

Texas A&M University System
2016 Student Learning Outcome Report
for Texas A&M University-Central Texas

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION LEARNING OUTCOME: Upon completion of their degree program, students will be able to express ideas clearly and coherently orally, in writing, and electronically to a diverse range of audiences and interact with others in large and small group settings.

ASSESSMENTS

- AAC&U VALUE Rubric
- Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile (ETS-PP)
- National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE)
- End-of-Course Surveys (EOCS)

RESULTS: SUFFICIENT

- VALUE Written Communication - **Sufficient**
- ETS-PP Writing - **Sufficient**
- NSSE Writing and Speaking Clearly - **Sufficient**
- EOCS - Communication - **Sufficient**

Results Descriptions:

- **Exemplary** – All criteria met and results exceed expectations with little room for improvement
- **Proficient** – Most criteria met and results indicate mastery of objective with some room for improvement
- **Sufficient** – Acceptable number of criteria met and results meet expectations with room for improvement
- **Emerging** – Some criteria met and results indicate a need for improvement
- **Insufficient** – Few criteria met, results indicate a need for significant improvement or no/insufficient results reported to measure the performance of the objective

ANALYSIS:

A&M-Central Texas' students demonstrated sufficiency on the oral and written communication learning outcomes in Fall 2016, identical to the assessed level in Spring 2013. The university used the VALUE rubrics to directly assess students. IDEA and NSSE indirect assessments validated these results.

ACTION:

A&M-Central Texas elected writing as the topic of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to provide a greater focus on improving writing.

A&M-Central Texas introduced a University Writing Center to support writing for graduate and undergraduate students in 2014. The Center is gaining popularity among students and staff and increased usage is expected to elevate students' abilities.

COMMENTS:

A&M-Central Texas continues to grow its array of assessments. We based our assessment of this outcome solely on the ETS Proficiency Profile in 2013. We added three additional measures in assessing our students in 2016.

ASSESSMENT: VALUE RUBRIC WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATION

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

RESULTS: SUFFICIENT

The University considers the following breakpoints when applying the VALUE rubrics:

- **Exemplary** when the average rating is 4.0
- **Proficient** when the average rating is above 3.0
- **Sufficient** when the average rating is above 2.0
- **Emerging** when the average rating is above 1.0
- **Insufficient** when the average rating is 1 and below

ANALYSIS:

Students assessed in Summer and Fall 2016 using the Written and Oral Communications VALUE rubrics demonstrated sufficiency on both rubrics. Students (n=31) scored a mean rating of 2.7 on a scale of 0 to 4 on the oral communication rubric. Students (n=56) scored a mean rating of 2.3 on a scale of 0 to 4 on the written communication rubric. The mean ratings of above 2.0 suggest a rating of sufficient and approaching proficient. A marginal improvement over the university's 2013 rating where students nearly met the national mean.

ACTION: NONE

COMMENTS: NONE.

ASSESSMENT: ETS PP – WRITING AND READING

The ETS Proficiency Profile consists of 27 multiple-choice questions that most accurately measure a student's ability to "recognize the most grammatically correct revision of a clause, sentence or group of sentences" and "recognize and reword figurative language." This measure allows A&M–Central Texas to assess control of grammar, syntax, and mechanics in communicating ideas with clarity and concision.

RESULTS: SUFFICIENT

The University uses the following scale to determine student accomplishment of the outcome:

- **Exemplary** when 100% are proficient at level 1, 80% at level 2, and 50% at level 3
- **Proficient** when 80% are proficient at level 1, 50% at level 2, and 30% at level 3
- **Sufficient** when 60% are proficient at level 1, 30% at level 2, and 10% at level 3
- **Emerging** when 40% are proficient at level 1, 10% at level 2, and 0% at level 3
- **Insufficient** when 20% are proficient at level 1, 0% at level 2, and 0% at level 3

ANALYSIS:

Students assessed in Spring 2013 using the ETS Proficiency Profile direct assessment measure demonstrated sufficiency with reading and writing. Students (n=148) scored a mean of 115.5 on the reading component compared to the national average of 116. Students scored a mean of 113.7 on the writing component compared to the national average of 113. These results were within 0.5 percentage points of the national norms, suggesting a rating of sufficient.

ACTION: NONE

COMMENTS: NONE

ASSESSMENT: NSSE WRITING CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY

The National Survey for Student Engagement NSSE annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. The questions address empirically confirmed "good practices" in undergraduate education. That is, they reflect behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of college. NSSE doesn't assess student learning directly, but survey results point to areas where colleges and universities are performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved.

