



General Education Program Assessment Plan

Introduction/Background

The 2008-09 [General Education \(GE\) APR](#) included a [Draft GE Assessment Plan and Preliminary Report](#) based on the then-current goals. The Draft Assessment Plan was refined over the following year, and featured goals assessment at the individual course level, supplemented by other direct measures of student learning (e.g., CLA+), as well as indirect measures (e.g., NSSE, FSSE) of student and faculty perceptions. The Plan was put on hold as the seven goals were reviewed and revised in an effort to align with system-wide requirements. Segments of the 2008-09 Assessment Plan remain in place, however, and have guided action as this new plan was developed and refined under the revised GE goals and outcomes by the General Education Assessment Council (GEAC), as charged by the Provost and Senate Executive Committee.

The former seven- goals system required each GE course to demonstrate how it met Goals 1-5 and either Goal 6, Goal 7, or both Goals 6 and 7. Through lengthy consultation and conversations, the seven goals were replaced by [three goals and 16 outcomes](#) largely aligned with LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise) outcomes (2015) as suggested in Executive Order 1100 (previously 1033 and 1065) and assessable using the VALUE Rubrics which were designed and tested to assess the LEAP outcomes. Through the shared-governance process, the campus agreed that program faculty teaching GE courses should select 2-4 of the "most essential outcomes" and demonstrate where practice/achievement of those outcomes takes place in the course (i.e., a specific assignment identified on the syllabus, etc.) (Table 1).

The following Mission Statement and General Education Learning Goals and Outcomes were approved in 2015; they are not being included for revision or new discussion, but rather because they are what are being assessed.

General Education Mission Statement

General Education is fundamental to a university education. General Education develops foundational communicative, quantitative and critical thinking skills. General Education promotes an understanding of history and culture, fosters appreciation for the arts and humanities, and encourages a broad knowledge of social issues and scientific inquiry. Attaining a general education means that students understand that all learning is connected and enriches all aspects of life: personal, civic, and professional. (11/AS/14/UEPC)

General Education Learning Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: Develop the intellectual skills and competencies necessary to participate effectively in society and the world.

Students attaining the first learning goal will be able to:

1. Demonstrate effective oral communication.
2. Demonstrate effective written communication.
3. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively.
4. Apply quantitative reasoning concepts and skills to solve problems.
5. Find, understand, examine critically, and use information from various sources.
6. Comprehend and use appropriate technological resources effectively.

Goal 2: Develop broad knowledge of biological and physical sciences, humanities and creative arts, and social sciences.

Students attaining the second learning goal will be able to:

1. Explain and apply basic scientific methods.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the living and non-living physical world.
3. Recognize the structures and institutions that frame human interactions.
4. Express appreciation of cultural, intellectual, and artistic ideas and works.
5. Demonstrate effective creative expression and understanding through artistic means.
6. Identify life-skills and behaviors needed to flourish as a mature person.

Goal 3: Develop abilities to integrate knowledge, make informed ethical decisions, and accept civic responsibility.

Students attaining the third learning goal will be able to:

1. Integrate and combine knowledge and abilities developed in several fields to analyze and critically evaluate specific problems, issues, or topics.
2. Illustrate the ability to self-reflect and assess relevant ethical values.
3. Identify and analyze problems within local, regional, national, and/or global contexts.
4. Demonstrate enhanced awareness of multicultural, community, and/or technological perspectives.

GE courses will address two to four of the most essential learning outcomes.

17/AS/14/UEPC Resolution to Adopt General Education Goals and Outcomes

Approved by the Academic Senate on February 10, 2015

Approved by President Joseph F. Sheley on March 26, 2015

Source URL: <https://www.csustan.edu/general-education/general-education-goals>

General Education (GE) Assessment Plan

This GE Assessment Plan accomplishes the following:

- Outlines goals of the GE Assessment Plan;
- Displays curricular alignment between General Education areas, learning goals, and outcomes;
- Explains the process and methods for assessing student learning outcomes;
- Includes a description and timeline for assessment activities; and
- Provides a plan/timeline for future assessment activities (see 6.2.5 in revised EO 1100).
- Provides a framework for faculty to improve assessment practices in General Education

