

E.W. Scripps School of Journalism ¹

Assessment Plan for Majors, Minors and Certificates

The E.W. Scripps School of Journalism adopted goals as well as core competencies and values within the context of the mission of the School. This plan remains updated to reflect changes within the journalism industry and the resulting pedagogy. These form the foundation of the School's assessment plan and directly correlate to the ACEJMC values and competencies. Additionally, the Scripps assessment plan is in accordance with Ohio University's accreditation via the Higher Learning Commission.

OUR MISSION/COMPETENCIES

Mission Statement – E.W. Scripps School of Journalism

The E.W. Scripps School of Journalism is committed to providing an education that emphasizes professional excellence, critical thinking, and social responsibility.

To maintain and enhance our democratic society and the free exchange of ideas, journalism must be built on the principles of truth, accuracy, and independence. Our faculty search for these principles, our students strive for them, and our alumni live them.

Through a blend of professional education, practical experience, and intellectual exploration, we teach journalism in a way that can be applied to many professions and to a rewarding life in a multicultural and fast changing world. Whether it's telling a story, building a brand, or engaging in research, we prepare students for their chosen professions now and as those professions change in the future.

Core Competencies

The core competencies of the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism are aligned with the professional values and competencies formulated by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). As such, the faculty endorses the adoption of the ACEJMC goals. Journalism graduates should be aware of certain core values and be able to:

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;

¹ Please note Assessment is now Standard 3, which follows Standard 2, Curriculum. The revisions to Standard 2 Value and Competencies are reflected in this plan. All 2020 revisions to ACEJMC standards will go into effect for site-team reviews scheduled for Fall 2022 and beyond. A revised self-study template will be sent in September 2021 to schools on the 2022-23 visit schedule. All of the standards were revised. In some cases, the revisions reflect mainly editing changes and efforts to reduce redundancies among standards. In other cases, the revisions were significant and took steps to modernize the definitions and requirements and to streamline the process.

- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

There are varying levels of these values and competencies:

- Awareness – being familiar with the information;
- Knowledge – comprehending and synthesizing information;
- Application – competency to apply the information and the skills to the disciplines.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The E.W. Scripps School of Journalism will continue to assess learning outcomes in accordance with the ACEJMC values and competencies, the School's mission, and the University's established learning outcome objectives.

The director will appoint an assessment committee chair and committee members every three years. It is recommended that the committee have a minimum of five members, but no more than eight, including the director as an ad hoc member. This provides enough manpower to accomplish the tasks required without the committee becoming too unwieldy. For continuity, it is also recommended that at least two committee members and the chair serve at least two consecutive terms. It is recommended that the assessment committee be assigned student research assistants to assist with data processing. The committee will assess learning outcomes based on both direct and indirect measures following the specific timeline outlined with the measures below.

It will be the committee's responsibility to formulate deadlines, develop measurement instruments, collect data and annually provide the faculty with an outline of the results. Implementation of action items resulting from the data will be the responsibility of the School's standing committees or ad hoc committees as appointed by the director. All proposed changes to this document must be brought forth for a full faculty vote. Additionally, all changes suggested by the assessment committee's report must have full faculty vote before implementation.

ASSESSMENT MEASURES

The plan calls for five indirect and three direct assessment measures. The measures will be reviewed annually by the assessment committee to determine if any changes or additions need to be made to the existing measures, or if any additional measures need to be added.

Indirect Measures

1. Syllabi Audit (indirect measure)

To ensure that all students are exposed to awareness, knowledge and application of all the ACEJMC values and competencies, the syllabi audit will focus on the five core courses required of all journalism

majors, with track and elective courses being audited less frequently and viewed as supplemental in exposure and learning of the values/competencies.

A baseline audit in 2014 – 2015 was used to establish an instrument to measure the values and competencies specific to each core course. This instrument ensures that all the values and competencies are reached in at least one course that all students take. It also provides consistency of outcomes across all sections of core courses. Faculty are free to teach those goal values and competencies any way they find effective.

Accordingly, the assessment committee will conduct syllabi audits of all sections of the core courses every other year to check that the recommended values/competencies are evident in class learning objectives and in the content the course covers. In the alternate years, the assessment committee will conduct syllabi audits of select track courses or elective courses to ascertain how students' exposure to the values and competencies is supplemented beyond the core courses.

2. **Alumni Survey responses** supplied by Ohio University (indirect measure)

There is no better way to measure success than to seek input from alumni. We will continue to gather data annually from the Office of Institutional Research (OIR).

Each year, OIR administers a survey to alumni 12 to 15 months after graduation that gleans data about employment status, job satisfaction, and academic program satisfaction data. Items asking alumni about their perceptions of mastery on the 12 values and competencies are also included in the questionnaire, and responses will be forwarded to the assessment committee for analysis yearly.

