

Core Curriculum 5-Year Assessment Plan: Embedded Assessments for University Core B, and College Cores A and B

Introduction

As part of its charge, the Core Curriculum Advisory Committee (CCAC) is responsible for the development of an overall assessment plan for the Core Curriculum program at Radford University. A subcommittee of the full CCAC met on July 12th, 2010, to discuss details and specifics for assessment of the Core Curriculum Program. The assessment plan is slated to start in spring 2011 with pilot testing in University Core A. Simultaneously, planning will take place for assessment in two areas of University Core B: Natural Sciences and Mathematical Sciences.

Background: Program vs. Area Outcomes Assessment

The initial assessment plan for the Core Curriculum program will involve implementation of embedded assessment measures to determine the extent to which students in Radford University's Core Curriculum program are meeting learning outcomes, which relate to higher level learning competencies. Specific course content will be evaluated by the instructor in the manner he or she deems appropriate.

The University Core A program will be assessed via embedded student assignments that are required in five core courses (CORE 101, 102, 103, 201, and 202). Designated works will be collected and will be examined with the use of faculty-designed rubrics. The extent to which students are learning and meeting the established outcomes in these courses will be determined.

The remainder of the Core Curriculum program will be assessed according to methods developed by departments appropriate to the area outcomes covered in their courses. The faculty will collect student responses as specified in their plan and report data to the Office of Academic Assessment and CCAC. The CCAC will examine all of the findings and submit a report on the state of the Core Curriculum to the Faculty Senate and the Provost according to the timeline in Table 1.

Why Do We Assess Student Learning in Core Curriculum courses?

Core curriculum or general education assessment is required by our regional accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV). Moreover, assessing the extent to which students are learning what we say they are learning is a natural part of the teaching-learning process and necessary for institutions to improve their programs and change with the times.

Accreditation and Other Requirements

SACS

As part our regional accreditation, SACS requires that we assess our core curriculum program (i.e., general education). The SACS Comprehensive Standards pertaining to general education include the following:

3.3.1 This institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational program and its administration and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

3.4.10 The institution defines and published general education requirements for its undergraduate programs and major program requirements for all its programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level [as opposed to high school-level] competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that a graduate has attained those competencies.

In addition, SACS dictates where the responsibility of the assessment of general education lies:

3.4.12 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty.

SCHEV

SCHEV requires that state-institutions within Virginia measure and report student learning in six core competency areas: written communication, oral communication, critical thinking, technology/information literacy, scientific reasoning, and quantitative reasoning. Institutions will submit a report outlining plans for assessment of these areas over six years, including how and when results will be reported to SCHEV. Institutions determine learning outcomes for each area and choose whether or not to assess outcomes using a value-added or competency model.

Procedure to Encompass All Requirements for State Mandates and Regional Accreditation

The assessment of general education is required by SACS in order for institutions to meet their reaccreditation requirements. In addition, SCHEV requires assessment of core competencies in the six areas stated above. Radford University is able to utilize the same assessment measures and procedures to meet both SACS and SCHEV requirements.

Assessment Guidelines

This plan relies upon direct, course-embedded methods to assess learning outcomes. Departments will develop assessment measures that are designed specifically for the course and are embedded as part of the course. The following contains an explanation of different aspects of the course-embedded assessment techniques and a summary concludes this section.

Students' learning must be directly assessed. A direct assessment is an objective measure of achievement of learning outcomes. The most common forms of direct assessments are rubric oriented and objective test items.

Rubric Oriented Embedded Assessments

Rubric-oriented assessments describe different levels of a students' performance on learning outcomes. Student work that is especially suited to assessment by rubric may include essays, portfolios, short answers, speeches, performances, research projects, and lab assignments. Rubric examples can be obtained from the Office of Academic Assessment.

Objective Test Items

Objective test items may be multiple choice, fill-in the blank, matching, or identification. Objective test items must be consistent with the cognitive level stated in the learning outcome. At a minimum, three items should be utilized to measure each learning outcome. Examples of objective test items can be obtained from the Office of Academic Assessment.

Stages of Assessment

The process for completing the Core Curriculum Assessment includes the following steps. (See Appendix A for specific dates).

Stage 1: A plan for each course will be submitted to CCAC

A plan for each course will be submitted to CCAC. This plan will include information about the course (see Appendix B). If using objective test measure, include sample test questions and scoring key. If using rubric-oriented assessment include a description of the assignment and the rubric used for scoring.

