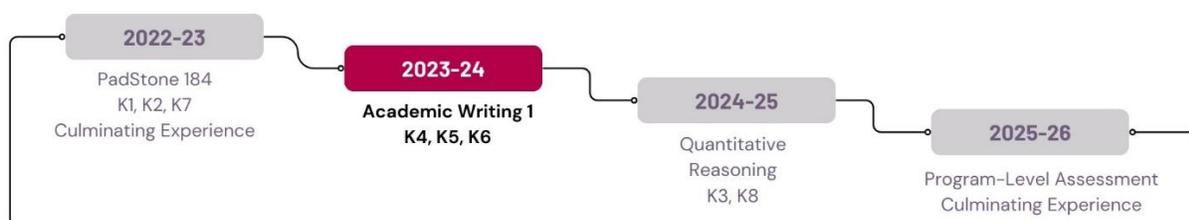


## GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Since the new General Education (Gen Ed) program was implemented in 2019, CWU has been engaged in improving the program through assessment. Especially since 2022–23, we have made significant progress by creating the General Education Assessment Workgroup ([CWUP 5-100-060\(3\)](#)) to revamp assessment across all areas of Gen Ed by collecting and assessing a sampling of student artifacts. The flowchart below shows the assessment cycle. For AY2023–24, [Academic Writing 1](#) and [Knowledge Areas 4, 5, and 6](#) were assessed.



The AY2022–23 assessment reports [1](#) and [2](#) led to closing the loop in the following areas for AY2023–24.

1. Develop a clearer process for the next round.
2. Conduct meta-analysis of Culminating Experience courses’ learning outcomes.
3. Combine the Culminating Experience assessment with the Gen Ed assessment.
4. Develop clear annual timelines for the Gen Ed assessment.
5. Run a full assessment of AY2023–24 knowledge areas using a broader collection of artifacts, from all colleges, and over a longer span of time.

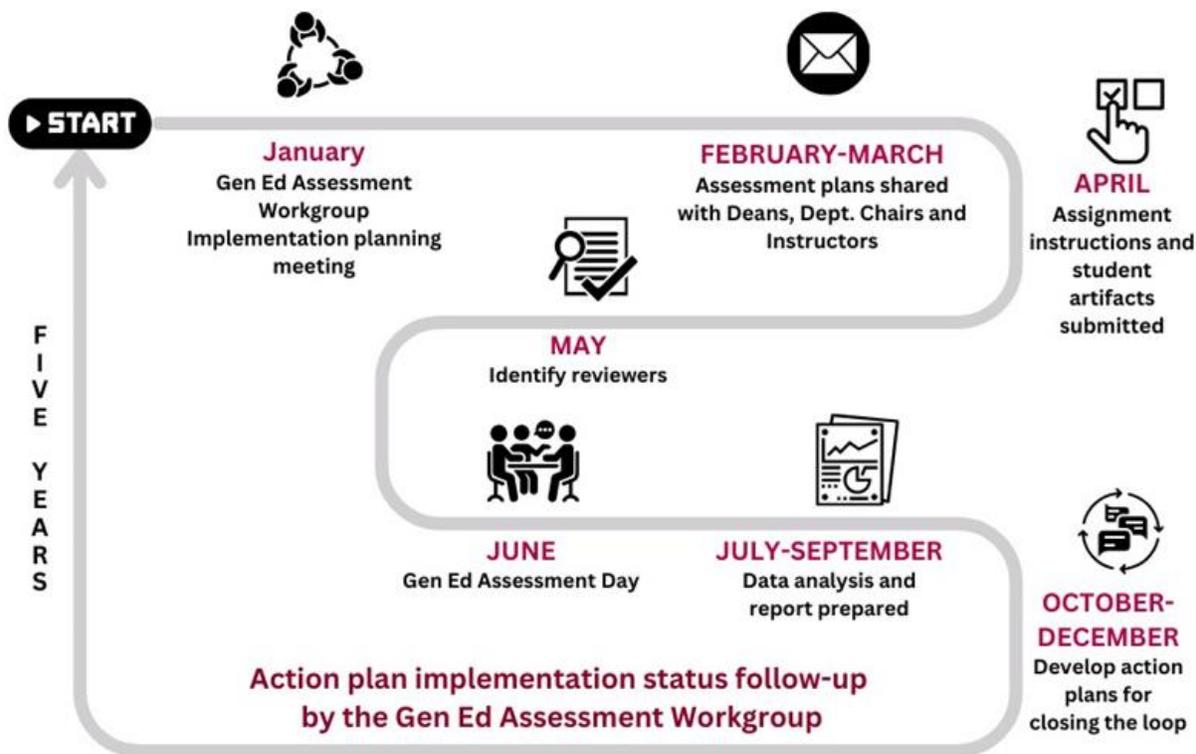
Given those recommendations, we undertook major changes in the Gen Ed assessment process for AY2023–24 for the process to more closely align with the [CWU vision](#) of a “model learning community of equity and belonging.” The Gen Ed assessment process engaged a wide swath of the campus community to build a collective interest in improving the Gen Ed program through the year-round assessment process.

