

Category1:
Helping Students Learn

Category 1

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1C1 – Common student-learning objectives

Eastern Michigan University's (EMU) common student learning objectives are embodied in the learning outcomes of the new General Education Program: Education for Participation in the Global Community. This program, inaugurated in September 2007, won a 2007 Association for General and Liberal Studies Award for Improving General Education in the category "commitment to common student-learning objectives." The common learning objectives for the General Education program constitute the foundational pattern of knowledge and skills that students are to possess upon completion of their bachelor's degrees. These Learning Outcomes [<http://www.emich.edu/gened/requirements-LearningOutcomes.html>] require all students to master effective communication (both written and oral), quantitative reasoning, and knowledge of the disciplines in four key areas (arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences). In addition, students are required to meet diversity requirements in two distinct areas: U.S. Diversity and Global Awareness. Finally, through the Learning Beyond the Classroom initiative all students are required to engage in experiences in one of these six areas: 1. Self and Well-Being, 2. Community Service, Citizenship, and Leadership, 3. Cultural and Academic Activities and Events, 4. Career and Professional Development, 5. International and Multicultural Experiences, and 6. Undergraduate Research. The Learning Beyond the Classroom requirement means that all students must, according to their interests and career ambitions, engage in their campus, regional, national, or international worlds through study-abroad opportunities, involvement in student government, attendance at lectures and artistic performances, social-service work, or other activities. Every student is also required to take an upper-division Writing Intensive course in his or her academic major area.

Currently, each specialized major and graduate program has a distinct set of goals. As part of EMU's new

web-based Integrated Program Review and Continuous Improvement Cycle [IPR] process, which began formal implementation in Fall 2006 [<http://www.emich.edu/public/aa/pr/>], all academic programs on campus now articulate longer-term goals and annual objectives in alignment with the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Five Criteria. These goals and objectives are entered into web-based templates and can be electronically aggregated at the department, college, and divisional levels. As time passes, this process will allow for the emergence and eventual formalization of common learning objectives for all students, regardless of status or program of study.

1C2 – Aligning learning with mission

EMU's Mission [http://www.emich.edu/president/emu_mission.html] establishes the broad parameters of EMU's educational mission: excellent teaching, the extension of knowledge through basic and applied research and creative and artistic expression, and a student-focused learning environment. Student-learning expectations for specific programs are developed within the broad parameters of EMU's mission as they respond to the specific needs of particular disciplines, employers, specialized accrediting bodies, and other vital stakeholders. For example, the student-learning expectations, practices, and development objectives for EMU's General Education Program were developed by a large interdisciplinary team of faculty and staff working with constituencies across campus and with national leaders in general education. EMU's IPR process asks all programs to align their goals and objectives with the HLC's Five Criteria. Fulfilling EMU's obligation to address effectively each of these five criteria is a key part of EMU's mission.

1C3 – Key instructional programs and methods

EMU's three largest majors are Elementary Education,

General Business, and Psychology. The wide array of teacher-preparation programs reflect EMU’s origin as Michigan State Normal School. The Professional Education Unit, which includes the College of Education and three other colleges across campus, is currently among the largest preparers of educational professionals in the country, as well as one of the largest preparers of minority educational personnel in Michigan. EMU has long been the largest preparer of special educators in the nation. Other key programs are crucial in other ways. For instance, the Nursing Program serves vital regional needs. The General Education program is also one of the key programs.

EMU currently offers courses and programs on campus and via weekend courses, independent-learning options, academic-programs abroad, and courses and programs offered at eight off-campus locations as well as within partnering companies. As Figure 1.1 shows, the number of classes offered fully online has increased from 391 in 2004 to 846 in 2007.

Instructional technology use varies by degree program and course level, but a number of recent initiatives have greatly enhanced the effective use of instructional technology across the institution. The Faculty Development Center (FDC) hosts Communities of Practice groups focused on faculty members’ sharing experiences and skills with podcasting, clickers, and wikis. The FDC also organizes annual Technovations Forums designed to introduce faculty and staff to emerging instructional technologies. The Smart Classroom Technology Upgrade Initiative identified minimum technology standards for each classroom on campus and has committed extensive resources to ensure that every classroom on campus meets this minimum standard. By spring 2007, all EMU classrooms met the minimum standard, and all academic buildings were wireless.

