

**Comparison of USG and SACS Expectations for General Education* Outcomes and Assessment
RACEA Task Force 2 on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
September 10, 2010**

Item	USG	SACS CS 3.5.1
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified by institution and approved by USG Council on General Education • At least 1 outcome in each of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communications ○ Quantitative Skills ○ Institutional Options ○ Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics ○ Natural Sciences, Math, and Technology ○ Social Sciences ○ US Perspectives ○ Global Perspectives ○ Critical Thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified by institution
Characteristics of Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning outcomes must be collegiate level, not skills-based, and broadly focused. • Learning outcomes must be consistent with the learning goals and with the mission of the University System of Georgia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College-level general education competencies
Identification of courses to specific outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not required
Time of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though still evolving, it appears the expectation is that learning outcomes will be assessed in conjunction with the core curriculum courses in which the outcome is addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any time up to graduation • Assessment of general education outcomes does not necessarily have to be associated with general education courses
Role of majors and co-curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears not to be supported because of the requirement of identifying learning outcomes with core curriculum courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes that general education outcomes may be reinforced, expanded upon, and/or assessed in the majors and the co-curriculum

*It is worth noting that the USG approach appears to be more about assessment of the **core curriculum** than of general education learning outcomes. This is in contrast to work done by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), which is one of the leaders in general education reform (see <http://www.aacu.org>). Particularly pertinent is this quote by Peter Ewell in *General Education and the Assessment Reform Agenda* (pp 5-6, AAC&U):

The assessment of general education is about examining the consequences of not any particular body of coursework that may be labeled as “general education” but of the undergraduate experience as a whole.

Since the USG model is more restrictive than SACS, institutions, by documenting their level of attainment of core curriculum outcomes, should be able to demonstrate compliance with SACS 3.5.1.

Sources:

http://www.usg.edu/academic_programs/cpr/implementing_the_new_core_curriculum/

http://www.usg.edu/academic_programs/documents/CorePolicy2009-09-23.pdf

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/handbooks/Exhibit%2031.Resource%20Manual.pdf> (currently under revision)

What constitutes “general education college-level competencies”?

One way institutions can demonstrate that their general education outcomes are college-level is to compare their expectations for student learning to those documented by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) in the following materials:

AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes

<http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm>

http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/EssentialOutcomes_Chart.pdf

VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) Rubrics

<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index.cfm>

Provide rubrics for the AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes

Trends and Emerging Practices in General Education

http://www.aacu.org/membership/documents/2009MemberSurvey_Part2.pdf