orientation, new student seminars, additional tutoring and workshops offerings.

## **INDIRECT FORMS OF ASSESSMENT**

City College currently administers several instruments that are used in helping to assess the General Education program.

### **1. Faculty surveys**

Faculty surveys are conducted in FIQWS to assess the effectiveness of the FIQWS program in student learning and transition to college life. In addition to being the initial course that introduces writing, critical thinking and information literacy skills, FIQWS also functions as a learning community, first-year experience, and college-readiness skills course. Faculty opinions about the course effectiveness in each of these areas are analyzed and used for further improvements of the program. In addition, FIQWS and writing intensive perspective courses utilize WAC surveys to inform the program of the effectiveness of writing pedagogy. Data from the surveys is used for improvements in course design, in particularly in relation to faculty resources, faculty development, co-teacher collaboration, and midterm reviews.

### **2. Student surveys**

End of semester Course and Teacher surveys are used to assess the effectiveness of individual sections and instructors. In addition to evaluating the instructor's performance, students reflect on their achievement of learning outcomes in the specific course. Additional surveys have been conducted in FIQWS to assess students' opinions about the effectiveness of the FIQWS program in relation to learning, community-building and development of college-readiness skills.

### **3. Student focus groups**

Focus groups of about 20 students will be convened every other year to investigate student perceptions about the general education curriculum. The investigation will focus on course and curriculum quality, students' understanding of program's goals, and course availability.



## TABLE 1: ASSOCIATION OF ASSESSMENT MEASURES TO PROGRAM OUTCOMES

*(Outcomes are numbered from 1 to 8 as listed above)*

- A** Demonstrate Proficiency in WRITING / Provides opportunities for developing writing proficiency
- B** Demonstrate Proficiency in CRITICAL THINKING / Provides opportunities for developing critical thinking proficiency
- C** Demonstrate Proficiency in INFORMATION LITERACY / Provides opportunities for developing information literacy proficiency
- D** Demonstrate Proficiency in QUANTITATIVE REASONING SKILLS / Provides opportunities for developing quantitative reasoning proficiency

1. Artistic Perspective Outcome (s) aligned with Program Outcomes
2. Global History and Culture Outcome (s) aligned with Program Outcomes
3. Literary Outcome (s) aligned with Program Outcomes
4. Logical-Philosophical Outcome (s) aligned with Program Outcomes
5. Natural Science and Natural Science with Interactive Component Outcome (s) aligned with Program Outcomes
6. Self and Society Outcome (s) aligned with Program Outcomes
7. US Society Outcome (s) aligned with Program Outcomes

	<i>(Outcomes are numbered from 1 to 8 as listed above)</i>										
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>FIQWS Research Paper</b>	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>W Perspectives Writing</b>	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>CLA</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Final Exam/ Assignments in FQUAN course (?)</b>	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Q Perspectives assignments / Exams</b>	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Syllabi Analysis</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>C&amp;T Survey Aggregate Scores and distributions</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Faculty Surveys</b>	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Student surveys</b>	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Midterm Progress Reports</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*0 = Measure is not used to measure the associated outcome.*

*1 = Measure is used to measure the associated outcome.*

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

A description of the tools used in the assessment of the program outcomes and their implementation are summarized in Table 2 below. The tools and their relationships to the program outcomes are listed in Table 1, above.