1C4 – Preparing students to live in a diverse world

EMU’s faculty draw on many sources of information and expertise as they design and prepare student-learning opportunities, including disciplinary standards, accrediting-body standards, and specialized research on student learning in the various disciplines, including the FDC, the Holman Learning Center, the Promote Academic Survival Success (PASS), the Summer Incentive Program (SIP), Access Services, and the Center for Adaptive Technology.

EMU takes pride in using its diversity as a resource for learning across colleges, programs, and academic levels. EMU’s commitment to preparing students to live in a diverse world is clearly evident in the framework of the General Education curriculum, which requires students to complete coursework in two distinct areas—U.S. Diversity and Global Awareness. The Office of Diversity and Community Involvement [<http://www.emich.edu/dci/>] and Campus Life support student groups, lectures, performing arts events, and other options focused on preparing students to live in a diverse world, and the Learning Beyond the Classroom component of the General Education program strongly encourages students to participate in these opportunities. Programs in Education, Business, Nursing, Social Work, Technology, and many other areas require student course work and site work related to diversity as they respond to the needs of employers and the guidelines of specialized accreditors.

1C5 – Maintaining climate of diversity, intellectual freedom, inquiry, and reflection

EMU’s commitment to creating a climate celebrating intellectual freedom, inquiry, reflection, respect

Figure 1.1: Online, Hybrid, and Web-Enhanced Courses

Course Classification									
FISC. YEAR	REGULAR	# OF COURSES	HYBRID	WEB ENHANCED	TOTAL SECTIONS	% REGULAR	% FULLY ONLINE	% HYBRID	% WEB ENHANCED
2004	10927	391	0	0	11318	96.5%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%
2005	10750	657	0	0	11407	94.2%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%
2006	10467	778	0	0	11245	93.1%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%
2007	10221	846	39	70	11176	91.5%	7.6%	0.3%	0.6%

for intellectual property, and respect for different opinions is enshrined in the institution's values and key documents. The EMU Board of Regents Code of Ethics requires all regents to pledge support for intellectual freedom. EMU's Values [<http://www.emich.edu/aboutemu/fastfacts/emuprofile.html#values>] include strong statements on academic freedom. Article II of the 2006-2010 EMU-AAUP Faculty Contract states that, "EMU and the Association fully affirm the principle of academic freedom in both teaching and research. The right of academic freedom shall be the right of every Faculty Member." Each of these documents and statements of philosophy and values ensures that intellectual freedom is enshrined in EMU's operations from the Board of Regents through senior leadership and suffuse the institution.

The statement of philosophy for the General Education program emphasizes that respect for intellectual freedom and diverse opinion is built into the bedrock of EMU's undergraduate educational experience. Other processes and offices foster the creation and maintenance of a climate that celebrates intellectual freedom, inquiry, reflection, respect for intellectual property, and respect for different opinions.

Each year, the Undergraduate Symposium and the Graduate Research Fair engage students in the protocols and standards of undergraduate and graduate research and allow students to engage in scholarly debate and the exchange of ideas within a structured climate of respect for different opinions. Student Government, Campus Life, and myriad student organizations [<http://www.emich.edu/campuslife/glso/orglist.php>] provide opportunities for students to find

like-minded peers and interact with students and community members from diverse backgrounds and opinions. In effect, nearly every office and division on campus contributes to the creation and maintenance of a climate that celebrates intellectual freedom, inquiry, reflection, respect for intellectual property, and respect for different opinions (Figure 1.2).

1P1 – Determining common student-learning objectives

Common learning objectives for EMU's General Education program are articulated by the General Education Advisory Committee and widely published on University websites, course syllabi, and EMU catalogues (1C1). Student-learning outcomes for particular programs are established by the relevant program faculty in that disciplinary area. In each area, common learning objectives are established by faculty committees in consultation with advisory boards, student representatives, and other stakeholders and are reviewed on a regular basis.

