Spring 2026
Information Session: Mason Core Assessment

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Introductions

In the chat, please write your:

- Name
- Position at Mason
- What you want to learn about Mason Core Assessment

Mason Core Team

- Laura Poms, Mason Core Director
- Tricia Wilson, Mason Core Curriculum Specialist

Mason Core Learning Outcomes and course assignments

- Questions? masoncor@gmu.edu

Agenda

- Background of Mason Core Assessment
- Learning Outcomes and Rubrics
- Submission Process
- Resources

Framework for Assessing General Education at George Mason

Students	•Ensure student learning of Mason Core Learning Outcomes
Faculty	• Provide faculty with targeted resources to strengthen teaching effectiveness and promote student learning
Institution	• Required for George Mason's regional accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to meet external reporting requirements

Student Learning Assessment

The Mason Core assessment framework is guided by three essential questions:

- Are students demonstrating achievement of the defined learning outcomes?
- How has student learning changed since the previous assessment cycle?
- What changes do the findings suggest for continuous improvement?

Phases of Assessment Cycle

1. Identify Outcomes and Measures	2. Collect Data	3. Analyze and Interpret Evidence	4. Share and Use Results for Improvement
The Mason Core Assessment plan is developed by identifying assessment outcomes and measures.	Instructors submit information from their Mason Core course: syllabus, course assignment and three randomly selected student artifacts.	The student work is de-identified and scored using the rubric for its respective Mason Core area.	Utilizing Mason Core assessment data, the Mason Core Committee will review and revise, as necessary, the overall structure and outcomes of the Mason Core.
• Essential questions of student learning • Target measures of success	The student artifacts should demonstrate performance on the specific learning outcomes for the Mason Core area that is being assessed.	OIEP analyzes assessment evidence collected and prepares a report to share the aggregated findings with the Mason Core Committee.	Faculty members will have the opportunity to engage in various professional development opportunities to refine their practices (e.g., assignment design) to further support student learning.

Assessment Timeline

- The Mason Core assessment cycle rotates three groups over a six-year period.
- Each group is assessed every three years and participates across two academic years.
- The cycle provides regular opportunities for reflection, review of results, and implementation of improvements.
- **Current group (2025-2026)**: Natural Science, Global History, and Writing Intensive

	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032
Collect Data	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group A	Group B	Group C
Analyze and Interpret Evidence		Group A	Group B	Group C	Group A	Group B
Share and Use Results			Group A	Group B	Group C	Group A

Rubric

Mason Core Assessment Rubric

Instructions: Use this rubric to assess student learning by selecting the rating that best reflects the student's performance on the specific learning outcome, based on the provided student artifact. Ratings are assigned using a 3-point scale. When assigning ratings, evaluate the student's work holistically, and assign whole-number ratings only. If there is insufficient evidence available to assess the learning outcome, assign a rating of IE (Insufficient Evidence).

Optional:
Justification of Rating: Provide a brief explanation for the rating assigned that **partly meets** each learning outcome, detailing the rationale behind your assessment.

	Meets (2)	Partly Meets (1)	Does Not Meet (0)	Insufficient Evidence (IE)
Rating	**The student demonstrates evidence of fully meeting the learning outcome.**	**The student demonstrates evidence of partially meeting the learning outcome.**	**The student does not demonstrate adequate evidence of meeting the learning outcome.**	**There is insufficient evidence available to assess the learning outcome in the assignment.**
Explanation	*The components of the learning outcome are clearly presented or effectively applied. Evidence of learning is provided, demonstrating comprehensive proficiency of the learning outcome.*	*The components of the learning outcome are partially presented or applied. Evidence of learning is underdeveloped, demonstrating partial proficiency of the learning outcome.*	*The components of the learning outcome are unclear or incomplete. Evidence of learning is missing, demonstrating minimal to no proficiency of the learning outcome.*	*The assignment does not address the learning outcome. There is insufficient evidence to assess the student's proficiency of the learning outcome.*
Student Learning Outcomes: Natural Science	**SLO1: Scientific Method**	Students will understand how scientific inquiry is based on investigation of evidence from the natural world, and that scientific knowledge and understanding evolves based on new evidence and differs from personal and cultural beliefs.		
	SLO2: Scope and Limits of Science	Students will recognize the scope and limits of science.		
	SLO3: Science and Society	Students will recognize and articulate the relationship between the natural sciences and society and the application of science to societal challenges (e.g., health, conservation, sustainability, energy, natural disasters, etc.).		
	SLO4: Scientific Literacy	Students will evaluate scientific information (e.g., distinguish primary and secondary sources, assess credibility and validity of information).		
	SLO5: Scientific Inquiry	Students will participate in scientific inquiry and communicate the elements of the process, including: a) making careful and systematic observations, b) developing and testing a hypothesis, c) analyzing evidence, and d) interpreting results.		

