

College of Communications Student Learning Assessment Plan

Goals

The overarching goal of the process is to assess student learning to improve curricula, instruction and learning. Student learning outcomes are assessed annually. The goals for learning are drawn from the professional values and competencies of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). They are:

Professional Values and Competencies

Individual professions in journalism and mass communication may require certain specialized values and competencies. Irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

1. Understand and be able to apply principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
4. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
5. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
6. Think critically, creatively and independently;
7. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
8. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
10. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;

11. Apply basic tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Measures

The most basic measure of student learning is course grades in the set of required courses that includes every one of the 11 professional values and competencies. The Student Learning Assessment (SLA) plan, however, calls for analysis of further direct and indirect measures to assess student learning. Moreover, the plan identifies an assessment role for working professionals in the communications institutions and industries for which we prepare students. Many of the working professionals are alumni of the College of Communications.

Direct Measures

There is a single direct measure, the *Faculty/Professional Team Evaluation of Student Work*. Student work will be assessed by teams composed of faculty and working professionals, many of whom are alumni. The student work itself is a sample drawn from courses across the curriculum, preferably from senior-level or capstone courses. Material will be drawn from lower-level courses, where appropriate. An assessment matrix, matching professional values and competencies with appropriate courses for each program in the college, is attached (AppendixA).

Indirect Measures

- Results of Annual Survey of Internship Supervisors
- Retention and graduation rates
- Student performance in national competitions
- Results of student surveys and/or focus groups of satisfaction and learning

Process

The SLA is conducted annually and managed by the associate dean for undergraduate education and outreach. There are three phases in the process:

- Preparation. With continuous quality improvement in mind, useful recommendations from the previous year's SLA are incorporated into the SLA plan.
- Data Collection, Analysis and Report Preparation. The *Faculty/Professional Team Evaluation of Student Work* gets underway. Secondary measures data are collected. The annual report is produced and distributed to the dean, department heads and alumni society board.
- Application of Findings. Results are used to improve curricula, course development, teaching and learning.

Preparation

Using the recommendations from the previous year's SLA, appropriate improvements to the plan are made. Course selection is made and faculty are contacted with instructions for sampling and submitting student work. In collaboration with the Alumni Society, volunteer assessment team members are recruited. Arrangements are made to collect secondary measures data; activities include planning the internship supervisors survey, designing and planning focus groups if needed and researching means to acquire other secondary measures.

Data Collection, Analysis and Report Preparation

Staff support is used to collect, organize and store data. Faculty teaching selected courses supply samples of student work – all grading marks removed – along with relevant assignment directions and syllabus.

Faculty/Professional Team Evaluation of Student Work. There will be six assessment teams for this, the SLA's principle direct measure, one for each program:

- Advertising
- Film/Video
- Journalism
- Media Studies
- Public Relations
- Telecommunications

Each team will be comprised of a faculty member and two professionals, except for Media Studies. The professionals will be recruited through the College's Alumni Society. Specifically, the chair of the Curriculum Assessment Committee of the Alumni Society works with the Associate Dean to recruit 10 to 12 professionals representing the industry side of the five academic areas. Five of the teams are composed of a faculty member and two professionals. The sixth team, Media Studies, is composed of three faculty members; Media Studies is not a professional skills-oriented major and thus, it is appropriate for scholars in this field to conduct the team assessment.

Each team member receives a portfolio of student work samples for his or her program. Portfolios are substantial, containing on average 15 to 20 samples ranging in format from term papers, films, radio and television productions, photography, web and graphics designs, Power Point presentations, media campaigns and research reports. Instructions for analysis are included (see Appendix B).

The teams will review the assessment material for each program and submit a report to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education.

Secondary Measures. Internship supervisors survey conducted (See Appendix C). If needed, student surveys and/or focus groups are conducted. Collect data on student performance in national competitions:

- Advertising: AAF

- Film/Video: festivals
- Journalism: Hearst, Dow Jones, Pennsylvania Associated Press Broadcaster's Association (PAPBA)
- Media Studies: n/a
- Public Relations: possibilities: PRSSA, Bateman, Golden Quill
- Telecommunications: explore possibilities for future: NAPTE, NAMIC, WICT, ITERA, PSN-TV, SBDC

All other data procured from various institutional sources.