The NSSE assesses the level to which senior-level students "engage in educational learning practices associated with higher levels of learning and development." The item on the NSSE, which examines students' perceptions as to what degree their experiences at this institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing clearly and effectively measures students' perceptions of the overall writing instruction they received while at A&M-Central Texas.

RESULTS: SUFFICIENT

The University uses the Carnegie Classification as a benchmark of NSSE performance and considers performance to be:

- **Exemplary** when 1 point or more above
- **Proficient** when equal to or above
- **Sufficient** when no more than 1 point below
- **Emerging** when no more than 2 points below
- **Insufficient** when more than 2 points below

ANALYSIS:

Indirect NSSE assessments of seniors in Spring 2013 indicate students perceive themselves sufficient in written communication and emerging in oral communication. When asked how much their experiences at this institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing clearly and effectively, 78 percent (135 out of 173) of students responded "quite a bit" or "very much" at a rate 4 percentage points higher than students at other southwest public universities (n=3,007) and 3 percentage points higher than all students assessed (n=3,180). A response rate above 70 percent is considered sufficient. When asked how much their experiences at this institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in speaking clearly and effectively, 66 percent (113 out of 172) of students responded "quite a bit" or "very much" at a rate 3 percentage points below students at other southwest public universities (n=2,997) and 2 percentage points below all students assessed (n=3,169). A response rate above 60 percent is considered emerging.

ACTION: NONE

COMMENTS: NONE

ASSESSMENT: EOCS WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Students complete a series of questions on the end-of-course survey to indicate their perceived gains on specific learning outcomes including writing communication.

RESULTS: SUFFICIENT.

The University measures the percent of students indicating substantial or exceptional gains in learning on the EOCS and considers performance to be:

- **Exemplary** when 90 percent or more
- **Proficient** when 80 percent or more
- **Sufficient** when 70 percent or more
- **Emerging** when 60 percent or more
- **Insufficient** when below 60 percent

ANALYSIS:

Indirect IDEA assessments of faculty by students between Fall 2012 and Summer 2016 indicate students perceived themselves as sufficient in written and oral communication. Between 3,500 and 8,500 students responded each year to IDEA question 8 (developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing) indicating they perceived substantial or exceptional progress at rates of 2013 – 74.8 percent (n=4,996), 2014 – 74.5 percent (n=3,570), 2015 – 76.3 percent (n=8,004), and 2016 – 76.2 percent (n=8,488). Percentages above 70 percent indicate sufficiency. Students' perceptions are approaching the proficient level of 80 percent.

ACTION: NONE

COMMENTS: NONE

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Upon completion of their degree program, students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking, including the ability to explain issues; find, analyze, and select appropriate evidence; and construct a cogent argument that articulates conclusions and their consequences. Students will be able to utilize, qualitative and quantitative reasoning as a base for problem solving.

ASSESSMENTS

- AAC&U Value Rubric
- ETS Proficiency Profile (ETS-PP)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- End-of-Course Survey (EOCS)

RESULTS: PROFICIENT

- AAC&U Value Rubric, Critical Thinking Skills and Problem Solving Skills - **Sufficient**
- ETS-PP Critical Thinking - **Sufficient**
- NSSE - **Insufficient**
- EOCS - **Proficient**

Results Descriptions:

- **Exemplary** – All criteria met and results exceed expectations with little room for improvement
- **Proficient** – Most criteria met and results indicate mastery of objective with some room for improvement
- **Sufficient** – Acceptable number of criteria met and results meet expectations with room for improvement
- **Emerging** – Some criteria met and results indicate a need for improvement
- **Insufficient** – Few criteria met, results indicate a need for significant improvement or no/insufficient results reported to measure the performance of the objective

ANALYSIS:

A&M-Central Texas' students demonstrated sufficiency on the critical thinking learning outcomes in Fall 2016, identical to the assessed level in Spring 2013. The university used the VALUE rubrics to directly assess students. IDEA and NSSE indirect assessments validated these results.

ACTION:

A&M-Central Texas established a course inventory for general education requirements in alignment with the State's core objectives for Fall 2016. With our more defined core curriculum course expectations, our programs can proceed with identifying how these core student learning outcomes are practiced in program upper-level courses. This integration is anticipated to enable enhanced assessment of the core student learning outcomes; to include critical thinking.

COMMENTS:

A&M-Central Texas continues to grow its array of assessments. We based our assessment of this outcome solely on the ETS Proficiency Profile in 2013. We added three additional measures in assessing our students in 2016.

