

Assessment plan for 2022-2023: News Major

*ACEJMC competencies are rotated each year for assessment. In the 2022-23 assessment plan, four competencies—**professional ethics, critical thinking in reporting, writing, and tools/technology**—receive emphasis. Several other competencies (law, history, cultural competency) will also be assessed as part of an ongoing, annual assessment instrument, a multiple-choice test for freshmen and seniors.*

Schedule for 2022-2023 assessment and reporting of results:

- *Fall 2022: The annual assessment plan is generated during the annual fall meeting of the JCM Assessment Committee and is informed by discussion with faculty as a whole, with the JCM Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and with the Department Chair.*
- *Fall, Spring, Summer 2022-23: Data will be collected.*
- *Summer/Fall 2023: Data will be analyzed and the reports written.*
- *Fall 2023: Results will be reported in several ways:*
 - *Findings will be shared during the first faculty meeting in August 2023: Faculty discuss results and provide feedback.*
 - *Assessment reports will post online for faculty.*
 - *Findings will be discussed with the Department Chair: The Assessment Committee chair is on the advisory committee to the Department Chair.*
 - *The JCM Assessment Committee chair is an ex officio member of the JCM Undergrad Curriculum Committee and will discuss 2022-23 report results as well as plans for the 2023-24 plan during the fall meeting of this committee.*
 - *The JCM Assessment Committee meets each fall to review the previous year's results, consider faculty feedback, and finalize the upcoming year's plan.*

OUTCOME 1: UNDERSTAND ETHICS

Students will demonstrate an understanding of professional ethics in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.

MEASURE 1: Freshman/Seniors Test: Ethics

Details/Description:

A 24-item multiple choice test is administered annually to freshmen in the MC 101 Introduction to Mass Communication class and to students across multiple senior-level JCM classes. Questions measure knowledge of competencies in media and mass communication: Law, Culturally Proficient Communication (formerly domestic and global diversity), Ethics, Theory, History. These competencies have been prescribed by ACEJMC, our accrediting body. Test results are compared annually.

Expectation of achievement:

It is expected that senior-level test scores (percent correct) for comm law will be higher than freshman-level scores, indicating knowledge gain.

Schedule for data collection:

These pre-test/post-test data are collected annually from both freshmen and seniors, typically in both fall and spring semesters (but at least during one semester).

Key personnel:

The JCM assessment committee is responsible for collecting and analyzing the data, working with the faculty members who teach MC 101 and the senior capstone courses.

MEASURE 2: Professional portfolio review: Ethics

Details/Descriptions:

Approximately 11 portfolio evaluations total conducted by five media professionals from broadcast and print news outlets:

- Two pros evaluate around four student portfolios each online (8 evals total)
- Three pros who visit the senior capstone class each provide one overall eval of the portfolios they looked at while visiting (3 evals total)

Media professionals provide:

- (a) Quantitative rating for several aspects of the students' work (Excellent=5, Very Good=4, Good=3, Fair=2, Poor=1), and
- (b) Qualitative feedback on these aspects and on the professional program curriculum generally.

The question asks professionals to rate student projects based on the following competencies:

- *Professional ethics* (claims sourced, fairness/balance, diversity of sourcing – focus of this assessment)
- Critical thinking in news reporting (in evaluating information)
- Writing quality

Expectation:

- Media professionals' quantitative feedback on ethics will average 3.5 (which rounds up to 4=Very Good) or higher across the student work.
- Qualitative feedback will be consistent with quantitative assessments.

Schedule for data:

Select ACEJMC competencies such as this one are assessed every two years, generally. Particular assessment needs or obstacles each year may increase or decrease this frequency. Professional portfolio reviews are conducted annually, but assessed competencies are rotated.

Key personnel:

Members of the Assessment Committee and selected media professionals.