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Submission Process

Submission Guidelines

After the add/drop period ends, primary instructors of record will receive an email with a unique submission link for each course section assigned. A separate submission is required for every section.

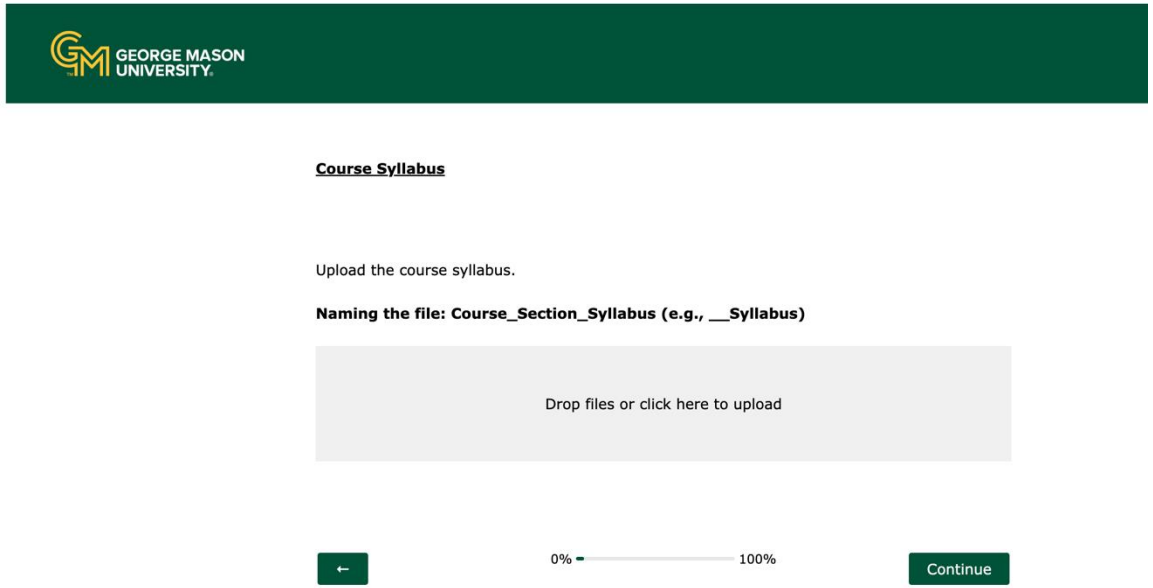
Required submission materials:

1) Course Syllabus
2) Course Assignment
3) Learning Outcomes
4) Student Artifacts (three per section)

If the course section (e.g., a recitation) does **not** collect student work, please enter the paired course section number when prompted (selecting this option will end the survey).

Qualtrics Submission Form: Course Syllabus

1) **Course Syllabus**
   a. Upload the course syllabus
   b. Naming the file: **Course_Section_Syllabus** (e.g., ENGR107_001_Syllabus)



Qualtrics Submission Form: Course Assignment

2) Course Assignment

a. Upload one assignment that assesses student learning on one of the Mason Core Learning Outcomes in the course. Ensure the assignment allows students to clearly demonstrate proficiency in the identified learning outcome.

b. Naming the file: **Course_Section_Assignment** (e.g., ENGR107_001_Assignment)

For more information on selecting assignments for assessment, please reference the May 2025 pre-workshop session for your category.