1P2 – Designing new courses and programs

New programs and courses are designed in response to an array of inputs, including advisory boards, specialized accreditation standards, employer requests, the development of new technologies or methods in particular disciplines, and student-learning outcome data. At present, the evaluation of these inputs and the design of new programs and courses largely begins at the department level; EMU's Course and

Figure 1.2: Sample of Documents Reflecting Climate of Diversity, Intellectual Freedom, Inquiry and Reflection

Office or Statement	Link
EMU's Student Conduct Code	www.emich.edu/sjs/conductcode.html
The Division of Student Affairs: Academic Integrity Program for New and Transfer Students	www.emich.edu/campuslife/myfy/academics/academicintegrity.php
The Office of Student Judicial Services: Guidelines for Faculty on Promoting Academic Integrity	www.emich.edu/sjs/academic_integrity.html
Halle Library	www.emich.edu/halle/plagiarism.html
The Office of Research Development: Online Instructional Module Devoted to the Responsible Conduct of Research for Faculty and Staff	www.rcr.emich.edu

Program Development Process, outlined in the Course and Program Development Handbook, ensures robust review of each newly proposed program or course first by faculty from other departments in that college and then by faculty committees from all other colleges, as well as by senior academic-administrative personnel including college deans and the Provost. Each course and program-proposal form asks the originating department to specify market issues as well as student needs, and careful analysis of this balance is part of the course input process. In addition, the office of Continuing Education (CE) works closely with departmental faculty and administrators in gathering and analyzing market data prior to the start-up of new off-campus or online programs.

1P3 – Determining required student preparation

The preparation required of students for the specific curricula, programs, and courses is determined by relevant faculty members in consultation with advisory boards and specialized accreditation bodies, and in response to review of student-outcome data. Currently these processes tend to be local to particular departments rather than systematic across the institution.

1P4 – Communicating expectations to students

EMU uses multiple methods to communicate its expectations regarding student preparation and student-learning objectives (for programs, courses, and the awarding of specific degrees or credentials) to prospective and current students. These key communication vehicles are summarized in Figure 1.3.

EMU’s Academic Advising AQIP Action Project has presented recommendations, currently under review by an implementation team, designed to enhance communicating expectations to students even more effectively.

1P5 – Helping students select programs that match needs, interests, and abilities

Students are offered support in selecting programs of study that match their needs, interests, and abilities through a number of different processes. For students just entering EMU, whether as their first time in college or as transfer students, the Fast Track program offers students advising and registration support including a review of student test and placement data

Figure 1.3: Communicating Expectations to Students

Means of Communication	What is Communicated	Who Manages the Communication Process	Target Audience
Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogues	Curricula, Degree Requirements, Graduate Requirements, Learning Objectives for Specific Majors, Policies and Procedures, Academic Honesty Standards	Academic Affairs	Prospective and Current Students
FUSION New Student Orientation	Degree Options, Policies and Procedures	Student Life	New Students
General Education Course Syllabi	General Education Course Outcomes	Director of General Education working with all faculty and instructors	Students Enrolled in General Education Courses
EMU Department and Program Websites	Learning outcomes for specific programs and majors; expectations regarding student performance	Program-Area Faculty	Current and Former Students
Fast Track	Expectations regarding student performance and learning objectives for specific programs and for the General Education Program	Academic Advising	New Students
Advising Worksheets; Major and Program Worksheets	Expectations regarding student performance and learning objectives for specific programs	Faculty and College Advisors	Current Students
Program Course Syllabi	Specific learning outcomes; expectations regarding student performance; respect for intellectual property	Program Coordinators	Current Students

where relevant [<http://www.emich.edu/admissions/undergraduatestudents/fasttrack/>]. Students being admitted to some programs meet directly with faculty in those programs to discuss programs of study and necessary preparation. Students are also offered regular group-advising sessions related to General Education, pursuing careers as educational personnel, and in many particular majors and programs. In some areas, such as Math and Foreign Languages, placement tests are employed to determine student preparation and to guide students into appropriate courses. The First-Year Writing Program uses Guided Self-Placement materials to help students select an appropriate First-Year Writing course [<http://www.emich.edu/english/gsp/>]. Both Career Services and Academic Advising utilize interest inventories to help students select programs of study. As noted in 1C4, many offices and processes on campus support faculty members and academic departments with explaining and helping to address a wide range of learning styles.