Reflecting on the need for a clearer process and timeline, we created a Gen Ed assessment [timeline and a communication plan](#), for which the process started in January 2024. The Gen Ed Assessment Workgroup finalized the [rubrics](#) in January 2024 given the previous year’s feedback and shared those with the deans and department chairs. Also, a [Q&A](#) handout was created and posted on the Gen Ed website and distributed to the instructors.

After communicating with the campus community about the assessment plans, the instructors who taught the designated areas of Gen Ed (for this year, AW1, K4, K5, and K6) were asked to submit two student artifacts randomly selected from each section through an online submission site. During the submission process, the instructors were asked to remove the student and

instructor names and any other identifiers. The instructors were also asked to select the learner outcomes appropriate to measure through the artifacts they selected.

All the artifacts were compiled in SharePoint. On the [Assessment Day](#) of June 12, 2024, a diverse group of faculty and staff, including associate deans, department chairs, and tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty, gathered to review the student artifacts, assign a rating using the rubric, have a small group discussion, and provide feedback at the closing of the Assessment Day.



Regarding closing the loop on Culminating Experience, we scheduled the next Culminating Experience assessment for AY2025–26 and will conduct meta-analysis of CE courses’ learning outcomes in AY2024–25.

## DATA COLLECTION

### *Courses Offered in Fall 23 and Winter 24*

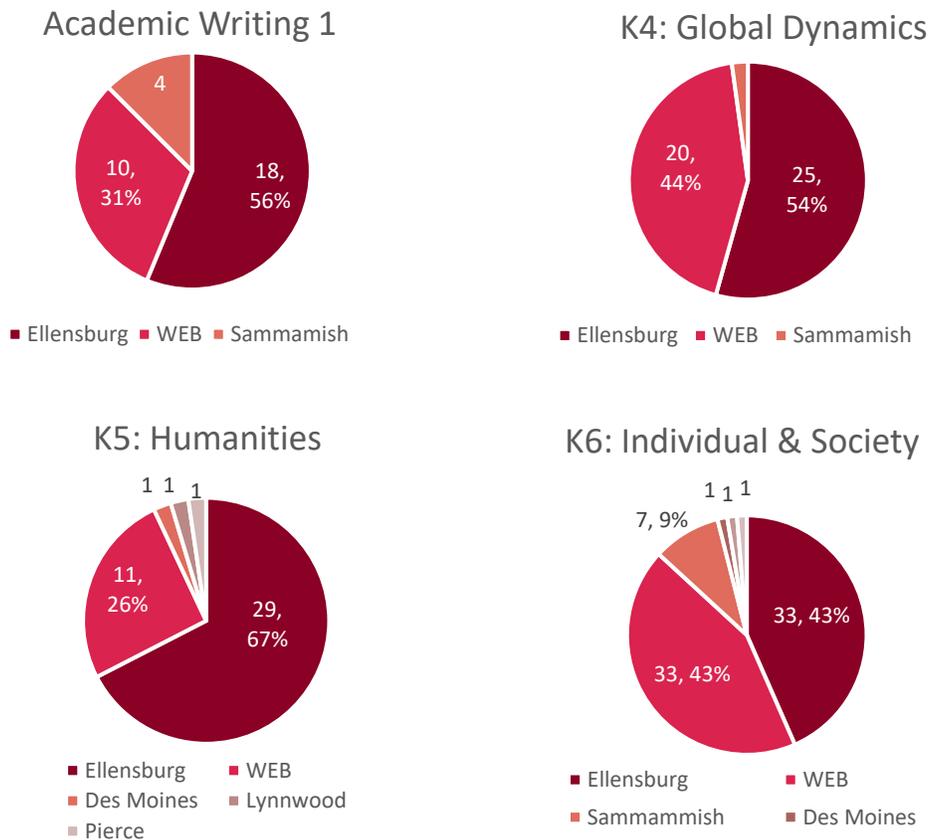
Table 1 shows the number of sections offered in Fall 23 and Winter 24. A vast majority of AW1 sections were offered by the English Department (30) with two sections by DHC. All the knowledge areas were widely spread across the colleges and departments, involving 17 departments for K4, 12 departments for K5, and 18 departments for K6. Note that the departments offered multiple knowledge areas, and the total number of departments involved in the process was 32.

