

**Sustainability Literacy Assessments**  
**University of Wisconsin-Green Bay**  
**Spring 2021 update**

UWGB assesses for sustainability literacy in two ways: 1) General Education assessment; 2) graduating senior and recent alumni surveys.

**1). General Education Assessment**

Our most recent General Education assessment (2014–16) asked instructors to assess students in the following areas of learning:

- Demonstrates a basic knowledge of sustainability.
- Recognizes the complexity and multi-faceted nature of sustainability.
- Makes informed judgments.
- Integrates sustainability and social responsibility.

The results of this assessment are available here:

[https://www.uwgb.edu/UWGCMS/media/Assessment/files/Benchmark-Assessment-Results-Sustainability-\(2014-16\).pdf](https://www.uwgb.edu/UWGCMS/media/Assessment/files/Benchmark-Assessment-Results-Sustainability-(2014-16).pdf)

A new round of assessment is underway starting during the Spring 2021 semester. About two years ago, we streamlined the Sustainability Perspective learning outcomes as follows:

- Think critically regarding the array and implications of alternative sustainability definitions and describe why actions to achieve sustainability are complex and controversial.
- Discuss sustainability within the context of ethical decision-making and engage in informed judgments about environmental problems as socially responsible citizens.

Starting with the Spring 2021 semester, all General Education courses will be assessed each semester on a three-year cycle, with the course instructor choosing the outcome (out of the two approved) to assess for that three-year period. In other words, instructors teaching Sustainability Perspective courses will choose one (of the two) learning outcomes listed above, and they will assess that outcome each time they teach the course over a three-year period. This approach will yield longitudinal data that should be very helpful. Moreover, we will have assessment data every semester going forward (rather than having data for a few years, followed by gap, which happened under the previous plan).

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## 2). Data Regarding Sustainability Learning from Graduating Senior and Recent Alumni Surveys, 2018–2019

The following reports are published on the Student Perspectives page of the UWGB Office of Testing Services and Assessment at: <https://www.uwgb.edu/otsa/student-perspectives/>.

The vast majority (over 90%) of UWGB graduating seniors and recent alumni who completed these surveys reported at least average academic preparation or understanding of “Sustainability perspectives” and their importance for making “informed and ethical judgments about the environment as responsible citizens.” In all three survey groups included below, a majority chose from the highest two values on the Likert scale (i.e., “Excellent” or Good,” or “Extremely” or “Very”). Despite the inclusion of a Sustainability Perspective in the new General Education program, a small percentage (less than 10%) of graduating seniors and recent alumni rated their understanding or preparation regarding sustainability with the lowest two values (i.e., “Slightly” or “Not at All,” or “Fair” or “Poor”). Clearly, there is room for improvement, but it is also important to recognize that some of our graduating seniors entered the university having completed their General Education requirements elsewhere, so they may not have taken one of the required Sustainability Perspective courses.

### 2019 Alumni Survey:

In the Summer/Fall of 2019, we surveyed UWGB alumni (via email & postal mail) who received bachelor’s degrees in August 2015, December 2015, and May 2016. Of the 1243 alumni receiving bachelor’s degrees in this period, all but one had a working mailing address. Thirteen percent (160) of the alumni with a working mailing address completed the survey; the overall completion rate was 160/1243, or 13 percent. Alumni were only given the option of completing the Alumni Survey online this year.

How well did UWGB prepare them? 62% indicated “Excellent” or “Good,” while 2% chose “Poor.”

Scale: Excellent = 5, Poor = 1 E = Excellent, G = Good, A = Average, F = Fair, P = Poor	Academic Preparation					
	Mean	E	G	A	F	P
☞ Sustainability perspectives to make informed and ethical judgments about the environment as responsible citizens.	3.7	20%	42%	30%	6%	2%

### 2018 Graduating Senior Survey:

In May 2018, August 2018, and December 2018, 1,179 students received bachelor’s degrees from UWGB. We surveyed all students eligible to graduate in those terms, and received 383

completed questionnaires (32 percent). Students are sent several emails throughout each semester (for which they are graduating) and are invited to complete the survey then.

How well did UWGB prepare them? 69% indicated that their understanding was “Extremely” or “Very” well developed, while only 2% reported “not at all.” (Note: This question appeared on the graduating senior survey for the first time in 2018, reflecting the fact that students who started in 2014 and graduated in 2018 completed the Sustainability Perspective General Education requirement.)

Scale: Extremely = 5, Not at All = 1 5 = Extremely, 4 = Very, 3 = Somewhat, 2 = Slightly, 1= Not at All	Development of Understanding					
	Mean	5	4	3	2	1
☞ Sustainability perspectives to make informed and ethical judgments about the environment as responsible citizens.	3.9	36%	33%	22%	7%	2%

### 2018 Alumni Survey:

In the Summer/Fall of 2018, we surveyed UWGB alumni (via email & postal mail) who received bachelor’s degrees in August 2014, December 2014, and May 2015. Of the 1256 alumni receiving bachelor’s degrees in this period, all had a working mailing address. Seventeen percent (213) of the alumni with a working mailing address completed the survey; the overall completion rate was 213/1256, or 17 percent. Alumni were given the option of completing the Alumni Survey online or via a paper based survey.

How well did their UW-Green Bay education help to develop their skills overall? 70% chose “Excellent” or “Good,” while 1% chose “Poor.”

Scale: Excellent = 5, Poor = 1 E = Excellent, G = Good, A = Average, F = Fair , P = Poor	Academic Preparation					
	Mean	E	G	A	F	P
Sustainability perspectives to make informed and ethical judgments about the environment as responsible citizens	3.9	29%	41%	24%	5%	1%

### Sources:

2014–2016 General Education Assessment (Sustainability Perspective):  
[https://www.uwgb.edu/UWGCMS/media/Assessment/files/Benchmark-Assessment-Results-Sustainability-\(2014-16\).pdf](https://www.uwgb.edu/UWGCMS/media/Assessment/files/Benchmark-Assessment-Results-Sustainability-(2014-16).pdf)

2019 Student Perspectives Report:  
<https://www.uwgb.edu/UWGCMS/media/Institutional-Research-Assessment/GeneralEducationAssessment/Comprehensive-Report-2019.pdf>

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<https://www.uwgb.edu/UWGCMS/media/Institutional-Research-Assessment/GeneralEducationAssessment/Comprehensive-Report-2018.pdf>

*Compiled by Professor David Voelker, Chair of the Sustainability Committee, Jan. 6, 2021*