General Education Competency Assessment Report for Blue Ridge Community College 2024-2025: Critical Thinking and Professional Readiness

This assessment report is to fulfill the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia's Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education.

General Education Philosophy at BRCC

Blue Ridge Community College's general education offerings intentionally strive to develop a liberal arts perspective. The program exposes students to a broad body of knowledge of the major social, cultural, historical, and scientific forces that have shaped human identity and the world. General education enables students to integrate knowledge to address fundamental questions about the nature of the world and its inhabitants. Blue Ridge Community College believes general education is an important component for all students whether they are going immediately into the workforce or continuing their education.

As a part of the VCCS, Blue Ridge Community College adheres to the VCCS General Education Policy in selecting and defining general education competencies. The General Education Policy states that "upon completion of the associate degree, graduates of Virginia's Community Colleges will demonstrate competency in student learning outcomes (SLOs) determined and assessed by each college in 1) civic engagement, 2) critical thinking, 3) professional readiness, 4) quantitative literacy, 5) scientific literacy, and 6) written communication." (p. 1). The competencies are defined as follows:

Civic Engagement is the ability to contribute to the civic life and well-being of local, national, and global communities as both a social responsibility and a life-long learning process. Degree graduates will demonstrate the knowledge and civic values necessary to become informed and contributing participants in a democratic society.

Critical Thinking is the ability to use information, ideas, and arguments from relevant perspectives to make sense of complex issues and solve problems. Degree graduates will locate, evaluate, interpret, and combine information to reach well-reasoned conclusions or solutions.

Professional Readiness is the ability to work well with others and display situationally and culturally appropriate demeanor and behavior. Degree graduates will demonstrate skills important for successful transition into the workplace and pursuit of further education.

Quantitative Literacy is the ability to perform accurate calculations, interpret quantitative information, apply and analyze relevant numerical data, and use results to support conclusions. Degree graduates will calculate, interpret, and use numerical and quantitative information in a variety of settings.

Scientific Literacy is the ability to apply the scientific method and related concepts and principles to make informed decisions and engage with issues related to the natural, physical, and social world. Degree graduates will recognize and know how to use the scientific method, and to evaluate empirical information.

Written Communication is the ability to develop, convey, and exchange ideas in writing, as appropriate to a given context and audience. Degree graduates will express themselves effectively in a variety of written forms.

Furthermore, BRCC complies with the VCCS General Education Policy by assessing each of the six competency areas outlined above in accordance with SACSCOC accreditation standards and SCHEV policy.

General Education Assessment

The approach to assessment at BRCC is based on the idea that no single instrument or process captures the breadth and depth of general education, and that a robust assessment plan contains multiple strategies. We use direct course-embedded measures of student work through processes within our career/technical and transfer program coursework. We also administer standardized direct assessments of general education to graduating students and/or use indirect measures such as surveys and participation, depending on the competency. Our assessment process considers four components:

General education outcomes in major content coursework

All associate degree programs have a general education core defined by distribution requirements. The general education coursework core of the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees is small in proportion to the major coursework. AAS programs such as Nursing, Veterinary Technology, Business Management, and Aviation are roughly proportioned at 15 credits general education to 45 credits major coursework. While the introductory level courses in composition, math/science, humanities, and social science provide the fundamentals, the important information for program improvement is to know how students perform in key general education outcomes within the context of their major coursework. Are nursing students writing well in their nursing coursework, following the conventions of their discipline? How does critical thinking factor into the decision-making process in business? Questions like these are addressed by this piece of the package.

With the Transfer Virginia driven restructuring of the transfer degrees, BRCC now offers both metamajor or “parent” degrees (AA Liberal Arts, AS Social Science, AS Science) and more focused major programs as standalone awards (AS Business, AS Computer Science, AS Education, AS Engineering). For the purposes of General Education assessment, our revised plan treats the broad metamajor degrees in the same way as the previous AA&S in College Transfer, using a cluster approach. However, the new focused AS majors are participating in the same process as the AAS programs.

For our career/technical (AAS) and transfer (AS) major programs, we ask each year that as part of the program’s overall general education assessment strategy, they perform a course-embedded assessment of a designated competency for that year. **For this report, program heads were asked to identify a program course for 2024-25 in which they would assess the Critical Thinking competency using student work in that course**.

General education outcomes in general education coursework

The restructuring of the transfer programs also gave us the opportunity to rework this piece. Every transferable associate degree has the Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) at its core, and the UCGS defines six blocks of General Education distribution requirements:

- Block I: Written Communication (ENG 111/112)
- Block II: Humanities /Arts/Literature
- Block III: Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Block IV: Natural Sciences
- Block V: Mathematics
- Block VI: History

The program coordinators for each of the metamajor degrees will coordinate and report on assessment activities within general education distribution requirements as follows:

- AA Liberal Arts: Written Communication; Humanities /Arts/Literature, with ownership of Written Communication, Civic Engagement, and Critical Thinking
- AS Social Science: History; Social and Behavioral Sciences, with ownership of Civic Engagement, Critical Thinking, and Scientific Literacy
- AS Science: Natural Sciences; Mathematics, with ownership of Quantitative Literacy and Scientific Literacy

Scoring of artifacts belongs to all the faculty and takes place during Spring in-service. Faculty are divided into teams and are introduced to the AAC&U-style rubrics we have developed for assessment of General Education. Faculty are guided through the scoring process, including a discussion and calibration step for selected works. After scoring assigned works, faculty will regroup and share observations and recommendations, course instructors will develop action plans, and follow-up assessments will take place the next year.

We have also made changes to the public-facing reporting for this component. Course faculty are provided with detailed reports on student performance, including precise score data. However, we have opted to not include class-level data in the institutional report, as many of our courses have a single section taught by an identifiable instructor. Our past strategy was to aggregate by competency, combining results over several years. While this does work to anonymize the score data, having the results in this form is not particularly useful. Going forward, we will not use a themed competency for reporting on this piece but will simply describe projects the faculty are working on each year and improvements they have seen across all measured competencies. This will be done with the understanding that score data is being collected and furnished to the faculty for their use, and that other parts of our General Education public reporting do include score data at the program and institutional level for transparency.