**Table 1: Section Offering Status for Fall 23 and Winter 24**

	Number of Sections	Number of Departments Offering Sections	Total Number of Students Enrolled
Academic Writing 1	32	2	702
K4	46	17	1,488
K5	43	12	1,272
K6	76	18	2,539
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>		

For the AW1 sections, most were offered on the Ellensburg campus (56%). Other sections were offered through WEB (31%) and the Sammamish center (13%). In terms of the K4: Global Dynamics sections, most (54%) were offered on the Ellensburg campus, followed by WEB (44%). For the K5: Humanities sections, nearly two-thirds (67%) were offered on the Ellensburg campus. About one-fourth (26%) of the sections were offered through WEB, and three centers offered one section each. For the K6: Individuals and Society sections, an equal number were offered on the Ellensburg campus (43%) and through WEB (43%) with the remainder at the centers (14%).

**Chart 1: Number of Sections Offered by Campus**



Overall, 197 sections were taught by 95 instructors, which indicates that each instructor taught two sections on average. The instructors who taught those sections were asked to submit two randomly selected student artifacts along with the instructions of the assignment and learner outcomes that were aligned with the respective assignments. We successfully collected 324 artifacts from 162 sections (82% response rate). The follow-up e-mails with those non-submitting instructors indicated that five instructors did not have an active CWU e-mail address as of April 30, 2024, and two instructors had extenuating circumstances that exempted them from the process. Excluding those sections, the actual response rate was nearly 90%.

## ASSESSMENT DAY

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The Gen Ed Assessment Day was held on June 12, 2024. The recruitment of the reviewers was done through the Deans Council, the Academic Department Chairs Organization (ADCO), and the General Education Committee. The successful recruitment resulted in ensuring 24 diverse reviewers, including four associate deans, four department chairs, 11 T/TT faculty, five NTT faculty, and one registrar. Before the Assessment Day, all the reviewers received SharePoint access, through which they could access a rubric, the assignment instructions, the student artifacts, and information on the learner outcomes appropriate to measure given the artifacts the instructors selected. The reviewers were asked to score two student artifacts before coming to the Assessment Day as a test run.

On the Assessment Day the reviewers were divided into four groups (AW1, K4, K5, and K6), and each group was assigned artifacts to review for their respective area. After the overview of the Day, the reviewers shared their scores from the two test-run samples and discussed if there were any discrepancies among the reviewers. This process helped to optimize the inter-rater reliability.

The rubric score ranged from 1 (below expectation) to 4 (excellent), and the performance metric was an average of 3 (i.e., acceptable) in all sub-outcomes. Each student artifact was assessed by at least two reviewers and if the reviewers disagreed on a score, the average score was used. A total of 197 student artifacts were reviewed on the Assessment Day.

The last 30 minutes of the Assessment Day were used for a debrief to discuss what we learned through the assessment and how we could improve the assessment process.