Goals of the GE Assessment Plan

As established in the 2008-09 GE Academic Program Review and revised to reflect current circumstances:

1. The plan shall assess the General Education program as a whole and, in particular, its success in addressing the goals and outcomes of the GE program.
2. The plan shall be minimally intrusive to ensure instructor control and decision-making in his/her class(es).
3. No part of this assessment process shall form part of the RPT or post tenure review of any faculty member, unless requested by that faculty member.
4. The assessment plan shall include a mechanism by which improvements in a particular GE Area program can be achieved.
5. GE program assessment will work in concert with the Stanislaus State [*Principles of Assessment of Student Learning*](#), with a focus on assessment of student learning, as measured by GE Area outcomes, not course-level outcomes, as identified by faculty.

As stated above, a major purpose of the GE Assessment plan is to develop a framework to assess student learning in the Stanislaus State GE Program as a whole that is “minimally intrusive” and that allows for changes and improvements in the program as well as courses informed by the assessment. Importantly, a multi-modal approach is best, because, grades for instance, only indicate a small part of the overall success of the GE Program. In addition, no single measure (e.g., grades) of student success also measures student success on specific student learning outcomes, because not every assignment will actually assess all of the GE outcomes. In addition, because the GE Program is a multi-department, campus-wide program, department-level assessments are inadequate to assess the GE program. Through a campus-wide GE Assessment plan the goals of GE Program “as a whole” can be assessed, with reference to specific GE Learning Outcomes in each area that will inform instructors, departments/programs, and administrators (e.g., Deans, AVPAA), thereby potentially bring resources to bear to improve and support student success in General Education.

Curricular alignment between General Education areas, learning goals, and outcomes

History of the alignment process

The General Education Assessment Council (GEAC) was formed based on the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education in 2015. GEAC was charged, primarily, with developing an assessment plan for General Education and assisting with the GE Academic Program Review (Provost Memo, Jan.25, 2016). GEAC concluded their work in Spring 2018. Responsibilities for GE Assessment will follow the processes indicated in the approved assessment plan.

To accomplish their charge, the GE Assessment Council completed an initial review of all GE Course Learning Outcomes as listed in the approved course proposals archived in the Office of Academic Programs. They also reviewed an initial mapping of courses to draft outcomes, completed by department chairs/program coordinators in 2011. Based on this information and discussion regarding the CSU-defined Area definitions (EO 1100-draft February 2015), GEAC developed a provisional document aligning GE Areas with Stan State GE Outcomes both found to be in common across the Area(s) and aligned with Area definitions described in EO 1100.

GEAC members reached out to all departments and met with 23 academic departments over the spring 2017 semester to discuss a process for developing the draft alignment of GE course learning outcomes and to receive feedback on the preliminary alignment. Based on department feedback and discussion over spring 2017, each GE Area was aligned with core “anchor” outcome(s) found in common across Area courses (Table 1). The General Education (GE) Area and Outcome Alignment was approved in May, 2018; a revised version based on EO-1100 was reviewed and approved by faculty governance and the President (See [General Education \(GE\) Area and Outcome Alignment](#)) in spring 2019. Through the process of GE course recertification and future certification, departments will identify 2-4 GE Learning Outcomes for each GE course, choosing from the anchor outcome(s), and supplementing with any others outcomes, as they see fit and as GE Subcommittee allows (based on review criteria).

Alignment of GE Areas with GE Learning Outcomes

Each GE Area has anchor outcomes (in **bold** in Table 1) that must be included among the learning outcomes identified for each course in a particular GE Area. At least one anchor outcome must be selected for each Area course. After the anchor outcome(s) are selected, program faculty may select 1-3 additional outcomes from the suggested outcomes list (total 2-4 outcomes) ([Resolution to Adopt General Education Goals and Outcomes 17/AS/14/UEPC](#)). Outcomes should be selected with the understanding that all outcomes selected will be identified on GE course syllabi. Moreover, the anchor outcomes will be assessed and reported on as part of the departmental annual report and the Academic Program Review process. Only anchor outcomes will be used for GE Program assessment. Options for assessment of GE outcomes for courses in an Area are indicated in a separate column, reflecting outcomes commonly found in courses in that area. For example, acknowledging that all A1 courses must address 1.1 as the anchor outcome, the department/program would also need to select at least one additional outcome to meet the 2-4 outcome requirement. Whereas, for Area C1, the department/program with courses in this Area may choose both, or choose either, of the two listed anchor outcomes, and may choose up to two

additional suggested outcomes. Anchor outcomes form the foundation of GE Program assessment of student learning.