In this report, the new General Education assessment process involving all faculty will be discussed in the "Special Projects" section. Results for 2024-25 spanning multiple competencies will be discussed in a new section for "General Education in the UCGS Core."

Institutional level assessment with external benchmarks

Course-embedded assessment in our general education and major content courses is a way of gathering information that is meaningful and actionable for faculty. We added these processes to our assessment package to address a weakness that is inherent in standardized graduation assessments of general education: well-designed summative assessments of general education are written in a way that performance should not be dependent on a particular course. This makes sense as a broad measure of what students can demonstrate by the end of a program, but it's not particularly helpful when you are asking faculty to make use of assessment data to inform strategies for improvement. These instruments don't provide information at that level.

They do have a use however, which is why we opted to supplement them with other measures instead of replacing them when the VCCS schedule of assessments was discontinued. Course-embedded assessment does not provide external benchmarks – faculty end up comparing student performance to benchmarks they set themselves, and it's not surprising that those benchmarks are frequently "met." Standardized assessments give us benchmarks outside ourselves to compare and the results of these graduation assessments can alert us if something is seriously off at the program level. **Each year, graduating students are required to complete an assessment; for 2024-25, the competency was Professional Readiness, and the instrument was the *Global Perspective Inventory (GPI)* from Iowa State University**.

Assessment schedule

BRCC will assess the general education competencies on a three-year cycle, reporting on two competencies per year. One of those will be the institutional-level graduation assessment, and for each of these, we have designated the instrument. The other competency will be assessed using the course-embedded approaches described above. Career/technical programs will contribute to the assessment of the themed competency for that year, and summary reports will be provided for the recent activity of the general education clusters in that area.

Instruments:

- Written Communication: *IntelliMetric Written Communication Assessment – Writing Response Test*, McCann
- Civic Engagement: *Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory* (PSRI), Iowa State University
- Quantitative and Scientific Literacy: *Quantitative Reasoning Test* (QR) and *Scientific Reasoning Test* (SR), Madison Assessment
- Critical Thinking: *Test of Everyday Reasoning* (TER), Insight Assessment
- Professional Readiness: *Global Perspectives Inventory* (GPI), Iowa State University

	Cycle 1			Cycle 2		
Competency	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**2027-2028**	**2028-2029**	**2029-2030**	**2030-2031**
Written Communication	Embedded			Graduates (McCann)		
Civic Engagement	Graduates (GPI)			Embedded		
Quantitative Literacy		Embedded			Graduates (QR)	
Scientific Literacy		Graduates (SR)			Embedded	
Professional Readiness			Embedded			Graduates (GPI)
Critical Thinking			Graduates (TER)			Embedded

Competency: Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is the ability to use information, ideas and arguments from relevant perspectives to make sense of complex issues and solve problems. Students will locate, evaluate, interpret, and combine information to reach well-reasoned conclusions or solutions.

- **CT1:** Evaluate a source to determine its credibility for supporting arguments
- **CT2:** Tie conclusion to a synthesis of information
- **CT3:** Incorporate evidence appropriately into a work to support an argument or position

The assessment rubrics for each outcome are included in Appendix A. Outcomes and rubrics were chosen, developed, and approved by faculty across all disciplines as part of a year-long process, and continue to be revised and updated. Rubric statements are modeled after the AAC&U Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric and borrow heavily from that source but have been significantly modified to better align with our assessment structure.

Critical Thinking within Career/Technical (CTE) Programs and Transfer Majors

New for 2024-2025: With the restructuring of the transfer awards into a system of metamajor and major specific degrees, we are treating the major AS programs (Business, Computer Science, Education, Engineering) as similar to the AAS majors for contributions to General Education assessment. Program managers for these awards were asked to identify contributions to the Critical Thinking competencies in representative major coursework classes.

For the course embedded assessment of Critical Thinking within the AAS/AS programs, we asked faculty to identify a course and assignment to assess *at least one* of CT1, CT2, or CT3 in student work using the lens of the Critical Thinking rubrics (see Appendix A). Contributions included:

- Criminal Justice AAS: Students will complete an essay synthesizing both deontological and utilitarian ethics from the standpoint of a criminal justice practitioner. The students will use historical writings and contemporary ethical theories to analyze complex ethical dilemmas and examine the moral outcomes from both deontological and utilitarian perspectives. [CT2: *Tie conclusion to a synthesis of information*]
- Advanced Manufacturing Technology AAS: Students will set up a working system. Instructor introduces a number of faults into the system. Students need to identify and verbally explain their rationale for what they think is wrong. Students are rated on efficiency and clarity of explanation. [CT2]
- Engineering AS: Students must problem solve to determine the focal length and index of refraction for plane mirrors, spherical mirrors, and lenses. [CT2]
- Computer Science AS: Students will assess why certain computational solutions might not work and apply critical thinking techniques to save time in developing more efficient approaches. {CT2]
- Early Childhood Development AAS: Students will apply critical thinking skills as they analyze parent handbooks from three different childcare centers. They will be examining specifically the

extent to which each center promotes family involvement and the levels of support provided to families. They will summarize their findings in a written paper, including evidence from the parent handbooks to support their argument. [CT3: *Incorporate evidence appropriately into a work to support an argument or position*]

- Emergency Medical Services AAS: Students will complete a final essay and presentation regarding a certain type of shock and its effects on the body. For this shock essay, the students will have to use multiple scholarly sources for the evidence-based portion of the final. [CT3]
- Education AS: The students will read a case study about a child that comes from a diverse background. They will need to analyze what the child's strengths are along with their weaknesses. [CT3]

Program faculty are very satisfied with student performance

Table 1: Critical Thinking score summary

CT summary scores (all components)		
Score	**Number**	**%**
4	42	20.9%
3	76	37.8%
2	59	29.4%
1	24	11.9%
0	0	0.0%
A score of "2" indicates uneven performance but an overall impression of competence. A score of "3" indicates satisfactory or better performance.		

