

# General Education Assessment Plan

## Objective Review Committee Report Template

### **Objective: Information Literacy (8)**

**Objective Review Committee Membership: Chris Chatwin, Jim Disanza, Linda Hensen-Jackson, Phil Homan, Tony Lovgren, Sarah Robey, Matt Wilson**

A. Evaluate the assessment plan for each course, together with its implementation. Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

**ACAD 1111 Information Literacy & Inquiry:** The assessment plan for ACAD 1111 is conducted via the Student Success Center on the ISU Pocatello campus. It assesses 5 Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) which are relevant to the definition of Objective 8 in the General Education Objectives. The SLO's are evaluated on a rotating basis by a committee every year. The committee uses valid rubrics on which to base their evaluations. As a result of this structure, the assessment plan is appropriate and effective.

**CMP 2203 Media Literacy:** The assessment plan for this course is thorough, sound, and well thought-out. Unfortunately, the implementation of the plan failed. This course is taught by several faculty in the Communication, Media, and Persuasion Department. It is clear that no one who taught the course thought to step up to remind people about annual assessments. In addition, the person who taught the course more frequently than anyone else was given a terminal contract in June of 2020. This individual found another job and left the university prior to the spring 2021 semester. Any hope of retrieving assessment data from this individual's courses was lost. To make sure that this does not happen again, the department Chairperson has appointed a faculty member who regularly teaches the class as director of assessment. This person is responsible for processing semesterly assessment reports and putting these in a form that can be forwarded to GERC.

**HIST 2291 Introduction to Research:** The assessment plan for HIST 2291 is straightforward and well-tested in the History Department. History faculty evaluate a representative sampling of student work once a year, focusing on a different competency each year. The submitted assessment/assignment is chosen by each 2291 instructor (3-4 rotating faculty), the sample chosen at random, and the student work anonymized before others in the department assess the sample as exceeding, meeting, or falling below expectations. The system seems to be working well and consistently from year to year. Having an assigned Assessment Coordinator (for all of our Gen Ed Objective courses) within the Department has helped us keep on top of our assessment schedule, collecting materials, etc.

**LLIB 1115 Introduction to Information Research:** Since accomplishing this objective requires hands-on practice, student annotated bibliographies are used to assess one of the five Objective 8 competencies each fall semester. Analytics from exam questions that measure

student understanding of learning objectives unable to be assessed with the annotated bibliographies will also be used. Assignment prompts and rubrics for the annotated bibliographies, as well as syllabi, will be gathered as indirect assessments for the course. The annotated bibliography assignment prompts and rubrics as well as a sample percentage of student annotated bibliographies will be mapped to the Objective 8 competencies to see if they match. The sample size will consist of 8-15% of randomized student annotated bibliographies completed and turned into all LLIB 1115 instructors. Annotated bibliographies will be randomized by method of instruction delivery: face-to-face and online instruction.

**FIN 1115: Personal Finance:** FIN 1115 is offered both through ISU and several Idaho High Schools. As such, the assessment process was recently retooled in order to bring consistency across all different teaching platforms. The assessment is conducted through multiple choice questions administered through examinations, quizzes, or assignments. Since each school operates on different schedules and under different circumstances it was viewed that this would provide the best level of assessment consistency. For each of the 5 Learning Objectives there are 3 multiple choice questions administered. Each question is evaluated to determine that at least 70% of respondents are answering each question correctly. 70% and above is seen as satisfactory. With the change to multiple choice questions we also decided to assess all 5 Learning Objectives each semester.

**INFO 1101 Digital Information Literacy:** The five-page research paper in APA style is the culmination of the following four of five learning outcomes (1, 2, 3, and 5). Early in the semester, we work with the students to develop a focused, clear, singular, and in-depth research question from a topic of their choice. Students use their digital devices to learn and utilize the library's electronic resources to choose a topic and develop a research question that requires analysis/problem-solving to answer. The approved research question then centers student efforts on establishing an outline. This, in turn, focuses their effort on using their digital devices to collect information from electronic resources. This information is then synthesized and analyzed, resulting in an effective answer to the research question with appropriately cited sources. A separate assignment is used to assess learning outcome 4. We believe that using one assignment to assess four of the five learning outcomes does not accurately identify whether any of the four outcomes are problematic for students. We are in the process of identifying a revised assessment plan to address this deficiency.

B. Evaluate the assessment *outcome* for each course. To what extent are students in each course satisfactorily achieving the learning outcomes for the objective? Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

**ACAD 1111 Information Literacy & Inquiry:** Over the last five years the assessment committee for this course has evaluated the following SLO's:

1. Determine the nature and extent of the information/data needed to accomplish a specific purpose.
2. Identify sources and gather information/data effectively and efficiently.
3. Evaluate credibility of sources and information/data.

4. Understand the economic, ethical, legal, and social issues surrounding the creation, collection, and use of information/data.
5. Use information/data effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

Findings from the assessment committee indicate success for the majority of these SLO's with specific suggestions for the areas of challenge. Suggested areas of change are in #3, helping students more fully understand the evaluation of authors' credibility and limitations of sources. The committee has also identified changes to be implemented to further support students in these challenge areas by adding more emphasis on feedback & revision, academic integrity, standardizing the expectations of 1<sup>st</sup> Year students, evaluation on the merits of information, and better contextualization of information literacy.