The associate dean analyzes data from both the primary/direct measure and secondary/indirect measures. She prepares and distributes an annual report of findings. It reports the degree to which goals for student learning were attained, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, trends, etc. It is distributed to the dean, department heads and the alumni society board.

Application of Findings

The annual report is the basis for discussion at College and Departmental levels and with the board of the Alumni Society. The discussions are intended to lead to proposals for action (amending curriculum, improving or supporting instruction within existing curriculum, improving facilities, etc.). Based on discussions, a response report will be prepared by the Associate Dean and will include specific recommendations for action. The Associate Dean is responsible for tracking and recording actions taken in response to the assessment process.

A detailed check sheet of each activity or step in the process is found in Appendix D.

Appendix A Course Matrix

Value or Competency	Advertising	PR	Film/Video	Journalism	Media Studies	Telecomm
Freedom of Expression	424	473	438 or 439	401, 409 and 465	411 and 413W	385, 484 and 489
History, Professions	422 and 427	471	455	401	413W	484 and 489
Diversity	471	471	452 or 455	401 and 409	205 and 452 or 455	385, 489 and 497 Big Ten Channel (BTC)
Ethics	424 & 417	473 and 417	438	409	304 and 411	385, 489 and 493
Visual Literacy	424	471	438 or 449	465, 469 and 480	411 and 455 or 452	383 and 497 (BTC)
Critical/Creative Thinking	422 and 424	471	438 or 449	409 and 465	411 and 413	385
Research/Evaluate	420 and 424	420	438 and 455 or 452	460, 465 and 480	304 and 413	489 and 493
Writing	422, 424	471	446	460, 465, and 467	304 and 455 or 452	489 and 493
Critical Evaluation	420 and 424	471	452 or 455	460, 465 and 467	304 and 455 or 452	489 and 493
Math	420 and 422	420	“Quant Gen Ed Req”	“Quant Gen Ed Req”	304	385 and 493
Tech/Tools App	422 and 424	471	449 and 438 or 439	465, 469 and 480	304	383 and 497 (BTC)

**Appendix B
Instructions for Assessment Team Members**

FILM/VIDEO STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES FOR REVIEW

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE REVIEW THE SAMPLE OF STUDENT WORK YOU RECEIVED WITH THIS SHEET. THEY ARE ORGANIZED BY COURSE NUMBER, CORRESPONDING TO THE TABLE BELOW. PLEASE REFER TO PAGE TWO, PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES, FOR A BETTER DESCRIPTION OF EACH AREA. INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH SAMPLES DEMONSTRATE ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH VALUE OR COMPETENCY USING THE SCALE NOTED BELOW. PLEASE CONSULT WITH YOUR TEAMMATES AND RETURN YOUR ASSESSMENT BY _____.

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	DOES NOT APPLY OR CANNOT BE DETERMINED

COURSE	1 FREEDOM OF SPEECH	2 HISTORY	3 DIVERSITY	4 USE OF IMAGES & INFORMATION	5 ETHICS	6 CRITICAL THOUGHT	7 RESEARCH METHODS	8 WRITING SKILLS	9 CRITICAL EVALUATION SKILLS	10 STATISTICAL CONCEPTS	11 APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Comments (Your comments are very important! Please provide some feedback supporting your ratings. Add additional sheets if necessary.):

TELECOMMUNICATIONS STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES FOR REVIEW

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE REVIEW THE SAMPLE OF STUDENT WORK YOU RECEIVED WITH THIS SHEET. THEY ARE ORGANIZED BY COURSE NUMBER, CORRESPONDING TO THE TABLE BELOW. PLEASE REFER TO PAGE TWO, PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES, FOR A BETTER DESCRIPTION OF EACH AREA. INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH SAMPLES DEMONSTRATE ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH VALUE OR COMPETENCY USING THE SCALE NOTED BELOW. PLEASE CONSULT WITH YOUR TEAMMATES AND RETURN YOUR ASSESSMENT BY _____.

