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# UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM

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at Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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## Assessment of the Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum, like most General Education requirements, is not a degree granting program; the Core is comprised largely of arts and sciences courses that provide the supporting fabric for the major. Nonetheless, if we are to require these courses of our students we are accountable for documenting their efficacy. Our assessment procedure is unique for general education at a major public research institution.

We are collecting portfolios for each course in the Core. Each portfolio contains a current syllabus, sample student assignments, and the course assessment report. Instructors are not identified in the assessment report; single courses with multiple sections are expected to coordinate the assessment and establish the congruence of the sections with the frame of the course. Each course is treated as an indicator for Core goals, and these indicators are evaluated using a primary trait analysis grid.

Members of the Core Curriculum Executive Council review and rate these portfolios on a regular basis. Feedback to the originating academic unit consists of the cover sheet rating, the primary trait grid, and written comments from the reviewers. Courses for which there is no assessment will be excused from the Core Curriculum.

This portfolio project has been in place since the pilot reading of Summer 1996. It is labor intensive, but also productive of rich and complicated profiles of an area of undergraduate experience. This system of gathering portfolios on Core courses actually accomplishes two purposes: the assessment of student learning outcomes **and** the review of faculty instruction, two different but complementary activities. The result, of course, is the same: the quality of the University.

For a copy of our most recent assessment report, contact [Jim Allen](#), Director, University Core Curriculum, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois 62901-4522.

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**UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM  
ASSESSMENT CHART  
January 10, 2002**

Academic Unit Title \_\_\_\_\_ Assessment Instrument(s) Used: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course Number \_\_\_\_\_ Pretest/Posttest \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course Name \_\_\_\_\_ Portfolio of Work \_\_\_\_\_  
 Semester and Year Offered \_\_\_\_\_ Focus Groups \_\_\_\_\_  
 Enrollment (end of semester) \_\_\_\_\_ Proficiency Test \_\_\_\_\_  
 Instructor of Record (with rank) \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

(If a GA, put candidacy rank — MA or Ph.D)

Student Learning Objectives	Number and Percent of Students Who:			
	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Failed to Meet Expectations	Unknown
1.	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:
2.	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:
3.	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:
4.	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:
5.	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:	No: %:

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## Specifications for Core Course Assessment Portfolio

It is the academic unit's responsibility to see that all Core courses are assessed properly and in a timely manner. Instructors should consult with their Chairs and Directors if they have any questions about assessment.

Use **one** cover sheet per course. Courses with multiple sections also use one cover sheet, with section numbers clearly marked on the sheet and the syllabus. Under each cover sheet (with the top portion completed by the academic unit) include the following:

**1. Current syllabus with student learning objectives listed. Eliminate instructor names from the syllabi and supporting materials. To protect the confidentiality of the assessment process, only the unit should know the names of the instructors for sections being documented.**

- (a) For courses with multiple sections for which the syllabus varies from instructor to instructor, please submit six randomly selected syllabi.
- (b) For all other courses, submit **one** current syllabus from **each** faculty of record.

**2. Course exams.**

No more than **two** sample exams **per course**. **One** should be the **final**.

**3. Other kinds of assignments.**

Handouts such as sample paper or journal assignments, special projects, student evaluations (summary of pertinent representative comments), or other materials that may help give a fuller picture of course goals and student learning objectives. **Please do not submit student work.**

A syllabus from Instructor X must be accompanied by supporting materials from Instructor X. Each syllabus submitted must be accompanied by the supporting material requested and clipped together in the order requested.

**4. Assessment chart.**

**5. Assessment discussion from instructor(s) or course coordinator must follow the format below, in the order listed. Three page maximum.**

- (a) Describe your assessment indicators (e.g. pre-post test, portfolio, or other means of assessing student learning).
- (b) Show how they are related to course objectives on the chart **and** in the narrative.

- (c) What did you learn from your assessment?
  - (d) Do your assessment results suggest any changes that might be needed in your Core course? If yes, what are you considering?
  - (e) Are there unique aspects of your course that will assist in understanding your assessment results?
- Other comments?

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## Cover Sheet for Course Portfolio

**Academic Unit: Fill in items 1-3 only. See accompanying instruction sheet for specifications.**

1. Department/School \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_

2. Course Name and Section Numbers Documented \_\_\_\_\_

**Fill in all that apply: (\*lecture is any section with an “offering of” not “enrollment of” 51+)**

COURSE FORMAT	NUMBER OF LECTURE OR CLASS SECTIONS	NUMBER OF LABS OR DISCUSSION SECTIONS	TOTAL COURSE ENROLLMENT
Lecture with labs or discussion sections*			
Lecture & discussion*			
Lecture only*			
Small class (15-50)			

**3. Check that all requested materials are included and presented in the following order:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ syllabus with student learning objectives listed
- \_\_\_\_\_ exams
- \_\_\_\_\_ other sample course handouts or materials (not student work)
- \_\_\_\_\_ assessment chart
- \_\_\_\_\_ discussion of assessment data

**FOR CORE USE ONLY!**

**Reader: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (Please circle)**

**Recommendations:**

- Satisfactory assessment materials have been provided.
- Satisfactory course materials have been provided.
- Course needs improvement in the following areas:
  - documentation
  - assessment data (including chart)
  - assessment feedback loop
  - relationship of course to Core goals
- Unsatisfactory materials were provided. Please contact Core Director.
- Insufficient evidence to maintain status as a Core course. Please contact Core Director.

2/02

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## ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Use the same syllabus for all sections of a course.

Make sure the learning objectives are listed on the syllabus.

Make sure the learning objectives match those on file at the Core office; if they don't, you either need to change the course or change the objectives that are on file.

Make sure that the statements on course policies are consistent with the guidelines in the student handbook and employee handbook

Make sure that there is a statement of academic honesty on the syllabus (especially regarding plagiarism)

Once the course objectives are established, figure out what kinds of assignments or exams or projects would assess students' grasp of the course objectives. (i.e., create assignments that relate to the objectives, rather than assigning things that address only one objective, or that in fact do not relate at all to the objectives. Don't assign a report on an artist just for the sake of making students write; rather, tailor your assignments to help students grasp one or more of the objectives)

Figure out how to tell if your students have learned what you were trying to teach them-how will understanding or skill manifest itself? You must be able to measure student learning, whether quantitatively or qualitatively.

Decide whether you're going to collect data from all students, or from a random sampling, and how you will make it quantitative.

**Run your ideas by Jim Allen, Director, University Core Curriculum, to see if they make sense.  
Call 453-3466 or email [jsallen@siu.edu](mailto:jsallen@siu.edu).**