Due to the varied nature of the programs, the level of the course chosen, and the complexity of the assignment within the course, there is no value in using the data to compare programs to each other. The intent is that, looking at many students across many programs, we get a picture not only of student competency, but also the extent to which program faculty view their students as sufficiently prepared to function in a professional setting. Very few student works scored as completely lacking in proficiency. Many of the courses the student work is pulled from come at the end of the program plan, weaker students have not made it to this point, and students in these classes should be high-performing. Many instructors indicated that in terms of class expectations, a score of 2 would not be considered satisfactory, and they would expect their students to be proficient (3) to exemplary (4) at the task.

Discussion of results

For discussion of results, instructors complete a Google form that asks them to address the following:

- Think back about when you were grading your students' work. Did you notice any themes?
- Name one thing you saw that they were particularly good at across the board.
- Can you name one thing that they seemed to have trouble with?
- Was there anything that jumped out that even the good students seemed a little weak on?
- For the weaker students, what sorts of things tripped them up that you gave a lower score?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Name one thing you could do to support your weaker students and help them address the performance issues you noted above.

Here are some of those observations:

Think back about when you were grading your students' work. Did you notice any themes?

- We found that about half of the students used concepts from [their] Discrete Math class in the application of their algorithmic programming. Also, those students who worked with our tutor did much better as the term progressed.
- Generally that students could respond to "right there" type responses but for some the applying what they learned in class to this new situation was a stretch.
- Many students could gather the proper information and reference scholarly material. However many did not apply it completely properly or were leaving large sections of material where there was no reference to sources when there should have been.

Name one thing you saw that they were particularly good at across the board.

- Across the board, the students demonstrated that they understood their opinions and point of view were subjective, and in each essay, they pointed out that others may have varying opinions based upon their point of view, background, history, demographics, and individual situations.

Can you name one thing that they seemed to have trouble with?

- Ethical dilemmas cause frustration, defensiveness, and internal conflict. That is the point of subjecting students to these two points of view and engage them to think critically. I noticed each student had trouble holding their thoughts and feelings in a strong way, although that is the point of the assignment.

Was there anything that jumped out that even the good students seemed a little weak on?

- The assignment could have been more straightforward if I had made the assessment verbal. Writing down critical thinking requires the student to not only think critically, but also to accurately write down their thoughts. Grammar, spelling, and sentence structure can sometimes get in the way of the student expressing themselves on critical thinking issues.
- Even stronger students showed some misunderstanding around the limitations of geometrical optics. Specifically, they often overlooked the fact that this model is an approximation and does not account for phenomena such as diffraction or the full wave nature of light. This suggests a gap in connecting simplified models to their physical limitations.

Name one thing you could do to support your weaker students and help them address the performance issues you noted above.

- Bringing a tutor to the classroom during our programming days was very helpful, but unfortunately, the tutor could only make it to two of our class sessions this semester. In the future we will try to increase the number of in-class visits and also better encourage students to work at the tutoring center.
- In reflecting upon the scores of this assignment, it became apparent that I need to be more clear in my instructions. Providing more structure, such as requesting at least 3 examples from each handbook to support their findings, may help them be more successful. Providing an example of an analysis may also increase the students' success.
- I will continue to offer tools such as a paper outline, the CRAAP test, and encouragement to utilize BRCC's writing coach. I will also provide a sign-up for Zoom sessions to review first drafts together.

Competency: Professional Readiness (2024-25 Graduation Assessment)

Professional Readiness is the ability to work well with others and display situationally and culturally appropriate demeanor and behavior.

Instrument: Global Perspective Inventory (GPI) (Iowa State University)

The Global Perspective Inventory (GPI) assesses a global and holistic view of student learning and development, focusing on how students think and interact with others. Originally developed by the Global Perspective Institute, Inc., the GPI is now hosted by the Research Institute of Studies (RISE) at Iowa State University. For the assessment of *Professional Readiness*, the following sections are included:

- Openness to Diversity and Challenge (ODC)
- Intrapersonal Affect (Affect)
- Interpersonal Social Interaction (SocInt)

The results of the above sections will be compared with the results of the 2019-2020 administration of the Professional and Social Responsibility Inventory (PSRI) and the national means of the GPI from the 2024-2025 report. Disaggregated data (programs and demographics) will focus on variation from the overall means (of all participating BRCC graduates) and the national means.

Methodology and Limitations

The GPI was administered to students planning to graduate with an associate degree during the 2024-2025 academic year. BRCC graduates have been assessed at the time of graduation for over 15 years.

The assessment was available to complete online, with instructions for access provided through emails and reminders during the semester of intended graduation. Students had approximately four weeks to complete the assessment, with some variation depending on how early students applied for graduation and how quickly those applications were reviewed.

Participation was voluntary and low-stakes, with no impact on GPA or graduation eligibility. Recent changes to VCCS and federal guidelines for transcript policies reduced incentives for completion. An additional limitation is the number of test takers when examining results by program; there were 19 programs with an *n* of less than 10.

Comparative analyses included:

- Welch's unpaired t-test for differences between BRCC's 2024-2025 GPI results and the 2019-2020 administration of the PSRI.
- One-sample t-tests comparing BRCC 2024-2025 results to national GPI means from the 2024-2025 report.

Due to the unavailability of raw PSRI data from 2019-2020, disaggregated comparisons are limited to the 2024-2025 GPI results. Subgroup means are compared to the overall BRCC graduate results and the national means.

In the absence of targeted program-level interventions, general assessment scores are expected to remain stable over time.

