



PART II, STANDARD 9. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES



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Executive Summary

The SCJ's history of assessment of student learning goes back to the mid-1990s, when the School first introduced evaluation forms and ratings sheets designed to measure success in its writing, capstone and internship programs. In 1999, FIU and the SCJ were required by the State of Florida to introduce a formal process for assessing student learning. In 2004, the Board of Governors further formalized the process by establishing the [Academic Learning Compact](#), a set of specific measures for written and oral communication, critical thinking, and discipline-specific competencies.

Since the 2000s, the SCJ has been consistently assessing not only the indicators in the Academic Learning Compact, but also its discipline-specific competencies and skills as defined by ACEJMC. The SCJ's ability to rapidly update, change and expand its curriculum is at the heart of the assessment process. Over the accrediting cycle, the School has refined and expanded its assessment measures. The new assessment plan is applied to both the graduate and undergraduate programs and pays special attention to:

- Pedagogical approaches and contexts for achieving ACEJMC outcomes;
- Effectiveness of the School's courses in covering ACEJMC values and competencies; and
- Measurement of student learning.

Besides assessing these items, direct and indirect measures were designed to guide the School in implementing changes in its curriculum and delivery in ways that help the SCJ achieve established student learning outcomes. Both departments use broad student learning outcomes that are tailored to each major as described below.

1) Critical Thinking

All SCJ students will demonstrate the ability to think critically, creatively and independently in their own work and about the work of others.

2) Oral and Written Communication Skills

A) Students will demonstrate competency in basic writing strategies, including correct use of grammar, style, and punctuation.

B) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the central concepts of oral communications:

- Content: Subject matter information provided clearly
- Delivery: Structure of presentation delivered in an effective manner

C) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the central concepts of the field of communication and students will have to apply these theories in their visual and written presentations.

3) Content/Discipline Knowledge

A) PRAAC students will demonstrate an understanding of the central concepts of integrated communications strategy and tactics. These concepts will include:

- Conducting research and evaluating information
- Applying basic numerical and statistical concepts
- Applying tools and technologies for integrated marketing communications

B) Journalism + Media students will demonstrate an understanding of the central concepts of journalism and digital media. These concepts include:

- Conducting research and evaluating information
- Applying basic numerical and statistical concepts
- Applying tools and technologies for broadcast and online communications

C) All students in the SCJ will master knowledge in the five common core areas in the School curriculum:

- Writing Strategies (J + M) or Fundamentals of Written and Visual Communication
- Global Media And Society
- Mass Communications Law and Ethics
- Visual Design for Globalized Media
- Multimedia Production

4) Technology

All students in the SCJ will master technology skills necessary for digital media professionals gathered through laboratory course experiences in each discipline.

Additionally, SCJ students are assessed early in the semester to determine how well prerequisite classes prepared them for the capstone experience. Capstone faculty evaluate students using ACEJMC competencies as well as specific learning objectives for prerequisite classes. This assessment, combined with the assessment that comes with supervising and editing student work daily, generates important feedback that is used to improve the curriculum. Indirect measures employed by the School include surveys of graduating students and alumni, student awards, job placement, clients served, publication of student work, online metrics and live feed and podcast viewership.

Student Learning Outcomes and ACEJMC's 12 Professional Values and Competencies

The SCJ has integrated ACEJMC's 12 core values and competencies into its curriculum and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and uses them to evaluate curriculum and instruction.

1. Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
5. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
7. Think critically, creatively and independently;

8. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
9. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
10. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
11. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts; and
12. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

1. Provide a copy of the unit's written plan for assessment of student learning outcomes. This plan must include the dates of its adoption and of implementation of its components.

Department of Communication

[Link to the B.S. in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communication Assessment Overview](#)

[Link to the M.S. in Mass Communication \(On Campus\) Assessment Overview](#)

[Link to the M.S. in Mass Communication \(Online\) Assessment Overview](#)

Department of Journalism + Media

[Link to the B.S. in Digital Communication and Media, B.S. in Mass Communication Assessment Overview](#)

[Link to the M.S. in Communication Assessment Overview](#)

On February 15, 2005, the Florida Board of Governors mandated that the public universities in Florida develop an Academic Learning Compact (ALC) for each baccalaureate degree program they offer. The Compacts identify the expected core student learning outcomes for degree program graduates in the areas of communication skills, content/discipline knowledge and skills, and critical thinking skills. Students should acquire these skills and knowledge if they successfully follow the prescribed course of study in their declared major, and the Compacts will delineate what students are expected to know and be able to do upon successful completion of their degree program. [View ALC regulations.](#)

In compliance with Academic Learning Compact requirements, the Department of Journalism + Media and the Department of Communication assess both student learning outcomes and program outcomes for advanced skills courses under the baccalaureate degree programs, as well as for identified University Core Curriculum

and Global Learning Courses. Assessment involves the collaboration of multiple faculty and staff members in planning, collecting, analyzing, reporting, using and sharing assessment data for program improvement.

