

Step 1: Aligning Course Goals with General Education Outcomes

Effective assessment begins with reviewing and aligning curriculum and courses. This first step requires you to consider several important questions: What *outcomes*—that is, what blend of skills, knowledge, and values—are students expected to learn in our core curriculum? Which courses address these general educational outcomes? What specific activities in these courses teach and/or reinforce discrete, assessable parts of these outcomes, in this document called *measurable proficiencies*?

As you begin this process of *alignment*, you need to . . .

- 1. *Become familiar with VSU's eight General Education Outcomes.*** These outcomes are available at [link to "VSU General Education Outcomes" on GEC web page]. As you will see, they are broadly stated and written as paragraphs. In this format, Outcome statements are too general to assess. However, they do give a valuable overview of the general mix of knowledge, skills, and values that outline each educational target.
- 2. *Identify courses in your department that address these Outcomes.*** In fall 2008, every academic department identified the General Education Outcomes it addresses in each of its core curriculum courses. Review this document [link to Excel file: alignment of core courses and Gen Ed Outcomes]. As you will see, each core curriculum course addresses some of the skills and knowledge described in one or more of these outcomes. However, no single course addresses every facet of an outcome. As a result, your assessment team will work with the General Education Council to select one or two courses and to match them with appropriate general education outcomes.
- 3. *Identify specific Measurable Proficiencies that one or two courses directly address.*** The General Education Council has divided each Outcome into 3 to 8 discrete statements, called **Measurable Proficiencies**, which lend themselves more easily to analytical evaluation. Review the list of Measurable Proficiencies at [link to VSU General Education Outcomes with Measurable Proficiencies, including fall group assignments]. As you will see, this list also includes the outcomes and proficiencies that the first assessment groups have targeted. Identify at least two Measurable Proficiencies that your course or courses address in a reasonably thorough way.

After you have completed the alignment process, fill out sections A, B, and C of the General Education Assessment: Pilot Project Worksheet [link]. Use a separate sheet for each Measurable Proficiency you plan to assess.