Test-Taker Demographics

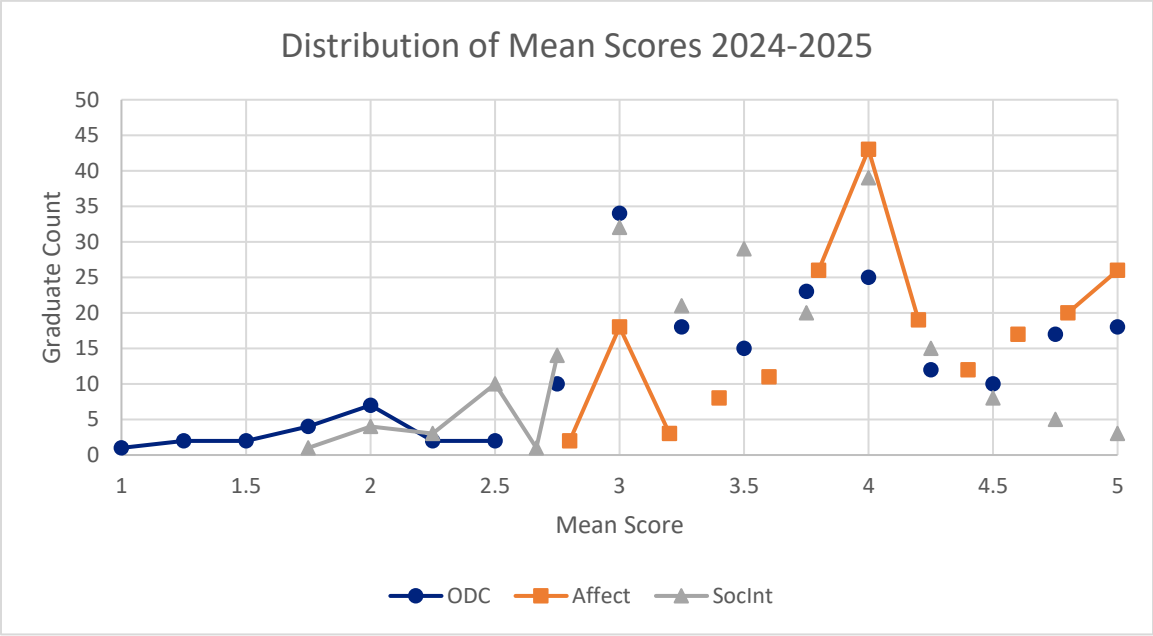
In 2024-2025, there were 256 results. 50 results were removed by RISE for reasons such as stopping out on the first screen and declining the consent form. When matched with graduates, one student who had not actually gradated with an associate degree was also removed, yielding 205 complete assessment records. The following describes the demographics of the 205 students. Detailed demographic information is available in *Appendix B: Professional Readiness Data Details*.

Some general trends:

- Of the 516 AA&S, AA, AS, and AAS degree graduates from 2024-2025, 205 (40%) completed the graduation assessment. This marks a large drop from 2023-24, which marked a high point for participation (74%) prior to the assessment becoming optional.
- The program breakdown was nearly even, with 52% Transfer (AA&S, AA, and AS) to 48% career/technical (AAS).
- Transfer degrees have gone through notable changes recently, one of which was restructuring Specializations into full associate degree programs. One of these, the Computer Science AS, had enough participants to warrant a detailed mini-report.
- Within AAS degrees, the following individual programs had 10 or more graduating participants and will receive detailed mini-reports: Business Management, Information Systems Technology, and Veterinary Technology. The remaining AAS programs each had fewer than 10 participants and will not be analyzed at the program level.
- The assessment sample was 75% White, with Hispanic students comprising the next largest group at 10%.
- Consistent with the prior year, a quarter of participants (25%) were First Generation students, and more than a third were Pell eligible (37%).

Results

For data details and tables, refer to *Appendix B*. A summary and discussion of notable findings is below.



Established benchmarks and overall performance

For comparison and analysis, we have the results from the 2019-2020 administration of the PSRI. 195 total students participated in that administration.

Change over time

Graduates in 2024-2025 showed a statistically significant improvement in *Interpersonal Social Interaction* compared with 2019-2020, with small but notable gains. The other two measures remained stable, with no significant changes over time.

Looking at the individual items under each category, there were some improvements of significance. Detailed data can be found in Appendix B, but these improvements are noted below:

- *I frequently interact with people from a country different from my own.*
  - Increased from 3.23 in 2019-2020 to 3.60 in 2024-2025 (p = 0.0005).
- *I do not feel threatened emotionally when presented with multiple perspectives.*
  - Increased from 3.84 in 2019-2020 to 4.09 in 2024-2025 (p = 0.0044).
- *I frequently interact with people from a race/ethnic group different from my own.*
  - Increased from 3.88 in 2019-2020 to 4.08 in 2024-2025 (p = 0.0199).

Table 2 - Overall Mean Comparison, 2024-2025 and 2019-2020

	2024-2025			2019-2020					
	n	M1	SD	n	M2	SD	M1-M2	*p*	*d*
Openness to Diversity and Challenge	202	3.62	0.89	175	3.69	0.86	-0.07	0.4385	0.0800
Intrapersonal Affect	205	4.12	0.60	187	4.02	0.59	0.10	0.0972	0.1681
Interpersonal Social Interaction	205	3.50	0.65	187	3.33	0.71	0.17	0.0142	0.2498

National means

BRCC students scored significantly lower than the national average on two of the three measures: *Openness to Diversity and Challenge* and *Intrapersonal Affect*. Scores averaged slightly lower than the national average for *Interpersonal Social Interaction*, but not to a significant degree.

Table 3 - Overall Mean Comparison, 2024-2025 BRCC Graduates and National

	n	**M**	**SD**	**Nat. Mean**	**Nat. SD**	**M-Nat.M**	***p***	***d***
Openness to Diversity and Challenge	202	3.62	0.89	4.01	0.72	-0.39	<0.0001	0.4818
Intrapersonal Affect	205	4.12	0.60	4.27	0.46	-0.15	0.0004	0.2806
Interpersonal Social Interaction	205	3.50	0.65	3.58	0.70	-0.08	0.0795	0.1184

Variation among programs

Due to the lack of raw data from the 2019-2020 PRSI, program-level comparisons were restricted to the 2024-2025 means and national means. Full data are available in Appendix B, while items are significance are discussed below.