### Reviewers

- ✓ 4 Associate Deans
- ✓ 4 Department Chairs
- ✓ 11 TT/T Faculty
- ✓ 5 NTT Faculty
- ✓ 1 Registrar



## FINDINGS

### *Assessment Results and Reviews Feedback: Academic Writing 1*

#### **Learner Outcomes:**

1. Read college-level texts critically and rhetorically—distinguishing central ideas from evidence; identifying the author’s purpose, assumptions, and attitudes; and locating issues or topics in need of further research.
2. Summarize college-level texts objectively, accurately, and ethically—referring to all key ideas and excluding unnecessary details.
3. Respond to college-level texts—evaluating their reasoning, currency, thoroughness of research, or reliability of findings.
4. Synthesize responses to issues, various perspectives on a topic, or solutions to a problem, and draw reasonable conclusions based on this synthesis.
5. Express ideas in clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs, following the conventions of academic English—citing sources and demonstrating control of grammar, usage, and punctuation rules.
6. Cite and document sources precisely and effectively according to the guidelines of a specific style manual.

Chart 2 shows the average rating for the six sub-outcomes of AW1. Artifacts demonstrating evidence scored 2.8 on average for SLO1, 2.8 for SLO2, 2.8 for SLO3, 3.2 for SLO4, 3.3 for SLO5, and 3.0 for SLO6. A possible reason that SLO1, 2, and 3 were below the performance metric of 3 is that the reviewers consistently commented that the “college-level texts” language was not clearly defined and, as a result, some reviewers had a higher expectation than others for what “college-level texts” should be. Clear definitions and more simplified outcome language would be helpful for both instructors and students to meet the targeted goals.

**Chart 2: AW1 Assessment Outcomes by Percentage ( $n = 50$ )**



**Feedback from the reviewers:**

- More debrief time is needed for the assessment process. More time to calibrate and discuss specific essays is needed. More time to talk through the process.
- The language for the outcome “college-level texts” is problematic. What exactly is “college-level text”? Several people had trouble agreeing on what a college-level text is.
- Faculty participating in the assessment need to contextualize the artifacts they submit for review. Faculty need to match the artifact with the outcomes more directly and clearly. Make sure the artifact meets a specific outcome and help the assessment committee see where and how that outcome is met.
- A memo or overview of how the artifact meets the outcomes would be helpful.
- Assignment descriptions for artifacts could highlight how the artifact meets the outcome and which outcomes the artifact meets.
- Revise and update the Gen Ed outcome language and phrasing for easier assessment. The outcome language for AWI is redundant, and several outcomes ask for similar actions.
- Number the learning outcomes on the rubric for future assessments.
- Break up the assessment process so the assessment committees only address three outcomes for each assessment. So, three outcomes are assessed each year. Too much labor to look for six outcomes in one artifact during one assessment.
- Take names off the e-mail submissions so faculty names are not visible on artifacts.

***Assessment Results and Reviews Feedback: Knowledge Area 4: Global Dynamics*****Learner Outcomes:**

1. Develop the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate underlying global, national, and local issues in the present or in a historical context.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how diversity, inequality, or privilege interact with social, economic, and political power globally.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and processes required for decision-making, participation in civic or international affairs, economic productivity, and global stewardship.
4. Develop the ability to effectively address significant issues and articulate impacts on global issues that could be social, cultural, economic, historic, or political.
5. Apply knowledge and skills to address complex global problems using interdisciplinary perspectives and conceptual models.

The average rating for the five sub-outcomes of K4 is shown in Chart 3. Artifacts demonstrating evidence scored 3.0 on average for SLO1, 2.8 for SLO2, 3.0 for SLO3, 2.8 for SLO4, and 3.1 for SLO5. The reviewers’ comments indicate that clearer instructions for the reviewers were needed before the Assessment Day. We have recruited a diverse group of people as reviewers, and they do not necessarily teach Gen Ed or have ever been involved in an assessment. Also, the reviewers suggested that adding a submission requirement for the instructors to provide a brief description of how the assignment is tied to the SLOs would greatly help the reviewers.