3. **Tracking alums using social media** (indirect measure)

This initiative, carried out with the help of student workers at the front desk in the journalism suite, gives us timely feedback on where our students are employed after graduation. This measure gives us fast feedback and enables us to track where our graduates are moving over time. This central repository is available for all faculty members and is used to update our monitors in the journalism suite. Data on the most recent graduating class will be forwarded to the faculty for analysis yearly.

4. **Student Competitions** (indirect measure)

We want our students to be able to compete regionally and nationally, and this is an excellent means to evaluate learning (application). The competitions in which our students compete include the National Student Advertising Competition, Hearst Journalism Awards, SPJ Mark of Excellence Awards, Ohio AP Broadcast Awards, the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Emmy Awards, and the Public Relations Society of America Teahan Awards, among others. Plus, our students compete for many national internships, scholarships and fellowships. Compiling this data over time will assist in determining effectiveness of instruction through outside evaluation of student work in comparison with students across the country. Through the school's Contest Committee, the Assessment Committee will provide yearly lists of student awards.

5. **Minors and certificate participation** supplied by assistant dean for student success (indirect measure)

Our school offers two minors (Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations) and one certificate (Podcasting) to all Ohio University students. Gauging campus-wide enrollment in these endeavors gives us insight as to how non-journalism students perceive the value of our program's academic offerings. Equally important, this measure will apply findings from recent syllabi audits to core courses in the respective minors and certificates for annual analysis to verify the curriculum's learning outcomes align with our assessment measures.

Direct Measures

1. **Employer Internship Performance Evaluations** (direct measure)

Every journalism student is required to participate in at least one advisor-approved internship. To fulfill this requirement, students must have their internship supervisor complete an evaluation form that includes assessments of students' writing, critical thinking, and knowledge of skills and concepts of their field. The evaluation forms will be aggregated at the end of each year as evidence of students' progress in those values and competencies.

2. **Freshmen/Senior Knowledge Survey** (direct measure)

To determine how well students achieve over time, a knowledge test will be administered to freshmen and seniors that will assess awareness and knowledge of many of the values and competencies. The test will examine basic journalism knowledge (ethics, law, history and First Amendment), and basic numerical and statistical concepts. The test will be administered in JOUR1010 each fall to all freshmen to establish baseline knowledge, and in the senior capstone courses, JOUR4860 Strategic Communication Capstone and JOUR4870 News and Information Capstone, fall and spring semesters. This will allow for longitudinal comparisons of students' learning over a four-year time period. The data from the knowledge tests will be analyzed yearly.

3. **Senior Capstone Project Review** (direct measure)

All journalism seniors take a capstone course in which they produce a major multimedia project that brings together the skills and concepts they have learned throughout their academic program (application). Each capstone professor is asked to have at least one industry professional review these projects and evaluate them for evidence of mastery of multiple values and competencies, including professional ethics, diversity, critical and creative thinking, writing and skill with tools and technologies of the profession. A uniform evaluation metric will be used to address those values/competencies, to which individual professors may add any additional evaluation items that are specific to their students' projects. After the professional evaluation is returned to the faculty member, they should submit a response to the committee that addresses their application of this feedback. The data from those professional evaluations will be aggregated and analyzed annually.

FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Assessment committee will prepare an annual report to the faculty at the beginning of fall semester with results of the analysis of data collected on the seven measures, and any recommendations for change if deficiencies are found in learning outcomes of the values/competencies. Those recommendations would be discussed by the full faculty and/or assigned to the appropriate committee (i.e. curriculum, technology, contest, or ad hoc) for an action plan if needed.

TIMELINE

1. *Syllabi Audit*

Data Collection—Fall and Spring semester by assessment committee, odd years core courses, even years track or elective courses

Analysis—Semester after data collection

Recommendations—Fall semester with Assessment Committee annual report

2. *Alumni Surveys*

Data Collection—Fall and Spring semester by Office of Institutional Research

Analysis— Check in Spring and Fall semesters when data is released.

Recommendations—Fall semester with Assessment Committee annual report

3. *Tracking Grads*

Data collection - Year round

Analysis – Spring and Summer

Recommendations – Fall semester with Assessment Committee annual report

4. *Student Competitions*

Data Collection—Fall and Spring semesters by contest committee and front office

Analysis—Compilation of list by academic year's end

Recommendations—Fall semester from Contest Committee, Assessment Committee annual report

5. *Employer Internship Performance Evaluations*

Data Collection—Fall, Spring and Summer semesters by students interning (front office compiles)

Analysis—Fall or Spring semester by Assessment Committee

Recommendations—Fall semester with Assessment Committee annual report

6. *Freshmen/Senior Knowledge Test*

Data Collection—Fall and Spring semesters by faculty teaching JOUR1010 and JOUR4860/JOUR4870

Analysis—Spring semester by Assessment Committee

Recommendations—Fall semester with Assessment Committee annual report

7. *Senior Capstone Project Review*

Data Collection—Fall and Spring semesters by faculty teaching JOUR4860/JOUR4870

Analysis—Spring semester and summer by Assessment Committee

Recommendations—Fall semester with Assessment Committee annual report