1P6 – Documenting effective teaching and learning

Evaluating the Instructional Effectiveness of EMU's faculty members and full-time lecturers is a clearly defined process in both the EMU-AAUP and EMU-FT contracts (4P6). The EMU-AAUP contract specifies that "With respect to Instruction (and advising), Faculty Members have responsibility to engage in pursuits that enable them to be current in their respective disciplines, to continually improve their understanding of the learning process and use of pedagogical methods that promote learning, to provide students with clear and explicit expectations, and to be available for consultation on academic matters with their students" (Marginal Paragraph 184).

Discipline-specific expectations are developed by particular departments, reviewed by the administration, and codified in Department Evaluation Documents all of which are available online: <http://www.emich.edu/ahr/deds.html>. These documents also specify what materials and modes of documentation are appropriate for documenting effective teaching and learning in accordance with disciplinary standards.

Marginal Paragraphs 169 and 170 of the EMU-FT contract articulate expectations for instructional effectiveness for full-time lecturers: <http://www.emich.edu/ahr/PDFs/Contracts/FT-2005.pdf>.

Expectations for determining and documenting effective teaching and learning are also disseminated by the FDC and the General Education Advisory Committee.

1P7 – Building effective and efficient course-delivery systems

Course-delivery systems vary with discipline and in every instance are determined by the faculty specializing in that discipline. In weighing the merits of various online and off-campus programs, department and program faculty work closely with the staff of Continuing Education and utilize CE market research and student surveys as well as their experiences with their own students. Course evaluations allow students to comment on delivery methods as well as course content, and this information provides the basis for decision-making about new technologies and new methods of instructional delivery. EMU has recently invested in course- and facilities-scheduling software that should provide longitudinal data on which to base decisions about how best to balance student and institutional needs. A task force is reviewing the range of online platforms in use and preparing to make recommendations about the University's selection and support of online platforms.

1P8 – Monitoring currency and effectiveness of curriculum

Primary responsibility for monitoring the currency and effectiveness of the curriculum rests in the academic departments with faculty specialists in each disciplinary area. In accordance with the EMU-AAUP Contract, each department has a formal committee charged with input on curricular matters. Decisions to revise or discontinue programs or courses usually originate with disciplinary faculty. Information and recommendations from advisory boards, disciplinary accreditation bodies, student surveys, licensing bodies, and other discipline-specific organizations are regularly reviewed to maintain the currency and effectiveness of all curricula. In general, proposals to revise or discontinue programs pass from departments to the representative faculty bodies of their colleges and then to the office of Academic Programming. From this office they are distributed to the College Councils of all other colleges for comment. Once this process is completed, the

materials are reviewed at the Provost's level, and the requested changes are typically implemented.

In 2006-2007 EMU began piloting a new, web-based Integrated Program Review and Continuous Improvement Cycle (IPR) process, which is aligned with the HLC accreditation criteria (8P3). Department Heads, School Directors, and Program Coordinators use relevant data from EMU's Office of Institutional Research and Information Management (IRIM), along with their own internal data, to analyze and discuss their programs and departments within the framework of the accreditation criteria. Programs and departments evaluate their performance, which results in the development of draft long-term goals and short-term objectives. Once the college deans add their responses, the reports are locked and made public on the University's intranet for comment by interested members of the campus community. The comments are followed by a roundtable discussion, which is open to the public, including the specific college dean, department head, and faculty, along with the executive administration for the Division of Academic Affairs. The feedback and findings from the process are used to finalize long-term goals and develop forward-looking, short-term objectives for the coming year in the form of an annual plan. The plan is developed and then reviewed for two consecutive years before undergoing a full program review again.

The outcome of the IPR and Continuous Improvement Cycle may result in the revision to curricula and programs based on empirical data and identification of programmatic strengths and weaknesses in a systematic manner. Revisions or other changes may then cycle through the Course and Program Development process to ensure that there are no objections to proposed changes.