ASSESSMENT: VALUE RUBRIC, CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND PROBLEM SOLVING

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

RESULTS: SUFFICIENT

The University considers the following breakpoints when applying the VALUE rubrics:

- **Exemplary** when the average rating is 4.0
- **Proficient** when the average rating is above 3.0
- **Sufficient** when the average rating is above 2.0
- **Emerging** when the average rating is above 1.0
- **Insufficient** when the average rating is 1 and below

ANALYSIS:

Students assessed in Summer and Fall 2016 using the Critical Thinking and Problem Solving VALUE rubrics demonstrated sufficiency on both rubrics. Students (n=56) scored a mean rating of 2.2 on a scale of 0 to 4 on the Critical Thinking rubric. Students (n=56) scored a mean rating of 2.1 on a scale of 0 to 4 on the Problem Solving rubric. Faculty not assigned to teach the sections applied the VALUE rubrics to individual senior class assignments. The mean ratings of above 2.0 suggest a rating of sufficient.

ACTION:

None

COMMENTS:

None.

ASSESSMENT: ETS-PP CRITICAL THINKING

The ETS Proficiency Profile consists of 27 multiple-choice questions that most accurately measure a student's academic skills relating to critical thinking.

RESULTS: SUFFICIENT

The University considers the following breakpoints when applying the ETS PP assessment:

- **Exemplary** when the average scaled score is between 176-180
- **Proficient** when the average scaled score is between 171-175
- **Sufficient** when the average scaled score is between 161-170
- **Emerging** when the average scaled score is between 156-160
- **Insufficient** when the average scaled score is between 150-155

ANALYSIS:

Students assessed in Spring 2013 using the ETS Proficiency Profile direct assessment measure demonstrated sufficiency with critical thinking. Students (n=148) scored a mean of 109.8 on the critical thinking component compared to the national average of 110. These results were within 0.2 percentage points of the national norms, suggesting a rating of sufficient.

ACTION:

None.

COMMENTS:

None.

ASSESSMENT: NSSE

The National Survey for Student Engagement NSSE annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. The questions address empirically confirmed "good practices" in undergraduate education. That is, they reflect behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of college. NSSE doesn't assess student learning directly, but survey results point to areas where colleges and universities are performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved.

RESULTS: INSUFFICIENT

The University uses the Carnegie Classification as a benchmark of NSSE performance and considers performance to be:

- **Exemplary** when 1 point or more above
- **Proficient** when equal to or above
- **Sufficient** when no more than 1 point below
- **Emerging** when no more than 2 points below
- **Insufficient** when more than 2 points below

ANALYSIS:

Indirect NSSE assessments of seniors in Spring 2013 indicated students perceived themselves emerging in problem solving. When asked how much their experiences at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in analyzing numerical and statistical information, 61 percent (103 out of 169) of students responded "quite a bit" or "very much" at a rate 2 percentage points below students at other southwest public universities (n=2,992) and 3 percentage points below all students assessed (n=3,166). A response rate above 60 percent is considered emerging. When asked how much their experiences at this institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in solving complex real-world problems, 59 percent (102 out of 172) of students responded "quite a bit" or "very much" at a rate 3 percentage points below students at other southwest public universities (n=2,992) and 3 percentage points below all students assessed (n=3,164). A response rate below 60 percent is considered insufficient.

ACTION: NONE

COMMENTS: NONE

ASSESSMENT: EOCS

Students complete a series of questions on the end-of-course survey to indicate their perceived gains on specific learning outcomes including critical thinking.

RESULTS: PROFICIENT

The University measures the percent of students indicating substantial or exceptional gains in learning on the EOCS and considers performance to be:

- **Exemplary** when 90 percent or more
- **Proficient** when 80 percent or more
- **Sufficient** when 70 percent or more
- **Emerging** when 60 percent or more
- **Insufficient** when below 60 percent

ANALYSIS:

Indirect IDEA assessments of faculty by students between Fall 2012 and Summer 2016 indicated indicate students perceived themselves as proficient in critical thinking and problem solving. Between 3,500 and 8,500 students responded each year to IDEA question 11 (learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view) indicating they perceived substantial or exceptional progress at rates of 2013 – 79.2 percent (n=4,977), 2014 – 79.6 percent (n=3,570), 2015 – 81.7 percent (n=8,000), and 2016 – 81.6 percent (n=8,482). Between 3,500 and 8,500 students responded each year to IDEA question 9 (learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems) indicating they perceived substantial or exceptional progress at rates of 2013 – 78.7 percent (n=4,988), 2014 – 79.4 percent (n=3,572), 2015 – 81.7 percent (n=8,008), and 2016 – 82.6 percent (n=8,486). Percentages above 80 percent indicate proficiency.

ACTION: NONE

COMMENTS: NONE