Eastern Illinois University

Division of Journalism

School of Communication & Journalism

## Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan for the Major and Minor

Adopted by Journalism Faculty, April 23, 2004

(Revised Aug. 17, 2004; spring 2007; spring 2008; spring 2012; summer 2017; summer 2024)

The purpose of adopting and implementing this plan is three-fold: (1) to comply with the *Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning* adopted by Eastern Illinois University; (2) to comply with Standard Nine of the ACEJMC (Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication); and (3) to evaluate student competencies. This plan is designed to meet goals in both a quantifiable and systematic manner. It is intended to provide the division with feedback and information on an annual basis. The sources of feedback will be from students in both the major and minor where applicable, from alumni and from professionals who employ our students and graduates in internships and in full- and part-time positions. Assessment efforts will include both majors and minors in courses from the journalism core. No differentiation will be made between majors and minors in reporting assessment results. Assessment efforts in other courses, from internships and exit interviews will involve only majors.

# EIU Criteria for Assessment

In the academic setting, the term “assessment” generally is used to mean the evaluation of learning at the program level as distinguished from evaluation of individual students. Faculty members rightfully assert that they assess students through grading and testing. These evaluations, however, are restricted to learning that occurs within only one course. The curricula of academic programs encompass numerous courses as well as other learning experiences such as internships and practica. Students are expected, therefore, to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes from the combination of experiences in the entire curriculum. Assessment of student learning focuses on this “macro” level rather than on the “micro” level of individual students.

Assessment of student learning is an integral part of curriculum development and revision. It documents that learning has occurred and provides a rational basis for making purposeful changes to curriculum. While the goal of assessment is improvement of student learning, it also can be used for other purposes. Assessment information, for example, might indicate other changes needed in the academic program. Assessment data can be useful in recruiting students and faculty and in highlighting students’ strengths for potential employers. Moreover, assessment results may document how the program supports the mission of the university, the goals of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the expectations of other external bodies.

This plan for assessment of student learning at Eastern Illinois University is based on the principle of shared governance and is therefore faculty driven. Faculty, students, and administrators have been involved in the development of the plan and will continue to be involved in academic assessment. EIU’s plan creates a two-tiered process for assessment of student learning. Assessment is conducted at the *university* level to evaluate students’ achievement of university-wide student learning goals (general education student learning goals). Assessment is conducted at the *department/academic unit* level to evaluate students’ achievement of the learning goals of the academic programs (majors and minors).

Assessment of student learning is a continuous and dynamic process. This process can be described as a series of steps. As one cycle of steps is completed, another cycle begins. The process thus is recursive; each subsequent cycle is dependent on the information gathered in the previous cycle. Regardless of the type of learning program that is being assessed, the assessment process encompasses five general steps:

1. Identify student learning goals and objectives;
2. Select assessment measures to evaluate students’ achievement of those objectives;
3. Develop and implement procedures for systematic collection of assessment data using the selected assessment measures;
4. Analyze, summarize, and report the assessment data; and
5. Use the assessment data to improve student learning.

Once the cycle has been completed, the process begins anew: review and revise (if needed) the student learning goals and objectives, reevaluate and consider new methods to measure student learning; review and revise (if needed) the assessment procedures; and analyze and use the data to improve student learning.

# ACEJMC Criteria for Assessment

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. The Council evaluates curricula and instruction in the light of evidence and expects programs seeking accreditation to assess students’ attainment of professional values and competencies. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

1. Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
2. Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
3. Application: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

Student learning is evaluated to: (1) develop curriculum, improve teaching, and enhance student learning; (2) document what students have learned; and (3) provide accountability. Evaluation of student learning also enables the Council and its representatives to make fairer and more consistent judgments across units and programs.

# Goals of the Assessment Plan

1. To comply with university criteria regarding assessment.
2. To comply with ACEJMC criteria regarding assessment and accreditation.
3. To evaluate student learning outcomes and competencies on a program and division-specific basis.
4. To establish a systematic method of gathering data that enables evaluation on an annual basis.
5. To offer students and alumni regular, accessible vehicles for feedback and commentary.
6. To enable faculty to assess effectiveness of curriculum and other instructional methods.
7. To improve student learning.

### Student learning goals and objectives

Assessment will be based upon 10 core values and competencies established by the ACEJMC in its Accreditation Standard Two - Curriculum and Instruction:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that graduates of accredited programs be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

1. 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;

2. demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;

3. 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;

4.present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;

5. write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

6. demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;

7. apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;

8. effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;

9. critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;

10. apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

#### Assessment Measures

Most of the values and competencies are covered in several courses in the curriculum. However, to make assessment as manageable as possible, a limited number of courses have been chosen to assess each core value and competency. In most cases a course has been chosen because its primary focus revolves around a particular value and competency. Once courses and core values and competencies were matched, appropriate assessment measures were identified.

