

US CORE ASSESSMENT PLAN

University Seminar Mission Statement and Student Learning Outcomes:

Courses with the University Seminar (US) core designation are primarily intended for first-year students throughout all curricula to provide a platform for collegiate level discourse. Activities that hone critical thinking, written and oral communication skills are universally incorporated, but the themes represented in individual US core courses vary considerably to reflect the department or program from which the course originates. All US core courses are small in size and rely heavily on seminar-style teaching where course content is delivered by discussion and interaction rather than by lecture. This learning environment promotes vibrant interactions between first-year students, a faculty member, and in many courses, a more experienced student fellow. US core courses provide a venue where students can engage in rigorous academic discussions that promote critical thinking, learning, and understanding in a supportive and truly collegiate manner.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Through completion of the US Core students will

- Demonstrate critical thinking abilities
- Prepare and deliver an effective oral presentation
- Demonstrate analytical, critical, and creative thinking in written communication

Assessment Schedule:

Each year, the seminar directors will evaluate and assess one of the student learning outcomes (SLOs) in each of the US core offerings. All classes will assess the same SLO each year, starting with our first SLO: “Demonstrate critical thinking abilities.” The remaining two outcomes will be assessed in the following years.

Semester	Outcome to Be Assessed
Spring 2013	Demonstrate critical thinking abilities (AGED 140, CLS 101 and CLS 201, COM 110, LS 101)
Fall 2013	Demonstrate critical thinking abilities (BGEN 194, COLS 101, EDU 101, UH 201 and 301, US 101 and 121)
All Courses	
Fall 2014, 2017	Prepare and deliver an effective oral presentation
Fall 2015, 2018	Demonstrate analytical, creative and critical thinking in written Communication
Fall 2016, 2019	Demonstrate critical thinking abilities

Several courses that fulfill the US core requirement are not offered in the spring, and several other courses have a significantly lower spring enrollment. While we will begin the assessment this spring, we will assess the remaining seminars in Fall 2013. We will

then move to a fall assessment schedule so all courses can be assessed in the fall semesters.

Sample Size and Selection of Student Work:

We will evaluate student work from 5-10% of the students enrolled in each US core offering. Directors will review the course syllabus and select appropriate assignments to sample for each SLO. Directors will randomly select students from multiple sections (when possible) and will collect the student work from instructors. Directors will alternate instructors whose students are selected, and directors will not rely upon or favor any instructors over others.

Assessment Process:

Each seminar will select their assessment team comprised of at least two individuals from their leadership team and current seminar faculty. In instances where the seminar director is the only faculty member teaching the course, outside evaluators will participate in that course's assessment. Otherwise, the use of outside evaluators will be at the discretion of the seminar directors.

Evaluators will score student work using the common rubrics created by the seminar directors. Whenever possible, evaluators will not score work from their own section. After the assessment is complete, the director of each seminar will create a summary document that details the assessment results for their courses. These results will be shared with the seminar directors group.

Post Assessment:

Seminar directors will meet to review and discuss the assessment results at the end of each assessment cycle (once a year). The seminar directors will invite the Associate Vice Provost to join this discussion and a full summary of the assessment results will be shared.

Threshold:

Each course must meet a minimum threshold. 60% of student work from each course should be at the level of "meets expectations."

If a course fails to meet the 60% threshold, the following steps will be taken:

1. Courses with a score below 60% will review both their course and the assessment process and will bring their questions and potential solutions to discuss with the seminar committee.
2. The course will be re-assessed in the following semester (or during the next offering).
3. If the course does not meet the threshold after a second assessment, the seminar directors will discuss the assessment results and determine next steps to improve the course in consultation with the Associate Vice Provost.

Assessment Report:

After the individual course assessments have been completed, a representative (rotated throughout the seminar directors group annually) will compile the individual assessment reports and create a summary report to share with the Associate Vice Provost.

The report will include a narrative that:

- details the assessment results;
- provides a summary of each course's scores;
- provides sample rubrics;
- guidelines about necessary next steps if courses do not meet the threshold; and
- a discussion about any changes made since the last time a learning outcome was assessed.