

Assessment Plan

(Revised Spring/Summer 2021)

Data from assessment of student-learning objectives has driven curriculum development within the Unit for more than 25 years. The process became formalized in 1999 when the Department adopted its first structured assessment plan. The concepts in *William G. Christ's book on assessment, Assessing Media Education: A Resource Handbook for Educators and Administrators*, played a central role in shaping the plan.

The Department of Mass Communication will annually conduct at least one meeting for the purpose of assessment. Assessment of student learning will be a primary focus of this meeting, with particular attention paid to the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication's 10 "Professional Values and Competencies." Prior to this meeting, faculty will review accumulated data from sources including: Senior Exit Surveys conducted by the University's Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning, Departmental Alumni Surveys, the Pre/Post Test program, the Basic Writing Skills assessment and Internship Reports, among others.

At this meeting, the Department will also conduct its annual review of Senior Essays and Portfolios with participation by faculty, alumni and members of area professional media. During the course of the meeting results of the following measures will be examined:

Assessment Measures of Journalistic and Public Relations Skills

(Information Gathering, Writing, Editing, Use of Technology, Principles of Print Design or Broadcast Organization, Analytical Thinking)

Direct

Essay Review; Portfolio Review; Results of Questionnaires Completed by Professional Supervisors of Student Internships/Practicums; Basic Writing Skills Assessment

Indirect

Unit Surveys of Alumni, Student and Alumni Data Provided by the University's Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning

Assessment Measures of Student Comprehension of Mass Media Theory and Concepts

(Diversity, Ethics, Mass Media History, Mass Media and Society)

Direct

Pre-/Post-Test; Senior Essay

Indirect

Unit Surveys of Alumni; Student and Alumni Data Provided by the University's Office of Assessment and Institutional Research

After a review of this data, existing goals will be assessed and future goals will be established.

Departmental Alumni Survey Protocols

Each fall the Department will conduct a survey of graduates one and five years out to gather information on employment and satisfaction with their education.

Results will be compiled in a data-processing program, such as Excel, so that they can be tabulated and archived.

Faculty will evaluate items to insure their continued value to overall departmental assessment and their methodological validity.

Basic Writing Skills Assessment Protocols

The Department will administer the Basic Writing Skills assessment at the sophomore level in MACO 251: News Writing and MACO 252: Reporting, then again in a senior-level course within each concentration (such as MACO 455: Public Affairs Reporting). This 50-item instrument is designed to assess student proficiency in the areas of Associated Press Style, Grammar/Punctuation, Spelling and Word Usage (such as sexist language or redundancy).

Students who do not score at least a 70 percent on this instrument in MACO 251, will be required complete a departmentally created Canvas course in this area while enrolled in MACO 252. Those students who do not score at least 70 percent on the instrument while enrolled in MACO 252 will not be allowed to progress into higher-level skills courses.

The goal would be to have 80 percent of seniors scoring 80 percent or more; or to see a 75 percent improvement between sophomore and senior scores.

Results will be compiled in a data-processing program, such as Excel, so that they can be tabulated and archived.

Faculty will evaluate items related to measuring ACEJMC values and competencies every five years (next review AY 2026-2027) in order to insure their continued relationship to Council expectations and methodological validity.

Internship/Practicum Reports Protocols

Each semester results from intern supervisor reports will be compiled. The reports will contain items measuring student proficiency in media skills (Analytical Thinking, Editing, Information Gathering, Principles of Print Design or Broadcast Organization, Use of Technology and Writing). They will also include items measuring student professionalism (such as punctuality and dependability).

The goal would be to have 85 percent of students score in the “Highly Agree” or “Agree” range on a five-point scale on all items.

Results will be compiled in a data-processing program, such as Excel, so that they can be tabulated and archived.

Faculty will evaluate items related to measuring ACEJMC values and competencies every five years (next review AY 2026-2027) in order to insure their continued relationship to Council expectations and methodological validity.

Pre-/Post-Test Protocols

The Pre-/Post-Test instrument will be administered each to semester to all MACO 101: Survey of Mass Communication students prior to midterm and to all MACO 490: Digital Media Convergence students following midterm (See attached Pre-Post Instrument). The purpose of this measure is to assess progress in mastering the 10 “Professional Values and Competencies” expected of graduates from programs accredited by Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Eighty-four items on this instrument are designed to assess student proficiency across these 10 areas. The remaining items are intended to gather information on demographics and media use.

The “Acceptable” score on this instrument will be 70 percent, “Mastery” 85 percent. The goal would be to have 85 percent of seniors score in the “Acceptable” range, or to see a 75 percent improvement between freshmen and senior scores.

Results will be compiled in a data-processing program, such as Excel, so that they can be tabulated and archived.

Faculty will evaluate items related to measuring ACEJMC values and competencies every five years (next review AY 2026-2027) in order to insure their continued relationship to Council expectations and methodological validity.

Senior Essay/Portfolio Review Protocols

Each year, prior to its annual assessment meeting, the Department will conduct a review of essays written by and portfolios prepared by students in the capstone course (MACO 490: Digital Media Convergence). Members of the faculty, alumni and area media professionals will conduct this review. Review forms will be completed by each participant prior to the meeting.

Forms for the essay review will reflect measures of student proficiency in the student learning outcomes expected by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication related to mass communication theory – Diversity, Ethics, Mass Media History, Mass Media and Society. Forms for the portfolios review will primarily be directed at assessing student proficiency in ACEJMC’s learning outcomes in the areas of Journalistic and Public Relations Skills – Analytical Thinking, Editing, Information Gathering, Principles of Print Design or Broadcast Organization, Use of Technology and Writing.

The goal would be to have 100% of students score at least a three on a five-points scale, and 60% scoring four or higher.

Once the forms are completed, results will be compiled in a data-processing program, such as Excel, so that they can be tabulated and archived.

Faculty will evaluate items related to measuring ACEJMC values and competencies every five years (next review AY 2026-2027) in order to insure their continued relationship to Council expectations and methodological validity.