**1. 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:**

Courses used for assessment: JOU 2001 Journalism and Democracy

JOU 2091 Honors Journalism and Democracy

JOU 4420 Communication Law and Ethics

Measurement tools: (1) Selected exam/quiz questions from JOU 4420; (2) Alumni surveys; (3) Exit

surveys; (4) Assessment pre-test given to students in JOU 2001 and 2091 and

post-test given to students in JOU 4420

**2. demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications:**

Courses used for assessment: JOU 3940 History of American Journalism

JOU 2001 Journalism and Democracy

JOU 2091 Honors Journalism and Democracy

JOU 4420 Communication Law and Ethics

Measurement tools: (1) Selected exam/quiz questions from JOU 3940; (2) Selected questions from

the pre-test given to students in JOU 2001 and 2091 and post-test in JOU 4420; (3) Alumni surveys; (4) Exit interviews

**3. 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 context:**

Courses used for assessment: JOU 2001 Journalism and Democracy

JOU 2091 Honors Journalism and Democracy

JOU 3970 Race, Gender, and the Media

JOU 4420 Communication Law and Ethics

Measurement tools: (1) Selected exam/quiz questions from JOU 3970; (2) Selected questions from pre-test in

JOU 2001and 2091 and post-test in JOU 4420; (3) Internship evaluations; (4) Alumni

surveys; (5) Exit surveys

**4. present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies:**

Courses used for assessment:

JOU 2950 Introduction to Visual Communication

JOU 2902 Copy Editing and Design

JOU 3002 Introduction to Multimedia Journalism

JOU 3750 Social Media Engagement

Measurement tools: (1) Selected assessment assignments for JOU 2902, 2950, 3002 and 3750; (2) Internship

evaluations; (3) Alumni surveys; (4) Exit surveys

**5. write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes**

**they serve:**

Courses used for assessment: JOU 2101 News Reporting and Writing

JOU 3000 Advanced Reporting & Research

JOU 3610 Broadcast News

JOU 3750 Social Media Engagement

Measurement tools: (1) Standardized assessment assignments in the courses; (2) Internship evaluations; (3) Alumni surveys; (4) Exit surveys; (5) University Electronic Writing Portfolio scores

**6. demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness**

**and diversity:**

Courses used for assessment: JOU 2001 Journalism and Democracy

JOU 2091 Honors Journalism and Democracy

JOU 4420 Communication Law and Ethics

Measurement tools: (1) Ethics essay from JOU 4420; (2) Selected questions from pre-test in JOU 2001 and

2091 and post-test in JOU 4420; (3) Internship evaluations; (4) Alumni surveys; (5) Exit

surveys

**7. apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the**

**communication professionals in which they work:**

Courses used for assessment: JOU 2000 Fundamentals of News Gathering

JOU 2101 News Reporting & Writing

JOU 2950 Introduction to Visual Communication

JOU 3000 Advanced Reporting & Research

JOU 4420 Communication Law and Ethics

JOU 4730 Journalism Capstone Seminar

Measurement tools: (1) Selected standardized writing assessments in JOU 2101 and JOU 3000; (2) Selected

assessment assessments in JOU 2000, JOU 2950, JOU 4420, JOU 4730; (3) Internship

evaluations; (4) Alumni surveys; (5) Exit interviews

1. **effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts:**

Courses used for assessment: JOU 2101 News Reporting & Writing

JOU 3000 Advanced Reporting & Research

Measurement tools: (1) Math assessment tests given in JOU 2101 and JOU 3000; (2) Internship evaluations;

(3) Alumni surveys; (4) Exit surveys

**9.**  **critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical**

**correctness**:

Courses used for assessment: JOU 2101 News Reporting & Writing

JOU 2902 Copy Editing and Design

JOU 2950 Introduction to Visual Communication

Measurement tools: (1) Standardized assessment assignment in JOU 2902 and JOU 2950; (2) Style

assessment test in JOU 2101 and JOU 2902; (3) Internship evaluations; (4) Alumni

surveys; (5) Exit surveys

**10. apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.**

Courses used for assessment: JOU 2902 Copy Editing and Design

JOU 3002 Introduction to Multimedia Journalism

JOU 3750 Social Media Engagement

Measurement tools: (1) Standardized assessment assignments in the courses; (2) Internship evaluations; (3)

Alumni surveys; (4) Exit surveys

# Assessment Procedure

All journalism majors and minors will participate in assessment. Assessment efforts will focus on the major and minor together.

In courses where exam/quiz questions are to be used as a measurement tool, faculty will identify questions from exams that are applicable to a given core value and competency.

An evaluation and analysis of a random sample of standardized assessment assignments placed on the assessment server will be used to assess student outcomes related to particular core values and competencies.

Internship surveys will be used to evaluate student performance and employer satisfaction regarding core values and competencies.

Alumni surveys will be used to gather information on whether alumni think their education and experiences at the university properly prepared them for the workplace and for life with emphasis on particular core values and competencies.

Exit interviews will be used to allow graduating seniors to give feedback on whether they believe they are leaving the program with an awareness and understanding of core values and whether they have gained certain competencies.

###### Collection, analysis and reporting of assessment data

Faculty teaching courses in which exam questions are to be used for assessment will report results of the applicable questions each semester to the division assessment coordinator. Reporting deadlines: One week after the end of the fall and spring semesters.

