



# Amarillo College General Education Competency Methodology

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Division of Planning & Advancement  
Office of Outcomes Assessment

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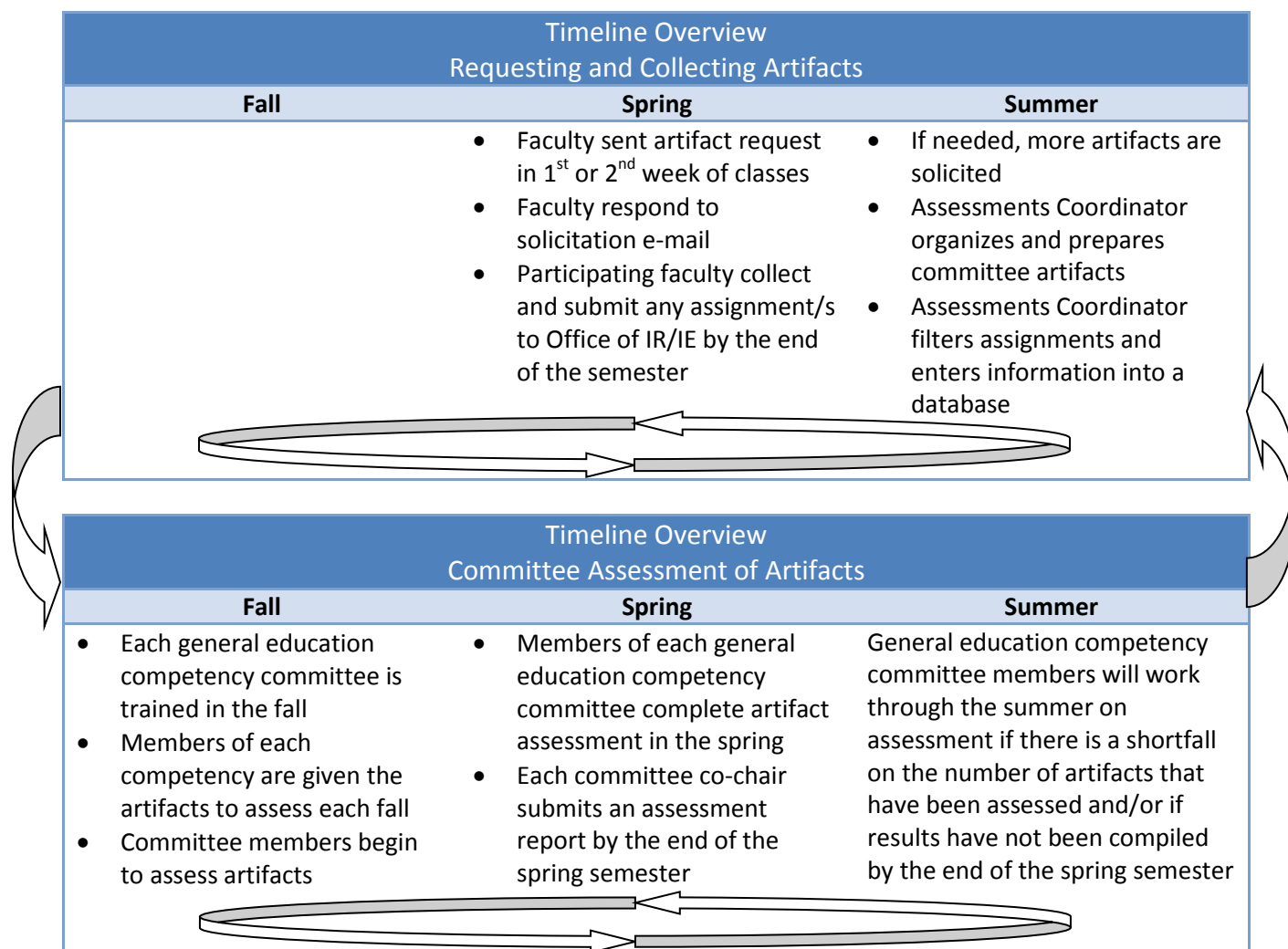
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### **Timeline Overviews:**

Each of the below timelines represents a continuous cycle. Both the “Requesting and Collecting Artifacts” and “Committee Assessment of Artifacts” cycles occur simultaneously each academic year.



### **Course Selection Process:**

Each Amarillo College student, in the entire Amarillo College population who meets the course selection criteria, is eligible for artifact evaluation.

After the first class day, the Office of IR/IE runs a query that generates the *30 Hour Student's File*. The *30 Hour Student's File* lists every section of every course that is offered at AC for a particular semester for students who have earned 30 or more non-developmental hours at AC. The queried list includes the course location, section title, student information for each student enrolled in each course section, and faculty information for each faculty member who teaches each course section.