OUTCOME 2: THINK CRITICALLY IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

MEASURE 1: Professional portfolio review: Critical thinking in news reporting

Details/Descriptions:

Approximately 11 portfolio evaluations total conducted by five media professionals from broadcast and print news outlets:

- Two pros evaluate around four student portfolios each online (8 evals total)
- Three pros who visit the senior capstone class each provide one overall eval of the portfolios they looked at while visiting (3 evals total)

Media professionals provide:

- (a) Quantitative rating for several aspects of the students' work (Excellent=5, Very Good=4, Good=3, Fair=2, Poor=1), and
- (b) Qualitative feedback on these aspects and on the professional program curriculum generally.

The question asks professionals to rate student projects based on the following competencies:

- *Critical thinking in news reporting* (in evaluating information – focus of this assessment)
- Professional ethics (claims are sourced, fairness/balance, diversity of sourcing)
- Writing quality

Expectation:

Media professionals' quantitative feedback on critical thinking in news reporting will average 3.5 (which rounds up to 4=Very Good) or higher across the student work.

Qualitative feedback will be consistent with quantitative assessments.

Schedule for data:

Select ACEJMC competencies such as this one are assessed every two years, generally. Particular assessment needs or obstacles each year may increase or decrease this frequency. Professional portfolio reviews are conducted annually, but assessed competencies are rotated.

Key personnel:

Members of the JCM Assessment Committee and selected media professionals.

MEASURE 2: Internship eval: Critical thinking

Details/Descriptions:

Student internship performance is evaluated each semester by internship coordinators at a variety of sites. The evaluation covers numerous criteria. Only critical thinking, writing, reporting, photo/video ability (presentation competency), and editing are included in our assessment reports, as these correspond with ACEJMC competencies. This assessment is for *critical thinking*.

Each competency is evaluated on a 1-5 scale (5=Excellent, 4=Very Good, 3=Good, 2=Fair, 1=Poor). Evaluations are aggregated into mean scores for each competency across all Fall 2021 eval forms.

Expectation:

It is expected that supervisors' quantitative ratings will average 3.5 (rounding up to "very good") or higher for this area.

Schedule for data:

Internship evaluation data is collected annually, but this competency is assessed every two years, generally. Changing needs or obstacles may alter this schedule.

Key personnel:

Internship supervisors complete the evaluation forms, and forms are collected by the department's internship coordinator. The assessment committee has access to completed forms and committee members compute the mean scores.

MEASURE 3: Internship eval: News reporting/Research

Details/Descriptions:

Student internship performance is evaluated each semester by internship coordinators at a variety of sites. The evaluation covers numerous criteria. Only critical thinking, writing, reporting, photo/video ability (presentation competency), and editing are included in our assessment reports, as these correspond with ACEJMC competencies. This assessment is for *news reporting/research*.

Each competency is evaluated on a 1-5 scale (5-Excellent, 4-Very Good, 3=Good, 2=Fair, 1=Poor). Evaluations are aggregated into mean scores for each competency across all Fall 2021 eval forms.

Expectation:

It is expected that supervisors' quantitative ratings will average 3.5 (rounding up to "very good") or higher for this area.

Schedule for data collection:

Internship evaluation data is collected annually, but this competency is assessed every two years, generally. Changing needs or obstacles may alter this schedule.

Key personnel:

Internship supervisors complete the evaluation forms, and forms are collected by the department's internship coordinator. The assessment committee has access to completed forms and committee members compute the mean scores.

OUTCOME 3: WRITE CORRECTLY AND CLEARLY

Students will write correctly and clearly in forms and styles that are appropriate for the professions, audiences, and purposes they serve.

MEASURE 1: Professional portfolio review: Writing

Details/Descriptions:

Approximately 11 portfolio evaluations total conducted by five media professionals from broadcast and print news outlets:

- Two pros evaluate around four student portfolios each online (8 evals total)
- Three pros who visit the senior capstone class each provide one overall eval of the portfolios they looked at while visiting (3 evals total)

Media professionals provide:

- (a) Quantitative rating for several aspects of the students' work (Excellent=5, Very Good=4, Good=3, Fair=2, Poor=1), and
- (b) Qualitative feedback on these aspects and on the professional program curriculum generally.

