

General Studies Portal Assessment Results (Spring 2017):

In accordance with the long-term assessment plan for General Studies Program, Portal courses were assessed in Spring 2017. A total of 343 responses were received.

Portal course assessment utilizes common assessment instruments and rubrics approved by the General Studies Council. The list of Portal courses selected for assessment were approved by the General Studies Council at the December 1, 2016 meeting; faculty responsible for the courses were then contacted and informed of the process to follow in conducting the assessment. Assessment results were collected using a Qualtrics survey during the last 3 weeks of the semester.

The General Studies Council determined in October 2015 that students in general studies courses should meet the standard of at least 70% of students achieving Proficient and Advanced for each identified learning outcome (both category and program level), where “Proficient” describes the skills of the typical student near the end of the course and “Advanced” is anything above proficient.

The assessment results for Portal learning outcomes (PO) are reported in Table 1. As shown in the last column of Table 1, the 70% goal was met for all of the Portal learning outcomes (PO 1 – PO 3). Almost three-quarters of the responses were rated Proficient and Advanced for PO 2 - interpret an argument through engaged discourse within the discipline (74.89%). The responses for both PO 3 - construct a cogent argument pertaining to the course topic (72.30%) and PO 1 - analyze critical issues confronting the individual and society (70.35%) were slightly above the 70% goal.

Comparing current assessment results to prior periods is also constructive. The comparison of Spring 2014 to Spring 2017 assessment results for Portal learning outcomes (PO) are reported in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, the 70% goal was not met for any of the Portal learning outcomes in Spring 2014; thus, meeting the 70% goal in the current period is definitely an improvement. One possible explanation for the improved performance is that faculty evaluators’ expectation for work meeting the “Proficient” and “Advanced” level was closer to the level where students are actually performing. Another possible explanation is the adjustments made in the assessment data collection process. Regardless of the reason, given that the purpose and intent of the Portal course is to “help students become intentional learners” through developing critical thinking skills, the improvement in assessment results is a positive step.

In addition to assessing the specific learning outcomes for Portal courses, the instruments used in the assessment process also measured the achievement on the GS Program Level Learning Outcomes; the assessment results for these Program Level Learning Outcomes are reported in Table 3.

As shown in the last column of Table 3, the 70% goal was met for the four Program Level Learning Outcomes (GS) measured. Slightly more than three-quarters of the responses were rated Proficient and Advanced for GS 1 – evaluate information appropriate to the task (75.73%); slightly less than three-quarters of the responses for GS 4 – communicate effectively in written form (74.05%) were rated Proficient and Advanced. The responses for both GS 2 – apply principles of critical thinking (70.64%) and GS 5 – analyze cultural issues within a global context (70.35%) were slightly above the 70% goal.

The comparison of Spring 2014 to Spring 2017 assessment results for Program Level Learning Outcomes (GS) are reported in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, while the 70% goal was not met for any of the Program Level learning outcomes in Spring 2014, the 70% goal was met in Spring 2017; meeting the 70% goal in the current period is definitely an improvement. As mentioned above, possible explanations for the improved performance include closer alignment between faculty evaluators’ expectations for work and the level where students are actually performing and adjustments made in the assessment data collection process.

Overall, the results reported above indicate that the 70% goal was met for all of the learning outcomes at the course level and program level. As mentioned earlier, there was a marked improvement in the results from the last

assessment cycle (Spring 2014). Going forward, additional information and feedback from instructors carrying out the assessment will be sought prior to making any recommendations regarding strategies to further improve the results. It should also be recognized that the results reported above are from the second-time data collection in the assessment cycle. Thus, the results should be considered another step in determining the base-line for achievement of the learning outcomes. As more data become available, recommendations for any potential changes can be made.

Table 1. Portal Assessment Results for Spring 2017 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

Portal Learning Outcome (PO):	Does not meet	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	Proficient and Advanced
PO 1: Analyze critical issues confronting the individual and society, including a global context.	0.87	3.49	25.29	53.20	17.15	70.35
PO 2: Interpret an argument through engaged discourse within the discipline.	0.44	4.38	20.29	57.66	17.23	74.89
PO 3: Construct a cogent argument pertaining to the course topic.	1.46	6.41	19.83	53.94	18.37	72.30

Table 2. Portal Assessment Results Comparison of Spring 2014 to Spring 2017 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

	PO 1: Analyze critical issues confronting the individual and society, including a global context.		PO 2: Interpret an argument through engaged discourse within the discipline.		PO 3: Construct a cogent argument pertaining to the course topic.	
	Spring 2014	Spring 2017	Spring 2014	Spring 2017	Spring 2014	Spring 2017
Does not meet	4.04	0.87	1.85	0.44	1.35	1.46
Beginning	22.22	3.49	15.99	4.38	12.12	6.41
Developing	34.01	25.29	34.01	20.29	28.62	19.83
Proficient	25.25	53.20	32.49	57.66	39.73	53.94
Advanced	14.48	17.15	15.66	17.23	18.18	18.37
Proficient and Advanced	39.73	70.35	48.15	74.89	57.91	72.30

Table 3. General Studies Program Level Assessment Results for Spring 2017 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

Program Level Learning Outcome (GS):	Does not meet	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	Proficient and Advanced
GS 1: Evaluate information appropriate to the task.	0.29	4.39	19.59	59.65	16.08	75.73
GS 2: Apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning.	0.29	4.07	25.00	52.33	18.31	70.64
GS 3: Communicate effectively in spoken form.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
GS 4: Communicate effectively in written form.	0.58	4.37	20.99	55.69	18.37	74.05
GS 5: Analyze cultural issues within a global context.	0.87	3.49	25.29	53.20	17.15	70.35
GS 6: Evaluate in context significant concepts relating to democracy.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 4. General Studies Program Level Assessment Results Comparison of Spring 2014 to Spring 2017 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

	GS 1: Evaluate information appropriate to the task		GS 2: Apply principles of critical thinking		GS 4: Communicate effectively in written form		GS 5: Analyze cultural issues within a global context	
	Spring 2014	Spring 2017	Spring 2014	Spring 2017	Spring 2014	Spring 2017	Spring 2014	Spring 2017
Does not meet	3.03	0.29	1.35	0.29	0.67	0.58	4.04	0.87
Beginning	19.53	4.39	15.15	4.07	12.46	4.37	22.22	3.49
Developing	29.63	19.59	38.72	25.00	38.38	20.99	34.01	25.29
Proficient	31.99	59.65	25.93	52.33	33.00	55.69	25.25	53.20
Advanced	15.82	16.08	18.86	18.31	15.49	18.37	14.48	17.15
Proficient and Advanced	47.81	75.73	44.78	70.64	48.4	74.05	39.73	70.35