



Amarillo College

**General Education Competencies  
Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs)  
Assessment Guide**

**Adopted by the Assessment Committee: April 2026**

# Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) Assessment Guide

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for assessing the College's general education competencies or ISLOs (institutional student learning outcomes). The general education competencies are provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) with an expectation that these competencies are taught by faculty in the Core Curriculum and achieved by our students. Reporting of the assessment of ISLOs is submitted to both the THECB and SACSCOC every 10 years. Learning outcomes assessment is a process for improving teaching and student learning.

## Amarillo College Principles of Assessment

AC's process for assessing student learning outcomes is guided by the following principles:

1. In alignment with the mission of Amarillo College, the intent of assessment is to improve the processes that help our learners identify and achieve their educational goals.
2. Outcomes assessment is data-driven and focuses on achieving continuous improvement in educational and administrative programs and educational support services rather than identifying these programs' successes or failures.
3. Outcomes assessment of student learning, educational support, and administrative support will be a collaborative process involving faculty, staff and students.
4. Outcomes assessment results will not be used for evaluation of faculty or staff. Assessment results will be used to illuminate areas of opportunities for improvement and serve as a celebration of teaching and student learning. The demonstration of self-reflective assessment of our educational support services and academic programs ultimately leads to institution success.
5. Whenever possible, the methodologies for assessing outcomes will be inconspicuous to students or others who are being assessed.
6. Whenever possible, submissions used for assessment will come from existing assignments instead of ones specially created for outcomes assessment. We will honor and assess the work we already do.
7. The assessment process itself will be evaluated by the Assessment Committee to ensure our continued alignment with AC's Strategic Plan and in our own efforts for continuous improvement.
8. Amarillo College's Strategic Plan includes evaluating student success by establishing and assessing an institutional outcomes assessment program. The President's Cabinet supports these outcomes assessment efforts.

## General Education Competencies (ISLOs)

The College adopted the following general education competencies as of the fall semester of 2014 from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB):

**Communication Skills (COM)** - effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

**Critical Thinking Skills (CT)** - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

**Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS)** - manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

**Personal Responsibility (PR)** - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

**Social Responsibility (SR)** - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

**Teamwork (TW)** - ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

## General Education Competency Map

The following table displays the general education competencies that are required to be addressed by each general education curriculum area (instructional programs). Our six general education competencies are provided to us by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. ISLOs (Institutional Student Learning Outcomes) is the term Amarillo College uses for General Education Competencies. The general education competencies (ISLOs) are assessed every two years.

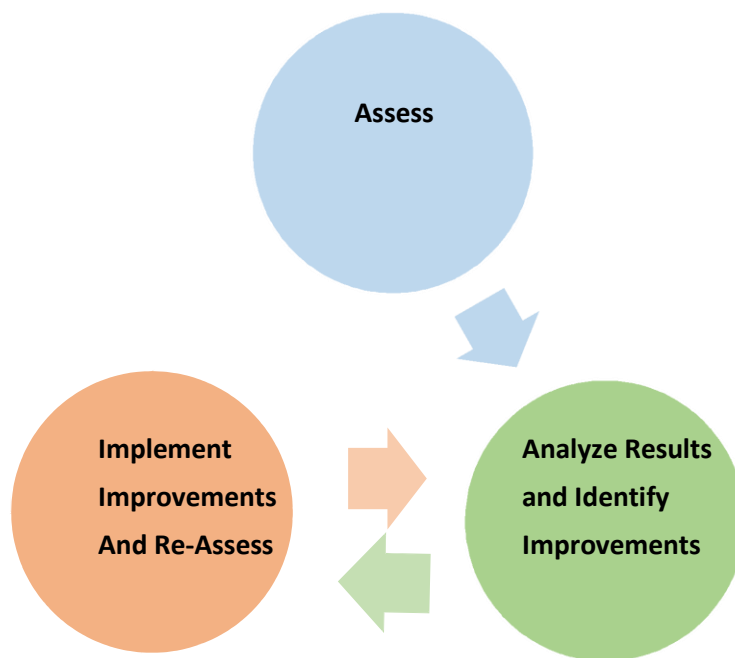
**Figure 1. Institutional Level Map for our (6) General Education Competencies**

Foundational Component Area	Communication	Critical Thinking	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Personal Responsibility	Social Responsibility	Teamwork
American History	X	X		X	X	
Communication	X	X		X		X
Creative Arts	X	X			X	X
Government/Political Science	X	X		X	X	
Language, Philosophy & Culture	X	X		X	X	
Life & Physical Sciences	X	X	X			X
Mathematics	X	X	X			
Social & Behavioral Sciences	X	X	X		X	

## Assessment Cycle and Schedule

An assessment cycle is displayed in **Figure 2**. A cycle is completed when a general education competency (student learning outcome) has been re-assessed. Re-assessment allows the College to determine if improvements that were made have impacted students learning.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 2: Assessment Cycle**

