

APPENDIX 9-A

Undergraduate Assessment Plan 2014 *updated 2017*

“Ignite the public conversation.” That is the phrase that expresses how we inspire our students to lead when they graduate with a degree from the Hussman School of Journalism and Media.

We are committed to challenging students – undergraduates and graduates – to engage the public in meaningful conversations about issues, ideas, policies and programs that serve the public and democracy. As a professional school in a great public research university, we believe we must produce knowledge that will advance the field, serve the industry and strengthen the values of free expression. We are committed to research with impact, to experiential teaching and immersive learning, and to a system of assessment to determine the ability of our students to master the skills, concepts and competencies expected of our profession.

Commitment to Assessment

For years, student experiences in the industry and the bi-annual meeting of the school's Board of Advisers and the school's Foundation Board had directly informed the curriculum and helped faculty members update course offerings. Since 2004, the school has honed in on measuring the outcome of our students' learning in a systematic fashion in order to ensure that they are learning what our curriculum intends them to master. In 2006–07, the school began to plan specific assessment measures.

Since that time, a school assessment committee made up of representatives of the sequences has focused

on classes in their areas to examine closely whether students were achieving the learning and skill mastery that the sequence expected. Those assessment discussions have been incorporated into the formal curriculum review. A stronger and more systematic measurement system was introduced into the school, building on the assessment and learning loop that improved our core course on writing and reporting. We are monitoring the assessment measures to ensure that outcomes of student learning match the aspirations of the course and the school.

Faculty members in the school are committed to an assessment plan that will lead to stronger graduates and deeper learning. Faculty members are determined to produce students who have mastered ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies and to continually measure that progress. The notion of a continuous curriculum review that involves specific assessments of the core courses is now embedded in the DNA of our curriculum committee. We emphasize the importance of assessing how our students reflect the values and master the competencies of ACEJMC. We believe that assessing and measuring the core of our curriculum, as well as the core courses of our sequences, will keep the teaching and learning fresh, focused and relevant.

The school's student learning outcomes build on the canon of values and competencies outlined by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. These are expressed succinctly as:

PART II – STANDARD 9
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student Learning Outcomes (Our students understand, embrace and respect):

- Principles of freedom of expression
- History and role of media in society
- Diverse society and audiences (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation)
- Global cultural perspectives (diversity of peoples and cultures)
- Concepts and theories in presentation of images (academically informed communication practices)

- Ethical principles for communications
- Critical, creative and independent thinking
- Research methods and analysis
- Clear and precise writing (write correctly and clearly)
- Accuracy, fairness and clarity
- Data, numbers and statistics
- Communications tools and technology

A curriculum matrix showing where student learning outcomes are reflected in core courses is provided below in Exhibit 9-A.

Exhibit 9.A

ACEJMC Values and Competencies	Required Core Courses (All Students)			Required Ad/PR Courses (Ad/PR Students Only)*	
	MEJO 121- Introduction to Digital Storytelling	MEJO 153- Writing and Reporting	MEJO 340/341- Introduction to Media Law	MEJO 137-Principles of Advertising and Public Relations	MEJO 379-Advertising and Public Relations Research
Principles of freedom of expression					
History and role of media in society					
Diverse society and audiences					
Global cultural perspectives					
Presentation of images and information practices					
Ethical principles for communications					
Critical, creative and independent thinking					
Research methods and analysis					
Clear and precise writing					
Accuracy, fairness and clarity					
Data, numbers and statistics					
Communication tools and technology					

*Since the journalism area of study branches into a variety of specializations, there are no common required courses for journalism students beyond the three in the core.



Competency is a primary objective of the course



Competency is explored in some way in the course

PART II – STANDARD 9

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

A summary of the methods, method type, performance target and implementation for each of the 12 student learning outcomes is provided in [Appendix 9-B](#) (Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: 2018–2022) and [Appendix 9-C](#) (Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: 2015–17). The school also conforms to the assessment requirements of the university's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), which limits the school to reporting the results of no more than five learning outcomes (italicized above) each year (see [Appendix 9-D](#), Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: 2017–2020). All 12 student learning outcomes are assessed each year, but only five selected outcomes are included in the OIRA report.

Assessment Measures

As a school, we focus on the core courses in our curriculum and monitor closely whether they are preparing students for the changing world of communication and giving them critical thinking and professional skills. Our plan calls for three direct and four indirect measures. All 12 of the ACEJMC values and competencies are assessed by one or more of these measures each year.

