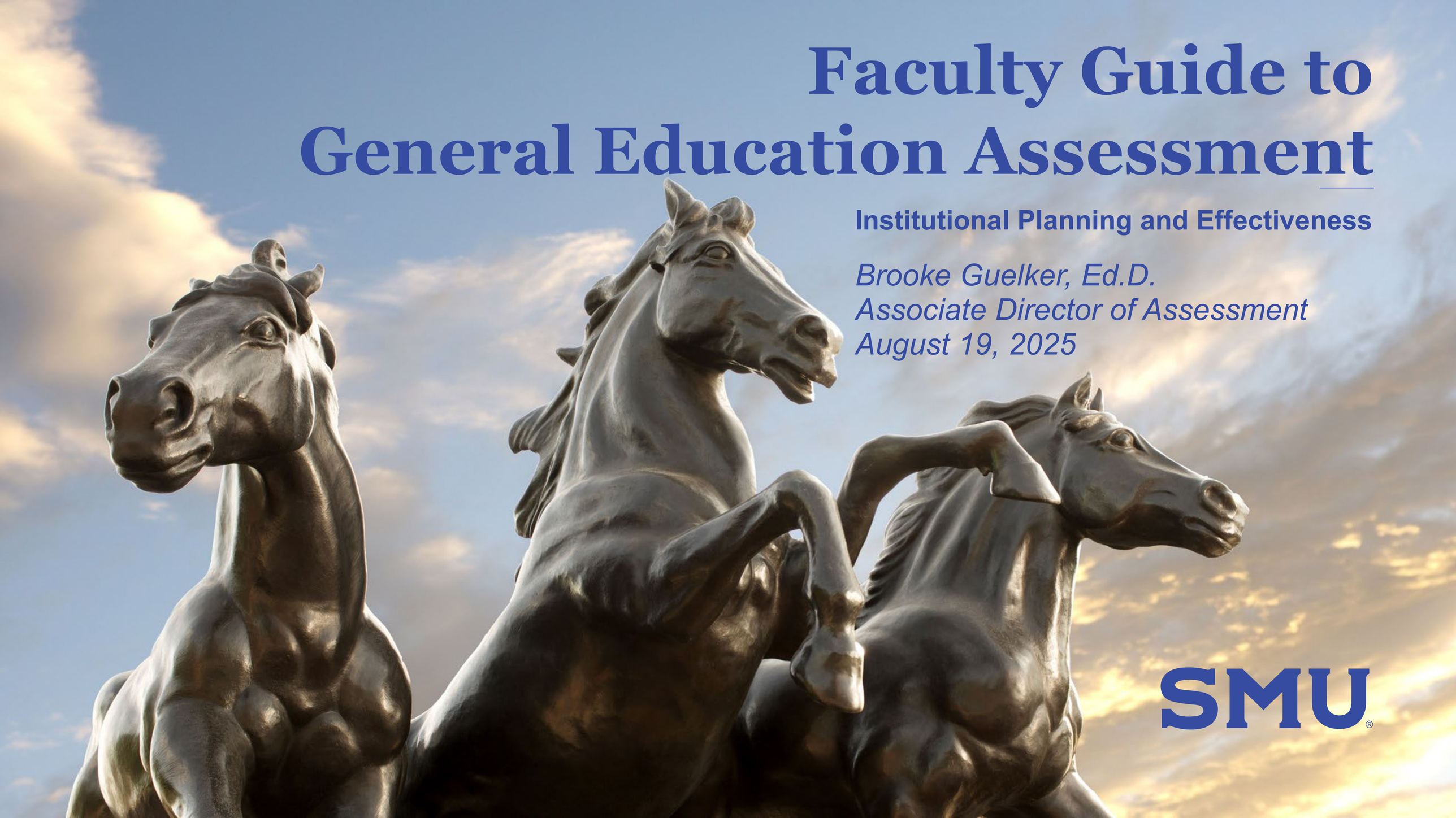

Faculty Guide to General Education Assessment

Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

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SMU®

Agenda

» General education assessment

» SMU’s assessment process

» The Common Curriculum (CC) and rubrics

» Assignment design and evidence collection methods

» Q&A

You will be able to:

» Understand the purpose of general education assessment

» Navigate SMU's three-year assessment cycle

» Create assignments which align with CC rubrics

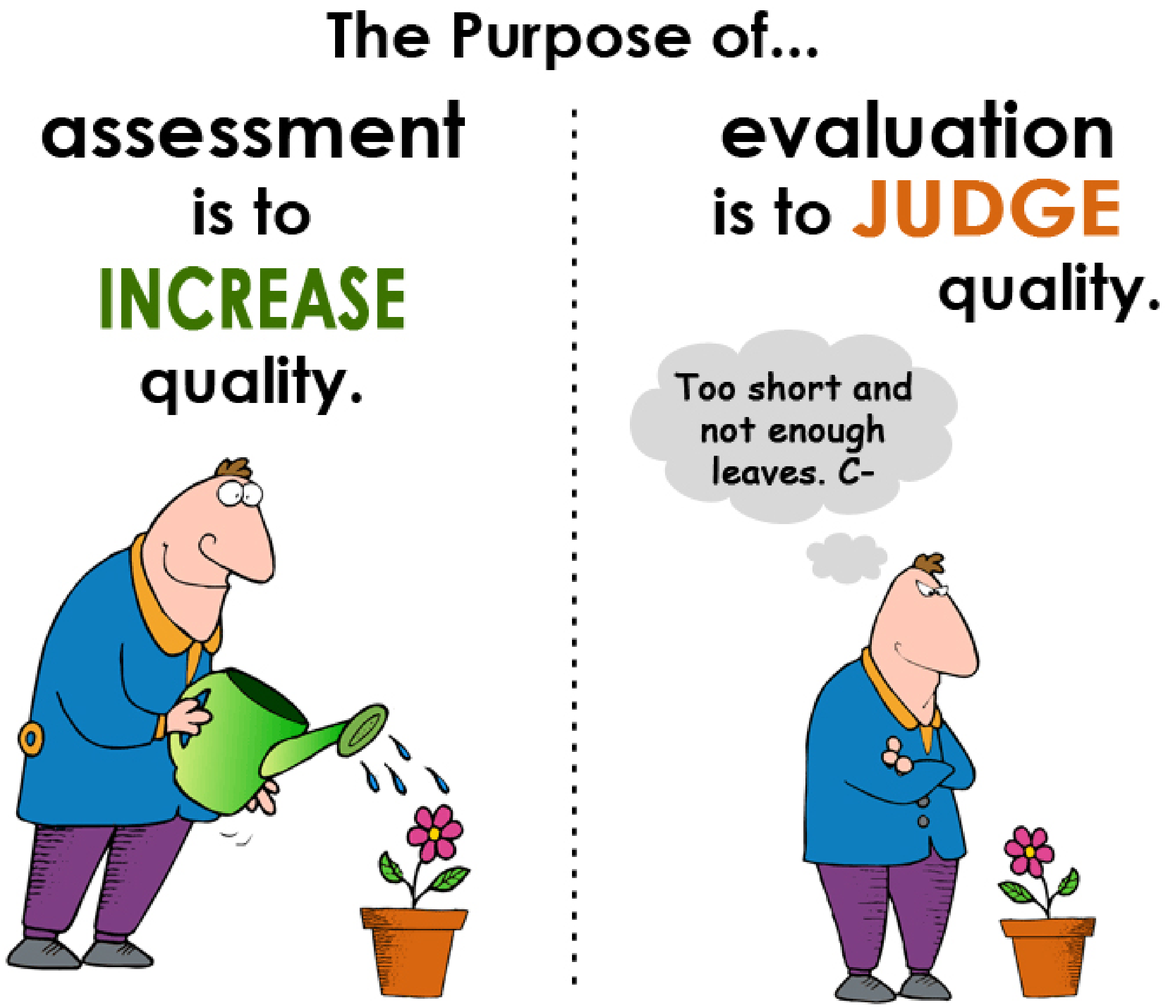
» Choose an assessment type and collection method

Why do we assess general education?

Why Assess?

» General education assessment shows us what's working, what's not, and how we can improve our courses while meeting SACSCOC's requirements for quality and accountability.

