SAU TECH GENERAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES (GECS)

COLLEGE ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY

Southern Arkansas University Tech has developed a program to assess the learning outcomes of its students to assure that the College is achieving its mission. The Assessment Program is designed to measure the level of skills and competencies gained by students at the program level and within the General Education curriculum for all Associate Degree students. Assessment activities are performed in a number of ways including placement exams prior to enrollment, program level goals and objectives, and classroom assessment techniques. Faculty identify desired student learning outcomes at the program and classroom level and then assesses through various methodologies how well these outcomes have been achieved. The College uses the data obtained from assessment measures to student academic achievement and the instructional methodologies delivered by the institution.

General Education Mission Statement and Competencies

Southern Arkansas University Tech recognizes its role in preparing its associate degree graduates to function as competent and skilled workers to achieve any continuing academic goals and to live as life-long learners and thinkers. Consequently, general education at SAU Tech is designed to assist students in understanding the connection between their course work, their social and vocational responsibilities, and their rewards as citizens of a free nation.

SAU Tech GECs

The general education core curriculum requirements are consistent with SAU Tech's mission. Each associate degree requires completion of a minimum number of credit hours of general education courses. In addition, each program-specific course within the associate degrees assess at least one GEC. For the purposes of assessment, the general education component at SAU Tech focuses on measurable student learning outcomes.

In order to support its general education mission, SAU Tech has adopted the following competencies expected of all its associate degree graduates.

1. Applied Ethics - The applied ethics competency involves two major components: (1) understanding principles of normative and non-normative ethical theories and (2) applying these principles in decision-making activities including case studies and contemporary social issues. Moral character is explored in all its dimensions: virtues and vices, commitments and attitudes, personal relationships, and community involvement, in addition to right and wrong conduct.
    a. Define the nature and scope of morality and ethics.
    b. Examine the historical perspective on the development of morality and ethics.
    c. Compare and contrast different theories of ethics.
    d. Apply critical thinking skills in analyzing ethical systems and issues.
    e. Evaluate contemporary issues using a variety of ethical perspectives.
    f. Examine, through personal reflection, one's own response to ethical issues.
    g. Demonstrate competency in cultural, social and civic awareness.

2. Communication - The communication competency will enhance students' written and oral communication skills. Students will examine and show competency through the use of different types of communication appropriate in professional and academic settings. Students will assess what communication is appropriate for certain audiences and ethical issues that arise from communicating with others. Students will be able to effectively communicate through oral and written communication methods.
    a. Writing - The development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.
        1. Demonstrate communication methods that are appropriate for different occasions, audiences, and purposes.
        2. Apply the conventions of standard written English with proficiency.
        3. Assemble scholarly information from electronic and non-electronic sources, including the library, for use in academic research projects.
        4. Analyze information gathered from various sources.

5. Demonstrate ethical use of information in academic writing and research assignments.
6. Compose written assignments using the specified style of documentation.

b. Oral Communication - Prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.
   1. Apply oral communication skills to achieve a variety of purposes (to inform, to persuade, to present speeches).
   2. Demonstrate competency in the use of technology and visual aids in presentations.
   3. Demonstrate competency in verbal and non-verbal aspects of delivery.
   4. Exhibit ethical use of credible information in oral presentations.
   5. Employ a variety of strategies to organize and present information in order to adapt the message to a specific audience and occasion, and to achieve a desired purpose.
   6. Apply active listening skills.

c. Interpersonal Communication - The process by which people exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages: it is face-to-face communication. Interpersonal communication is not just about what is actually said - the language used - but how it is said and the non-verbal, facial expressions, gestures and body language.
   1. Apply the principles of effective interpersonal communication.
   2. Demonstrate competency in the use of technology and visual aids in presentations.
   3. Examine the influence of gender, culture, perception, behavior, and values on interpersonal communications.
   4. Compare and contrast supportive and defensive communication methods.
   5. Employ a variety of strategies to organize and present information in order to adapt the message to a specific audience and occasion, and to achieve a desired purpose

3. Information Technology - Information technology competency is defined as the level of computer, electronics, and telecommunications literacy necessary to understand the purpose of information technology. Students will discover how information technology assists individuals and organizations to work more efficiently, and how information technology influences society. In addition to learning the technical fundamentals of computer use, students will build a skill and knowledge base in researching information, making appropriate ethical choices about the use of informational technology, and using technology to advance societal goals.
   a. Describe the basics of information technology, from hardware and software to future devices, social web, and trends in the digital age.
   b. Analyze ethical issues involving information technology.
   c. Demonstrate the use of information technology as a problem solving and productivity tool.
   d. Utilize the library and computer resources to locate reliable and relevant information for ethical use in research projects.

4 Critical Thinking - Critical thinking competency is defined as a set of skills and strategies for making reasonable decisions about what we do and believe. These skills and strategies include understanding the use of thought and language, recognizing the most common logical fallacies, and using the essential skills of deductive and inductive argument analysis and evaluation. Students must demonstrate practical applications of critical thinking in academic disciplines.
   a. Define the concepts of critical thinking, logic, and argument.
   b. Assess the function of clarity in arguments.
   c. Compare and contrast the purposes of language in persuasive statements.
   d. Evaluate different types of inductive and deductive arguments.
   e. Distinguish fallacies from good arguments.
   f. Apply critical reasoning concepts in order to evaluate issues of contemporary importance.

5. Mathematical Reasoning – Mathematical competency enables students to efficiently process data and to learn new material in fields inside and outside of mathematics. Students will develop a knowledge base that allows logical reasoning and valid problem-solving techniques that can be applied in the student's personal and professional careers.
   a. Demonstrate knowledge of mathematical concepts, including algebraic concepts.
   b. Demonstrate reasoning skills to analyze situations and draw valid conclusions.
   c. Analyze mathematical data.
   d. Identify mathematical connections to other disciplines.