Suggested outcomes chosen by faculty would be assessed and reported through the departmental program review process. The current criteria for the Academic Program Review Self-Study (see Appendix A) will be revised to include the following prompt, drawing from the Commitment to Student Learning section of the APR Self-Study Criteria.

Academic Program Review Self-Study Criteria - III.B.4

General Education

Evaluate the program’s effectiveness in providing service courses to the General Education program. Provide a review of the 2-4 selected general education learning outcomes per GE course offered by the program as aligned with the approved GE Outcomes Alignment (3/19). Attach up-to-date sample syllabi for each general education course offered by the program.

- Describe how achievement of each GE Area anchor and selected GE outcomes were assessed using direct/indirect methods.
- Discuss department/program strategies for collecting, analyzing, and discussing findings.
- Summarize actions taken based on assessment of student learning findings.

Describe how the General Education program aligns with/complements the program’s student learning outcomes, by describing in a paragraph or two how the 49-unit program complements or supports the major program of study, including (by reference if appropriate) any assessment activities or discussions used to make this determination.

Identify any areas for further development or other recommendations for the GE program. (WSCUC CFR 2.2a)

Table 1: General Education Area and Outcome Alignment

GE Area	GE Goal(s)	GE Anchor Outcome (Choose at least one, if multiple appear)	GE Suggested Outcomes* Choose 0-3 depending on the number of anchor outcomes chosen. Total chosen is 2-4 Outcomes.
A1	1, 3	1.1	1.3, 1.5, 2.3, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
A2	1, 3	1.2, 1.5	1.3, 1.6, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
A3	1, 3	1.3	1.5, 2.3, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
B1	2	2.1, 2.2	1.4
B2	2	2.1, 2.2	1.4
B3	1, 2	1.6	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3
B4	1, 2	1.4	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.6
UD-B	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4	1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
C1	1, 2	2.4, 2.5	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 2.6

C2	1, 2	2.4, 2.5	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 2.6
UD-C	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4	1.1, 1.2, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
D1	1	1.3	1.1, 1.2
D2	2, 3	2.3, 2.4	1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4
UD-D	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4	1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
E	1, 2, 3	1.6, 2.6	1.6, Any additional Outcomes

* The outcomes suggested in each *row* of this column are based on consultation with academic departments; however, departments may select *any* outcome listed in this *column*.

Principles of the GE Outcomes Assessment Process

The following GE Outcomes Assessment process follows the [Principles of Assessment of Student Learning](#).

Fundamentally, the outcomes assessment process requires that at least Principles 3 and 9 are followed:

3. Assessment of student learning must have course and program significance (P3);
9. Successful data requires University support (P9).

Principles particularly relevant to the GE outcomes assessment process are 1, 2, 3 & 5:

1. The primary purpose of assessment is improving student learning (P1);
2. Assessment of student learning is based on goals reflected in the University's mission (P2);
3. Assessment of student learning must have course and program significance (P3);
5. Assessment involves a multi-method approach (P5).

Finally, the framework of the GE assessment plan presupposes that, as indicated in Principles 7:

7. The results of assessment activities will not be used for the evaluation of individual faculty (P7);

Assessment findings will be used for the review of Area-level achievement of student learning outcomes.

In the process outlined below, designations such as (P1) or (P7), refer to specific Principles of Assessment of Student Learning that are relevant for that particular step in the process. If a Principle is/is not specifically referenced, it does not limit application of a particular Principle to a part of the process.