- Generally, transfer programs score significantly higher on these general education assessments than career/technical programs. This year, the *Openness to Diversity and Challenge* mean score for transfer programs was 3.81 (n = 105, SD = 0.88) while the mean for all AAS programs combined was 3.40 (n = 97, SD = 0.86). This difference was extremely statistically significant (p = 0.0010).
- The other two sections were not significantly different when comparing transfer and career/technical programs.
- The Veterinary Technology graduate scores were especially low. The average was the lowest out of all programs with an $n > 10$ for both *Openness to Diversity and Challenge* (3.21) and *Interpersonal Social Interaction* (3.26). The mean for *Intrapersonal Affect* was tied for the lowest, with both Veterinary Technology AAS and the AS Computer Science degrees averaging 4.00.

Variation among demographic groups

Disaggregated data is also available in *Appendix B*. We look at gender, race/ethnicity, age, Pell eligibility status, and first-generation status.

Some notable differences include:

- For *Openness to Diversity and Challenge*, Female graduates had significantly higher means (3.75, n = 123, SD = 0.86) than Male (3.40, n = 77, SD = 0.92).
- For *Interpersonal Social Interaction*, Pell eligible students had means that were significantly higher (3.64, n = 75, SD = 0.69) than those were not eligible for Pell (3.42, n = 130, SD = 0.61).
- While not quite significant (p = 0.0724), First Generation students also appeared to have higher means (3.66, n = 54, SD = 0.77) on *Interpersonal Social Interaction* than those students who were not First Generation (3.45, n = 151, SD = 0.59).
- Graduates ages 30-39 (n = 38) had higher means than those 18-21 (n = 85) in all three categories.
    - *Openness to Diversity and Challenge:* 3.66 vs. 3.57
    - *Intrapersonal Affect*: 4.21 vs. 4.10
    - *Interpersonal Social Interaction*: 3.70 vs. 3.49

Program-Level Feedback

To support continuous improvement in Professional Readiness, OIRE shared assessment results with program leads and invited feedback through a short survey. Respondents reflected on student performance, identified course components that support interpersonal and intercultural skills, and considered future enhancements. Activities cited included group-based workplace simulations in Accounting, assignments focused on intercultural skills in the Criminology course within the Criminal Justice program, and clinical and simulation experiences in the Nursing program.

Most program leads expressed confidence in current practices, although some acknowledged areas for growth. For example, Human Services reported plans to enhance instruction by incorporating guest speakers with international social work experience, while Veterinary Technology noted that while the competency is addressed in multiple courses, the emphasis may be too brief given the assessment results.

General Education in the UCGS Core

Every transferable associate degree has the Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) at its core, and the UCGS defines six blocks of General Education distribution requirements:

- Block I: Written Communication (ENG 111/112)
- Block II: Humanities /Arts/Literature
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- Block VI: History

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2024-25 projects and results

Written Communication (ENG 112 and HUM 210)

In ENG 112, faculty concluded a multi-year improvement project focused on technical writing skills. While students demonstrated a strong conceptual grasp of organizing thoughts and supporting positions, they often struggled with technical MLA formatting and documentation. To address this, the department collaborated with the library to expand resource guides. The follow-up assessment for 2024-25 showed some mild improvement. The revised assessment process gave English faculty the opportunity to directly participate in the discussion of student works, and a key theme was how much variety there was in individual instructors' implementations of a research assignment. The final recommendation was that this conversation be carried over to departmental meetings, where ENG 112 faculty can decide if they would like create additional structures or guidance surrounding the assignment.

In HUM 210, while 80% of students met performance benchmarks for organizing analytical papers, instructors noted that some students lacked prior writing preparation because the course has no formal prerequisites. Consequently, the instructor developed new modules on the "CRAAP test," citations, and research to provide additional support. We will be conducting a follow-up in 2025-26.

Quantitative Literacy (MTH 245)

This department successfully completed a long-term goal of integrating professional statistical software, such as R Studio and SPSS, into student projects. Although there was a slight fluctuation in scores compared to previous years — with 75% of students meeting interpretation targets (QL2) and 82% meeting representation targets (QL3) — performance remained above the 70% success target. Faculty plan to focus future efforts on ensuring new dual enrollment instructors are fully integrated into these project requirements.

Scientific Literacy (BIO 106)

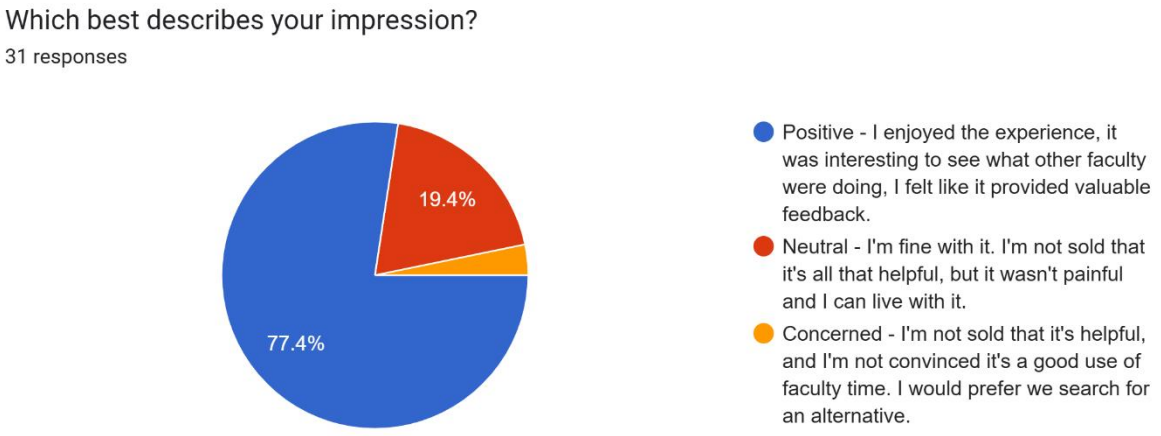
In their research projects, students showed a "big picture" understanding of the scientific process and selected engaging topics. However, they faced challenges with technical specifics, such as distinguishing between independent and dependent variables or setting realistic data collection timeframes. Faculty recommended providing students with more models of work featuring commentary on common errors. Reassessment for this course is deferred until it returns to the active schedule, likely in 2026.