**Course Selection Criteria:**

Once the *30 Hour Student's File* is generated, the following courses are **removed**:

- Academic course sections that have less than 10 students.
  - Exception: Under-represented courses (i.e. courses that would not otherwise have one section represented on the list and/or courses from branch campuses that would not otherwise be included that have at least 5 criteria-meeting students) are also eligible for inclusion
- Co-op courses
- Developmental courses
- Independent study courses
- Orientation courses (e.g. true orientation courses that span no longer than a few day's duration)
- Physical activity courses
- Practicum courses
- Recital courses
- Solo and Ensemble Courses
- Special Topics courses

Once the *30 Hour Student's File* is generated, the following students will also be **removed**:

- Certificate-seeking-only students
- Non-degree Seeking Students
  - Rationale: Students who have received 30 or more hours at AC, but have not yet declared a degree plan will be included in the course selection process because it is assumed that the student will declare a degree plan before graduating or through the reverse transfer process. However, students who are only declared as certificate-seeking or non-degree seeking will be removed from the list because these students typically are not required to take all of the general education courses that prepare them to successfully master AC's general education competencies.

Once the *30 Hour Student File* has been filtered, the remaining core curriculum courses are paired with the appropriate component area and competencies [required by the THECB](#) and remaining (non-core) courses are paired with the component area that appears to be the best fit based on the component area description. For courses not in the core curriculum, department head feedback serves as a secondary means for core objective identification requests.

### **Requesting Artifacts:**

The artifact solicitation process occurs approximately 8 months in advance from the point that the artifacts are assessed by a general education competency committee. For example, the artifacts that were collected from faculty, in the spring 2013 semester, would be assessed by the appropriate general education competency committee during the fall 2013-spring 2014 year. However, when new competencies are implemented less than a year in advance from the intended assessment period or a sufficient number of artifacts for a particular competency are not received, the solicitation cycle may be adjusted so that the proper number of artifacts can be procured from faculty.

Once competency matches have been determined based on the *30 Hour Student File*, a mail merge e-mail is sent out to the selected faculty that requests their participation in the assessment of general education. The [solicitation e-mail](#) identifies the course/s and provides competency information. Participating faculty are asked to identify coursework that meets the competency description/s and to submit ungraded or graded (when deemed appropriate) student work, assignment instructions, and a key (when available) to the Assessment's Coordinator. Additionally, the e-mail requests that faculty complete and send in the "[General Education Solicitation Response Form](#)."

The general education response form requires that faculty provide the following information:

- Name
- Department
- Course Title/s
- Date Assignment Available
- Information on Assignment
- Method of Participation
- Information on Needed Assistance

Non-responding faculty are sent a follow-up request a few weeks after the initial solicitation e-mail is sent. Faculty members who do submit artifacts are sent a letter of thanks at the close of the spring semester.

Because the collection process is transparent to students, students will not be aware if/when their particular coursework is being assessed. However, the Amarillo College catalog does stipulate under the "[Assessment of Student Experiences](#)" that by choosing to enroll in Amarillo College that the students have agreed to be assessed.

### **Preparing Artifacts:**

Once the Office of IR/IE has received student artifacts from the instructors, copies are made of the artifacts and/or any printed artifacts are scanned and stored in a private, shared network drive. If appropriate, any submitted artifacts are returned to the instructor within a 48 hour period.

For each artifact copy that will be seen by a committee (physical or virtual copy), any reasonable amount of student identifying or faculty identifying information is removed. Once any identifying information is removed, the work is then sorted by an artifact group letter and the artifacts within that group are assigned a number. For instance, one class's submitted artifacts will be assigned as Group A, another class will be Group B, etc. Next, each artifact within each group will be assigned a number using the following format: A1, A2, etc. Assigning the artifacts a group letter and artifact number helps ensure inter-rater reliability by removing information that may present a personal bias. Although blurring a student's face for a speech artifact would not be feasible as it would detour from the overall presentation quality, as many measures as possible will be taken to ensure anonymity and limit bias.

It is the goal of the Office of IR/IE to demonstrate as much artifact diversity as possible. As a result, if a student's work meets the competency and rubric criteria for multiple competencies, it is possible that a student's artifact may be used for assessment purposes within more than one competency area.

### **Inter-rater Reliability**

Rubrics are created for each competency area. Rubrics created between 2007 and 2010 were developed by the Instructional Assessment Sub-Committee with the exception of Mathematics, which was created by the Mathematics General Assessment Competency Committee. Rubrics created after 2011 are entirely developed and approved by the Instructional Assessment Committee. However, the general education competency committees are encouraged to note weaknesses within the rubrics.