Assessment *Is*



» A tool to improve curriculum and teaching

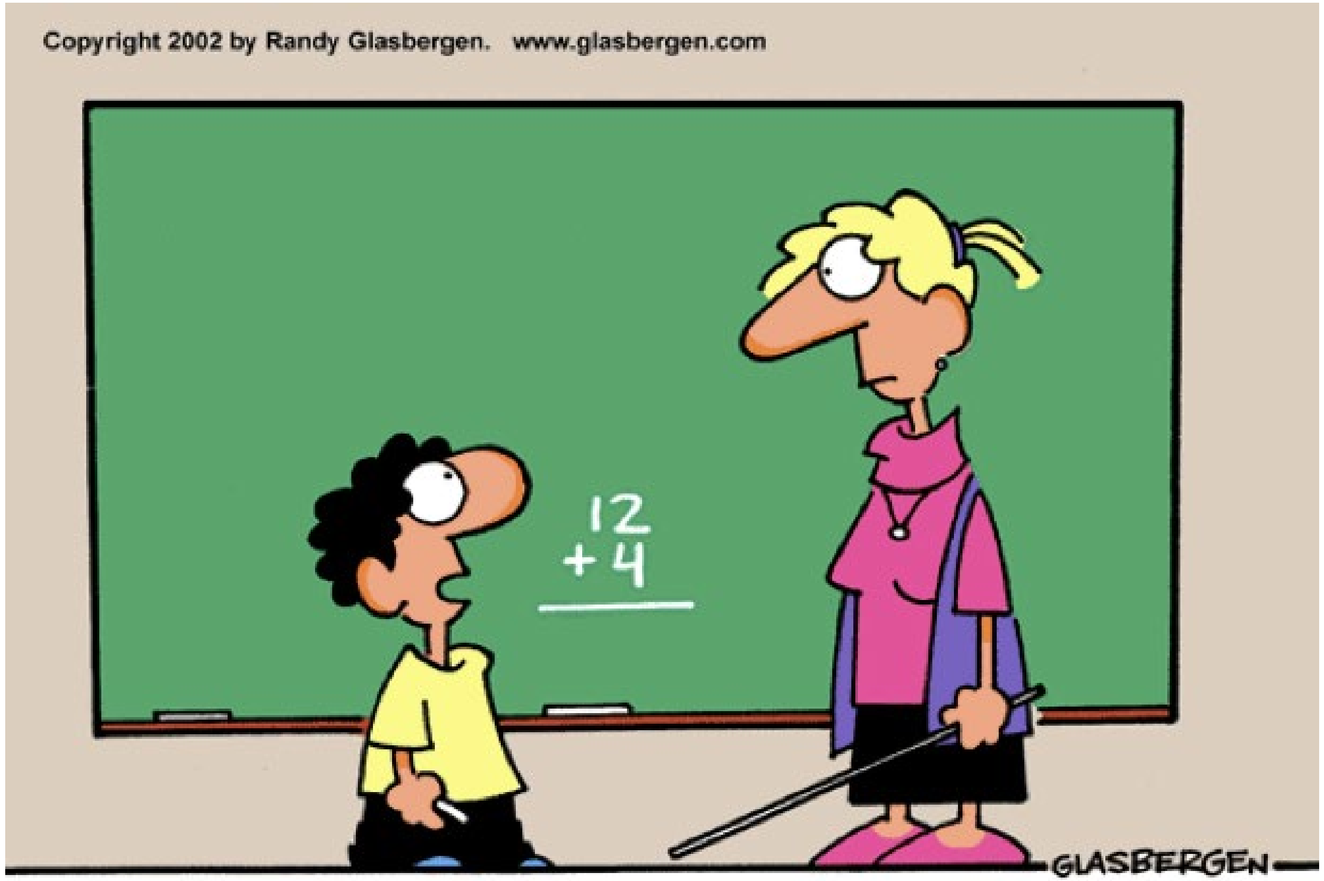
» Focused on skills and performance

» A way to guide evidence-based improvements in student learning

Assessment is *Not*

» An evaluation of faculty teaching

» A factor in student grades



"Do I get partial credit for simply having the courage to get out of bed and face the world again today?"