Measure	Description	Frequency / Start Date	Collection Method	Administered by
<b>FIQWS Research Paper</b> <b>Perspectives Writing Assignments</b> <b>W, CT, IL Rubrics</b>	Evaluation of Learning Outcomes through assessing research papers from FIQWS courses and appropriate assignments in Perspectives courses	Every fall for FIQWS courses; 3 year cycles for each perspective course, 2 year break	Instructors send materials to Ana Vasovic or Department coordinator	Course Instructors, Ana Vasovic, Joshua Wilner
<b>CLA</b>	National test, given to a sample of students at 0, 60, and 120 credits	Every fall, starting with fall 12 semester	CUNY administered, TBD	CUNY, Testing office
<b>Final Exam / Assignments in FQUAN course</b> <b>Quantitative Skills Rubric</b>	Evaluation of Learning Outcomes through assessing final exams / assignments from FQUAN courses	every Fall semester	Instructors collect materials, assesses it	FQUAN instructors, Ana Vasovic, Joshua Wilner
<b>Q Perspectives assignments / Exams</b> <b>Quantitative Skills Rubric</b>	Evaluation of Learning Outcomes through assessing final exams / assignments from FQUAN courses	3 year cycles for each perspective course, 2 year break	Instructors send materials to Ana Vasovic or Department coordinator	Course Instructors, Ana Vasovic, Joshua Wilner
<b>Syllabi Analysis</b>	Syllabi evaluated every semester for containing key information on student learning	every Fall semester	Syllabi Emailed to Ana Vasovic	Instructors, Ana Vasovic, WAC Fellow
<b>Aggregate scores and score distributions on the C&amp;T Survey, concerning learning outcomes items (to be formulated)</b>	A survey addressing student satisfaction with instruction and perception of achievement of learning outcomes	Every semester, the revised survey started in Spring 2008	Student completes C&T Survey. IR office works with Office of Assessment to provide aggregate information	Office of Institutional Research
<b>Faculty Survey</b>	FIQWS Faculty complete surveys on course effectiveness and writing pedagogy; Perspectives faculty complete surveys on writing pedagogy	Alternate surveys every fall semester	Faculty complete survey on survey monkey, data is downloaded and analyzed	Instructors, Ana Vasovic, Craig Levinsky
<b>Student surveys/focus groups</b>	Students reflect on their learning experiences in Gen Ed courses	TBD	Used clickers in earlier semester but deemed inefficient; need to rethink the strategy; gather focus groups for a lunch time meeting and discussion	Ana Vasovic; Joshua Wilner
<b>Midterm Progress Reports</b>	Evaluation at midterm time of each students class performance; interventions offered	every Fall semester	Instructors in FIQWS, FQUAN and PSY 102 evaluate online each student on basic class performance; recommend interventions	Instructors, Ana Vasovic

# ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

The assessment teams meet with Ana Vasovic and Joshua Wilner to discuss findings and propose recommendations for improvement. A final assessment report for a course is prepared and submitted to the Gen Ed Implementation Committee for review and approval of recommendations. In the case of FIQWS, the information is forwarded to all instructors taught during the semester of assessment and to all instructors scheduled to teach in the upcoming semesters during the FIQWS orientation meeting. IN Perspectives, the findings and recommendations of the assessment team are forwarded to the Departmental Chair and/or course coordinator. The effectiveness of the implementation of suggested changes varies greatly by the department. The Undergraduate Studies office is developing plans to help improve the feedback loop mechanism (assigning/hiring course coordinators for every large perspective course has been recommended to the Provost).

## **Examples of changes based on assessment include:**

- Changes in course content
- Changes in course delivery / pedagogy
- Addition/deletion of courses
- Changes in pre- and co-requisites
- Changes in degree requirements
- Changes in emphasis for new or vacant faculty positions
- Develop / implement guidelines for adjuncts, teaching assistants and other contingent faculty
- Facilitate curriculum discussions at faculty meetings, curriculum committee meetings, and faculty retreats
- Justification of past curriculum changes and to show program improvement resulting from those changes
- Changes in advising processes
- Development of academic services for students
- Changes to student academic facilities such as computer labs, science labs, and study areas
- Development of program-based websites to provide students with academic and program information
- Further refine the assessment methods or implement new assessment methods
- Changes in instructional emphasis for current faculty
- Changes in course scheduling
- Changes in faculty/staff assignments

## **Modification of the Assessment Plan**

The Gen Ed Assessment coordinators will review the assessment process every year and will make modifications based on need.