Natural Science: NatSci_Pre-Assessment_Workshop_05-19-2025_(Source).mp4

Global History: Global History PreAssessment Workshop 05.20.25.mp4

Writing Intensive: WI_Pre-Assessment_Workshop_05.19.25_(Source).mp4

Qualtrics Submission Form: Learning Outcomes

3) Learning Outcomes

a. Select the Mason Core Learning Outcome that best aligns with the knowledge and/or skills assessed in the uploaded assignment. While multiple outcomes may apply, choose the one most directly relevant to the assignment for submission purposes.
b. Briefly explain how the assignment assesses the learning outcome.
c. Refer to the Submission Guide for learning outcome options for each category type.

Category	Learning Outcome	Description
Natural Science		
Natural Science Overview (non-lab) 3-credits	Select one outcome from Learning Outcomes 1-4	SLO 1. Understand how scientific inquiry is based on investigation of evidence from the natural world, and that scientific knowledge and understanding evolves based on new evidence and differs from personal and cultural beliefs. SLO 2. Recognize the scope and limits of science. SLO 3. Recognize and articulate the relationship between the natural sciences and society and the application of science to societal challenges (e.g., health, conservation, sustainability, energy, natural disasters, etc.). SLO 4. Evaluate scientific information (e.g., distinguish primary and secondary sources, assess credibility and validity of information). SLO 5. Participate in scientific inquiry and communicate the elements of the process, including: a) making careful and systematic observations, b) developing and testing a hypothesis, c) analyzing evidence, and d) interpreting results.
Natural Science (lab) 4-credits	Select one outcome from Learning Outcomes 1-5	
Approved Combined (lecture and lab) 4-credits	Lecture: Select one outcome from Learning Outcomes 1-4 Lab: Select Learning Outcome 5	
Global History		
	Select Learning Outcome 2	SLO 2. Communicate a historical argument through writing, speech, and/or digital media using a variety of primary and secondary sources.
Writing Intensive		
	Select Learning Outcome 2	SLO 2. Writing to Communicate: Compose one or more written genres specific to the field of study in order to communicate key ideas tailored to specific audiences and purposes; genres may be academic, public, or professional.

Natural Science

SLO1: Scientific Method

Students will understand how scientific inquiry is based on investigation of evidence from the natural world, and that scientific knowledge and understanding evolves based on new evidence and differs from personal and cultural beliefs.

SLO2: Scope and Limits of Science

Students will recognize the scope and limits of science.

SLO3: Science and Society

Students will recognize and articulate the relationship between the natural sciences and society and the application of science to societal challenges (e.g., health, conservation, sustainability, energy, natural disasters, etc.).

SLO4: Scientific Literacy

Students will evaluate scientific information (e.g., distinguish primary and secondary sources, assess credibility and validity of information).

SLO5: Scientific Inquiry

Students will participate in scientific inquiry and communicate the elements of the process, including: a) making careful and systematic observations, b) developing and testing a hypothesis, c) analyzing evidence, and d) interpreting results.

Natural Science – Lecture: Select one learning outcome from Learning Outcome 1-4.

Natural Science – Lab: Select Learning Outcome 5.

Global History

SLO 1: Identify major chronological developments in global history from the pre-modern period (before 1400 CE) to the present.

SLO 2: Communicate a historical argument through writing, speech, and/or digital media using a variety of primary and secondary sources.

SLO 3: Apply historical knowledge and historical thinking to contemporary global issues.

Global History: Select Learning Outcome 2.

Writing Intensive

SLO 1 Writing-to-Learn: Students will use informal or formal writing in ways that deepen their awareness of the field of study and its subject matter.

SLO 2 Writing-to-Communicate: Students will compose one or more written genres specific to the field of study in order to communicate key ideas tailored to specific audiences and purposes; genres may be academic, public, or professional.

SLO 3 Writing-as-a-Process: Students will draft and revise written works based on feedback they receive from instructors and peers, using strategies appropriate to the genre, audience, and purpose.

Writing Intensive: Select Learning Outcome 2.