Special Projects: Redesigning the Assessment Process

The restructuring of our transfer awards to align with the Transfer Virginia / VCCS AA and AS programs offered an opportunity to examine our processes surrounding the assessment of transfer degrees. When we adopted the cluster structure in 2017-18 as an organizational framework for beginning a program of course-embedded assessment, we were adding a component to our assessment portfolio that was significantly different in that it involved direct assessment of student work. Prior to that, faculty experience with General Education assessment was only with the graduation assessment tests, which were very hands-off – faculty didn't need to do anything to implement them and didn't find much use for the results. To introduce the idea of rubric based assessment, we began with a requirement that faculty contribute student work on request, but the scoring and reporting pieces all belonged to a dedicated team of "cluster leads."

Starting with 2024-25, we have implemented a new process that requires faculty engagement with more of the process: While the program leads are responsible for organizing and documenting General Education assessment and improvement projects within their areas, they will no longer form the scoring team. Scoring of artifacts belongs to all the faculty and takes place during Spring in-service. Faculty are divided into teams and are introduced to the AAC&U-style rubrics we have developed for assessment of General Education. Faculty are guided through the scoring process, including a discussion and calibration step for selected works. After scoring assigned works, faculty will regroup and share observations and recommendations, course instructors will develop action plans, and follow-up assessments will take place the next year.

The process went well, with faculty organized into teams for the January in-service. Faculty participation was effectively 100%. All faculty responded, and other than a handful of excused absences, all showed for their designated session. A survey was conducted after the sessions were completed. 31 faculty responded. 77.4% rated the experience as positive, and 19.4% as neutral, with only one faculty indicating concern with the process. Faculty feedback teams communicated directly in many cases with the faculty who provided the artifacts. The discussions injected new life and energy into the process. We plan on continuing with this model going forwards.



Appendix A: Critical Thinking Outcomes Assessment Rubrics

Critical Thinking is the ability to use information, ideas and arguments from relevant perspectives to make sense of complex issues and solve problems. Students will locate, evaluate, interpret, and combine information to reach well-reasoned conclusions or solutions.

CT1: Evaluate a source to determine its credibility for supporting arguments (History/Social and Behavioral Science/English Composition)

	4 (Exemplary)	3 (Proficient)	2 (Developing)	1 (Emerging)	0 (Insufficient)
CT1: Evaluate a source to determine its credibility for supporting arguments	Identifies why a source is appropriate and can thoroughly discuss, with nuance, the relevance and credibility of the source. Uses source to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis.	Identifies why a source is appropriate and can thoroughly discuss, with nuance, the relevance and credibility of the source.	Identifies why a source is appropriate and can discuss the relevance and credibility of the source.	Partially identifies why a source is appropriate and can discuss the relevance and credibility of the source, possibly with some errors.	Cannot identify an appropriate source or determine whether a source is relevant or credible.

CT2: Tie conclusion to a synthesis of information, including opposing viewpoints (English Composition)

	4 (Exemplary)	3 (Proficient)	2 (Developing)	1 (Emerging)	0 (Insufficient)
CT2: Tie conclusion to a synthesis of information, including opposing viewpoints	States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from their research. Conclusion should be original, synthesizing sources and student perspective.	States a conclusion that arises specifically from and responds specifically to their research.	States a conclusion that is connected to the argument and research but may be overly general or insufficiently supported.	States a conclusion, but conclusion may be ambiguous, illogical, or unsupported.	Fails to state a conclusion.

CT3: Incorporate evidence appropriately into a work to support an argument or position (History/Social and Behavioral Science/English Composition)

	4 (Exemplary)	3 (Proficient)	2 (Developing)	1 (Emerging)	0 (Insufficient)
CT3: Incorporate evidence appropriately into a work to support an argument or position	Academically appropriate supporting evidence is used to develop a *comprehensive* analysis or synthesis, fluently examining all sides of a position.	The position is presented or argued with supporting evidence. Sources are appropriate for academic work. Information is examined critically within the context of the argument.	The position is presented or argued with supporting evidence. Sources are appropriate for academic work. Information is taken uncritically, with little questioning.	The position is presented or argued with some supporting evidence; however, sources may be inappropriate for academic work. Relevance of the source to the argument may be unclear.	The position is presented or argued without providing or identifying supporting evidence.

Appendix B: Professional Readiness Data Details

Demographics:

Table 4 – Test-take Demographics, SIS Data (Age, Ethnicity, First Generation, Pell eligibility), 2024-25

Age Group		Ethnicity		First Generation		Pell Eligible	
≤17	2	African American	11	No	151	No	130
18-21	85	American Indian	3	Yes	54	Yes	75
22-29	68	Asian	8	**Total**	**205**	**Total**	**205**
30-39	38	Hispanic	21				
40-49	7	Not Specified/Unknown	9				
50 and over	5	Two or More Races	0				
Total	**205**	White	153				
		Total	**205**				

Table 5 – Test-taker by Gender (SIS Data Pull and Self-Reported on the PSRI), 2023-24

SIS Data			Self-Reported		
Female	126	61.5%	Woman	118	57.8%
Male	77	37.6%	Man	76	37.3%
Unknown	2	1.0%	Transgender/Gender Nonconforming	3	1.5%
Total	**205**	100.0%	Rather Not Say	8	3.4%
			Total	**205**	100%

Table 6 – Number of test-takers by award and program (2024-25)

