

## **PART II**

# **Standard 3. Assessment of Learning Outcomes**



**PennState**  
Donald P. Bellisario  
College of Communications

[bellisario.psu.edu](http://bellisario.psu.edu) | [@PSUBellisario](https://twitter.com/PSUBellisario)

## Part II, Standard 3. Assessment of Learning Outcomes

### Executive summary:

- The College has a comprehensive plan for assessing student learning outcomes. The plan, which has been approved by the university, is regularly reviewed and updated, most recently in Spring 2024.
- The College’s goals for student learning are based on the ACEJMC values and competencies.
- The College uses multiple direct and indirect measures in its analysis of data to assess curriculum and instruction. Student Learning Assessment in the College is conducted annually and managed by the associate dean for academic affairs and the coordinator for undergraduate education.
- Working professionals, including alumni, assist with Student Learning Assessment by annually evaluating samples of student work and then meeting with the College’s Assessment Advisory Committee representative for each major to discuss their findings.
- The College’s students consistently excel in local, regional and national competitions.
- The College uses various means to track its graduates to assess their professional experience and improve student instruction.

### Please respond to each of the following instructions:

**1. Provide a web link to where the unit’s written plan for assessment of student learning outcomes is published in a prominent, easy-to-find place on the website. This plan must include the dates of its adoption and of implementation of its components.**

The College has had a comprehensive [Student Learning Assessment \(SLA\) Plan](#), which it periodically reviews and updates, for more than 20 years. The plan’s overarching goal is to improve curricula, instruction and learning. The plan, which has been reviewed and approved by the university’s Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research (OPAIR), was last updated in Spring 2024.

The Site Team Report from 2018 praised the College’s assessment process but recommended, “The college would benefit from a standardized reporting template for its assessment team reports. Such a template could make it less likely learning outcomes would be dropped from the assessment process by the departments and easier to evaluate outcomes across the college.” In response, the College has modified the assessment process and prioritized efforts to close the loop. Report templates were created to ensure a focus on SLOs, to encourage more detailed responses to assessment reports, and to identify areas where departments have closed the loop on reviewer recommendations. In 2025, a new Director of Curriculum and Assessment was appointed and tasked with developing the next step in the assessment plan – identifying and implementing more direct measures beginning in the 2025-26 cycle.

Members of the assessment team in the Bellisario College have been recognized for their excellence in assessment work. In 2025, the university named six “Penn State Assessment Champions,” and two of the six are part of the Bellisario College assessment team – Julie Evak, undergraduate education coordinator, and Tara Wyckoff, curriculum coordinator for advertising/public relations and recently named director of curriculum and assessment. These awards recognize the outstanding expertise of the Bellisario team.

**2. Provide the unit’s definition of goals for learning that students must achieve. If this definition is incorporated into the plan for assessment, a page reference will suffice.**

The College’s goals for student learning are taken from the professional values and competencies of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). They are included on page 1 of our Student Learning Assessment Plan.

**3. Describe the collection and reporting of data from both direct and indirect assessment measures and how the unit used its analysis of the data to improve curriculum, instruction, etc. Provide end-of-year assessment reports. If there are multiple reports from the review period, summarize the findings and make the reports available in a separate digital file.**

## Measures

### Direct Measures

- **Professional Team Evaluation of Student Work.** Student work is assessed by faculty-led teams comprised of working professionals, most of whom are alumni. The student work is a sample drawn from courses across the curriculum, mostly from junior- and senior-level courses. An assessment matrix matches professional values and competencies with appropriate courses for each program in the College.
- **Survey of Internship Supervisors.** The survey asks internship supervisors to rate students directly on their mastery of the 10 ACEJMC professional values and competencies. The results are examined and measured against results from previous years.

### Indirect Measures

- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Student performance in national competitions
- Senior Exit Survey

## Assessment Process

Student Learning Assessment in the College is conducted annually and managed by the associate dean for academic affairs and the coordinator for undergraduate education. The three phases in the process are summarized here. See the [SLA Plan](#) for a more detailed explanation.

- **Preparation.** Each year, the SLA Plan is reviewed and revised using recommendations from reviewers and faculty members from the previous year.
- **Data Collection, Analysis and Report Preparation.** The professional team evaluations of student work get underway and internship supervisors are surveyed. Data for the indirect measures is also collected. The annual report is produced and distributed to the dean, department heads and Alumni Board. Department heads are asked to review key findings and provide details on how previous years' findings have been addressed in the curriculum.
- **Application of Findings.** Results are used to improve the College's curricula, course development, teaching and learning. Examples of specific improvements to the curriculum include:
  - Additional industry-standard software (Movie Magic, Final Draft, Avid Media Composer) was adopted for film production classes.
  - Additional budgeting and management lessons were incorporated in film producer course.
  - Added more ethics classroom discussions and cases to narrative film-making courses to meet ethics standards in student documentary producing.
  - Added a new production course, Brand Storytelling, in Telecom major to improve students' skill currency.
  - Instituted a mandatory writing-intensive capstone course to Telecom major.
  - Made Gender and Diversity in the Media a required course across all majors to better ensure acquisition of cultural proficiency skills, knowledge and values.
  - Worked with Media Studies instructors and revised Strategic Communications Law to better ensure learning in freedom of speech concepts.
  - Redesigned Writing for the Media to address shortcomings in student writing ability.
  - Updated digital engagement lessons in public relations courses.