Stage 2: CCAC reviews assessment plans

In the second stage of the assessment the CCAC will review the plan. Modifications may be suggested when appropriate.

Stage 3: Data is collected and submitted to CCAC

Departments, schools, and programs will collect and submit assessment data to CCAC as specified in Appendix C.

Stage 4: CCAC evaluates data and submits an area report

The Office of Academic Assessment will provide a summary report to the CCAC. The CCAC will evaluate the data, generate a report for each area, and present this information to university stakeholders. This report will include recommendations for area improvement based upon assessment findings.

Stage 5: Improvements are made based on assessment findings

Departments, schools, and programs will address recommendations for improving student learning based upon assessment findings.

Stage 6: Core Curriculum Final Report is submitted

Upon completion of one full cycle of assessment, university-wide discussions will be held to determine if any overall structural changes need to be made to the Core Curriculum program.

Other Requirements for Assessment

There are several other requirements for course embedded assessment. First, assessment measures must be required or graded components of the course so they are taken seriously. Second, all learning outcomes for the area must be assessed. If a course falls within more than one area, all outcomes in both areas needs to be assessed. Third, the same assessment method must be used across all sections of a course.

What Will Not Be Done with Assessment Findings

Assessment results are not intended to be used:

- To evaluate any faculty member in regards to their teaching
- For promotion or tenure decisions
- For evaluation of any School or Department

The goal of the assessment program is to examine the Core Curriculum program and to determine if students are learning what Radford University deems important.

Table 1. Timeline for Entire Core Curriculum Program (See Appendix A for specific dates for Area Requirements)

	<u>2010-2011</u>	<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>	<u>2014-2015</u>	<u>2015-2016</u>
University Core A	Pilot testing	Implement	Implement	Draft Report	Final / Plan revision	Implement
Mathematical Sciences	Plan Development	Implement	Report draft		Final / Plan revision	Implement
Natural Sciences	Plan Development	Implement	Report draft		Final / Plan revision	Implement
Humanities		Plan Development	Implement	Report draft	Final	Plan revision
Visual and Performing Arts		Plan Development	Implement	Report draft	Final	Plan revision
Social and Behavioral Sciences		Plan Development	Implement	Report draft	Final	Plan revision
US Perspectives			Plan Development	Implement	Final	
Global Perspectives			Plan Development	Implement	Final	
Foreign Languages			Plan Development	Implement	Final	
Health and Wellness			Plan Development	Implement	Final	

Appendix A: Specific Dates for Area Requirements (2010-2011 to 2015-2016)

Assessment Plan Timeline for Mathematical and Natural Sciences

Stage 1: Departments within the Mathematical and Natural Sciences will submit plans to CCAC by **March 31st, 2011**.

Stage 2: The CCAC will respond to the assessment plans by **April 15th, 2011**. Revisions of plans must be resubmitted in a timely manner.

Stage 3: Departments and Schools will collect data in their Core Curriculum courses in the **Fall of 2011, Spring of 2012, and Summer of 2012**. Data from these courses will be submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment by **September 1st, 2012**.

Stage 4: CCAC submits a report to the Core area and other constituencies by **March 1st, 2013**.

Stage 5: CCAC will meet with the departments within the Area by **May 1st, 2013** to discuss the report. The Departments or Schools in the area will decide upon an avenue for area improvements and submit their suggestions to the CCAC by **November 1st, 2013**. The area will make course improvements and begin the planning for the next Core Curriculum Assessment Cycle to begin in **2014-2015** academic year.

Stage 6: Core Curriculum Final Report for all areas will be submitted to all constituencies by **March 1st, 2015**.

Assessment Plan Timeline for Humanities, Visual and Performing Arts, and Social and Behavioral Sciences

Stage 1: Departments will submit plans to CCAC by **October 1st, 2011**.

Stage 2: The CCAC will respond to departments by **February 1st, 2012**. Plan revisions will be submitted to the CCAC by **April 1st, 2012**.

Stage 3: Data collection will occur in the **Fall of 2012, Spring of 2013, and Summer of 2013** and data will be submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment by **September 1st, 2013**.

Stage 4: The CCAC submits a report to the Core area and other constituencies by **March 1st, 2014**.