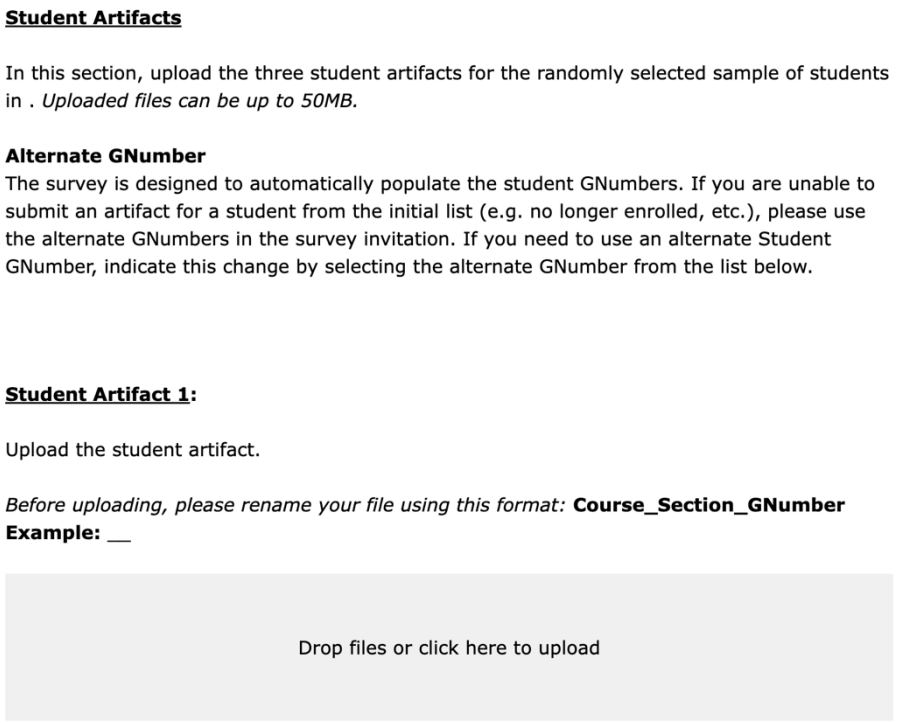
Qualtrics Submission Form: Student Artifacts

4) Student Artifacts

a. Upload the three student artifacts from the randomly selected sample of students in the course.

b. Naming the files: **Course_Section_Student GNumber** (e.g., ENGR107_001_G123456)

c. *If you need to use an alternate Student GNumber, indicate this change by selecting the alternate GNumber from the list.*



Student Artifacts

In this section, upload the three student artifacts for the randomly selected sample of students in . *Uploaded files can be up to 50MB.*

Alternate GNumber
The survey is designed to automatically populate the student GNumbers. If you are unable to submit an artifact for a student from the initial list (e.g. no longer enrolled, etc.), please use the alternate GNumbers in the survey invitation. If you need to use an alternate Student GNumber, indicate this change by selecting the alternate GNumber from the list below.

Student Artifact 1:

Upload the student artifact.

Before uploading, please rename your file using this format: **Course_Section_GNumber**
Example: __

Drop files or click here to upload

Spring 2026: Timeline

January 2026: Mason Core Assessment Email

February 2026: Submission Information Sessions

March 2026: Qualtrics Email Invitation (after add/drop ends)

May 2026: Submission Materials due on 5/11

Fall 2026: Ratings

Faculty teaching Mason Core courses in assessed categories are invited to participate in the Ratings Workshop in Fall 2026.

More information to come!

Workshop Outcomes

- Mason Core Assessment Overview
- Learning Outcomes and Rubrics
- Norming and Examples
- Rating Student Artifacts

Mason Core – Instructor Certification Program

If you regularly teach courses within the Mason Core program, consider participating in the Mason Core Instructor Certification Program (MC-ICP), offered in partnership with Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning.

Scan to learn more:

- Learn about strategies, assignments, and approaches that can make teaching a general education course more effective, engaging, and efficient
- Connect with a wider community of faculty teaching general education courses
- Document teaching for reappointment or promotion processes

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Resources

Mason Core

- Mason Core: https://masoncore.gmu.edu/

OIEP

- Mason Core Assessment: Overview
- Assessment Process: How to Submit
- FAQs: OIEP FAQs

Mason Core Assessment

May 11, 2026

Submit materials by the end of the semester.

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