Direct measures

Knowledge pre/post-test (entry-level students/graduating seniors)

The school administers a 20-question item knowledge test to students. The test is given to students in the entry-level writing and reporting course and again to seniors in multiple capstone courses to gauge knowledge gained from the start of the program to the end. The average of multiple question items for each of 12 student learning outcomes are used to assess students' knowledge and understanding.

Aggregate internship evaluations

Many students complete at least one professional internship as an elective obtained through the school's

Career Services office. The worksite supervisor of each intern completes an evaluation form that assesses seven of our student learning outcomes. Aggregate student scores on these outcomes are summarized in the internship assessment report.

External Capstone Project Review

Industry professionals review the work of undergraduate seniors enrolled in capstone courses and the work of students at the master's level. A random sample of senior projects is selected as a point of comparison to assess how well students are able to demonstrate they can apply what they have learned.

Indirect measures

Experience Survey

Every other year, graduating seniors are asked to complete a 35-question item experience survey. The survey, which is given in conjunction with the knowledge quiz, solicits the feedback regarding operational outcomes about career services, preparation for the workforce, diversity, access to courses, funding support for awards and scholarships, and school resources (library, global programs).

Internship self-reports

Students who complete an internship are asked to assess their own performance in the internship. These self-reported responses assess specific student learning outcomes based on this external experience.

Student awards

The success of students in competitions and the awards they receive are an external indicator of the effectiveness of our curriculum. The accumulation of these awards are indicators of the quality of instruction and how much students learn. The student awards are collected every year as well and are the responsibility of each individual sequence head.

PART II – STANDARD 9
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Employment data

The ability of graduates to find jobs in a highly competitive marketplace is a measure of the quality of the academic experience. The employment survey is conducted in September and October every year after graduation, and the primary assessment tool here is whether the alumni

have mass communication jobs. Results are based on breakout data from Final Destination reports.

Exhibit 9-B, below shows the measurement instruments and the type measure (direct or indirect) used to assess the 12 student learning outcomes.

Exhibit 9-B: Assessment Measures and ACEJMC Values and Competencies

ACEJMC Value/Competency	Knowledge Exam 2015–17	Knowledge Exam 2018–2020	Industry Professional Capstone Evaluations	Internship Supervisor Review	Self-report from Internship	Experience Survey 2015–17	Experience Survey 2018–2020
1. Principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in the U.S.	Direct	Direct				Indirect	Indirect
2. History and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications	Direct	Direct				Indirect	Indirect
3. Gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and/or other forms of diversity in relation to media and communications	Direct	Direct		Direct		Indirect	Indirect
4. Diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of media and communications in a global society							Indirect
5. Concepts and theories in the use and presentation of images and information	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct		Indirect	Indirect
6. Professional ethical principles and work in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity	Direct	Direct		Direct		Indirect	Indirect
7. Thinking critically, creatively and independently	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
8. Conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to my major area within MEJO	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct		Indirect	Indirect
9. Writing correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for my major area within MEJO	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
10. Ability to critically evaluate my own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammar		Direct			Indirect		Indirect
11. Application of basic numerical and statistical concepts	Direct	Direct				Indirect	Indirect
12. Application of tools and technologies appropriate for my major area within MEJO	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct		Indirect	Indirect

PART II – STANDARD 9
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

In addition to the formal assessment procedures described above, the school uses alumni and media professionals to assess work in specific courses. For examples, see Appendix 9-A-2.

Assessment Implementation

Implementing a plan is critical to its success. During the past six years, we have made progress in making the assessment plan actionable. Our plan has followed

phases, focusing initial attention and measures on core courses critical to what we demand of our students. We have focused and changed our core courses as a result of assessment measures and what we have learned. We continue to focus attention on core courses throughout the sequence curriculum and to suggest changes to the curriculum and individual courses as a result of the assessment learnings. Exhibit 9-C below shows our timeline for assessment over the past five years.

Exhibit 9-C: Timeline: Assessment of Student Learning

	Direct Measures			Indirect Measures			
	Knowledge pre-/post test	Supervisor Internship Evaluations	Capstone Project Evaluations	Experience Survey	Self-Report Internship	Awards	Job Placement
2015-16	X/X			X	X	X	X
2016-17	X/X	X		X	X	X	X
2017-18	/X	X		X	X	X	X
2018-19	X/X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2019-20	X/X	X	X	X	X	X	X