Award	Program	Frequency	# of Degrees Awarded 24-25[1]
AA&S	College/University Transfer (closed)	66	181
AA	Liberal Arts	4	17
AS	(All AS combined)	36	118
AS/AA&S	Business Administration (includes closed specialization)	7	40
AS	Computer Science (includes closed specialization)	11	21
AS	Education	1	4
AS	Engineering (includes closed specialization)	5	20
AS	General Studies	1	3
AS	Science	5	15
AS	Social Science (includes closed Psychology Specialization)	6	15
AAS	(All AAS combined)	99	200
AAS	Accounting	4	7
AAS	Advanced Manufacturing Technology	7	16
AAS	Automotive Analysis and Repair	0	3
AAS	Aviation Maintenance Technology	2	9
AAS	Business Management	10	19
AAS	Computer & Electronics Tec	3	4
AAS	Criminal Justice	7	12
AAS	Early Childhood Development	1	2
AAS	Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	3	7
AAS	Engineering Technology	3	7
AAS	Human Services	7	8
AAS	Information Systems Technology	15	23
AAS	Nursing	8	45
AAS	Technical Studies	0	0
AAS	Veterinary Technology	29	38

[1] Two graduates earned two associate degrees during the 24-25 academic year. Neither took the GPI.

Results:

Table 7 - Overall Means ODC Items: 2024-2025, 2019-2020, National

Openness to Diversity and Challenge

	2024-2025		2019-2020				
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**National Mean**	***p* year-to-year**	***p* to National**
Overall	3.62	0.86	3.69	0.78	4.01	0.4385	< 0.0001
The real value of a college education lies in being introduced to different values.	3.51	1.1	3.62	0.99	3.89	0.3050	< 0.0001
Learning about people from different cultures is a very important part of my college education.	3.65	1.05	3.67	1.01	4.11	0.8506	< 0.0001
The courses I enjoy the most are those that make me think about things from a different perspective.	3.84	0.89	3.85	0.84	4.05	0.9104	0.0009
Contact with individuals whose background (e.g., race, national origin, sexual orientation) is different from my own is an essential part of my college education.	3.48	1.15	3.62	1.06	3.98	0.2178	< 0.0001

Table 8 - Overall Means Affect Items: 2024-2025, 2019-2020, National

Intrapersonal Affect

	2024-2025		2019-2020				
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**National Mean**	***p* year-to-year**	***p* to National**
Overall	4.12	0.6	4.02	0.59	4.27	0.0972	0.0004
I am sensitive to those who are discriminated against.	4.01	0.8	3.94	0.9	4.18	0.4168	0.0026
I do not feel threatened emotionally when presented with multiple perspectives.	4.09	0.8	3.84	0.92	4.12	0.0044	0.5910
I am accepting of people with different religious and spiritual traditions.	4.29	0.74	4.21	0.78	4.45	0.2988	0.0022
I enjoy when my friends from other cultures teach me about our cultural differences.	4.2	0.74	4.13	0.75	4.47	0.3523	< 0.0001

Table 9 - Overall Means of SocInt Items: 2024-2025, 2019-2020, National

Intrapersonal Social Interaction

	2024-2025		2019-2020				
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**National Mean**	***p* year-to-year**	***p* to National**
Overall	3.5	0.65	3.33	0.71	3.58	0.0142	0.0788
Most of my friends are from my own ethnic background. (R)	2.75	1.07	2.85	1.03	2.78	0.3440	0.6878
I frequently interact with people from a race/ethnic group different from my own.	4.08	0.82	3.88	0.87	4.22	0.0199	0.0151
I intentionally involve people from many cultural backgrounds in my life.	3.58	0.95	3.40	0.91	3.77	0.0555	0.0045
I frequently interact with people from a country different from my own.	3.60	1.07	3.23	1.01	3.54	0.0005	0.4230

Program:

Table 10 - Comparison of Mean ODC Scores between Programs and All Graduates, Programs and National (2024-2025)

Openness to Diversity and Challenge

	n	M	SD	M-All.M	*p* (All Grads)	*d* (All Grads)	M-Nat.M	*p* (Nat.)	*d* (Nat.)
All Graduates	202	3.62	0.89	0.00	-	-	-0.39	<0.0001	0.4818
All Transfer Majors	105	3.81	0.88	0.20	0.0753	0.2147	-0.20	0.0218	0.2488
AA&S: College/University Transfer (closed)	65	3.93	0.85	0.32	0.0129	0.3562	-0.08	0.4508	0.1016
All AS Majors	36	3.59	0.92	-0.03	0.8570	0.0331	-0.42	0.0096	0.5084
AS: Computer Science (includes former spec.)	11	3.25	0.97	-0.37	0.2443	0.3975	-0.76	0.0266	0.8897
All AAS Majors	97	3.40	0.86	-0.21	0.0420	0.2514	-0.61	<0.0001	0.7691
AAS: Business Management	< 10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AAS: Information Systems Technology	15	3.53	0.83	-0.08	0.6922	0.1046	-0.48	0.0419	0.6178
AAS: Veterinary Technology	28	3.21	0.75	-0.40	0.0118	0.4982	-0.80	<0.0001	1.0882

Table 11 - Comparison of Mean Affect Scores between Programs and All Graduates, Programs and National (2024-2025)

Intrapersonal Affect

	n	M	SD	M-All.M	*p* (All Grads)	*d* (All Grads)	M-Nat.M	*p* (Nat.)	*d* (Nat.)
All Graduates	205	4.12	0.60	0.00	-	-	-0.15	0.0004	0.28058
All Transfer Majors	106	4.16	0.61	0.05	0.5821	0.0661	-0.11	0.0662	0.20362
AA&S: College/University Transfer (closed)	66	4.22	0.59	0.10	0.2356	0.1681	-0.05	0.4936	0.09452
All AS Majors	36	4.06	0.63	-0.05	0.5982	0.0975	-0.21	0.0533	0.38072
AS: Computer Science (includes former spec.)	11	4.00	0.61	-0.12	0.5377	0.1983	-0.27	0.1728	0.49979
All AAS Majors	99	4.06	0.58	-0.05	0.4043	0.1017	-0.21	0.0005	0.40118
AAS: Business Management	10	4.18	0.62	0.06	0.7715	0.0983	-0.09	0.6571	0.16487
AAS: Information Systems Technology	15	4.25	0.53	0.14	0.3772	0.2296	-0.02	0.8859	0.04030
AAS: Veterinary Technology	29	4.00	0.57	-0.12	0.2987	0.2051	-0.27	0.0165	0.52131