1P9 - Determining student and faculty support

A number of offices, centers, and groups on campus work regularly to determine student and faculty needs relative to learning support (3P1, Figure 3.2). The key offices and centers involved in this work are summarized in Figure 1.4.

One of EMU's first AQIP Action Projects focused on mapping the various means by which academic advising is provided across campus. A follow-up group

will work with the recommendations developed by the Action Project team. Efforts to collect and analyze such information about student and faculty needs relative to learning support, tend to be local and occasionally ad hoc rather than centralized or systematic.

P10 – Alignment of curricular and co-curricular goals

While in general co-curricular development goals align with curricular learning objectives, an intensive effort is currently underway to align more intentionally and precisely particular co-curricular and curricular learning objectives in the new General Education curriculum. Since Fall 2007, all students are expected to complete a Learning Beyond the Classroom requirement. While some courses have been designated as ways to fulfill the Learning Beyond the Classroom requirement, most students will fulfill the requirement through co-curricular activities (1C1).

The parameters for the Learning Beyond the Classroom requirement, and the specific learning outcomes for each area, were devised by cross-divisional teams of faculty and staff from the Division of Student Affairs working closely together to align learning outcomes, whether students fulfill them with curricular or co-curricular activities. Currently, more than 250 student clubs and organizations are recognized by campus life, many of them aligned with particular programs, disciplines, or professional organizations.

1P11 – Determining processes for student assessment

Processes for student assessment are determined by relevant-area faculty. Program faculty develop student-assessment activities relevant to their disciplines and national standards; these processes are reported to the Director for Academic Assessment each year. The processes used are then communicated by the Director of Academic Assessment to all department heads and senior administrators on campus. The General Education Evaluation Committee is currently piloting an ePortfolio process for assessing student learning in five different areas. For each of the piloted courses, rubrics have been developed, and student work is evaluated by raters from different disciplinary backgrounds. The committee is currently assessing the

Figure 1.4: Determining and Providing Student-Learning Support

Service Provider	Support Provided	Target Audience
Holman Learning Center	Help with studying, note-taking, student learning styles, Supplemental Instruction, Peer Tutoring	Students at all levels
Faculty Development Center	Help with continuous improvement of course syllabi, instructional materials, instructional technologies	All instructors/faculty
Academic Projects Center	Support for strengthening writing skills, research skills, and information literacy	Writers and researchers at all levels
University Writing Center	Targeted Course Workshops integrated with EMU courses	Writers and researchers at all levels
Writing Across the Curriculum	Support for faculty teaching Writing Intensive courses across the curriculum	Faculty teaching Writing Intensive Courses
Mathematics Student Services Center	Support for strengthening mathematical skills	All students
International Student Resource Center	Support for International Students including ESL support, help with protocols for student conduct and academic honesty	International Students
Information Literacy Center	Support for strengthening Information Literacy across the curriculum	Students mastering Information Literacy for any course or project
Counseling Services	Support for dealing with test anxiety, procrastination	Students struggling with the emotional components of learning
Career Services	Support for exploring career options, finding co-ops and internships	Students exploring possible career paths
College and Departmental Advising	Support for making appropriate curricular choices, preparing graduate school and job applications, support with moving from major area of study to chosen career path	Students in upper-division classes
Academic Advising Center	Support with selecting a major, understanding expectations about student-preparation course selection	Students entering EMU and undeclared students
Student Athlete Support Services	Focuses on such student-athlete special needs as: Monitoring academic performance Providing learning assistance Evening study table Assisting with priority-registration procedures Assisting in monitoring athletic eligibility Educating student-athletes in regard to NCAA, MAC, and University rules and regulations	Student athletes
Access Services	Provides accommodations for students with disabilities and assists faculty and staff implementing those accommodations	Students, faculty, and staff
Center for Adaptive Technologies	Training on adaptive equipment, Exam Accommodation Facilities, equipment loans	Students, faculty, and staff with disabilities
PASS – Promote Academic Survival & Success Program	A two-semester program designed to benefit students during the transition from high school to college	The program is optional, but aimed at students with ACT scores slightly below average
SIP - Summer Intensive Program	An intensive, seven-week summer-academic program	High-risk high school graduates

merits of the pilot programs and evaluating these and other means of collecting and analyzing data from the new General Education program. One of EMU's Action Projects currently focuses on developing assessment processes for foundational general-education courses.