- Added more qualitative research methods lessons to balance the quantitative methods taught in Ad/PR research course.
- Experimented with methods to reduce student sensitivity to criticism, learn how to critically evaluate peer work and give constructive feedback.
- Additional ethics modules in courses other than ethics-centric courses, including News Writing and Sports Writing.

See full assessment reports for additional improvements:

[SLA Reports 2018-19](#)

[SLA Reports 2019-20](#)

[SLA Reports 2020-21](#)

[SLA Reports 2021-22](#)

[SLA Reports 2022-23](#)

[SLA Reports 2023-24](#)

#### **4. Describe the involvement of journalism and mass communication professionals, including alumni, in the assessment process.**

The Alumni Society Board and the Advertising/Public Relations Alumni Network Board work with faculty from the Bellisario College to complete SLA. It is part of the duty of the board members, along with recruited alumni professionals, to help facilitate this exercise and act as reviewers for the assessment. The Student Learning Assessment is a formal process that the College uses to measure the effectiveness of its teaching by linking student performance to learning objectives. The intensive process includes board members' regular review of student work, followed by face-to-face meetings with department chairs and other faculty representatives in the College to review their findings.

By evaluating curriculum, student assignments and work across various majors, Bellisario College has excelled at showing that students within the College are ready to take their place in society as active, critical and ethical participants once they graduate. It also provides the alumni with a chance to connect with faculty and share thoughts on curriculum that prepares students for the real world.

#### **5. In a digital file, list the major awards won by the unit's students in local, regional or national competitions during the review period. Limit to five a year.**

[Sample of Student Awards 2018-2025](#)

#### **6. In a digital file, list by specialty each member of the graduating class of **2022** and those graduates' current jobs. If practical, give a total number of "unknowns" rather than including them in the list. Describe the program used to track graduates to assess their experience in the profession and to improve curriculum and instruction.**

A list of the [jobs held by the graduating class of 2022](#) has been compiled as part of this standard.

A sample of the positions includes:

Account Coordinator, Warner Bros. Discovery

Account Coordinator, Ketchum

Account Executive, TBWA\Chiat\Day

Assistant Account Executive, DDB

Executive Trainee, Ruder Finn

Paid Search Associate, Publicis Health Media

Assistant Light Designer, QVC

Broadcast Associate, NHL Network



TV Scripted Assistant, Creative Artists Agency  
Media Operator, ESPN  
Production Assistant, NBCUniversal  
Account Coordinator, Matter  
Advertising Sales Assistant, Hallmark Media  
Associate Producer, SiriusXM Fantasy Sports Radio, SiriusXM  
Broadcast Associate, MLB/NHL Network  
Digital Ad Sales Associate, Paramount  
Marketing Assistant, Penguin Random House  
Media Desk Production Assistant, Fox News Media  
Sportswriter, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
Assistant Media Planner, Horizon Media  
Media Analyst, VaynerMedia  
Paid Social Buyer, Hearst Magazines  
Reporting Analyst and Communications Specialist, Citizens Rx  
Business Development Consultant, Oracle Corp.  
Coordinator, Client Success, iHeartMedia  
Television/Digital News Producer, Nexstar Media Group

The College tracks graduates to determine the extent to which its objectives are realized in the following ways:

- The 862 graduates for the class of 2021-22 — Fall, Spring and Summer — were surveyed via Penn State University’s post-graduate survey to determine their employment status after graduation. Information was gathered through two e-mail solicitations to graduates’ personal email accounts, three weeks apart, accompanied by a link to the online survey. We also invested in an external vendor, COutcomes, to pursue post-graduate outcomes for those who did not complete the university’s post-graduate survey. COutcomes’ primary source in determining the first-destination employment status for our graduates was a search of graduates’ personal LinkedIn accounts. Of the 862 graduates for the class of 2021-22, 607 (70.4%) were located using the combination of the university’s post-graduate survey and COutcomes’ initiatives.
- The College’s alumni records are updated through multiple avenues: alumni update their information directly to the university via telephone, email and online forms; alumni who belong to the College’s LinkedIn groups update their information online; the College updates its contact information for alumni at events held on- and off-campus; and alumni stay in contact with the College’s director of alumni relations. Alumni may also submit updates directly via an online form on the College’s website: [communicator.bellisario.psu.edu/alumni-notes/submit](https://communicator.bellisario.psu.edu/alumni-notes/submit). Alumni updates are published in *The Communicator* and online.
- Alumni records are maintained in the university’s comprehensive AWA system, a secure database operated and updated by the Penn State Alumni Association. The Association has records of its 170,000-plus dues-paying members and of more than 800,000 living Penn State alumni. The protected database allows the internal Penn State user the capability of viewing and maintaining constituent information, such as biography; degree and graduation year; address, contact information, email address(es) and telephone number(s); family information; giving history; alumni membership data; participation in clubs, organizations and student activities while at Penn State; awards and honors; participation in university and College programs, activities and events; and any contact with university development officers.
- The College’s Development Office and the Office for Internships and Career Placement maintain eight LinkedIn groups. Those accounts include alumni, students and other key contacts, totaling more than 13,000. The LinkedIn groups and accounts, maintained by College staff, are critical and effective for maintaining up-to-date professional records for all participating graduates.



