



## Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) Report for Non-Accredited Programs

(updated 9/19/23)

Program Type: **Non-Accredited Program**

Program Name: Communication Studies

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Review Cycle:

- Even Year
- Odd Year

Review Round:

- Round A** (Associate Dean review)
- Round B** (Associate Dean + VPAA review)

All SLO reports are archived here: <https://www.eiu.edu/assess/majorassessment.php>

DUE: **October 15<sup>th</sup>** to your Associate Dean or designee

Each academic program is expected to prepare a Summary of the Assessment Data by Student Learning Outcome. This summary may take the form of a chart or other means of presentation that describes the annual data collected, when it is collected, in which course(s), through which assignment or activity, and by whom. This summary should clearly indicate what the program seeks to discover in its students' learning. The summary should correspond to the record-keeping documents maintained by the academic program.

Program Name: Communication Studies

Please list all of the student learning outcomes for your program as articulated in the assessment plan.

1. Students will acquire communication studies disciplinary knowledge. This includes, an understanding of the discipline and its central questions, as well as the ability to apply communication theories and engage in communication inquiry.
2. Students will also improve their critical thinking skills. This includes developing critical questioning skills, and learning to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize data in a variety of contexts.
3. Students will be able to create and implement message strategies in a diverse range of contexts, which includes an emphasis on writing and speaking.
4. Students will cultivate a sense of social and ethical responsibility, and multicultural sensitivity.

#### PART 1. OVERVIEW OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND MEASURES

Student Learning Outcome (SLO)	What <b>measures and instruments</b> are you using? This could be an oral or written exam, a regularly assigned paper, a portfolio—administered early and later in coursework.	How are you using this info to improve student learning? What are you hoping to learn from your data? Include <b>target score(s) and results</b> , and specify whether these were met, not met, or partially met for each instrument.	Does your SLO correspond to an <b>undergraduate learning goal (ULG)</b> : writing, speaking, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, responsible citizenship?
1	CMN 4680 debuted in SP24. Senior capstone project for traditional degrees; CMN 4950 Workplace Relationships; Final project for students in the Communication in Organizations online degree	The portfolios and final projects will be assessed by the instructors for the courses. The goal is for the average student to be assessed as at least minimally competent (60%) according to the rubric to be established by the Assessment Coordinator and approved by the faculty. The	NA

	<p>program. In both programs, the final project will be assessed for disciplinary fluency using rubrics developed by the Assessment Coordinator and approved by the faculty.</p>	<p>trend should be to improve competency for an average of highly competent (80%+).</p> <p>CMN 4680: Communication Capstone, the culminating on-campus experience for Communication Studies seniors, required a portfolio wherein disciplinary knowledge could be assessed. The course also required an in-class presentation and a public poster session. Assessment of the portfolio project revealed class average for critical thinking of 3.41, writing 3.65, and speaking and listening 3.60.</p> <p>CMN 4950: Workplace Relationships, the culminating on-line experience for Communication in Organization seniors, required a final project that was a case study seminar paper. There was no presentation element for this assignment. Assessment of the project revealed class average for critical thinking of 3.04, and writing of 2.77.</p>	
2	<p>In order to assess critical thinking, all core classes, and a representative sampling of classes across the curriculum, will be assessed by the instructors using a critical thinking rubric approved by the faculty.</p>	<p>Data was gathered specific to CMN core courses (e.g., CMN 2010, 2040, 3000, 3100, 3220, 3903, &amp; 4680). The data are encouraging. In the area of CT, core courses averaged 3.36, which is the equivalent of competence for 3000-level classes.</p> <p>Moreover, the rubric scores for critical thinking were competent across all class levels. However, in our last report, a trend was observed that has been discussed with the faculty and will continue to be monitored. The 2000-level classes scored marginally higher in critical thinking than did the 3000 and 4000-level. The 2000-level courses averaged 3.39, the 3000-level classes averaged 3.29, and the 4000-level averaged 3.22. It is concerning to see 4000-level classes not achieve highly-competent, even though the margin of difference is small. One contributing issue is that one of the 2000-level classes is Argumentation &amp; Critical Thinking leading to more direct instruction in critical thinking. More implementation of direct</p>	CT

		instruction in upper division courses has been discussed with the faculty teaching these courses.	
3	<p>In order to assess <i>general speaking and writing</i>, all core classes, and a representative sampling of classes across the curriculum, will be assessed by the instructors using speaking rubrics and writing rubrics that have been approved by the faculty. In addition, student assignments across the curriculum will be evaluated to specifically measure written and spoken message creation.</p> <p>In order to assess students' <i>ability to create and implement diverse message strategies</i>, seniors enrolled in the face-to-face and online capstone courses will complete the Communication Flexibility Measure in an online survey. The competency levels on the Communication Flexibility Measure are (on a 5-point scale).</p>	<p>The rubric scores for courses by class level are as follows:</p> <p>Speaking: 2000-level 3.41; 3000-level 3.45; 4000-level 3.36. The results for 2000-level classes exceeded expectations, while 3000 and 4000-level classes fell marginally short. While we would like the averages for upper division courses to be higher, there are several mitigating factors. First, the averages across all course levels are higher than our last report, which may be attributed to relaxed restrictions after COVID where students are becoming more comfortable with public speaking. Second, course offerings for 4000-level courses tend to be low, and with a mix of face-to-face and online courses. Presentations in online courses are rare, which skews the numbers lower for speaking.</p> <p>Writing: 2000-level 3.44; 3000-level 3.16; 4000-level 3.35. The results for 2000-level courses exceed expectations, 3000-level meets expectations, and 4000-level fall a bit below expectations. While we are pleased that students across all levels achieve competence in this area, it is still our goal for 4000-level students to be highly competent.</p> <p>While our speaking and writing for courses overall were not where we hoped they would be for upper-division courses, it is worthy of mention that, again, our core courses are exceeding expectations. Our core average for writing is 3.52 and for speaking and listening it is 3.50. Writing is meeting our goal of competent for 3000-level, and speaking is surpassing our goal for 3000-level. We are pleased with this</p>	SW