The division internship coordinators will report results of applicable internship survey questions to the division assessment coordinator.

The school chair will report applicable alumni survey results annually to the division assessment coordinator.

The department chair will report applicable data from exit interviews twice a year to the department assessment coordinator.

Standardized Assessment Assignments Procedure:

Each journalism course that has a standardized assessment assignment in the assessment plan will have a folder on the department assessment server. Instructors in these courses will be responsible for assigning, collecting and storing the standardized assessment assignment on the server. Deadline: One week after the end of the fall and spring semesters.

In the summertime every three years, a group of outside evaluators, made up of professional journalists and journalism educators from other universities, will be brought to campus to evaluate a random sample of 30 percent of the standardized assessment assignments using designated rubrics for the core values/competencies identified for each course.

The division assessment coordinator will analyze all assessment data and write reports to the university and to share with journalism faculty.

Data from the assessment report will be used to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and other instructional methods, and will be used to improve student learning. After analyzing the assessment data, the division Assessment Committee will report to the division Curriculum Committee any proposed curriculum changes.

This report was prepared by the division assessment coordinator, Ensung Kim.

Addendum 1: Journalism Courses being used for assessment

**Departmental assessment is based upon the following 10 objectives, or core values and competencies:**

1. 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;

2. demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;

3. 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;

4. present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;

5. write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professionals, audiences and purposes they serve;

6. demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;

7. apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;

8. effectively and correctly apply basic numeral and statistical concepts;

9. critically evaluate their own work and that of others

for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style

and grammatical correctness;

10. apply tools and technologies appropriate for the

communications professions in which they work.

**Courses in which exam/quiz questions are to be used for assessment:**

JOU 3940 – Objective 2

JOU 2950 – Objective 4

JOU 3970 – Objectives 3

JOU 4420 – Objectives 6 and 7

**Courses in which assessment assignments are to be used for assessment:**

JOU 2000 – Objective 7

JOU 2101 – Objectives 5, 7, 8 and 9

JOU 2902 – Objective 4, 9 and 10

JOU 2950 – Objectives 4, 7 and 9

JOU 3000 – Objectives 5, 7 and 8

JOU 3002 – Objectives 4 and 10

JOU 3610 – Objectives 5

JOU 3750 – Objectives 4, 5 and 10

JOU 4401 – Objectives 4, 5, and 10

JOU 4730 – Objective 7

**Courses in which math assessment test is to be used for assessment:**

JOU 2101 – Objective 8

JOU 3000 – Objective 8

**Courses in which style assessment test or assignment is to be used for assessment:**

JOU 2101 – Objective 9

JOU 2902 – Objective 9

**Courses in which pre-test/post-test is to be used for assessment:**

JOU 2001 – Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 6

JOU 2091 – Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 6

JOU 4420 – Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 6

**Other assessment measurements and their applicable core values:**

Exit surveys – Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Internship evaluations (when available) – Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

# Addendum 2: Assessment responsibilities for individual faculty members

**JOU 2000 Fundamentals of News Gathering**

1. Submit selected assignment to server (Obj. 7)

# JOU 2001 Journalism and Democracy

1. Administer the journalism assessment pre-test (Objs. 1, 2, 3, 6)

# JOU 2091 Honors Journalism and Democracy

1. Administer the journalism assessment pre-test (Objs. 1, 2, 3, 6)

# JOU 2101 News Reporting & Writing

1. Submit standardized assessment writing assignment (Objs. 5, 7)

2. Administer the math assessment test (Obj. 8)

3. Administer the style assessment test (Obj. 9)

# JOU 2902 Copy Editing and Design

1. Submit standardized assessment assignment (Obj. 4, 9, 10)

# JOU 2950 Introduction to Visual Communication

1. Submit standardized assessment assignment (Objs. 4, 7, 9)

## JOU 3000 Advanced Reporting and Research

1. Submit standardized assessment writing assignment (Objs. 5, 7)

2. Administer the math assessment test (Obj. 8)

**JOU 3002 Introduction to Multimedia Journalism**

1. Submit standardized assessment assignment to server (Objs. 4, 10)

## JOU 3610 Broadcast News

1. Submit standardized assessment writing assignment (Obj. 5)

## JOU 3750 Social Media Engagement

1. Submit assessment assignment to server (Obj. 4, 5, 10)

**JOU 3940 History of American Journalism**

1. Submit results from selected exam/quiz questions (Obj. 2)

## JOU 3970 Race, Gender, and the Media

1. Submit results from selected exam/quiz questions (Objs. 2, 3)

## JOU 4401 Journalism Portfolio

1. Submit results from online portfolio (Objs. 4, 5, 10)

## JOU 4420 Communication Law & Ethics

1. Administer the ethics assessment essay exercise (Objs. 6, 7)

2. Administer the journalism assessment post-test (Objs. 1, 2, 3, 6)

**JOU 4730 Journalism Capstone Seminar**

1. Submit standardized assessment assignment (Obj. 7)