

What is FSSE?

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) was designed to complement the National Survey of Student Engagement, which is administered to undergraduate students. FSSE measures faculty, instructor, and graduate student expectations for and involvement with undergraduate student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with student learning and development. FSSE results can be a catalyst for productive discussions related to teaching, learning, and the quality of undergraduates' educational experiences. Since FSSE's inception, more than 230,000 faculty members from nearly 800 colleges and universities have participated in the survey.

What Gen Ed Courses Contribute to Essential Learning Outcomes

Using data from 11,000 faculty members in 2005, FSSE showed that general education courses place greater emphasis on developing intellectual skills, personal and social responsibility, deep approaches to learning, and diverse interactions. In contrast, non-general education courses emphasize practical skills more and are linked with greater levels of student-faculty interaction.

Nelson Laird, T. F., Niskodé-Dossett, A. S., & Kuh, G. D. (2009). What general education courses contribute to essential learning outcomes. *The Journal of General Education*, 58(2), 65-84.

New FSSE Measures

In 2013, FSSE underwent a survey update creating a variety of new measures of faculty expectations for and involvement with undergraduate engagement:

- Higher-Order Learning
- Reflective & Integrative Learning
- Learning Strategies
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Collaborative Learning
- Discussions with Diverse Others
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Effective Teaching Practices
- Quality of Interactions
- Supportive Environment

The first eight of these ten measures are used in the following study of general education courses.

An Updated Study

Using data from the 2013-2015 administrations of FSSE, with responses from 38,283 faculty from 327 institutions, we compared general education courses and non-general education courses using these new FSSE measures as well as examined characteristics of the courses and the faculty who teach different types of courses. Half of the faculty chose to respond about a general education course they taught during the current school year.

Who Teaches Gen Ed Courses?

The characteristics of faculty teaching general education and non-general education courses were examined in order to determine any differences. Characteristics examined include:

- **Academic rank**
- Age
- **Citizenship**
- Course load
- **Disciplinary area**
- Earned degree
- Gender identity
- **Racial/Ethnic identification**
- Sexual Orientation
- Teaching experience
- Tenure

Bolded characteristics denote those with notable disproportions for those teaching general education courses versus those teaching non-general education courses.

What Characterizes Gen Ed Courses?

Course characteristics were examined in order to determine what characterizes general education courses. Characteristics examined included:

- **Course division**
- Format (classroom, distance, hybrid, etc.)
- **Course size**
- Writing component

Bolded characteristics denote those with notable disproportions for general education courses.

What Do Gen Ed Courses Contribute to Engagement?

General education courses place greater emphasis on higher-order learning, reflective and integrative learning, quantitative reasoning, and learning strategies; provide more opportunity for discussions with diverse others; and faculty display more effective teaching practices. General education and non-general education courses equally encourage collaborative learning and promote student-faculty interaction.