1. At the beginning of each semester, the FDGE will identify applicable GE Area sections for sampling student work at random with a goal of assessing GE outcomes in 20% of sections within each subarea.¹
2. The FDGE and GE Subcommittee will notify instructors, and their department/program chairs, teaching within the GE Area to be assessed that year (see Table 2)² Faculty in the Area will be

¹ For example, for area A2, 25 sections of English 1007 and five sections of English 1001 will be offered in spring 2018. Sampling 20% means that six sections will be identified for student work (artifact) collection for a total of 30 artifacts (5 from each section) that are aligned with the core outcome 1.2.

² See the area assessment timeline in Table 2.

informed of the process and invited to retain copies of student work for direct assessment of specific GE student learning outcomes (see #3).

3. Faculty teaching the identified GE Area sections will identify an assignment/activity that best enables assessment of student achievement on one and/or two GE anchor outcome(s) identified for that Area (P4) and provide five anonymized (P7) student work artifacts from that assignment, including the prompt, to the FDGE by the end of either Fall or Spring semester. Student artifacts should be chosen at random from completed assignments. Any identifying student and faculty information collected will be confidential (P7). Student artifacts will be destroyed at the conclusion of the annual assessment reporting process.
4. The FDGE will invite all part-time and full-time temporary faculty and tenure track faculty who teach in the identified GE Area to participate as compensated (P9) reviewers to assess student learning using artifacts from the GE area assessed that year. Development or modification of a selection process of reviewers occurs in consultation with the SEC.
5. Reviewers will use the Title 5 and the EO 1100 (or subsequent Executive Orders governing GE) GE Area definitions, as well as the VALUE rubrics that were used to develop the GE goals and outcomes (P1-4), to evaluate student artifacts for student achievement of GE Area outcomes. Reviewers will engage in a norming activity using the VALUE rubric, use the rubric to assess student achievement, and write a GE Area Assessment report based on the findings of the particular Area assessed that year. GE Area Assessment reporting will focus on student achievement of Area Outcomes in the GE program, not on details of specific GE courses or departments contributing to the GE program (P7-8).
6. A typical 2-day assessment schedule could be:
 - A. Morning Day 1: Norming
 - B. Afternoon Day 1: Assessment
 - C. Morning Day 2: Assessment
 - D. Afternoon Day 2: Reflection and development of the GE Area Assessment Report, which will form part of the GE APR.
7. The FDGE and GE subcommittee review the GE Area Assessment Reports and send a report to the UEPC in fall term for review and approval (P6). (See "Reporting" below)
8. The FDGE will post the approved summary report to the GE Assessment website, share with area Faculty, and disseminate to campus. The report will be integrated into the GE Annual reports and will be part of the GE APR process (P6).

Timeline for Assessment Activities

Table 2 displays a draft timeline for General Education outcomes assessment to begin (Fall 2019 following approval of the GE Assessment Plan. The timeline and activities will continue to be refined as discussions continue amongst the FDGE, the Faculty Fellow for Assessment, Assessment of Student Learning subcommittee, GE subcommittee, UEPC, and faculty teaching General Education courses. This timeline includes activities that will occur in addition to systematic annual processes such as the review of university-wide assessment data.

Table 2: Draft General Education Timeline for APR cycle

Cycle Year	GE Area	GE Goal	GE Core Outcomes
Year 1	Area A	1	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5
Year 2	Area B	1,2	1.4., 1.6, 2.1, 2.2
Year 3	Area C	2	2.4, 2.5
Year 4	Area D	1, 2	2.3, 2.4
Year 5	Area E	1,2	1.6, 2.6
Year 6	Upper Division	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
Year 7	Program Review		

Participation

Department Chairs can request substitutions of faculty to submit artifacts for assessment. Deans and Chairs are ultimately responsible for the provision of artifacts. The purpose of assessment of General Education is to provide evidence that we are achieving what we say we are achieving. It reduces the current practice of relying on specific anecdotes and guessing.

In an effort to balance faculty workload and that of Chairs, Deans and the FFA and FDGE, the assessment does not use a true scientific and randomized experimental design. However, efforts will be made to ensure that random selection of sections does not result in undue burden on an individual faculty member in a particular GE Area. In addition, because each GE Area is only assessed once every 7 years (based on the APR process), it is unlikely that an individual faculty member will be disproportionately burdened.

