Annual Assessment Report

Academic Year: 2016-17
Department: Core 2.0
Program(s): Research (R) Core

1. What Was Done

Based on our assessment plan learning outcomes 1 and 2 were assessed in non-independent study R Core classes.

   1. Locate relevant information from broad and diverse resources.
   2. Apply critical and creative thinking to synthesize information.

Work assessed included classwork from Arts Research (RA); Natural Science Research (RN); Social Science Research (RS); and additional Research and Creative Experience Courses (R). Two assignments from each class and section were selected randomly (suggestion was students 2 and 7 from the roll list) and assessed by members of the R Core committee. Faculty were asked to submit student work appropriate to the R Core learning outcomes being assessed for this period.

The rubrics located in the R Core assessment plan were used to assess the work submitted.

When possible, course assignment briefs and syllabi were checked to ensure inclusion of R Core language and learning outcomes. Results were scattered. Many classes included explicit mention of the R Core but did not list the specific learning outcomes. Other classes the concept of research was fully embedded and clearly stated in documents but without mention of the Core. In a few cases the R Core learning outcomes were explicitly stated on all relevant documents. Similarly, the total weight of the assignment in relation to the semester was not always clearly stated as a percentage of the total grade.

2. What Data Were Collected

Assignment briefs and two examples of student work were collected from each class and section of the following course: WILD 401RN; BMKT 342R; EDU 397R; M386R; SOCI 318R; NSRG 387R; AMST 202RA; ARTZ 231RA; COLS 260RS; ARTZ 105RA; ARTZ 110RA; PHOT 113RA.

3. What Was Learned

While student work overwhelmingly scored above the threshold on both SLO 1 and 2, some discrepancies were present between the upper-level (300 and 400) and introductory-level (100 and 200) classes. Both levels consistently scored above the threshold, but the highest scores were in the upper-level courses.
4. How We Responded

We expect upper-level students to be more experienced learners than the freshmen and sophomores, so no changes are required since the R Core is largely distributed across all levels of curricula.

We see evidence that the responsible conduct of research is covered as part of the course in many cases. Because of the diverse disciplines involved in this area it looks different in specific syllabi and assignment briefs. In some cases, such as the arts, language in the syllabi states that all work must be original and generated by the student. In other cases, the assignment outline explains responsible conduct of research.

5. Recommendations

We recommend R Core faculty be reminded to include relevant R Core learning outcomes in the assignment briefs, in addition to syllabi. We also recommend the university consider the distribution of the R Core learning outcomes across the curriculum because some assignments will include one Core learning outcome and other assignments include all of the R Core learning outcomes. This means some assignments with Core learning outcomes may not account for 30% of a student’s grade.

The diverse nature of the R Core requires a relatively large assessment committee representative of multiple faculty from multiple units. We recommend growing the committee from three members to a minimum of five members. This will be especially important as we move to the next cycle of assessment where we will be assessing capstone assignments, projects, and exhibitions which are delivered as independent study projects involving an entire semester’s work to complete one very complex and large project or exhibition.

Finally, because some lower-level Core classes are delivered by GTA’s and NTT faculty, a more robust orientation for new faculty is recommended to ensure instructors understand the role of the Core and the instructor responsibility to develop appropriate assignments and learning outcomes when they are not provided by the unit offering the class.