

2014 Core Curriculum Texas Woman's University Core Assessment Plan

"The assessment of the Core Curriculum is an evaluation of the attainment of the Core Objectives."

TWU's assessment plan for assessment of the Core Objectives includes the following:

I. **Assessment Methods**

As required by THECB, assessment will occur at the *institutional level*. All Core Objectives will be assessed using the same methodology. All assessment measures will be course-embedded in order to assess *authentic* performance of students in relation to each of the six Core Objectives. Examples of potential assessment measures will include papers, projects, labs, performances, presentations, etc. All assessments will be direct measures of assessment.

The AAC&U VALUE Rubrics or modified versions of the same (to reflect unique TWU needs) will be used to assess student performance on the Core Objectives. Training and calibration/norming sessions will be conducted for those course instructors selected for Core Assessment in each designated year.

Academic units (and respective course instructors) with designated Core courses, must be willing to assess students on the required Core Objectives of the Foundational Component Area (FCA) according to a rotational schedule developed and maintained by Academic Assessment and Institutional Research and Data Management (IRDM) via one or more course-embedded assignments that address the traits for each of the 6 Core Objectives.

During each academic year we will assess two different Core Objectives. Thus, all six core objectives will be assessed on a three-year cycle. This three-year cycle of assessment will allow for changes during the 10-year period, prior to the first official report to the THECB, to improve student performance based on analysis of the Core Objectives.

Sampling Design

Since each core course belongs to only one Foundational Component Area (FCA), the FCA creates a natural stratification of courses for each core objective. Consequently, the analysis of any one Core Objective will be based on taking a representative sample of courses across the FCA. In particular, the sampling design is a *stratified cluster sampling*, where each course selected contains a cluster of students that will be assessed on a particular Core Objective.


Sample size

The sample size needed to assess a particular Core Objective will first rely on estimating the typical total number of students who take the courses, across all the FCAs, for which that Core Objective is required. Knowing this estimated total will allow us to determine the appropriate sample size needed to conduct an analysis, assuming the analysis involves proportions, on the Core Objective with a margin of error in the range of $\pm 3.5\%$ to $\pm 5\%$.

Sampling Strata to Select a Representative Sample to Assess Each Core Objective

Sampling Strata (Foundational Component Area)	Core Objectives					
	CT	COM	EQS	TW	PR	SR
Communication	X	X		X	X	
Mathematics	X	X	X			
Life and Physical Sciences	X	X	X	X		
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	X	X			X	X
Creative Arts	X	X		X		X
American History	X	X			X	X
Government/Political Science	X	X			X	X
Social and Behavioral Science	X	X	X			X

New Core Assessment Cycle

Core Objectives Assessment Cycle	Year 1 2014-15	Year 2 2015-16	Year 3 2016-17	Year 4 2017-18	Year 5 2018-19	Year 6 2019-20	Year 7 2020-21	Year 8 2021-22	Year 9 2022-23	Year 10 2023-24
Critical Thinking Skills	Pilot 	X			X			X		
Communication Skills		X			X			X		
Empirical and Quantitative Skills			X			X			X	
Teamwork			X			X			X	
Personal Responsibility				X			X			X
Social Responsibility				X			X			X

II. Criteria/Targets

The VALUE Rubrics (as designed or TWU modified) will be used as a common assessment tool (scoring mechanism) to assess authentic student performance specific to each Core Objective across the courses that constitute the Core.

The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) *Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education* (VALUE) rubrics are designed to assess undergraduate students on the following skill sets: *Intellectual and Practical Skills, Personal and Social Responsibility, and Integrative and Applied Learning*. The rubrics allow for cross-disciplinary assessment of student performance on authentic assessment measures such as papers, projects, performances, presentations, etc. According to AAC&U, the rubrics are valid and reliable for use at the undergraduate level across disciplines (often used in the assessment of general education programs); and therefore, provide an appropriate scoring mechanism for the six Core Objectives. Furthermore, TWU has recently become a member of LEAP-Texas which clearly advocates the same skill set as those represented in the Core Objectives.

