

Gen Ed Assessment 2018-2020

Mark Walker
Director of General Education
September, 2020

The academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 have been transitional for both Union College as a whole and its general education program, the “Common Curriculum”: David Harris became president of Union; a new strategic plan was approved by the Board of Trustees; and an ad hoc committee, the “Gen Ed Task Force,” began the work of designing a new general education curriculum. This transition has presented some challenges for general education assessment.

Initially three types of data were collected in order to assess the Common Curriculum (CC). The first consisted of individual assessments, whereby a cohort of in-coming students was selected at the start of the new academic year and then subsequently followed until graduation. When these students enrolled in a class that would earn CC credit, their instructor was then contacted and asked to assess that student. All sections of the First Year Preceptorial (FPR), Union’s reading and writing course for new students, and the Sophomore Research Seminar (SRS) were assessed, whereby all FPR and SRS instructors were asked to assess their class as a whole. The decision was made to halt the individual assessments with the Class of 2020, probably in anticipation of rapid general education reform. The assessment of FPR and SRS sections has continued.

CC assessment is hampered by a low return rate. During 2018-2020 less than a

third of assessments that were requested were returned. As a result, the data fluctuates, making significant analysis difficult. For example, see the assessment results of the first learning outcomes for the FPR and SRS (see Appendix 1) The basic problem is that the current CC assessment regime does not produce information that is helpful for the instructors teaching such courses. In particular, while data on how many students meet particular learning objectives at different levels (exceptional, mastery, proficient, developmental, insufficient, not observed) has been gathered, standards have not been established for determining whether each level has been satisfactorily met (see Appendices 2 & 3), whether enough students are proficient, exhibit mastery, or are exceptional. Moreover, even if such standards had been set and observed, they may not help an instructor desiring guidance on how to raise the performance of their students. When the assessment regimen is created for the new General Education program, it will be important to engage in a dialogue with the instructors of courses that will count towards this curriculum in order to determine what sort of information derived from assessment will be helpful to them.

The Gen Ed Task Force, which began its work in the autumn of 2018, has been hampered both by the inherent difficulty of the task, and external forces. In 2018-2019, discussions about Gen Ed reform ran parallel to the year-long efforts to create a new Strategic Plan. Since a new Gen Ed curriculum should support the Strategic Plan, little progress could be made until the new Strategic Plan was announced in the autumn of 2019. Although the Task Force had made considerable advances by the spring of 2020, the onset of the global pandemic first froze its work, then in combination with the social

upheaval following the murder of George Floyd refocused its goals, a process that has continued. The Gen Ed Task Force is planning to bring a new curricular proposal to the Faculty during the spring term of 2021.

The present CC assessment at Union is not ideal. It is no longer synced with the Strategic Plan and does not receive strong support from the Faculty. However, we are assessing the existing General Education curriculum. In other words, the CC assessment is doing its job. Since Union is engaged in the process of reforming general education, it arguably would not make sense to revise the current assessment regime of the CC. A new general education curriculum must first be developed, approved by the Faculty, and implemented. This new curriculum should be designed to facilitate its own assessment, and this assessment should produce information that instructors can use to improve their courses.

Assessment Requests Returned

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
IAR Requests Returned	38%	28%	30%
FPR Requests Returned	47%	32%	27%
SRS Requests Returned	31%	34%	31%

FYP Outcome A1: Discusses Ideas

	Fall 2018	Winter 2019	Fall 2019	Winter 2020
Exceptional	34	13	15	27
Mastery	25	33	26	11
Proficient	20	30	31	29
Developmental	15	20	17	5
Insufficient	5	3	11	2
Not Observed	0	1	0	14

SRS Outcome A1: Develop a Research Topic

	Fall 2018	Winter 2019	Spring 2019*	Fall 2019	Winter 2020	Spring 2020*
Exceptional	28	14	26	28	8	13
Mastery	42	18	37	42	24	42
Proficient	21	25	26	21	46	33
Developmental	7	12	6	7	22	8
Insufficient	2	0	5	1	0	3
Not Observed	0	1	0	0	0	0

*Excludes the sections of SCH 150 for reasons of comparison.