- The College’s Alumni Society board of directors and the Advancement Council meet twice a year, and the College’s Advertising/Public Relations Alumni Network board meets once a year. Board members meet with students, alumni and faculty members to discuss the program’s academic objectives and curriculum. The Alumni Society board and the Ad/PR Alumni Network board also take part in an annual Student Learning Assessment, in conjunction with faculty, to provide input on curriculum and instruction.
- The College encourages alumni involvement immediately following graduation through participation in student seminars, job fairs and on-campus and regional alumni events. In 2024, the Development Office held 21 such events on- and off-campus, with 1,487 total participants.

**7. Provide a matrix that aligns the student learning outcomes with the courses where they are taught and the direct or indirect measures that assess the outcomes.**

Value or Competency	AD	DGJRM	FILM	JOURN	MEDIA	PR	STRCM	TELCM
<b>Freedom of Expression</b>	320	230W, 260W, 403, 409, 492	339, 437,438, 439, 445, 448, 449	260W, 402, 403, 460W	205, 405, 410, 419	370	428B	404, 492
<b>History, Professions</b>	320	180, 271, 280, 403, 492	333, 445	260W, 271, 403	250, 333, 410	370	428A	180, 380, 404, 487W
<b>Cultural Diversity</b>	375, 420, 422, 426	269, 271, 409	346,440, 445, 446	205, 269, 271, 409, 465	205, 410, 419, 452	375, 420, 471, 473	230W, 428C	180, 205, 380, 489W
<b>Images &amp; Information</b>	268, 320, 420, 424, 427	269, 271, 282, 364, 469	337, 338, 339, 340, 440	269, 271, 360, 465, 469, 480, 481	250, 270, 32x, 333, 410, 411, 413, 451, 452, 454, 455	268, 370, 420, 471, 473	428D, 428E	282, 283
<b>Writing</b>	421, 425, 468	228, 260, 460, 467	342W, 346, 446	260W, 360, 403, 460W, 465, 467	205, 250, 410, 411, 413, 451	471, 473	230W, 428B, 428C, 428D	487W, 489W
<b>Ethics</b>	375, 417, 420, 427	271, 409	337, 338, 437, 438	409	205, 304, 418	375, 417, 420, 471, 473	428B, 428D	180, 486
<b>Critical Thinking/ Research</b>	375, 422, 424	310, 403, 467	346, 437, 438, 439, 440, 443, 444, 445, 446, 448, 449	403, 460W, 462, 467	205, 250, 304, 32x, 333, 410, 411, 413, 418, 451, 452, 454, 455	375, 471, 473	428C, 428D, 428E	486, 487W, 489W
<b>Numerical/ Statistical</b>	420, 422	260, 310, 364, 467	340, 440, 443	260W, 271	304, 32x, 413, 418	420, 473	428D	310, 380, 487W

Value or Competency	AD	DGJRM	FILM	JOURN	MEDIA	PR	STRCM	TELCM
<b>Critically Evaluate Information</b>	421, 424, 450	467	437, 438, 439, 440, 445, 448, 449	260W, 269, 460W, 467	205, 250, 304, 32x, 333, 405, 410, 411, 413, 418, 419, 455	372, 471, 473	428D, 428E	486, 487W, 489W
<b>Tools &amp; Technology</b>	268, 421, 422, 424	180, 269, 280, 364, 469	340, 440, 444, 448, 449	269, 271, 360, 465, 469	242, 270, 304, 418	268, 372, 471, 473	428A, 428D, 428E	280, 282, 283

The College's assessment process uses direct and indirect measures as it considers student learning outcomes across the majors. Below is a chart that demonstrates how measures map to individual outcomes.

Value or Competency	AD	DGJRM	FILM	JOURN	MEDIA	PR	STRCM	TELCM
<b>SLO1</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4
<b>SLO2</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4
<b>SLO3</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4
<b>SLO4</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4
<b>SLO5</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4
<b>SLO6</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4
<b>SLO7</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4

Value or Competency	AD	DGJRM	FILM	JOURN	MEDIA	PR	STRCM	TELCM
<b>SLO8</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4
<b>SLO9</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2,	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2,	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4
<b>SLO10</b>	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2,	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2, IM3, IM4	DM1, DM2, IM2,	DM1, DM2, IM1, IM2, IM3, IM4

DM1 - Professional Team Evaluation of Student Work

DM2 - Survey of Internship Supervisors

IM1 - Retention Rates

IM2 - Graduate Rates

IM3 - Student Awards

IM4 - Senior Exit Survey