**CMP 2203 Media Literacy:** Unknown. Some data could not be retrieved because the faculty member who taught most of the courses departed. Other faculty teaching the course did not follow through on the assessment plan.

**HIST 2291 Introduction to Research:** Faculty review of student performance indicates strong levels of student achievement towards all of the five learning objectives over the previous five years. As stated above, the History Department assesses a different learning objective each year, which allows instructors to submit student work that is best representative of that year's objective. It is worth noting that a number of History faculty teach 2291, and each teaches the course differently. However, there are clearly many ways to effectively teach to the learning objectives.

**LLIB 1115 Introduction to Information Research:** Each of the department's six learning outcomes is mapped to one or more of the Objective 8 competencies:

1. Find a specified variety and quantity of both academic and popular information sources as outlined by their instructor that are used to address a particular research topic. (Competencies 1-2)
2. Identify the source types found. Ex: newspapers, magazines, government documents or reports, peer-reviewed articles, books, encyclopedia articles, reference resources, etc. (Competency 2)
3. Evaluate the sources they found using standardized criteria, such as (but not limited exclusively to) currency, relevance, accuracy, authority, and purpose. (Competency 3)
4. Students will document the sources of information they located in a professionally recognized reference format, such as APA, MLA, CSE, etc. (Competencies 4-5)
5. Students will use the information they found to create an annotated bibliography with relevant sources and summaries that could be used to answer a research question. (Competencies 4-5)
6. Students will demonstrate understanding of economic, ethical, legal and social issues surrounding the creation, collection, and use of information. Final exams will assess students' understandings in these areas. (Competencies 4-5)

Per the last Five-Year Departmental Report, Objective 8 Competencies 1-3 were evaluated: Competency 1 in 2015-2016, Competency 2 in 2016-2017, and Competency 3 in 2017-2018.

The departmental assessment committee found that 95% of students had met Competency 1, 77% had met Competency 2, and 94% had met Competency 3. Moreover, after adjustments to the assessment process, Competency 2 was reassessed in 2017- 2018), and the committee found that 90% of students had met it.

**FIN 1115: Personal Finance:** This past year was the first year that all 5 Learning Objectives were evaluated and the first year in which I was a part of the assessment process.

Competencies 1 - 4 were all found to be satisfactory with percentage correct as follows:

Competency #1: 94%

Competency #2 88%

Competency #3 87%

Competency #4 82%

Competency #5 was found to be unsatisfactory with a percentage correct of 51%. Based on the results for Learning Outcome 5 “Use information/data effectively to accomplish a specific purpose” there will be an increased focus on teaching students the tools necessary to use information to make informed decisions. This Learning Outcome will be further evaluated following the Spring 2021 semester to see if further changes or training is required.

**INFO 1101 Digital Information Literacy:**

As identified in part (A), we believe that using one assignment to assess four of the five learning outcomes does not accurately identify whether any of the four outcomes are problematic for students. We are in the process of identifying a revised assessment plan to address this deficiency.

C. Evaluate the list of courses currently approved to satisfy the objective. To what extent does the current list contribute to a strong, coherent system of general education. Would a reduction or increase in the number or variety of courses in this objective strengthen the overall system? Provide a brief summary of the Committee’s findings. Describe any recommended changes.

Objective 8’s makeup of courses has strength in its diversity. While Objective 8 consists of fewer courses than any other in our general education system, its disciplinary variety allows students from different majors to learn the important skills of seeking, gathering, and evaluating information through a unique lens that best aligns with their personal and academic interests. While variety is important, the committee also recognizes that a growing list of courses serving Objective 8 can serve as a burden both to students likely to become overwhelmed in selecting a course from the list and to the bodies responsible for overseeing some degree of unified assessment across the objective. The ORC reports that the current list of Objective 8 courses strikes a fine balance between diversity and brevity and requests that the GERC be mindful of the importance of that balance in consideration of any courses proposed to the objective in the future.

D. Evaluate the stated learning outcomes of this general education objective. Are there any problems with the learning outcomes as currently described, or ways in which they might be

improved? Provide a brief summary of the Committee’s findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

Considering the significant development of the technologies that have mediated and continue to mediate the creation, distribution, and use of information over the past 20 years, the committee would recommend that GERC consider updating Objective 8 outcomes. Since the conception of this Objective at ISU, the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (2000) (pp. 2-3) from which the Objective 8 outcomes were derived have been supplanted by a new set of standards, the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (2016); in light of this, the GERC may wish to revise the current Objective 8 competencies to conform to the ACRL’s new information literacy standards.

E. Evaluate the objective itself and its place within the system of general education. To what extent does the objective, in its current form, contribute to a strong overall system of general education? Are there ways in which the objective could be modified to improve it? Could the system be improved with its elimination or replacement? Provide a brief summary of the Committee’s findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

Objective 8 amounts to an integral and irreplaceable component in the broader general education program. By completing this objective and achieving the information literacy competencies therein, students are benefited not just in their academic lives, where they find themselves more capable of conducting effective research in future courses, but in their personal, professional, and civic lives as well. In an increasingly complex information ecosystem where misinformation abounds, information literacy is an essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skill and, thus, Objective 8 serves a unique and critical purpose within the broader system.

Accepted by GERC:	May 10, 2021
Accepted by UCC:	May 11, 2021
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