Table 12 - Comparison of Mean SocInt Scores between Programs and All Graduates, Programs and National (2024-2025)

Interpersonal Social Interaction

	n	M	SD	M-All.M	*p* (All Grads)	*d* (All Grads)	M-Nat.M	*p* (Nat.)	*d* (Nat.)
All Graduates	205	3.50	0.65	0.00	-	-	-0.08	0.0795	0.1184
All Transfer Majors	106	3.53	0.65	0.03	0.7000	0.0462	-0.05	0.4302	0.0740
AA&S: College/University Transfer (closed)	66	3.58	0.63	0.08	0.3752	0.1250	0.00	1.0000	0.0000
All AS Majors	36	3.46	0.66	-0.04	0.7383	0.0611	-0.12	0.2828	0.1764
AS: Computer Science (includes former spec.)	11	3.41	0.66	-0.09	0.6678	0.1374	-0.17	0.4129	0.2499
All AAS Majors	99	3.47	0.65	-0.03	0.7065	0.0462	-0.11	0.0954	0.1629
AAS: Business Management	10	3.50	0.46	0.00	1.0000	0.0000	-0.08	0.5957	0.1351
AAS: Information Systems Technology	15	3.48	0.59	-0.02	0.9014	0.0322	-0.10	0.5222	0.1545
AAS: Veterinary Technology	29	3.26	0.64	-0.24	0.0673	0.3721	-0.32	0.0118	0.4771

Gender

Table 13 - Scores disaggregated by gender (2024-2025)

Openness to Diversity and Challenge					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Female	123	3.75	0.86	0.13	-0.26
Male	77	3.40	0.92	-0.22	-0.61
Intrapersonal Affect					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Female	126	4.17	0.57	0.05	-0.10
Male	77	4.03	0.63	-0.09	-0.24
Interpersonal Social Interaction					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Female	126	3.55	0.65	0.05	-0.03
Male	77	3.41	0.64	-0.09	-0.17

Race/Ethnicity

Table 14 - Scores disaggregated by race/ethnicity (2024-2025)

Openness to Diversity and Challenge					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Black or African American	10	3.95	0.82	0.33	-0.06
Hispanic	21	3.98	0.70	0.36	-0.03
White	151	3.53	0.91	-0.09	-0.48
All Other Races Combined	20	3.73	0.86	0.11	-0.29
Intrapersonal Affect					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Black or African American	11	4.40	0.58	0.28	0.13
Hispanic	21	4.08	0.55	-0.04	-0.19
White	153	4.12	0.61	0.00	-0.15
All Other Races Combined	20	3.98	0.49	-0.14	-0.29
Interpersonal Social Interaction					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Black or African American	11	3.77	0.43	0.27	0.19
Hispanic	21	3.61	0.50	0.11	0.03
White	153	3.46	0.68	-0.04	-0.12
All Other Races Combined	20	3.54	0.57	0.04	-0.04

Age:

Table 15 - Scores disaggregated by age and Traditional & Non-Traditional (2024-2025)

Openness to Diversity and Challenge					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
18-21	84	3.57	0.86	-0.05	-0.44
22-29	67	3.66	1.02	0.04	-0.35
30-39	37	3.66	0.81	0.04	-0.35
Traditional (24 and under)	122	3.64	0.87	0.02	-0.37
Non-Traditional (25 and over)	80	3.59	0.93	-0.03	-0.42
Intrapersonal Affect					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
18-21	85	4.10	0.55	-0.02	-0.17
22-29	68	4.06	0.66	-0.06	-0.21
30-39	38	4.21	0.59	0.09	-0.06
Traditional (24 and under)	123	4.09	0.56	-0.03	-0.18
Non-Traditional (25 and over)	82	4.15	0.64	0.03	-0.12
Interpersonal Social Interaction					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
18-21	85	3.49	0.68	-0.01	-0.09
22-29	68	3.37	0.65	-0.13	-0.21
30-39	38	3.70	0.58	0.20	0.12
Traditional (24 and under)	123	3.47	0.66	-0.03	-0.11
Non-Traditional (25 and over)	82	3.56	0.63	0.06	-0.02

Pell:

Table 16 - Scores disaggregated by Pell eligibility (2024-2025)

Openness to Diversity and Challenge					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Not Pell eligible	129	3.57	0.89	-0.05	-0.44
Pell eligible	73	3.70	0.89	0.08	-0.31
Intrapersonal Affect					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Not Pell eligible	130	4.09	0.58	-0.03	-0.18
Pell eligible	75	4.16	0.62	0.04	-0.11
Interpersonal Social Interaction					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Not Pell eligible	130	3.42	0.61	-0.08	-0.16
Pell eligible	75	3.64	0.69	0.14	0.06

First Generation

Table 17 - Scores disaggregated by First Generation status (2024-2025)

Openness to Diversity and Challenge					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Not First Generation	149	3.59	0.88	-0.03	-0.42
First Generation	53	3.70	0.92	0.08	-0.31
Intrapersonal Affect					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Not First Generation	151	4.10	0.58	-0.02	-0.17
First Generation	54	4.16	0.63	0.04	-0.11
Interpersonal Social Interaction					
	n	M	SD	M-All Grads Mean	M-National Mean
Not First Generation	151	3.45	0.59	-0.05	-0.13
First Generation	54	3.66	0.77	0.16	0.08