The question asks professionals to rate student projects based on the following competencies:

- *Writing quality* (focus of this assessment)
- Professional ethics (claims are sourced, fairness/balance, diversity of sourcing)
- Critical thinking in news reporting (in evaluating information)

Expectation of achievement:

Media professionals' quantitative feedback on writing quality will average 3.5 (which rounds up to 4=Very Good) or higher across the student work.

Qualitative feedback will be consistent with quantitative assessments.

Schedule for data collection:

Select ACEJMC competencies such as this one are assessed every two years, generally. Particular assessment needs or obstacles each year may increase or decrease this frequency. Professional portfolio reviews are conducted annually, but assessed competencies are rotated.

Key personnel:

Members of the JCM Assessment Committee and selected media professionals.

MEASURE 2: Internship eval: Writing

Details/Descriptions:

Student internship performance is evaluated each semester by internship coordinators at a variety of sites. The evaluation covers numerous criteria. Only critical thinking, writing, reporting, photo/video ability (presentation competency), and editing are included in our assessment reports, as these correspond with ACEJMC competencies. This assessment is for *writing quality*.

Each competency is evaluated on a 1-5 scale (5-Excellent, 4-Very Good, 3=Good, 2=Fair, 1=Poor). Evaluations are aggregated into mean scores for each competency across all Fall 2021 eval forms.

Expectation:

It is expected that supervisors' quantitative ratings will average 3.5 (rounding up to "very good") or higher for this area.

Schedule for data:

Internship evaluation data is collected annually, but this competency is assessed every two years, generally. Changing needs or obstacles may alter this schedule.

Key personnel:

Internship supervisors complete the evaluation forms, and forms are collected by the department's internship coordinator. The assessment committee has access to completed forms and committee members compute the mean scores.

MEASURE 3: Eval of Advanced Reporting courses: Writing

Details/Descriptions:

As part of an assessment action plan put in place to address writing concerns, the instructor of the core JCM 303 News writing/Reporting class, in consultation with the Assessment Committee Chair, created a rubric that instructors of upper-level writing/reporting courses could use to assess their students' competency in "writing quality." These skills are taught in the required core JCM 303 course, and the assessment checks for level of knowledge/skill retention.

At the end of the Spring 2023 semester, instructors of two upper-level news reporting classes will rate how strongly they agree that students demonstrate competency in the following skills related to "writing quality" in a news reporting context:

Student shows competency in...

1. Writing effective ledes
2. Writing stories that are clearly and logically organized
3. Writing active, efficient sentences
4. Using correct grammar.
5. Using correct journalistic style (e.g., AP style)
6. Applying these competencies to both hard news and soft (feature) news stories
7. Applying these writing competencies across different platforms

Strongly disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly agree=5).

Expectation:

Mean competency levels of 4 or above should be met: 4=Agreement that student has demonstrated the competency. (This standard is higher than the 3.5 level used in some similarly measured assessments because of the intentionality of this effort.)

Schedule for data:

Select ACEJMC competencies such as this one are assessed every two years, on average. Particular assessment needs or obstacles each year may increase or decrease this frequency.

Key personnel:

The JCM 303 Newswriting instructor created the assessment rubric in collaboration with the JCM Assessment Committee chair. The JCM assessment committee is responsible for collecting and analyzing the data, working with the faculty members who teach the assessed courses.

MEASURE 4: Writing survey of students (indirect measure)

Details/Descriptions:

JCM 303 News Writing and Reporting students in fall 2021 and spring 2022 (N=165) were given statements about their perceptions of the effectiveness of writing instruction in the class, and this assessment was also conducted in 2020-21 and 2019-20. This assessment will be conducted again in fall 2022 and spring 2023. The assessment has been conducted frequently (almost yearly) because of the centrality of the writing competency to the news major and the journalism profession; repetition also allows for comparison in results across time.

Students rated each statement on a 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree).