SMU's Process

The Common Curriculum Assessment Cycle

CC Assessment

- Runs on a three-year cycle
- Relies on faculty participation
- Ensures students meet stated learning outcomes
- Note: Even if IPE isn't collecting work that year, faculty must assess all CC components each term the course is taught

CC Assessment Cycle

Year	Action
1	***Data collection and analysis***. Faculty collect and submit student assessment assignments to the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) for juried assessment.
2	***Identify improvement strategies***. IPE reports the juried assessment results to participating departments who subsequently work to identify student learning improvement strategies (e.g., improvements to the learning environment, improvements to course design, assignment design revision, etc.).
3	***Implement improvement strategies***. Departments implement the identified improvement strategies, preparing for the next data collection cycle with the goal of continuously enhancing student learning outcomes.

CC Assessment Calendar

Academic Year	Collection Terms	Components requiring submission to IPE	Year 1: Data Collection + Juried Assessment	Year 2: Improvement Strategy Discussion	Year 3: Improvement Strategy Implementation
2025-2026	May 2025 Summer 2025 August 2025 Fall 2025 January 2026 Spring 2026	• Exploring Science (ES) • Global Perspectives (GPS) • Human Diversity (HD) • Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) • Technological Advances and Society (TAS)	***Summer 2026***	***2026-2027***	***2027-2028***
2026-2027	May 2026 Summer 2026 August 2026 Fall 2026 January 2027 Spring 2027	• Academic Writing (AW) • Critical Reasoning (CR) • Oral Communication (OC) • Quantitative Applications (QA) • Quantitative Reasoning (QR) • Second Language Classical, Modern, and Sign (SLC, SLM, and SLS) • Writing (W)	***Summer 2027***	***2027-2028***	***2028-2029***
2027-2028	May 2027 Summer 2027 August 2027 Fall 2027 January 2028 Spring 2028	• Creativity and Aesthetics: Analysis (CAA) or Creativity and Aesthetics: Creation (CAC) • Civics and Individual Ethics (CIE) • Community Engagement (CE) • Historical Contexts (HC) • Literary Analysis and Interpretation (LAI) • Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Inquiry (PREI)	***Summer 2028***	***2028-2029***	***2029-2030***
2028-2029	May 2028 Summer 2028 August 2028 Fall 2028 January 2029 Spring 2029	• Exploring Science (ES) • Global Perspectives (GPS) • Human Diversity (HD) • Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) • Technological Advances and Society (TAS)	***Summer 2029***	***2029-2030***	***2030-2031***

Juried Assessment at SMU

» Conducted at the end of each collection year

» Faculty experts from across campus serve as raters

» Many return annually, gaining insights that improve their teaching

» Faculty are paid for their participation

» Interested in participating? Sign up annually @ smu.edu/juried

The Common Curriculum

Components (“tags”) and rubrics

Common Curriculum (CC)

- SMU's general education curriculum
- Developed by the faculty and managed by the Council on General Education (COGE)
- Composed of ***three*** knowledge areas with ***18*** components ("tags"):
  - ***Foundation***
  - ***Breadth***
  - ***Proficiencies and Experiences*** *(Graduation Requirements)*

CC Components or “Tags”

Foundation	*Breadth*	*Proficiencies and Experiences (Graduation Requirements)*
Academic Writing (AW)	Creativity and Aesthetics (CA) Creativity and Aesthetics – Analysis (CAA) Creativity and Aesthetics – Creation (CAC)	Civics and Individual Ethics (CIE)
Critical Reasoning (CR)	Exploring Science (ES)	Community Engagement (CE)
Second Language (SL) Second Language – Classical (SLC) Second Language – Modern (SLM) Second Language – Sign Language (SLS)	Historical Contexts (HC)	Global Perspectives (GPS)
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	Literary Analysis and Interpretation (LAI)	Human Diversity (HD)
	Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Inquiry (PREI)	Oral Communication (OC)
	Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS)	Quantitative Applications (QA)
	Technological Advances and Society (TAS)	Writing (W)

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Distributed Model

» General education courses are offered in nearly every department

» Most faculty will teach a course that requires assessment

» Watch for notifications and reminders from assessment@smu.edu

» Unsure if your course is tagged? Check the CC Course Search page

CC Rubric Components

Component	Definition
Student Learning Outcomes	Represents the overarching goal of the component.
Value Statement	Explains why the component is an integral part of the general education curriculum.
Supporting Skills	Provides the framework by which students meet the student learning outcome.
Course Content Criteria	Provides the key components of the course necessary to ensure students meet the student learning outcome. These components are required in order for a course to carry a tag. Defines the type of assessment assignment(s) that may be employed.
Glossary	Defines key terms in the rubric.
Scoring Rubric	The instrument used to determine the degree to which students met the defined supporting skills.