FIRST-YEAR PRECEPTORIAL Student Learning Outcomes

2018 FALL TERM
4 of 17 Sections Reporting | 59 Students
Evaluation (count/percent)

Learning Outcomes	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
	Outcome A1 Discusses Ideas	20	34%	15	25%	12	20%	9	15%	3	5%	0
Outcome A2 Reads texts critically	14	24%	18	31%	22	37%	4	7%	1	2%	0	0%
Outcome A3.a Supports a focused thesis	11	19%	24	41%	20	34%	3	5%	1	2%	0	0%
Outcome A3.b Organizes Information Logically	14	24%	21	36%	17	29%	5	8%	2	3%	0	0%
Outcome A3.c Expresses Ideas Clearly	11	19%	22	37%	14	24%	10	17%	2	3%	0	0%
Outcome A3.d Integrates Evidence	20	34%	15	25%	15	25%	7	12%	2	3%	0	0%
Outcome A4 Incorporates Revision	18	31%	13	22%	17	29%	9	15%	1	2%	1	2%
Outcome B Connections or Contributions	20	34%	13	22%	18	31%	6	10%	2	3%	0	0%
Outcome C Reflective Learning	20	34%	13	22%	16	27%	6	10%	1	2%	3	5%

Note: First Year Preceptorial Honors is offered in the Winter term.

FIRST-YEAR PRECEPTORIAL Student Learning Outcomes

2019 WINTER TERM
9 of 23 Sections Reporting | 120 Students
Evaluation (count/percent)

Learning Outcomes	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
	Outcome A1 Discusses Ideas	16	13%	39	33%	36	30%	24	20%	4	3%	1
Outcome A2 Reads texts critically	14	12%	37	31%	47	39%	15	13%	6	5%	1	1%
Outcome A3.a Supports a focused thesis	10	8%	43	36%	47	39%	17	14%	3	3%	0	0%
Outcome A3.b Organizes Information Logically	8	7%	47	39%	46	38%	15	13%	4	3%	0	0%
Outcome A3.c Expresses Ideas Clearly	13	11%	39	33%	45	38%	18	15%	5	4%	0	0%
Outcome A3.d Integrates Evidence	11	9%	43	36%	42	35%	21	18%	3	3%	0	0%
Outcome A4 Incorporates Revision	9	8%	36	30%	51	43%	13	11%	1	1%	10	8%
Outcome B Connections or Contributions	12	10%	45	38%	46	38%	11	9%	1	1%	5	4%
Outcome C Reflective Learning	15	13%	35	29%	38	32%	13	11%	2	2%	17	14%

Note: First Year Preceptorial Honors is offered in the Winter term.

FIRST-YEAR PRECEPTORIAL Student Learning Outcomes

2019 FALL TERM
5 of 17 Sections Reporting | 72 Students
Evaluation (count/percent)

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Outcome A1 Discusses Ideas	11	15%	19	26%	22	31%	12	17%	8	11%	0	0%
Outcome A2 Reads texts critically	12	17%	20	28%	17	24%	19	26%	4	6%	0	0%
Outcome A3.a Supports a focused thesis	10	14%	19	26%	20	28%	17	24%	6	8%	0	0%
Outcome A3.b Organizes Information Logically	14	19%	18	25%	18	25%	18	25%	4	6%	0	0%
Outcome A3.c Expresses Ideas Clearly	15	21%	16	22%	20	28%	13	18%	8	11%	0	0%
Outcome A3.d Integrates Evidence	12	17%	22	31%	17	24%	18	25%	3	4%	0	0%
Outcome A4 Incorporates Revision	14	19%	18	25%	18	25%	18	25%	4	6%	0	0%
Outcome B Connections or Contributions	12	17%	19	26%	22	31%	15	21%	4	6%	0	0%
Outcome C Reflective Learning	15	21%	16	22%	20	28%	13	18%	8	11%	0	0%

**FIRST-YEAR PRECEPTORIAL
Student Learning Outcomes**

2020 WINTER TERM
4 of 21 Sections Reporting | 55 Students
Evaluation (count/percent)

Learning Outcomes

	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Outcome A1 Discusses Ideas	15	27%	6	11%	16	29%	3	5%	1	2%	14	25%
Outcome A2 Reads texts critically	13	24%	12	22%	14	25%	1	2%	1	2%	14	25%
Outcome A3 Evaluates Evidence	13	24%	15	27%	11	20%	2	4%	0	0%	14	25%
Outcome A4 Develop an Evidence Based Argument	13	24%	11	20%	15	27%	2	4%	0	0%	14	25%
Outcome A5 Present Research Findings	13	24%	12	22%	14	25%	2	4%	0	0%	14	25%
Outcome A6 Practice Professional Standards of Citation	14	25%	5	9%	18	33%	3	5%	1	2%	14	25%
Outcome B Connections or Contributions	14	25%	15	27%	23	42%	3	5%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome C Reflective Learning	16	29%	15	27%	17	31%	7	13%	0	0%	0	0%