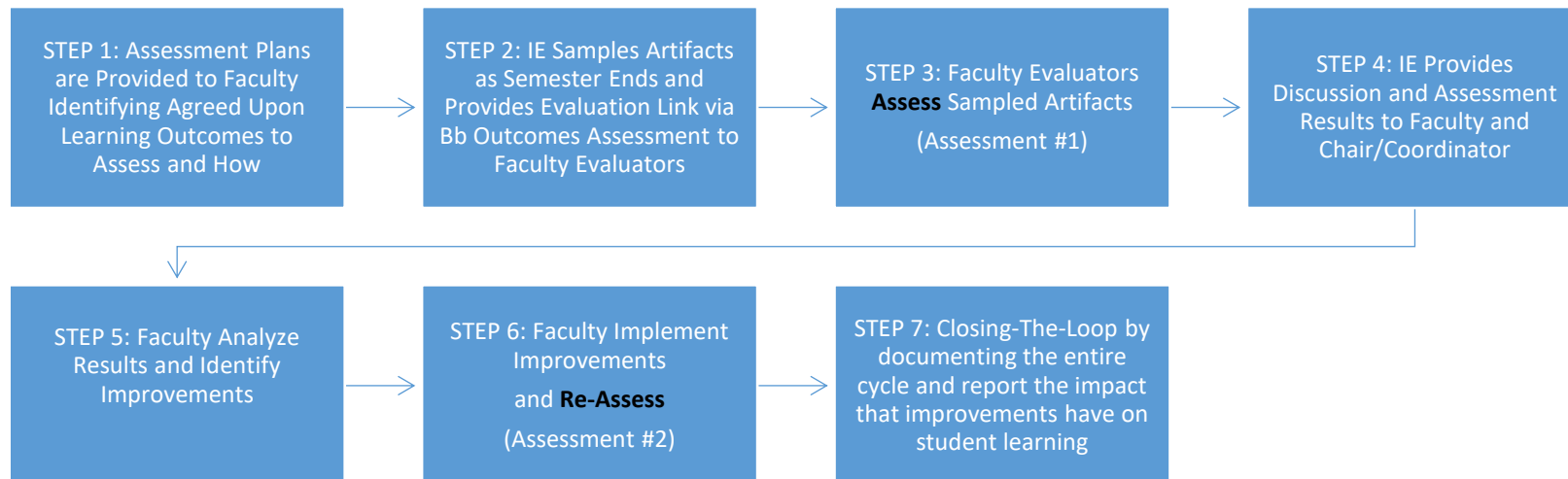


<sup>1</sup> This definition of an assessment cycle conforms to SACSCOC Standard 8.2.b.

## General Education Assessment Schedule

1. The assessment cycles are planned and on-going where learning outcomes are assessed and reassessed.
2. The assessment schedule is manageable.
3. Learning outcomes assessment occurs every two years.
4. Depending on the department, assessment occurs in fall, spring or summer allowing for a variety of courses and learning outcomes to be included in the assessment cycle and process.
5. Professional learning is embedded in the assessment cycle and assists faculty in developing improvement strategies for both teaching and learning.

## General Education Assessment Process Steps (Figure 3)



\*IE=Institutional Effectiveness

## General Education Outcomes, Assessment Methodology and Process

Faculty who teach courses within the Core curriculum utilize the *Blackboard Outcomes Assessment* application to assess general education competencies.

### Identification of Outcomes

Outcomes are provided by the THECB as the six general education competencies. Expectations for, and assessment of, student learning outcomes are the same for traditional students' learning and at off-campus instructional sites.

### Assessment Methodology

Assessment activities include all instructional modalities, to include face-to-face lecture, online, hybrid, clinical, and practicum, and are inclusive of instruction and student learning at off-campus instructional sites.

Student artifacts are collected, sampled, and assessed using the online Blackboard Outcomes Assessment application or in cases of performance arts, jury sheets are collected.

A student artifact is also known as the "common assessment" among faculty to assess student learning. For example, program faculty meet to decide on the best assignment/assessment to use to assess their ISLOs. This assignment is the same (common assessment) across all sections to assess the ISLO. Faculty are encouraged to create or label the assignment submission as "Common Assessment" for easy collection and may work with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to coordinate different submission types. Faculty work together to design assignments/activities to better foster and measure student learning.

Amarillo College faculty assess student learning using rubrics. Assessment scoring rubrics are developed by faculty. Rubric scoring is on a scale of four to zero. Faculty choose their benchmarks prior to assessment based on previous results and typically set 75% or an average of 3.00 out of 4.00 points as a benchmark.

Achievement	Score
Exemplary	4
Proficient	3
Emerging	2
Insufficient	1
Incomplete	0

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness analyzes the data, provides and discusses the results with program faculty for review and action.

The assessment process including the use of results to seek improvement is identical for the assessment of educational programs on-campus as it is for off-campus instructional sites. Amarillo College assesses programs delivered at off-campus instructional sites the same as it does for programs on-campus. Amarillo College encourages and supports the use of results to seek improvements.

### **Support for Faculty**

The role of Department Chairs and Deans in the assessment process is to facilitate this ongoing conversation of using the results to seek improvement and to support the faculty in these endeavors. In that role, the faculty and Chairs/Deans meet with Institutional Effectiveness to review the results.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness also assists faculty in the development of assessment scoring rubrics and curriculum maps and offers training on these subjects through the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Faculty are also supported through faculty development offered by our Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

CTL offers professional learning cohorts for all faculty. These cohorts are provided for faculty as they learn new student engagement techniques or pedagogical approaches to teaching. The Faculty Professional Development Plan provides for an academic year timeline and stipend to faculty for their development.

CTL and IE (Institutional Effectiveness) collaborate to bring professional development and assessment integration into the assessment cycle.

## **Use of Results for Improvement of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes**

Program coordinators and faculty will document assessment results and compare learning outcomes data across assessment cycles. Documentation will enable programs to analyze student learning improvement based on implemented action plans. A biennial report will be submitted by programs that consists of the following components:

- ISLOs measured
- Assessment results from Year A (ex. 2024-25 cycle)
- Discussion of implemented improvements
- Assessment results from Year B (ex. 2026-27 cycle)
- Comparative analysis of results and future action plan for improvement