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	DOES NOT APPLY OR CANNOT BE DETERMINED

COURSE	1 FREEDOM OF SPEECH	2 HISTORY	3 DIVERSITY	4 USE OF IMAGES & INFORMATION	5 ETHICS	6 CRITICAL THOUGHT	7 RESEARCH METHODS	8 WRITING SKILLS	9 CRITICAL EVALUATION SKILLS	10 STATISTICAL CONCEPTS	11 APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Comments (Your comments are very important! Please provide some feedback supporting your ratings. Add additional sheets if necessary.):

PUBLIC RELATIONS STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES FOR REVIEW

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE REVIEW THE SAMPLE OF STUDENT WORK YOU RECEIVED WITH THIS SHEET. THEY ARE ORGANIZED BY COURSE NUMBER, CORRESPONDING TO THE TABLE BELOW. PLEASE REFER TO PAGE TWO, PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES, FOR A BETTER DESCRIPTION OF EACH AREA. INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH SAMPLES DEMONSTRATE ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH VALUE OR COMPETENCY USING THE SCALE NOTED BELOW. PLEASE CONSULT WITH YOUR TEAMMATES AND RETURN YOUR ASSESSMENT BY _____.

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	DOES NOT APPLY OR CANNOT BE DETERMINED

COURSE	1 FREEDOM OF SPEECH	2 HISTORY	3 DIVERSITY	4 USE OF IMAGES & INFORMATION	5 ETHICS	6 CRITICAL THOUGHT	7 RESEARCH METHODS	8 WRITING SKILLS	9 CRITICAL EVALUATION SKILLS	10 STATISTICAL CONCEPTS	11 APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Comments (Your comments are very important! Please provide some feedback supporting your ratings. Add additional sheets if necessary.):

MEDIA STUDIES STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES FOR REVIEW

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE REVIEW THE SAMPLE OF STUDENT WORK YOU RECEIVED WITH THIS SHEET. THEY ARE ORGANIZED BY COURSE NUMBER, CORRESPONDING TO THE TABLE BELOW. PLEASE REFER TO PAGE TWO, PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES, FOR A BETTER DESCRIPTION OF EACH AREA. INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH SAMPLES DEMONSTRATE ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH VALUE OR COMPETENCY USING THE SCALE NOTED BELOW. PLEASE CONSULT WITH YOUR TEAMMATES AND RETURN YOUR ASSESSMENT BY _____.

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	DOES NOT APPLY OR CANNOT BE DETERMINED

COURSE	1 FREEDOM OF SPEECH	2 HISTORY	3 DIVERSITY	4 USE OF IMAGES & INFORMATION	5 ETHICS	6 CRITICAL THOUGHT	7 RESEARCH METHODS	8 WRITING SKILLS	9 CRITICAL EVALUATION SKILLS	10 STATISTICAL CONCEPTS	11 APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Comments (Your comments are very important! Please provide some feedback supporting your ratings. Add additional sheets if necessary.)

JOURNALISM STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES FOR REVIEW

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE REVIEW THE SAMPLE OF STUDENT WORK YOU RECEIVED WITH THIS SHEET. THEY ARE ORGANIZED BY COURSE NUMBER, CORRESPONDING TO THE TABLE BELOW. PLEASE REFER TO PAGE TWO, PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES, FOR A BETTER DESCRIPTION OF

EACH AREA. INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH SAMPLES DEMONSTRATE ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH VALUE OR COMPETENCY USING THE SCALE NOTED BELOW. PLEASE CONSULT WITH YOUR TEAMMATES AND RETURN YOUR ASSESSMENT BY _____.

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	DOES NOT APPLY OR CANNOT BE DETERMINED

COURSE	1 FREEDOM OF SPEECH	2 HISTORY	3 DIVERSITY	4 USE OF IMAGES & INFORMATION	5 ETHICS	6 CRITICAL THOUGHT	7 RESEARCH METHODS	8 WRITING SKILLS	9 CRITICAL EVALUATION SKILLS	10 STATISTICAL CONCEPTS	11 APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Comments (Your comments are very important! Please provide some feedback supporting your ratings. Add additional sheets if necessary.):

ADVERTISING STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES FOR REVIEW

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE REVIEW THE SAMPLE OF STUDENT WORK YOU RECEIVED WITH THIS SHEET. THEY ARE ORGANIZED BY COURSE NUMBER, CORRESPONDING TO THE TABLE BELOW. PLEASE REFER TO PAGE TWO, PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES, FOR A BETTER DESCRIPTION OF EACH AREA. INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH SAMPLES DEMONSTRATE ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH VALUE OR COMPETENCY USING THE SCALE NOTED BELOW. PLEASE CONSULT WITH YOUR TEAMMATES AND RETURN YOUR ASSESSMENT BY _____.