Currently, no nationally established benchmarks are available for the VALUE Rubrics. Projects are underway that will establish external benchmarks that can be used by colleges and universities once funding to support the same is established.

Two target indicators will be used to determine the appropriate level of attainment on each Core Objective. They are defined as follows:

- **Target Indicator 1: Criterion for Success Target** - The *acceptable level of individual student performance* for each selected assessment measure. Specifically, a score of 2.0 on the 4-point VALUE Rubric/TWU modified rubric for each trait/element assessed.
- **Target Indicator 2: Realistic Target** – The *percentage of students assessed who achieve* the set *criterion for success* for each selected assessment measure. Specifically, 65% of students assessed will achieve the set *criterion for success*.

Currently, both target indicators are used as a part of our degree and certificate program student learning outcomes assessment plans and reports.

Both target indicators are TWU's "best guesstimates" of where we should expect students to score on assessments specific to the Core Objectives. All Core Objectives will be analyzed and interpreted on the basis of the target indicators as initially established. Until a few rounds of data are available, we will not be able to determine if the target indicators are appropriate as initially developed. Subsequently,

we will re-assess our established target indicators and adjust as appropriate after the first three years of implementation. If our initial target indicators reach 90% attainment for two consecutive assessment cycles, we will raise Target Indicator 1, *Criterion for Success*, to a score of 3 on the 4-point VALUE Rubric/TWU modified rubric.

III. Analysis

A. Assessment and Analysis of Student Performance Specific to Core Objectives:

Selected Core course faculty will be designated to assess student performance on the targeted Core Objectives for a particular year, based on an authentic assessment (paper, project, performance, presentation, etc.) embedded within the course. Faculty and/or designated rater(s) will assess the students using the VALUE rubric or modified TWU version of the rubric. Student performance data on the designated Core Objectives (based on assessment-rotation cycle) will be submitted to Institutional Research & Data Management. Completed rubrics will include the following information in order to be able to analyze and interpret the data accurately:

- Core course number, prefix, and title
- Student ID number
- Semester/year assessed
- Rater information (FT faculty, adjunct, GTA, or rater(s) as designated by the program)

Data will be disaggregated as appropriate and will be analyzed to compare FTIC and Transfer cohorts as a whole, across colleges and departments. In addition, these analyses can include cohort comparison by number of completed hours, ethnicity, full-time/part-time, and majors.

Once data are analyzed, the results will be shared with the TWU Undergraduate Council Assessment Committee, Undergraduate Council, Academic Units, and the TWU Academic Council for input, interpretation, and possible “actions for improvement”. Subsequently, an action to improve student learning specific to Core Objectives assessed will be developed, implemented, and tracked over time to discern progress toward improvement on the Core Objectives.

B. Assessment and Analysis of the TWU Core Assessment System:

The TWU Core Assessment Plan will be assessed yearly, primarily with an internal review of administration, processes, and results obtained. Components to be assessed will include:

- Assessment cycle rotation

- Survey of Core course instructors (those who assessed student performance on one or more Core Objectives) and other designated raters
- Undergraduate Council Assessment Committee
- Comparison against other benchmarking indicators of quality assessment systems

If available, a peer assessment and evaluation of the TWU Core Assessment System will be conducted using an external peer evaluator from a comparable, representative institution.

IV. Actions and Follow-up

Assessment and Analysis of Student Performance Specific to Core Objectives:

Based on analysis and interpretation of the results, changes or actions for improvement will be systematically implemented as appropriate to improve student performance relative to the Core Objectives. Results will be tracked over time to determine if actions taken have positively impacted student performance. If results do not provide verification of the same, new actions will be implemented.

Assessment and Analysis of the TWU Core Assessment System: Based on data gathered/results and interpretation, changes/actions for improvement will be implemented to provide for improvement in the current system as it relates to administration, implementation, processes, and results.

V. Concluding Remarks:

Institutional Improvement at TWU is focused on not being satisfied with current performance. TWU strives for *continuous improvement* in student learning and related processes/initiatives over time.