1P12 – Student preparation for further study or employment

EMU's programs use a wide array of methods to discover how well prepared their students are for additional education and employment, including capstone courses, culminating exams, licensure-exam pass rates, and placement rates. Programs with specialized accreditation report these data as their accreditation bodies require. More systematization and sharing of processes and results across departments and colleges will likely enhance EMU's effectiveness in this area.

1P13 - Measures of student performance

Data is collected in a number of areas.

- The General Education Assessment Committee is currently piloting processes for analyzing student-performance data for the new General Education program inaugurated in September 2007.
- Academic Assessment collects reports on assessment activities in academic programs.
- Enrollment and persistence data are collected and reported by IRIM.
- IRIM also regularly computes aggregate grade-point averages at the undergraduate and graduate levels for each department.
- Institutional Assessment regularly administers such large-scale surveys as NSSE and the Graduating Senior Survey, which include data on student perceptions of their performance.
- Professional programs track and analyze pass rates on licensure, certification, and registry exams and use that data to make curricular and pedagogical revisions.
- The Professional Education Unit began collecting and analyzing student artifacts using the LiveText software in Fall 2006. This system enables faculty to

assess student performance in both pedagogical theory and content knowledge in all disciplines and allows for detailed reports to generalize and compare student performance across levels and among disciplinary areas in the Professional Education Unit.

- EMU's office of Community College Relations regularly collects data on transfer students from community colleges, including GPAs and degree completion, and reports this information back to feeder schools. This office works with feeder community colleges to determine what data they most need and how they need it broken out, and helps EMU track the performance of the majority of its transfer students.

1R1 – Student-learning achievement

Work on exploring processes for assessing the General Education Program and its learning outcomes began in the Fall Term 2007. A system using ePortfolios to collect student work has been piloted in a small number of courses in the 2007-08 academic year (the first year of the General Education program). One of EMU's AQIP Action Projects focuses on establishing the parameters for data collection and analysis related to student outcomes and performance in three foundational areas: effective oral communication, effective written communication, and quantitative reasoning.

As mentioned in responses to 1C1 and 8P4, EMU has also just finished its first pilot round of Program Reviews. In completing their Program Review reports, all programs must discuss how they are addressing the five Criteria of the HLC and their specific program learning objectives. Because EMU's large-scale efforts are relatively young, there are no detailed results at the institutional level to report at this time.

1R2 – Student-competence evaluation

A recent graduating-senior survey indicates levels of student satisfaction with their education at EMU. The following table lists the percentage of students indicating high or very high agreement with the following statements:

"I received a high-quality education from EMU." 76.8%

"The quality of education from EMU is comparable to other universities its size." 71.9%

"EMU prepared me well for my future career." 69.7%

"Employers will have a great deal of respect for my EMU degree." 59.6%

Programs in which graduates take licensure or certification exams track student-pass rates on these exams. For instance, results related to pass rates on teacher-certification exams can be found at this link: <http://college.livetext.com/doc/2398708>.

1R3 – Teaching-and-learning process results

The scale of EMU's operations is such that new courses and programs are constantly being designed and introduced while others are being phased out. As of March 2008, three new programs are under review, nine program revisions are under review, and four new course proposals are under review. EMU also has a new initiative underway to implement Resource 25 from CollegeNET, which will allow better data to support scheduling decisions.

The new Academic Projects Center, which opened its doors in January 2008, had already reported 499 service requests by April 3, 2008. Three hundred twenty-seven (327) of these were requests for writing support, 118 were requests for research support, 26 were requests for technical support, and 28 did not specify. Average daily traffic was 13.37 students.

1R4 – Comparative results

EMU has no significant comparative results to report at this time.

1I1 - Improving current processes

Improvements to current processes and systems for helping students learn typically have originated in particular academic and support departments. These will be addressed in future portfolios.

1I2 – Setting and communicating targets

Targets for improvement are determined and communicated by relevant program faculty; current results are reported to advisory boards and specialized accreditation bodies. These will be addressed in future portfolios.