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	DOES NOT APPLY OR CANNOT BE DETERMINED

COURSE	1 FREEDOM OF SPEECH	2 HISTORY	3 DIVERSITY	4 USE OF IMAGES & INFORMATION	5 ETHICS	6 CRITICAL THOUGHT	7 RESEARCH METHODS	8 WRITING SKILLS	9 CRITICAL EVALUATION SKILLS	10 STATISTICAL CONCEPTS	11 APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Comments (Your comments are very important! Please provide some feedback supporting your ratings. Add additional sheets if necessary.):

Appendix C

SAMPLE Intern Assessment Questionnaire

The College of Communications and its accrediting agency, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, has established a broad set of learning objectives for our students and we would like your help in assessing the extent to which the Penn State intern under your supervision, through his or her work, exhibits qualities associated with those goals.

As part of your review of the work of the intern under your supervision this semester, we would be very gratefully if you filled out the following, short, questionnaire. You can return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

Please review the following 11 items, with respect to the intern under your supervision. **On a scale of 1 to 5, could you please rate your agreement with the statement, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, by circling the appropriate number.** You may also note when the statement is not applicable (NA) to your situation.

1. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she can apply basic tools and technologies appropriate for the position.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 NA

2. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she can write correctly and clearly in a form and style appropriate to the position.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 NA

3. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she can think critically, creatively and independently.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 NA

4. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she can conduct research and evaluate information.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 NA

5. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she can apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 NA

6. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she can critically evaluate his or her own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 NA

7. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she understands concepts and can apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 NA

8. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she understands professional ethical principles and works ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 NA

9. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she understands and is able to apply principles and laws of freedom of speech and press.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>					<u>Strongly Agree</u>	
	1	2	3	4	5	NA

10. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she understands and is sensitive to the diversity of groups in a global society.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>					<u>Strongly Agree</u>	
	1	2	3	4	5	NA

11. In his or her work, the employee has demonstrated that he or she understands the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>					<u>Strongly Agree</u>	
	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Please feel free to offer any additional comments about the ability of the employee or the undergraduate preparation of the employee for his or her position.

Thank you once again for your time.

Appendix D

SLA Process Check Sheet*

Year: _____

Phase	Date Completed/ Person Charged	Description
SLA Plan revision		August: Review process recommendations from previous year and implement appropriate changes
Course selection		August: Select courses that will be part of the SLA
Recruit faculty to gather samples of student work		August and February: Select one or two faculty for each course; notify faculty that their section has been selected for the SLA and ask them to collect and submit samples of student work by end of semester
Finalize student sample collection		December and May: Collect the material, following up with faculty as necessary; reproduce and create 3 sets of materials for each of the 6 teams (5 majors, 1 team each for Ad & PR)
Collect secondary measures, "College-wide Indicators"		February – March: Obtain results for secondary, indirect indicators: a. graduation and retention rates (source:Registrar) b. student performance in competitions (source: dept heads) c. Satisfaction Survey Data (source: Karen Cooper, Student Affairs) d. NSSE e. Post-graduation Activities Report (source: Jack Rayman)
Write and distribute annual report.		June: Following standard form, analyze all primary and secondary measures; write report; distribute to Dean, department heads and alumni society board
Conduct Internship Supervisor Survey		June-August: Obtain supervisor list from COC Director of Career Placement; design survey; mail to respondents; collect returned surveys; enter into Excel and provide statistical results to Associate Dean.
Facilitate Assessment		August-November: Recruit and train 6 assessment teams and distribute materials and assessment

teams		rubrics
Alumni Board Presentation		September: At annual alumni board meeting, present annual report findings, seek input
Conduct follow-up analysis, write and distribute response report.		September: Conduct follow up analysis of assessment report; meet with each department head to review assessment; analyze, devise and implement changes to improve learning and the SLA process; write report; distribute to Dean and department heads
Monitor Assessment teams		November: Monitor assessment teams; enforce the deadline; collect reports.

*SLA process for two assessment periods overlap