

# Overview of General Education, Assessment, and Improvement

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## » SACSCOC 8.2b

- » The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides *evidence of seeking improvement* based on analysis of the results in the areas below:
  - » b. student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student outcomes: general education)
- » *One of the primary reasons we assess general education and analyze the results is to find opportunities to improve upon what we are doing.*
- » *Review and revision of the learning outcomes and associated rubrics are part of the improvement process.*
- » *The Council on General Education, the EPC, and the Provost review and approve any changes resulting from this process.*

# Review of Civic and Individual Ethics

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- » The Civic and Individual Ethics rubric was redesigned in Summer 2024.
- » CIE, like all proficiencies, is an applied component, where students are intended to develop skills or intellectual frameworks in context.
- » The review and revision of the rubric was based on feedback from faculty and the Council on General Education, who found the original rubric confusing and difficult to apply in many cases.
- » The redesign was intended to clarify the role of civic learning in the component and make the language around ethical inquiry clearer to faculty and easier to apply.
- » The faculty redesign committee emphasized, in the redesign, that the focus of the component is applied ethics in civic, individual, or professional contexts.
- » They clarified the content criteria and supporting skills to emphasize this.

# Civic and Individual Ethics Learning Outcome and Supporting Skills

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## CIE Learning Outcome

**Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in ethical reasoning about civic and individual life.**

***The learning outcome broadly describes the overarching goal of the component. Students are expected to engage in learning that supports this outcome across the course.***

## CIE Supporting Skills

- 1. Students will identify ethical topics, questions, and / or dilemmas.**
- 2. Students will describe ethical concepts and / or perspectives.**
- 3. Students will apply ethical concepts and / or perspectives.**

***The supporting skills break the learning outcome down into measurable skills. The expectation is that there is clear evidence these skills are being acquired, developed, and practiced throughout the course.***

***The final assessment should prompt students to perform these skills, and will allow us to evaluate to what degree they have been acquired.***



# CIE Content Criteria

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**1. Courses in this category offer a sustained reflection on ethical codes, concepts, issues, questions, dilemmas, and /or applications. Ethical questions and investigations are raised early in the course and returned to frequently.**

**2. Courses in this category consistently work with ethical concepts such as justice, freedom, fairness, privacy, security, acceptance, equality, empathy, rights, concern for the general welfare, or other relevant concepts.**

3. Courses in this category consider ethical questions in individual, professional, and/ or civic contexts. Examples of ethical questions that may be considered include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Is it appropriate for museums to display looted artwork?
- Does hiring a family member as a subcontractor on a project constitute a conflict of interest?
- Should a doctor treat a patient without their consent, if it would save the patient's life?
- Was dropping the atomic bomb in World War II justified?
- Are democratic societies obligated to accept political refugees from other countries?
- What rights must be protected? May these rights ever be violated?

# CIE Content Criteria

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4. Courses in this category include an assessment assignment that requires students to demonstrate each of the skills in the Civic and Individual Ethics Assessment Rubric (below). This assessment assignment should be one of the following: an objective exam, an essay question on an exam, an essay, or a research paper.

- » **Content criteria explain the characteristics a course should demonstrate (as evidenced by the syllabus).**
- » **The Council on General Education will generally expect that for a Proficiency requirement, at least 30% of the course will reflect the content criteria and will build toward the supporting skills.**
- » **The expectation is that this 30% will be distributed across the term.**

# Assessing Civic and Individual Ethics

Because of the way the supporting skills for this component are written, the optimal assignment for this component is a written essay or reflection.

Supporting skills 2 and 3 require students to describe and apply. Those are difficult skills to evaluate if an objective assignment is used (i.e. a multiple choice exam).

It is important to construct a prompt that directly reflects the language of the supporting skills, so that it is clear to students what they are expected to do.

We also always recommend being explicit with students that the assignment in question is an assessment for these skills, and we recommend sharing the rubric with them.





# Assessing Civic and Individual Ethics

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## » Essay Prompt for a U.S. Government and Politics Course

### » Title: Ethical Dilemmas in American Government and Policy-Making

» The American political system is shaped by ethical debates and moral dilemmas that influence policy decisions at every level. From questions of individual liberty versus collective security to concerns about economic justice and political representation, ethics play a fundamental role in shaping governance.

» For this essay, you will analyze an ethical dilemma in U.S. government and politics. Your essay should demonstrate the following skills:

**1. Identification of Ethical Topics and Questions:** Select a significant ethical dilemma in American politics. Clearly identify the issue, explain its relevance, and pose key ethical questions associated with it.

**2. Description of Ethical Concepts and Perspectives:** Discuss at least two ethical perspectives or theories (such as utilitarianism, deontology, social contract theory, virtue ethics, etc.) that can be applied to the dilemma. Explain how each perspective interprets and addresses the ethical questions you have identified.

**3. Application of Ethical Concepts to Policy Decisions:** Analyze how ethical considerations have shaped actual government policies or Supreme Court decisions related to your chosen dilemma. Evaluate how different perspectives influence policy choices and argue which ethical approach you believe offers the most justifiable resolution

## » Potential Topics (Choose One or Propose Your Own)

- **Government Surveillance vs. Individual Privacy:** To what extent should the government have the authority to monitor citizens in the name of national security?
- **Healthcare as a Right or Privilege:** Is it ethical for the government to guarantee healthcare for all citizens, or should it remain a market-based commodity?
- **The Death Penalty and Justice:** Does capital punishment align with ethical principles of justice and fairness, or does it violate fundamental human rights?
- **Voting Rights and Political Representation:** What ethical obligations does the government have to ensure fair and equal access to voting?
- **Campaign Finance and Political Influence:** Should there be stricter limits on political donations to prevent corruption, or do such limits violate free speech rights?

## » Essay Requirements

- **Length:** 4-6 pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font).
  - **Sources:** Use at least three scholarly sources, including one primary source (e.g., Supreme Court ruling, legislation, or official government document).
  - **Citations:** Follow APA or Chicago citation style.
- » Your essay should critically engage with the ethical dimensions of the topic while demonstrating clear reasoning, use of evidence, and thoughtful argumentation.

# Civic and Individual Ethics Assessment

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- » This prompt was generated by ChatGPT
- » You can generate similar assignments by asking ChatGPT for an assignment (give the format) that develops the supporting skills (put them into ChatGPT) and give the context (a college-level course on US Government and Politics, in this case)
- » This assignment prompt is very clear and detailed and directly reflects the language in the supporting skills.
- » Assessments should be given at or near the end of term.
- » If you are inclined to use objective assessment, you should work with our office to ensure alignment with the rubric.