Sample Rubric: Exploring Science (ES)

- **Student Learning Outcome**: Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in scientific inquiry with respect to the natural world.

- **Supporting Skills 1 – 3**:
  - Students will describe and contextualize a problem/issue in the natural world.
  - Students will recognize, identify, and organize evidence necessary to analyze or solve a problem in the natural world.
  - Students will analyze and/or solve a problem in the natural world, providing an explanation and summary of the analysis and/or solution.

Sample Rubric: Exploring Science (ES)

Course Content Criteria

1. Courses in this category focus on observable phenomena in the natural world.

2. Courses in this category emphasize the collaborative nature of scientific inquiry, including peer review.

3. Courses in this category give students the framework/tools to gather and assess empirical evidence and use that evidence to develop and test hypotheses.

4. Courses in this category develop students' quantitative literacy with the goal of interpreting empirical evidence.

5. Courses in this category develop students' understanding of the role of science and its impact on the world.

6. Courses in this category include an assessment assignment that requires students to demonstrate each of the skills in the Exploring Science 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.

Sample Rubric: Exploring Science (ES)

Supporting Skills	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1
Describe and contextualize a problem/ issue in the natural world.	Provides a highly accurate, clearly contextualized, comprehensive description of the problem / issue. Key aspects of the problem/ issue, such as its scope, impact, and relevance, are clearly explained; the overall description and contextualization provide a clear and thorough overview of the problem/ issue.	Provides a generally accurate, contextualized, description of the problem/ issue. Some key aspects of the problem/ issue, such as its scope, impact, and relevance, are explained, although not always clearly; the overall description and contextualization provide a general overview of the problem/ issue.	Provides a generally accurate, limited description and contextualization of the problem/ issue. Key aspects of the problem, however, such as its scope, impact, and relevance, are missing or unclear; the overall description and contextualization provide a limited overview of the problem/ issue.	Provides a vague, incomplete, and/or inaccurate description and contextualization of the problem / issue. Key aspects of the problem, such as its scope, impact, and relevance, are missing; the overall description and contextualization fail to provide any insight into the problem/ issue.
Recognize, identify, and organize evidence necessary to analyze or solve a problem in the natural world.	Displays a superior ability to recognize evidence related to a problem in the natural world; identifies a wide range of relevant evidence and organizes and categorizes the evidence in a highly logical and coherent manner.	Displays a strong ability to recognize evidence related to a problem in the natural world; identifies multiple types of relevant evidence, but evidence may contain minor omissions or lack depth in certain areas; evidence is organized in a clear and effective manner, but there may be minor issues with logic and flow.	Displays a general ability to recognize evidence related to problem in the nature world; not all evidence gathered may be relevant; misses some critical evidence necessary to support analysis; organization of evidence may lack clarity and /or coherence.	Displays a limited ability to recognize evidence related to problem in the natural world; misses significant critical evidence and evidence that is gathered may not be relevant; evidence is disorganized and lacks clarity and coherence.
Analyze and/or solve a problem in the natural world, providing an explanation and summary of the analysis and/or solution.	Clearly, effectively, and accurately analyzes or solves problem(s) in the natural world in terms of the given information; ideas are logically structured, and presentation of analysis and/or solution is clear and well-supported with credible and relevant evidence.	Accurately analyzes or solves problem(s) in the natural world in terms of the given information; ideas are generally structured in a logical manner and summary of analysis and/or solution is generally clear and largely supported with generally credible and relevant evidence.	Offers a general, somewhat limited, analysis of or solution to problem(s) in the natural world in terms of the given information; ideas are loosely structured and not entirely logical, and summary of analysis and /or solutions is somewhat vague or illogical and not entirely supported; evidence may lack relevance and /or credibility.	Struggles to analyze or solve problem(s) in the natural world in terms of the given information; ideas are disorganized, illogical, and unclear, and there is limited or no summary of analysis or solution; evidence is not relevant or credible, and may be altogether absent.