		<p>outcome, considering core courses are comprised of 2000, 3000, and 4000-level courses.</p> <p>The Communication in Organizations capstone class reported an average of 2.77 for writing, which does not meet our goal for this course. It is worthy of note that this course was recently revised from 4720 to 4950, and the assignments are still being adapted to meet higher expectations.</p> <p>Seniors in the face-to-face capstone course (CMN 4680) taking the Communication Flexibility survey should average a score of at least minimally competent (2.50-3.49). The average score in this measure was 3.41. We would like this score to be considerably higher. The faculty have discussed this score and agree that it does not reflect real world conditions. The students taking CMN 4680 in the spring of 2024 were, overall, high performing. We believe the assessing instrument itself is inadequate for what it is meant to measure and needs to be revised. This project will be undertaken before the survey is issued again in late spring 2025. Once the survey is revised, it will also be offered to the students taking CMN 4950, the online capstone course.</p>	
4	In order to assess social and ethical responsibility, each year seniors in the capstone courses will complete the Social and Professional Ethics Measure and the Multicultural Sensitivity Scale in an online survey. The competency levels are (on a 5-point scale)	Seniors in the capstone courses taking the Social and Professional Ethics Measure and the Multicultural Sensitivity Scale online survey should average a score of at least minimally competent (2.50-3.49). The results of the capstone survey showed an average of 4.06 for the Social and Professional Ethics Measure, and 4.34 for the Multicultural Sensitivity Scale. These numbers are on the upper end of competent, and we believe will increase with a revision of the instrument.	R

**PART 2. IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES BASED ON ASSESSMENT**

A. Provide a short summary (1-2 paragraphs) or bulleted list of any **curricular actions** (revisions or additions) that were approved over the past two years as a result of reflecting on the student learning outcomes data. Are there any additional future changes, revisions, or interventions proposed or still pending?

- Senior capstone course (CMN 4680) was taught for the first time in Spring 2024 and provides measurement in areas previously lacking (e.g., communication flexibility, ethics, and multicultural sensitivity).
- The survey that is used to assess the above is aged and in need of revision. It will be revised before it is administered again in Spring 2025.
- The current plan is to also administer the survey in the capstone course (CMN 4950) for the online degree program, Communication in Organizations.
- The faculty will meet for training in completing assessment instruments with focus on rubrics.

B. Provide a brief description or bulleted list of **any improvements (or declines)** observed/measured in student learning. Be sure to mention any intervention made that has not yet resulted in student improvement (if applicable).

- While there is improvement in senior ULGs as compared to sophomore and first year students, we still believe these measures need improvement. Faculty training in assessment instruments may help with outcomes.
- We believe that opportunities for speaking and writing need to increase, especially in upper-division courses and online courses. This is part of the discussion that will take place with faculty in this academic year.

**C. HISTORY OF DATA REVIEW OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS**

Please document annual faculty and committee engagement with the assessment process (such as the review of outcomes data, revisions/updates to assessment plan, and reaffirmation of SLOs).

Date of annual (or periodic) review	Individuals or groups who reviewed the assessment plan	Results of the review (i.e., reference proposed changes from any revised SLOs or from point 2.A. curricular actions)

8/2024	All faculty	Attention drawn to need to revise survey instrument to update the questions and make th
10/2024	Chair & Assistant Chair	Chair & Assistant Chair discussed the necessity of conducting faculty training in the use of rubrics for assessment, e.g., assessing students is not the same as assigning grades. Also discussed, the possibility of the capstone course for online students including a portfolio project that can be assessed in much the same way as the off-line capstone course.

**Dean Review and Feedback**

The Communication Studies BA continues to evolve in positive directions, particularly this cycle with assessment of the top level of the program as well as of its core requirements. Significant to this period was the debut of the capstone CMN 4680 course for traditional majors and the first couple years of CMN 4950: Workplace Relationships course (converted from CMN 4720) for the online Communication in Organizations degree. While still early in their history, these courses appear to be producing useful data for university learning goal assessment; scores were presented but contextualization via target scores/ranges would be helpful in this emerging area. Contextualization, however, is given for the other SLOs, and the data for critical thinking and speaking/writing within the core courses are encouraging indeed; they reveal significant increases in scores across nearly all course levels. Nevertheless, the Department feels that continued revision of the assessment instruments is needed, particularly in the capstone (4680), social and professional ethics, and multicultural sensitivity measures, and thus we commend them for always viewing assessment as a work-in-progress.

  
Dean or designee

12/6/24  
Date

**VPAA Office Review and Feedback (for "Round B" SLO report only)**

VPAA or designee

Date