Leadership and Governance

The General Faculty Constitution reserves oversight and evaluation of the GE program for the University Educational Policies Committee (UEPC), an elected body, which assigns a highly defined and limited role to GE Subcommittee, whose membership is by appointment by the Committee on Committees (COC). The Faculty Director of GE (FDGE), appointed by and reporting to the AVP for Academic Affairs, assumes leadership for the General Education program, again in highly defined areas, in collaboration and consultation with UEPC, GE Subcommittee and the ASL Subcommittee.

GE Subcommittee (see GE Subcommittee Charge and APR Procedures: General Education)

- Reviews GE course proposals from departments/programs for courses to be included in the General Education Program and makes decisions for continuance/discontinuance of GE course designations.
- Reviews department/program’s GE courses on a 7-year cycle and reports annually on University-wide GE Assessment.

- Reviews the General Education Goals and Outcomes on a 7-year cycle and recommends action (retain/revise).
- Submits an annual year-end report to UEPC, including recommendations for next steps.
- Responsible for the completion of the GE APR with the FDGE.

Faculty Director of General Education

- Facilitates the development and revision of the GE program assessment plan and the review and implementation of GE assessment plan by GE and ASL subcommittees.
- Liaises with faculty governance, administration, college-level committees, and departments to communicate and support the GE assessment process.
- With the General Education Subcommittee, responsible for the completion of the General Education annual assessment report and the 7-year Academic Program Review.

Faculty Fellow for Assessment

- Liaises with the FDGE and ASL Subcommittee of UEPC to evaluate GE assessment.
- Works with the different Colleges and Departments/Programs, and works within the faculty governance framework to unify GE assessment across academic units.
- Works with the Office of Assessment to facilitate, review, and improve GE assessment processes.

University Educational Policies Committee (see [APR Procedures: General Education](#))

- Reviews the GE Academic Program Review.
- Reviews the GE Assessment Plan and/or delegates to ASL subcommittee.

Department Chairs and Directors/Coordinators

- Facilitate the completion of the program APRs, which includes a General Education Assessment component.
- Invite faculty within specific GE Areas being assessed to participate in compensated student artifact reviews.

College Assessment Faculty Learning Communities

- Review college program APRs and annual assessment reports.
- Report on college-level GE assessment trends and discusses with the FDGE.

Deans

- Support university-wide assessment as it relates to academic disciplines, General Education, and Graduate Education outcomes.
- Facilitate the batch certification and GE course certification process.

AVP/ALO

- Supports the work of the Faculty Director of General Education.
- Supports the work of the Faculty Fellow for Assessment

- Ensures GE APR information is integrated into the University’s reaffirmation of accreditation self-study report.

Provost

- Supports the development of the implementation plan(s) as part of the GE APR process.
Supports the implementation plans of academic programs servicing the GE Program.

Framework for the Assessment of General Education

Structure

The three levels of student learning assessment at Stanislaus State are institutional-level, program-level, and course-level (Fig 1). Assessment of student achievement in GE occurs first at the course-level; course-level findings are reviewed and summarized via the departmental Academic Program Review. Because General Education is not affiliated with a single program, but is an institutional program, of necessity and practicality, assessment of GE goals and outcomes would naturally take place at the institutional level via the General Education Program Academic Program Review utilizing information gathered at the program-level. As part of the established Academic Program Review process, the FDGE and GE subcommittee should review student learning achievement data annually, as well as institutional data related to General Education including enrollment trends, faculty demographics and DFW rates. A review of student perceptions of achievement (e.g., NSSE, Graduating Senior Survey, Alumni surveys) are also reviewed. These levels of review are on-going, established University processes.