SOPHOMORE RESEARCH SEMINAR

Student Learning Outcomes

2018 FALL TERM
3 of 9 Sections Reporting | 43 Students
Evaluation (count/percent)

Learning Outcomes	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Outcome A1 Develop a Research Topic	12	28%	18	42%	9	21%	3	7%	1	2%	0	0%
Outcome A2 Find Evidence	12	28%	15	35%	12	28%	3	7%	1	2%	0	0%
Outcome A3 Evaluate Evidence	11	26%	16	37%	12	28%	3	7%	1	2%	0	0%
Outcome A4 Develop an Evidence Based Argument	10	23%	17	40%	12	28%	3	7%	1	2%	0	0%
Outcome A5 Present Research Findings	13	30%	15	35%	9	21%	4	9%	0	0%	2	5%
Outcome A6 Practice Professional Standards of Citation	12	28%	14	33%	12	28%	3	7%	1	2%	1	2%
*Outcome B Connections or Contributions	15	35%	13	30%	11	26%	3	7%	1	2%	1	2%
*Outcome C Reflective Learning	15	35%	12	28%	12	28%	3	7%	1	2%	0	0%

Note: Scholars Research Seminar is offered in the Spring term.

SOPHOMORE RESEARCH SEMINAR
Student Learning Outcomes

2019 WINTER TERM
4 of 11 Sections Reporting | 65 Students
Evaluation (count/percent)

Learning Outcomes	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Outcome A1 Develop a Research Topic	9	14%	18	28%	25	38%	12	18%	0	0%	1	2%
Outcome A2 Find Evidence	7	11%	19	29%	26	40%	12	18%	0	0%	1	2%
Outcome A3 Evaluate Evidence	6	9%	21	32%	19	29%	18	28%	0	0%	1	2%
Outcome A4 Develop an Evidence Based Argument	8	12%	19	29%	20	31%	17	26%	0	0%	1	2%
Outcome A5 Present Research Findings	12	18%	23	35%	16	25%	11	17%	2	3%	1	2%
Outcome A6 Practice Professional Standards of Citation	8	12%	12	18%	28	43%	14	22%	2	3%	1	2%
*Outcome B Connections or Contributions	8	12%	20	31%	10	15%	26	40%	0	0%	1	2%
*Outcome C Reflective Learning	6	9%	18	28%	14	22%	12	18%	0	0%	15	23%

Note: Scholars Research Seminar is offered in the Spring term.

Learning Outcomes	SOPHOMORE RESEARCH SEMINAR Student Learning Outcomes												SCHOLARS RESEARCH SEMINAR Student Learning Outcomes											
	2019 SPRING TERM 4 of 10 Sections Reporting 62 Students Evaluation (count/percent)												2019 SPRING TERM 1 of 6 Sections Reporting 10 Students Evaluation (count/percent)											
	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED		EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
Outcome A1 Develop a Research Topic	16	26%	23	37%	16	26%	4	6%	3	5%	0	0%	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome A2 Find Evidence	16	26%	26	42%	11	18%	5	8%	4	6%	0	0%	4	40%	4	40%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome A3 Evaluate Evidence	14	23%	23	37%	16	26%	5	8%	4	6%	0	0%	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome A4 Develop an Evidence Based Argument	13	21%	25	40%	13	21%	7	11%	4	6%	0	0%	4	40%	4	40%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome A5 Present Research Findings	19	31%	22	35%	12	19%	4	6%	2	3%	3	5%	4	40%	4	40%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome A6 Practice Professional Standards of Citation	22	35%	22	35%	11	18%	3	5%	4	6%	0	0%	4	40%	4	40%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome B Connections or Contributions	14	23%	26	42%	14	23%	6	10%	2	3%	0	0%	4	40%	4	40%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome C Reflective Learning	15	24%	21	34%	18	29%	7	11%	1	2%	0	0%	4	40%	4	40%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%