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Assignment Design + Evidence Collection Methods

Assessment Types

- **Formative assessments** are designed to monitor student learning, quickly identify areas of strengths or weakness, and allow the faculty to address problem areas *immediately*.

- **Summative assessments** are designed to evaluate student learning at the end of a course and allows the faculty to identify problem areas and address them in the *future*.
  - Common curriculum assessments should follow the summative assessment model where assessment is delivered at or near the end of the term so we can understand what students have learned.

Assignment Types & Instruments

Type	Sample Instrument	Notes
Objective	Multiple-choice quiz or exam Fill-in-the-blank quiz or exam	• Develop a block of 4-5 questions per supporting skill • Ensure the questions increase in difficulty • Ensure the questions align with defined supporting skills • Assignment prompt should mirror supporting skill's language to ensure students are being evaluated appropriately.
Non-objective	• Essay quiz or exam question • Short answer quiz or exam question • Research papers • Recorded presentations • Recorded performances • Lab reports	• Assignment prompt should mirror supporting skill's language to ensure students are being evaluated appropriately. • Share the rubric with your students so they understand what they're being asked to do.

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Sample Assignment Prompt (ES)

» For your research paper, select a contemporary biological issue related to topics covered in BIOL 1301—such as genetic engineering, antibiotic resistance, biodiversity loss, CRISPR applications, cancer biology, or cell signaling disorders—and, in 1,500–2,000 words, clearly describe and contextualize the problem by explaining its scope, causes, and relevance to science and society; identify, summarize, and logically organize at least five peer-reviewed scientific sources and two reputable non-academic sources that provide credible and relevant evidence; and analyze the issue by evaluating potential solutions, interventions, or future research directions, supporting your reasoning with scientific evidence while acknowledging limitations or uncertainties in current knowledge.

Sample Assignment Prompt (ES)

- **Formatting and Submission Requirements**
- **Length:** 1,500–2,000 words (excluding references and figures).
- **Format:** Double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins.
- **Citations:** APA or CSE citation style.
- **Figures/Tables:** Include at least one figure or table to illustrate a key point, with a descriptive caption.
- **Due Date:** [Insert date near end of term to align with summative assessment timing].

Evidence Collection Methods

Term	Collection Method(s)	Type
Regular: Fall Spring	• Canvas Assignment linking • Multiple Choice Canvas Quiz/Exam (0-50 and 51+ enrolled) • In-class Quiz/Exam (0-50 and 51+ enrolled) • In-class lab assignment • Any other assignment type (e.g., artistic performance) **Note: collection occurs via Canvas or Box upload.*	• Non-objective • Objective • Objective • Non-objective • Non-objective
Summer/Interterms: January May Summer August	• Multiple Choice Quiz/Exam administered via Canvas or in-class. • Any other assignment, quiz or exam administered via Canvas or in-class. **Note: collection occurs via Box upload only for these terms.*	• Objective • Non-objective

Key Take-Aways

Key Take-Aways

✅ Do	❌ Don't
• Participate actively in assessment—it's essential for improvement.	• Assume assessment is optional.
• Focus on improving student learning.	• Treat assessment as grading or evaluation of faculty.
• Assess all CC components every time you teach the course.	• Skip assessment if IPE isn't collecting that term.
• Watch for assessment@smu.edu emails for deadlines & instructions.	• Ignore or delay reviewing instructions.
• Complete the Fall 2025 CC Assessment survey (~September 12) for Canvas license priority.	• Link Canvas assignments without IPE instructions.
• Conduct assessment at or near the end of the course.	• Assess too early to capture full student learning.
• Design assignments which align with the CC rubric(s).	• Use assignments that don't connect to rubric outcomes.

CC Assessment Resources

» **Main**: smu.edu/assessment

» **Calendar**: smu.edu/CCcalendar

» **Rubrics**: smu.edu/CCrubrics

» **Wiki**: wiki.smu.edu/ccassessment

» **Training Materials**: smu.edu/CCtraining

» **Faculty Help Sessions**: smu.edu/CChelp

» **Juried Assessment**: smu.edu/juried

» Need help? Submit a STABLE Help Desk ticket.

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Questions?

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