**Chart 3: K4 Assessment Outcomes by Percentage (n = 56)**



**Feedback from the reviewers:**

- Learning outcomes are broad, but the artifact (or even the class) itself might not cover everything. In such cases, how do we evaluate whether the LO is met? What if LOs are covered over the entirety of the course but not necessarily in the artifact? Does meeting the criteria mean hitting all the points mentioned in each LO?
- Assessors needed more guidance on how to interpret the LO.
- More information and/or a brief description of how the assignment is tied to the LOs would be helpful for future assessment.
- Some assignments did not align well with the LO indicated by the instructors. They would need to be more thoughtful about whether the submitted artifacts cover the LOs.
- If the tools of the class used to cover the LOs are in-class discussions or presentations, is there a way to capture what is being covered by them?

**Assessment Results and Reviews Feedback: Knowledge Area 5: Humanities**

**Learner Outcomes:**

1. Read and respond in oral and written forms to literary, philosophical, historical, or religious works from a variety of cultures.
2. Synthesize an understanding of past humanistic knowledge with current knowledge, making connections between past and present.
3. Analyze alternative ways of articulating and interpreting the human experience.
4. Identify their own linguistic, conceptual, and normative presuppositions.
5. Analyze the ways in which linguistic, religious, philosophical, and historical circumstances shape the human experience.

The average rating for the five sub-outcomes of K5 is shown in Chart 4. Artifacts demonstrating evidence scored 3.0 on average for SLO1, 2.8 for SLO2, 3.0 for SLO3, 2.8 for SLO4, and 3.1 for SLO5. Again, the reviewers’ comments were mostly related to the assessment process and wanting clearer information regarding the selection of SLOs and the sampling process in

advance. Perhaps before the Assessment Day, an informational meeting with the reviewers would be necessary.

**Chart 4: K5 Assessment Outcomes by Percentage (n = 35)**



### Feedback from the reviewers

- Is artifact selection random? If so, why? The concern is the lack of a holistic view of the course.
- A range of artifacts may be more helpful for assessment because the artifacts don't necessarily speak to all outcomes for the course.
- What is the determining factor for meeting each outcome?
- Why are only one or two outcomes per knowledge area being assessed with the selected artifact? Who makes the call about which outcomes are being evaluated?
- Is randomization the reason that duplicate artifacts are shared for a course?
- There are classes/artifacts included for assessment in the K5 knowledge area that don't belong in this area.
- Some assignments were not designed to address all the outcomes selected for it. Some assignments didn't prompt students to meet the outcomes identified.
- Should one assignment meet all outcomes? Submission of multiple assignments may make it easier to demonstrate meeting all outcomes.

### **Assessment Results and Reviews Feedback: Knowledge Area 6: Individual and Society**

#### **Learner Outcomes:**

1. Identify the basic principles and institutions that underlie the cultures and traditions of groups, organizations, societies, or nations.
2. Describe theories about individuals, social processes, social networks, or the relationships between individuals and society.
3. Explain and apply diverse empirical methods to investigate and analyze individuals, groups, or societies.

4. Analyze human behavior, perspectives, or cultures using theory and research.
5. Articulate ways that social diversity shapes attitudes and values affecting the respect and equality of others.

The average rating for the five sub-outcomes of K6 is shown in Chart 5. Artifacts demonstrating evidence scored 2.7 on average for SLO1, 2.5 for SLO2, 2.0 for SLO3, 2.5 for SLO4, and 2.0 for SLO5. All the SLOs were below target. As the reviewers' feedback shows, this could be related to lack of properly selecting the assignment and identifying the SLOs that are appropriate to measure through the artifacts selected. An analysis by campus location indicated that a majority of K6 sections (57%) were taught by WEB or through the centers. More outreach and awareness of the Gen Ed assessment for online and center instructors is necessary. Also, per the recommendations from the reviewers, some of the current SLOs were not assessable and clarifying the definitions and rewording would be necessary.

**Chart 5: K6 Assessment Outcomes by Percentage (n = 39)**



### Feedback from the Reviewers:

Are there any weaknesses or gaps that have been identified in student performance?