SOPHOMORE RESEARCH SEMINAR
Student Learning Outcomes

2019 FALL TERM
3 of 9 Sections Reporting | 43 Students
Evaluation (count/percent)

Learning Outcomes

EXCEPTIONAL

MASTERY

PROFICIENT

DEVELOPMENTAL

INSUFFICIENT

NOT OBSERVED

Outcome A1

Develop a Research Topic

12

28%

18

42%

9

21%

3

7%

1

2%

0

0%

Outcome A2

Find Evidence

12

28%

15

35%

12

28%

3

7%

1

2%

0

0%

Outcome A3

Evaluate Evidence

11

26%

16

37%

12

28%

3

7%

1

2%

0

0%

Outcome A4

Develop an Evidence Based Argument

10

23%

17

40%

12

28%

3

7%

1

2%

0

0%

Outcome A5

Present Research Findings

13

30%

15

35%

9

21%

4

9%

0

0%

2

5%

Outcome A6

Practice Professional Standards of Citation

12

28%

14

33%

12

28%

3

7%

1

2%

1

2%

***Outcome B**

Connections or Contributions

15

35%

13

30%

11

26%

3

7%

1

2%

1

2%

***Outcome C**

Reflective Learning

15

35%

12

28%

12

28%

3

7%

1

2%

0

0%

Note: Scholars Research Seminar is offered in the Spring term.

SOPHOMORE RESEARCH SEMINAR
Student Learning Outcomes

2020 WINTER TERM
3 of 11 Sections Reporting | 50 Students
Evaluation (count/percent)

Learning Outcomes

	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Outcome A1 Develop a Research Topic	4	8%	12	24%	23	46%	11	22%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome A2 Find Evidence	8	16%	11	22%	21	42%	9	18%	1	2%	0	0%
Outcome A3 Evaluate Evidence	6	12%	9	18%	20	40%	12	24%	2	4%	1	2%
Outcome A4 Develop an Evidence Based Argument	10	20%	9	18%	18	36%	12	24%	1	2%	0	0%
Outcome A5 Present Research Findings	13	26%	9	18%	20	40%	5	10%	0	0%	3	6%
Outcome A6 Practice Professional Standards of Citation	1	2%	11	22%	31	62%	6	12%	0	0%	1	2%
*Outcome B Connections or Contributions	11	22%	5	10%	29	58%	4	8%	0	0%	1	2%
*Outcome C Reflective Learning	10	20%	4	8%	14	28%	6	12%	0	0%	16	32%

Note: Scholars Research Seminar is offered in the Spring term.

Learning Outcomes	SOPHOMORE RESEARCH SEMINAR Student Learning Outcomes												SCHOLARS RESEARCH SEMINAR Student Learning Outcomes											
	2020 SPRING TERM 4 of 11 Sections Reporting 60 Students Evaluation (count/percent)												2020 SPRING TERM 1 of 5 Sections Reporting 10 Students Evaluation (count/percent)											
	EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED		EXCEPTIONAL		MASTERY		PROFICIENT		DEVELOPMENTAL		INSUFFICIENT		NOT OBSERVED	
Outcome A1 Develop a Research Topic	8	13%	25	42%	20	33%	5	8%	2	3%	0	0%	1	10%	5	50%	2	20%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%
Outcome A2 Find Evidence	9	15%	22	37%	23	38%	4	7%	1	2%	1	2%	1	10%	3	30%	3	30%	2	20%	1	10%	0	0%
Outcome A3 Evaluate Evidence	9	15%	25	42%	22	37%	2	3%	1	2%	1	2%	2	20%	4	40%	1	10%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome A4 Develop an Evidence Based Argument	9	15%	27	45%	20	33%	2	3%	1	2%	1	2%	2	20%	4	40%	1	10%	1	10%	2	20%	0	0%
Outcome A5 Present Research Findings	11	18%	23	38%	17	28%	5	8%	1	2%	3	5%	1	10%	3	30%	3	30%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome A6 Practice Professional Standards of Citation	11	18%	20	33%	19	32%	8	13%	1	2%	1	2%	4	40%	2	20%	3	30%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%
*Outcome B Connections or Contributions	13	22%	16	27%	23	38%	6	10%	1	2%	1	2%	1	10%	3	30%	5	50%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%
*Outcome C Reflective Learning	12	20%	17	28%	22	37%	7	12%	1	2%	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	9	90%