The assessment plans for each of the departments in the SCJ, which were developed in 2017, address each program based on the degree awarded. Each department has a separate assessment for its University Core Curriculum Courses, such as IDS 3309 How We Know What We Know. Assessment data is collected a minimum of one semester per academic year and reported by October 15 of the subsequent year. Assessment results are reported to the Office of Academic Planning and Accountability - Institutional Effectiveness (assessment@fiu.edu).

Reporting data involves describing the data that has been analyzed. The main questions answered are:

- Were the criteria met?
- How many students or artifacts met the criteria set in the methods section?
- How many students or artifacts were included in the final assessment?
- What were the results of the assessment?

Use of Student Learning Evidence

This component represents the extent to which evidence of student learning is used to identify areas where changes in policies and practices may lead to improvement, inform institutional decision-making, problem identification, planning, goal setting, faculty development, course revision, program review, and accountability or accreditation self-study.

2. Provide the unit's definition of goals for learning that students must achieve. If this definition is incorporated into the plan for assessment, a page reference will suffice.

The goals for student learning are included in the Assessment Overview linked above, on p. 3 for the Department of Journalism + Media and p. 1 of the Department of Communication.

3. Describe the collection and reporting of data from both direct and indirect assessment measures and how the unit used its analysis of the data to improve curriculum, instruction, etc. Provide copies of any end-of-year assessment reports. If there are multiple reports from the six-year period, summarize the findings and make the reports available in a digital format.

[Department of Journalism + Media Assessment Reports](#)

[Link to Department of Journalism + Media Evaluation of Teaching Guidelines Proposal](#)

[Link to Department of Communication Assessment Reports](#)

[Link to Department of Communication Evaluating Teaching Guidelines Proposal](#)

In the Department of Communication, direct assessment measures are taken from the capstone course COM 4958 Senior Capstone Integrated Campaigns. In the Department of Journalism + Media direct assessment measures are taken from the capstone courses, JOU 4341C Senior Multimedia Project (Journalism and Digital Journalism) and DIG 4552 Advanced Multimedia Production (Broadcasting, Digital Broadcasting, Digital TV and Multimedia Production and Digital and Interactive Media students and Digital Media Studies students before the transition). The capstone assessments are the same as both departments' Student Learning Outcomes and include: Content Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Communication Skills (Oral), Communication Skills (Written) and Technology.

In addition to the student assessments collected from the capstone courses, individual instructors and the Department Chair use data from the [Evaluation of Teaching](#) policy that was introduced at the University level in 2019.

The program was only partially implemented during Spring 2020 due to the pandemic. The program will be fully implemented for Fall of 2021 when the University is back to normal operations. The goal of this policy is to help faculty improve teaching and learning outcomes by both direct methods, such as evaluation of capstone course projects and specific skills tests, and indirect methods, such as student surveys. Each faculty member is required to collect feedback about student learning outcomes from three sources (student, peer, and self-evaluation) that will guide continual improvements in teaching and student learning outcomes. The goal of the policy is to foster:

1. teaching that is learning-centered, focused on optimizing student learning, growth and development;
2. teaching that is evidence-based, using instructional practices informed by existing educational research and/or both quantitative and qualitative evidence from students and peers; and
3. teaching that is inclusive, that recognizes the significance and value of students' cultural identities to their learning and strives for equitable outcomes.

The University also uses institution-wide analytics to measure program-level outcomes

such as graduation, retention, course pass-fail rates and other statistical methods to measure the progress of students. These statistics can be drilled down to the department level or the course level.

Both departments collectively took steps to redefine its majors and restructure its degree programs over the last 5 years with data collected through these mechanisms: focus groups with students, feedback from professional partners (including Univision STEP in the Department of Journalism + Media) and faculty discussions. For example, professional partners urged the Department to include instruction in new areas like podcasting, motion graphics, augmented and virtual reality and increased instruction in areas like writing and Associated Press style. Until 2016, the B.S. in Mass Communication degree was offered in two specialization tracks: Public Relations and Advertising. In 2017, the Department of Communication discontinued its Public Relations and Advertising tracks and shifted to a new degree - a Bachelor of Science in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communications (PRAAC). The new PRAAC degree gives students a more flexible degree program, allowing them to take courses from both Public Relations and Advertising as well as other types of communication (e.g., public speaking, communication studies, digital media). It is different from the preceding tracks in Advertising and Public Relations in that it focuses more clearly and specifically on the skills and topics related to Public Relations, Advertising and related communication fields. Students are given more freedom to build their own skill set while still ensuring that the core skills and knowledge are still a part of the program.

4. Describe the involvement of journalism and mass communication professionals, including alumni, in the assessment process.