- Many assignments do not appear to require higher-level processing from students. For example, instructions for assignments that focus on summaries of course material could ask students to incorporate theories or research with citations. Analysis of material by the students was difficult to identify.
- Analysis of an issue should include potential counterarguments.
- Outcome #5 appeared to be the most difficult for students to meet, but it was unclear if that gap was due to weak assignment instructions that could be made stronger.
- When student writing was strong, it was much clearer when students were meeting the outcomes.
- Are there any actions or suggestions for course revisions to recommend for the Gen Ed instructions?
- Instructors should have the outcomes in front of them when they are designing the assignments and the rubric for the assignments.

- Encourage instructors to be selective when they pick which outcomes the assignment addresses and ask instructors to be more discerning in which outcomes they pick for the assignment. In fact, instructors should be discouraged from selecting all the outcomes for one assignment for the assessment.
- Picking an assignment that does one or two outcomes well would be much better than selecting an assignment that does all outcomes only slightly.
- Instructors should consider instructions for the assignments that mirror the language of the outcome.
- If the assignment is designed to address either Outcomes #3 or #4, the assignment instructions should include or stress citations.

***Suggestions/recommendations for Undergraduate Studies:***

- The assessment process would benefit if there was a way to ensure that student artifacts that are sampled from Gen Ed courses represent a similar proportion of each outcome.
- Start-of-the-quarter instructions from Undergraduate Studies to all instructors of Gen Ed that articulate the requirements/outcomes that should be met for the courses would be incredibly helpful (and/or more effective onboarding).
- Participating in the assessment process would be helpful if instructors and instructors from more disciplines were represented in the assessment process.
- The assessment process itself as a communal process is incredibly valuable.

***As currently written, the K6 group felt Outcomes #3, #4, and #5 should be reworded:***

- #3: “and” should be replaced with “or”; “diverse empirical methods” should be reworded as “empirical method(s).” In fact, Outcome #3 has far too many subcomponents and needs to be simplified to be achievable in a 10-week quarter.
- #4: “and” should be replaced with “and/or” so that “theory and research” becomes “theory and/or research.”
- #5: change “equality” to “equity”

## CLOSING THE LOOP

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### ***Closing the loop on the Assessment Process***

***Need better communication with the instructors who will submit the artifacts:***

The findings showed that the instructors need much clearer guidance about which learner outcomes will be assessed and how to ensure that the assignment aligns with the learner outcomes. We will start to reach out to the instructors who teach Quantitative Reasoning, K3, and K8 early enough to prepare the online submission. Also, we will proactively reach out to the WEB and center instructors as they are the key component for the Gen Ed assessment.

***Need better instructions for the reviewers:***

The findings indicate that the reviewers need clearer explanations about how the artifacts were collected. Also, they need a better understanding of the definition of learner outcomes, for example, what are “college-level texts” and does “diverse empirical methods” require one or multiple methods. We will coordinate a pre-assessment meeting before the Assessment Day to