Stage 5: CCAC will meet with the departments within the Area by **May 1st, 2014** to discuss the report. The Departments or Schools in the area will decide upon an avenue for area improvements and submit their suggestions to the CCAC by **November 1st, 2014**. The area will make course improvements and begin the planning for the next Core Curriculum Assessment Cycle to begin in **2015-2016** academic year.

Stage 6: Core Curriculum Final Report for all areas will be submitted to all constituencies by **March 1st, 2015**.

Assessment Plan Timeline for US Perspectives, Global Perspectives, Foreign Languages, and Health and Wellness

Stage 1: Departments will submit plans to CCAC by **October 1st, 2012**.

Stage 2: The CCAC will respond to departments by **February 1st, 2013**. Plan revisions will be submitted to the CCAC by **April 1st, 2013**.

Stage 3: Data collection will occur in the **Fall of 2013, Spring of 2014, and Summer of 2014** and data will be submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment by **September 1st, 2014**.

Stage 4: The CCAC submits a report to the Core area and other constituencies by **December 15th, 2014**.

Stage 5: CCAC will meet with the departments within the Area by **May 1st, 2015** to discuss the report. The Departments or Schools in the area will decide upon an avenue for area improvements and submit their suggestions

to the CCAC by *November 1st, 2015*. The area will make course improvements and begin the planning for the next Core Curriculum Assessment Cycle to begin in *2016-2017* academic year.

Stage 6: Core Curriculum Final Report for all areas will be submitted to all constituencies by *March 1st, 2015*.

Appendix B: Detailed Assessment Plan Example as it should be submitted by Department or School

Radford University: Core Curriculum Assessment Plan

Course Title and Number: _____ Date: _____

Department Contact Person* (Name, Email, and Phone Number):

This course is approved for core curriculum credit in: (Check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematical Sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> US Perspectives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Perspectives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Languages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visual and Performing Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Wellness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social and Behavioral Science | |

** Note: If a course is approved for core curriculum credit in more than one area, an assessment plan must be completed for each area when the area comes under review*

For the past three semesters in which this course was taught please give the following pieces of information:

	<u>Semester / Year</u>	<u>Number of Sections</u>	<u>Estimated Number of Students</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

Please provide the following information regarding the assessment plan for the Core Curriculum course designated above. (PLEASE NOTE: All outcomes for an area must be assessed.)

Example: Social and Behavioral Science Course 100

Outcome 1: Explain the social or cultural factors that shape individuals' ideas and behaviors.

- A. How will you be assessing students on this outcome?
- Short answer / essay
 - Objective items (multiple choice, fill-in the blank, etc.)
 - Other: Please explain in the space provide below

- B. Please provide / attach the questions or assignments **you will be using** to assess the students. Be sure to include the correct answers to the objectives questions and the rubric being used to evaluate.
- C. ***IF***, you have selected to use a different methodology please provide a detailed description of what you will be doing and examples or assignments or assessment items.

Outcome 2: Explain how individual and collective behaviors shape societies and cultures.

- A. How will you be assessing students on this outcome?
- Short answer / essay
 - Objective items (multiple choice, fill-in the blank, etc.)
 - Other: Please explain in the space provide below

- B. Please provide / attach the questions or assignments **you will be using** to assess the students. Be sure to include the correct answers to the objectives questions and the rubric being used to evaluate.
- C. **IF**, you have selected to use a different methodology please provide a detailed description of what you will be doing and examples or assignments or assessment items.

Outcome 3: Explain social or behavioral science concepts.

- A. How will you be assessing students on this outcome?
 - Short answer / essay
 - Objective items (multiple choice, fill-in the blank, etc.)
 - Other: Please explain in the space provide below

- B. Please provide / attach the questions or assignments **you will be using** to assess the students. Be sure to include the correct answers to the objectives questions and the rubric being used to evaluate.
- C. **IF**, you have selected to use a different methodology please provide a detailed description of what you will be doing and examples or assignments or assessment items.

Outcome 4: Use social or behavioral science concepts to interpret real-world problems, including the underlying origins of such problems.

- A. How will you be assessing students on this outcome?
 - Short answer / essay
 - Objective items (multiple choice, fill-in the blank, etc.)
 - Other: Please explain in the space provide below

- B. Please provide / attach the questions or assignments **you will be using** to assess the students. Be sure to include the correct answers to the objectives questions and the rubric being used to evaluate.
- C. **IF**, you have selected to use a different methodology please provide a detailed description of what you will be doing and examples or assignments or assessment items.

