

Comprehensive Core Competency Assessment Plan at Fresno State

Background and Approach:

Dr. Melissa Jordine, the Director of Assessment at Fresno State, completed the WASC Assessment Leadership Academy in 2014-2015 (cohort V) and conducted an initial pilot study on critical thinking by creating an ad hoc committee that operated at the university level. Fresno State then extensively discussed whether assessment of the core competencies should continue to be carried out campus-wide in a centralized system or if primarily responsibility for evaluating and reporting on the core competencies should be carried out at the department/program level. After considerable discussion and debate, Fresno State decided that a decentralized approach placing primarily responsibility for assessing the five core competencies was problematic in part due to the fact that there was the need to further develop and advance assessment efforts at the department and program level. Workshops and forums were held and information about the core competencies was disseminated and a collective effort to integrate these core skills into department/program Student Outcome Assessment Plans (SOAPs) and to establish two key outcomes for each competencies was carried out. Every undergraduate department/program at Fresno State reviewed or revised their SOAP to explicitly state the three core competencies that are most closely aligned with their program and all departments/programs understand that it is expected that all five core competencies must be reinforced or advanced by the major curriculum. Fresno State has created five ad hoc committees that are primarily responsible for evaluating the core competencies and these committees cease to exist after a core competency is evaluated and are reconstituted with different faculty serving. Moreover, each committee works directly with faculty and departments/programs across all seven colleges.¹ College Assessment Coordinators Chair and serve on all of the core competency committees and provide continuity and experience. Common rubrics and scoring mechanisms are used after an extensive norming process with committee members.

Core competencies and outcomes:

Competency	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Year Evaluated	Measure	Proficiency Rates
Oral Communication	Students communicate effectively and the delivery is extemporaneous	Students integrate content that is appropriate for the audience and organized along clear lines of reasoning	2016-2017 AY	Speeches in upper-division major courses Rubric	80% proficient in all three criteria

¹ Fresno State has eight colleges/schools in total, however, the Kremen School of Education and Human Development only has one undergraduate major which is liberal studies and these students primarily take courses offered by other departments. Therefore, for the purposes of evaluating the WSCUC core competencies the assessments are carried out in as many of the seven colleges/schools that offer multiple undergraduate degrees as possible.

Quantitative Reasoning	Students solve authentic quantitative reasoning problems using mathematical formulas	Students will be able to accurately interpret different kinds of quantitative data	2017-2018 AY	Quantitative Reasoning exam Score	51% were proficient
Information Literacy	Students use information effectively to achieve a specific purpose	Students critically evaluate information and its sources	2018-2019 AY	Papers from upper-division major courses Rubric	
Written Communication	Content is appropriate and well-organized and developed along clear lines	Students use appropriate language and sentence structures to convey meaning to readers	2019-2020 AY	Papers from upper-division major courses Rubric	
Critical Thinking	Students will identify and evaluate the thesis and/or key points of an argument	Students will be able to evaluate evidence to determine if it is valid and relevant	2020-2021 AY	Critical Thinking Exam Score	
Oral Communication			2021-2022 AY		
Quantitative Reasoning			2022-2023 AY		