The professional partners and alumni of the SCJ provide context that allows both departments to remain abreast of professional practices and emerging trends in the industry. For example, Mr. Lee Caplin, CEO of the Picture Entertainment Corporation, donated more than \$1 million to the SCJ for the iSTAR (Immersive Studio for Altered Reality) facility to integrate augmented and virtual reality into the curriculum of both departments.

Industry professionals and alumni are involved in final assessments of capstone courses and portfolio reviews in both departments, for both graduate and undergraduate programs, where they provide quantitative scoring and opportunities for one-on-one feedback with students.

5. In a digital format, list the major awards won by the unit's students in local, regional or national competitions in the past six years. Limit to five a year.

[Link to Student Awards](#)

6. In a digital file, list by specialty each member of the graduating class of 2016 and those graduates' current jobs. If practical, give a total number of "unknowns" rather than including them in the list. Describe the program used to track graduates to assess their experience in the professions and to improve curriculum and instruction.

[Link to Information About the Graduating Class of 2016](#)

While there is no formal program or process used to track graduates to assess their experience in the professions and to improve curriculum and instruction, both departments have varied approaches, such as keeping lists of graduates who have reached out to the Department, and mainly gather information anecdotally and from self-reports to help drive curriculum discussions and decisions. The University's [Career and Talent Development](#) team conducts Destination Surveys for recent graduates. The survey is administered 3 times per year, at the end of each semester.

PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S PROGRAMS

7. Attach the unit's written assessment plan for the master's program. Provide any end-of-year assessment reports. If there are multiple reports from the six-year period, summarize the findings and make the reports available in a separate digital format.

Global Strategic Communications

Course Assessed: PUR 6956 Professional Project

[Link to Department of Communication Graduate Program \(On-Campus\) Assessment Report](#)

[Link to Department of Communication Graduate Program \(Online\) Assessment Report](#)

Spanish-language Journalism

Course Assessed: MMC 6950 Professional Project in Mass Communication

[Link to Spanish-language Journalism Master's Program Assessment Reports](#)

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Method: The capstone courses, MMC 6950 Professional Project in Mass Communication, and PUR 6956 Professional Project, are assessed. Using a five-point rubric, a faculty/staff panel assess competency for each learning outcome based on the student's professional project (direct measure). Student work in the capstone courses are evaluated on content knowledge, communication skills and critical thinking. The results of the analysis are used to improve the curriculum in the programs overall.

8. Show that the unit has defined outcomes in the professional master's program appropriate to such a program, such as a professional project, a thesis or a comprehensive exam demonstrating development of analytical and critical thinking abilities appropriate to the profession.

The defined outcomes in the professional master's programs are appropriate for students' demonstration of analytical and critical thinking abilities required by the profession. These outcomes are measured in a comprehensive professional project as described below.

Global Strategic Communications

PUR 6956 Professional Project is designed to highlight the various skills and concepts a student has acquired during the study of global strategic communications. The course allows a student to demonstrate excellence in an area of communication study. Students in this course will be assessed by the successful completion of his/her professional project.

Course Objectives

Course objectives for PUR 6956 include:

- Employ the writing, tactical and strategic communications skills students have learned during their study of global strategic communications within this master's degree program.
- Arrange a professional project that will demonstrate to peers, faculty and professionals that the student has mastered the skills taught throughout their graduate career within the School of Communication + Journalism.

Students will be able to:

- Show critical, creative and independent thinking.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications profession, as well as for the audiences, and purposes they serve.
- Identify relevant communications concepts and apply communications theories to contemporary issues.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

Spanish-language Journalism

As the final step prior to graduating, students must complete a professional project, to demonstrate excellence in the area of investigative journalism. The capstone course, MMC 6950 Mass Communication Professional Project, provides further training in investigative reporting, teaching students how to go beyond the daily news coverage. The final project emphasizes problem solving in developing stories from conception to finished product. The course is practical and, at the same time, directs students to think deeply and critically about the stories they will report, write, produce and publish in a multimedia platform.

Capstone Objectives

Students will use the skills they have learned during master's program course work by:

- Identifying story topics and formulating hypotheses for in-depth investigation.
- Gathering information by using documents and databases, by interviewing and by doing in-depth field work.
- Writing compelling stories that cover not only the who, what, when and where, but also the why, the how and the "so what?"
- Using effective interviewing techniques.
- Developing a website to publish the project and engage the audience through social media platforms.
- Demonstrating attention to journalistic ethics, including public trust, truthfulness, fairness, integrity, independence and accountability.
- Reporting stories ethically by producing narratives that are well balanced and fair, and guided by the principles of freedom of speech.
- Demonstrating an understanding of the relevance of diversity in the communications industry.

- Applying the writing skills and strategies learned during his/her studies, free of grammatical and spelling errors.
- Finding experts, documents, and any other materials necessary to become an authority on his/her subject matter.
- Extracting vital information from public records or documents, to conduct productive interviews and ascertain the value of any other materials used in reporting and writing the project.