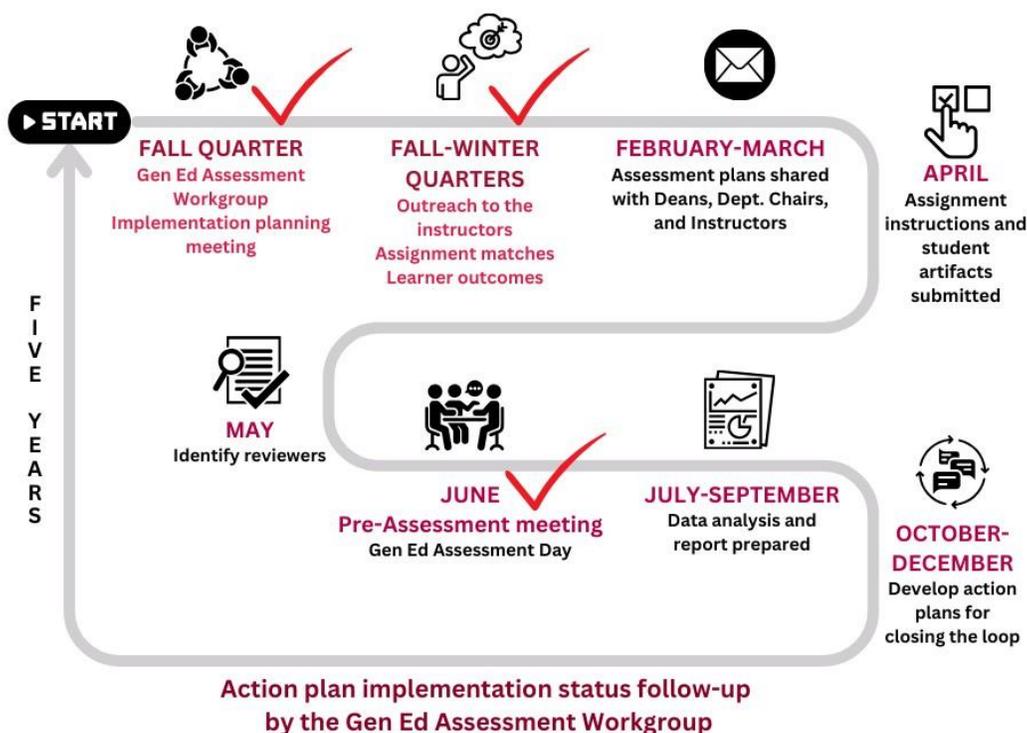
explain the process. Also, a sample test run could be done at that meeting rather than on the Assessment Day.

***Need more time for the Assessment Day:***

As we are collecting a large sample, it was not feasible to complete reviewing all the artifacts in three hours with an inter-rater reliability check and a small group discussion for feedback. We will make the Assessment Day one full day starting in the morning so that the reviewers will not have too much pressure to finish the review and have sufficient time for the small group discussion.

***Need better data preparation for the Assessment Day:***

Some reviewers indicated to exclude the instructors’ names from the submission site. Also, some instructors submitted artifacts in the wrong knowledge area, which created confusion for the reviewers. The data should be cleaned up before the Assessment Day.



***Closing the loop on the Component Areas***

Moving forward, there will be no “one assignment fits all SLOs,” and we will ask the instructors to more carefully assess the assignment and learner outcomes and ask them to pick an assignment that has a strong connection with one or two outcomes rather than asking for weaker connections with all outcomes. Also, the instructors will be asked to submit a short paragraph to explain how the assignment is connected to the one or two selected learner outcomes. Before communicating with the instructors, the definition of the language used in the learner outcomes must be clarified. For example, for the upcoming assessment of Quantitative Reasoning, if the SLOs include the language of “Perform **college-level** arithmetical and mathematical

calculations,” then “college-level arithmetical and mathematical calculations” needs to be clearly defined as seen with the issue in Academic Writing 1.

### **Academic Writing 1**

The findings showed that the term “college-level texts” was never clearly defined. This affected the instructors’ development of the assignment and the students’ understanding of the expectation of what they should read, summarize, and evaluate in AW1. As the sections were mostly taught by the English Department, the department could present this at a department meeting and define “college-level texts.”

### **Knowledge Area 4**

Similar to the other knowledge areas, the reviewers were unclear if the learner outcomes indicated “and,” that is, whether all the elements must be presented in the paper, or one element would be sufficient. For example, a reason SLO2 rated below the target is that the reviewers determined that all the elements (i.e., social, economic, and political power globally) must be presented. Having the instructors clarify this to more closely align with the learner outcomes would help reviewers in scoring the papers.

### **Knowledge Area 5**

There is a need for the clarification of learner outcomes. Especially, SLO4 where 13% of the artifacts were below the expectation rating. It requires clearer explanations to the students regarding the meaning of “their own linguistic, conceptual, and normative presuppositions” and carefully design what kind of assignment would be appropriate to measure such learner outcome.

### **Knowledge Area 6**

The findings indicated that a comprehensive reevaluation of the K6 assessment would be necessary. This includes clarifying the language in learner outcomes and developing better communication tactics for the WEB and center instructors. Those areas will be addressed in AY2024–25 including proposed language changes being presented to the General Education Committee. We will also collect new data after addressing the areas of recommendations and redo the assessment in AY2025–26.

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