Regardless of who developed the rubrics, each rubric statement is determined by faculty and each artifact is evaluated by faculty representing appropriate areas of institution. Each faculty member has a strong knowledge base for the competency for which he/she was assigned. Additionally, each rubric is tested to ensure that the statements are broad enough to work for a variety of disciplines and assignments, but focused enough to garner the same type of ratings for assignments that were completed by students with a similar level of competency.

Each committee will be composed of 3-5 members and will have a designated chair or co-chairs. The committee co-chairs' responsibility is to ensure that each committee member has the resources they need to successfully complete artifact evaluations and that all members are on task. Further, at least one member of each competency group will also serve on or act as the liaison to the Instructional Assessment Sub-Committee to ensure that the general education competency committee and the Instructional Assessment Committee have coinciding goals and understand the big assessment picture.

In a typical year, each general education competency committee will rotate off at least one of its current members. However, at least one person who has previously served will always remain on each general education competency committee to ensure that there is some form of consistency and rating experience, within each competency, on a year to year basis.

In cases of rating discrepancies or when questions arise, the committee is asked to defer to the chair/co-chairs.



## **Committee Training**

In the early fall, each general education competency committee group is trained by the Assessments Coordinator. Committee co-chairs, who have previously served on the committees, can also be used as a training resource.

If the committee notices any problems with the rubrics, artifacts they have received, or experience any other sort of obstacle in the evaluation process, continued training and support can be given to the committee by the Assessments Coordinator.

## **Artifact Evaluation:**

### ***All Artifacts:***

In the fall, the competency committees are guided on how to efficiently access assignment instructions and the artifacts that are attached to each assignment. While some past committee co-chairs and/or individual members requested they be sent a physical copy of each assignment and each artifact, the Office of IR/IE makes every effort to limit unnecessary resource waste and strongly encourages the members to access the electronic, scanned artifact copies that are available on a private, shared network drive.

Each committee will then do one of the following:

- 1) Individually assess each artifact and submit their individual scoring report and any comments to the selected chair/co-chair
- 2) Meet as a group and as a group unanimously decide on a rating for each artifact.

For groups who individually assess artifacts, an average score will be computed by the designated committee co-chair. The primary factor that dictates how a group meets will be largely dependent on work schedules, committee member locations, and personal preference. However, groups that do not physically meet will be expected to meet virtually with one another regarding scoring issues and overall impressions of student strengths and weaknesses.

When each competency group member and/or group conducts an evaluation, an artifact can be rated anywhere from a 1 to a 5 based on the alignment of the student work (artifact) with the rubric description. Each committee member is also expected to note students' strengths and weaknesses found through the artifact evaluation process. The noting of strengths and weaknesses will be done as an aggregate reflection of the students' overall attainment of a competency rather than a reflection of individual students or the strengths/weaknesses of an individual assignment.

After all of the committee members have evaluated each group's artifacts, the results are sent to the designated committee chair/co-chair who compiles a report of overall results, strengths, and weaknesses. The compiled results are then sent to the Assessments Coordinator. Once the Assessments Coordinator receives the artifacts, an action plan for how to best distribute the results or improve the process will be put in place.

### ***Old Artifacts:***

Before AC officially adopted the THECB competencies in 2011-2012, AC used different rubrics or evaluation methods to assess artifacts. Information related to old competencies (e.g. technology, mathematics, aesthetic awareness, etc.) can be viewed on the [Annual Assessment Reports Web page](#).

**Use of Results:**

After the Assessments Coordinator receives the general education competency committee assessment results, the Assessments Coordinator compiles the data in a report that shows trend line data as well as an overview of any pertinent committee findings.

The Assessment Coordinator's report is approved by each general education competency committee. Next, recommendations for improvement are submitted to the Dean's Council and may be subsequently given to the Curriculum Committee. The Dean's Council and Curriculum Committee are the bodies that are expected to implement improvements/revisions and communicate these recommended improvements/revisions to the faculty and staff who fall under the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

**General Education Assessment Reports:**

- [2012 Spring General Education Competencies Report](#)
- [2011 Spring Report \(Academic Year 2010-2011\)](#)
- [2010 Spring General Education Competencies Report on Assessment](#)
- [2009 Spring General Education Competencies Report on Assessment](#)
- [2008 Spring General Education Competencies Report on Assessment](#)
- [2007 Fall Preliminary Report](#)
- [Spring 2007-Spring 2008 Graph Participation and Result Snapshot](#)
- [2007 Spring Submission Results and Plans](#)
- [2006 Math Embedded Assessment Pilot Report](#)