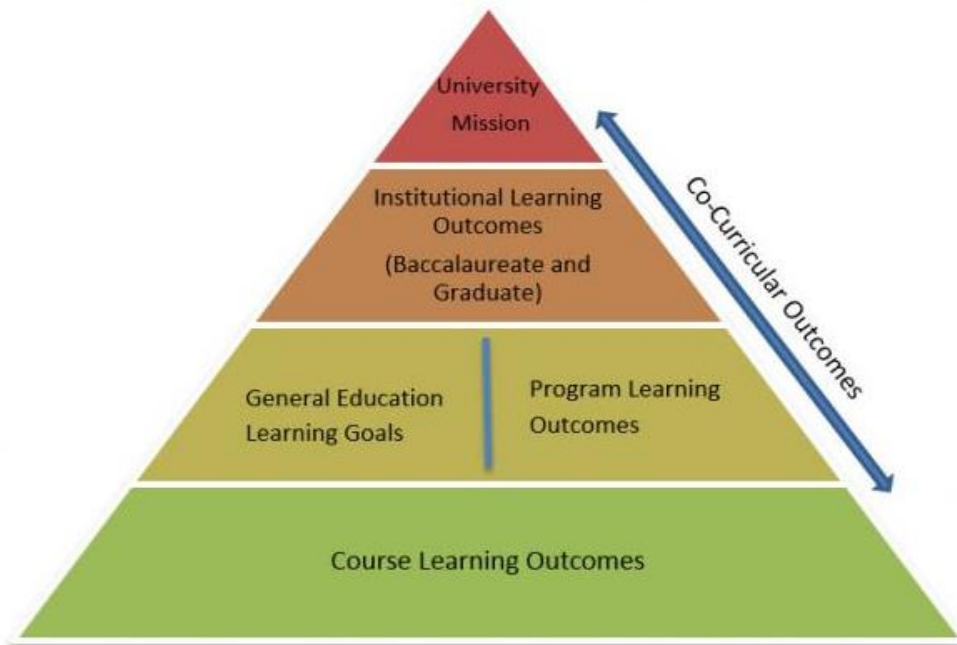


Fig. 1. Relationship of Course Learning Outcomes through the University Mission

University-Wide Assessment

Assessment at the GE program level across the University is overseen in tandem by the Faculty Director of General Education, the General Education Subcommittee, and ASL subcommittee. While academic program reviews, outcome assessment data, course embedded assessment, and curricular development are completed at the department/program level by faculty, (P3,4 & 5) many of the other assessment activities described below (Table 3) are conducted by the University's various administrative support offices and resulting reports are distributed to the Faculty Director of General Education and General Education subcommittee for review and posted on University websites (Institutional Dashboards, Office of Institutional Research, Office of Assessment, General Education).

These assessment methods, measures and data sources are reviewed by GE subcommittee annually as part of the seven-year Academic Program Review process. The College Assessment FLCs will also review program APRs to identify college-level trends regarding GE and report to FDGE/GE Subcommittee.

Reporting

Reviewing and Reporting on General Education Assessment Results

The goal of assessment of student learning in General Education is to provide evidence that indicates the level of student achievement of learning outcomes in a particular GE Area. The annual GE Assessment Report includes GE Area-, not course-, level trends. For example, the report may indicate that the majority of lower-division GE students in Area B are in the “developing” stages of “Applying quantitative reasoning concepts and skills to solve problems” (Outcome 1.4). Another example may be that the report could highlight areas where students are “proficient” and efforts to sustain that proficiency can be continued at the course and program level. These examples do not focus on, nor identify, a particular instructor or a particular course, nor could any of those specifics be determined from the report, in the examples above.

Campus Distribution:

1. The report will be distributed to the University community and posted on the GE website.
2. Information will be shared with faculty governance and key administrative units (e.g., Office of Assessment, Office of General Education, etc.,)
3. The report will be shared with faculty within the GE Area assessed. The information provides direction that can be used in faculty efforts to improve teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.
4. Annual GE Assessment reports will become part of the 7-year APR that is reviewed by campus governance committees and made available to campus faculty. Each Annual report will include assessment of a particular GE Area. The 7-year APR will summarize the previous annual reports and synthesize progress on GE goals and student learning outcomes.
5. The Provost will hold an open forum to meet with GE program stakeholders as part of the 7-year APR process to discuss assessment reporting and ways to support progress in GE.

Approved by the Academic Senate on 05/07/19

Approved by President Junn on 05/24/19