1. I understand how to organize a news story.
2. JCM 303 helped me understand how to organize a news story.
3. I understand how to keep readers engaged in a news story.
4. JCM 303 helped me understand how to keep readers engaged in a news story.
5. I understand journalistic style.
6. JCM 303 helped me understand journalistic writing style.
7. I understand how to write in a grammatically correct way.
8. JCM 303 helped me understand how to write in a grammatically correct way.

Expectation:

- (1) A 4.0 (very good) or higher for means of all measures, and
- (2) Trends of improvement or stability of acceptable scores across the years this assessment has been conducted.

Schedule for data:

Select ACEJMC competencies are assessed, or receive stronger analytical focus every two years, on average. However, the writing competency has been evaluated every year during the cycle, given its widespread importance across the courses. Particular assessment needs or obstacles each year may increase or decrease this frequency.

Key personnel:

The JCM assessment committee is responsible for collecting data, in cooperation with the faculty who teach the assessed class.

OUTCOME 4: TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

Students will demonstrate the ability to apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions.

MEASURE 1: Broadcast news audio production

Details/Descriptions:

Assessments over the last few years have indicated problems with students' audio production. Faculty discussion about this problem helped identify a need to improve audio instruction earlier in the News Major sequence. An action plan was put into place to implement and assess this instruction in JCM 331 Introduction to Electronic Production. Instruction will provide more feedback at each level of competency, as assignments become increasingly complex. Work will be assessed at each level.

1. Following instruction, students will be given a cursory, baseline assignment of recording VO style b-roll where they are required to record two-channel audio recordings with their video. Lectures will address natural sound, how to consider recording sound on scene, and how to conduct and record strong interview audio. This first assignment will be assessed and feedback provided.
2. In class, students will be given an assignment to record b-roll and natural sound for a VO/SOT. They will also be tasked with interviewing a subject and recording the interview. Materials they recorded will be workshopped. This second assignment will be assessed and feedback provided.
3. In the final assignment, students will build on previous lessons about natural sound and interview sound, and will add in their own voice tracks. This project will be preceded by a lesson on recording strong audio—including avoiding over modulation, pops, and wind sound. This is the third and final stage of audio production. This third assignment will be assessed and feedback provided.

In total, this class will produce two "level 1" stories, or VOs. This will be repeated for two "level 2" stories, or VO/SOTs, and two "level 3" stories, or packages. Audio production gets progressively more complicated as the course progresses, and additional instruction is brought in throughout.

Expectation:

The plan will assess (a) student learning for each assignment and (b) student improvement across the three assignments. Measures, based on the assignment's grading rubric, will include the following four

statements, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale. This will result in 12 measures total, 4 for each of the three assignments. Means for each measure will be compared across the three assignments in order to evaluate progress.

- Audio is clear and free of static or pops.
(Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5)
- Students demonstrate appropriate use of natural sound.
(Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree)
- Audio is appropriately leveled.
(Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree)
- Audio contributes meaningfully to the story.
(Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree)

Schedule for data:

Data will be collected Fall 2022, and the plan is repeat this assessment Spring 2023.

Key personnel:

The JCM assessment committee is responsible for collecting data, in cooperation with the faculty who teach the assessed classes.

Three other competencies will also be assessed, as part of an annual test given to freshmen and seniors:

OUTCOME 5: UNDERSTAND COMMUNICATION LAW

Students will understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and the press.

OUTCOME 6: UNDERSTAND HISTORY

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.

OUTCOME 7: CULTURALLY PROFICIENT COMMUNICATION

Students will demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.

MEASURE: Freshman/Seniors Test

Details/Description:

A 24-item multiple choice test is administered annually to freshmen in the MC 101 Introduction to Mass Communication class and to students across multiple senior-level JCM classes. Questions measure

knowledge of competencies in media and mass communication: Law, Culturally Proficient Communication (formerly domestic and global diversity), Ethics, Theory, History. These competencies have been prescribed by ACEJMC, our accrediting body. Test results are compared annually.

Expectation:

It is expected that senior-level scores (percent correct) for comm law will be higher than freshman-level scores, indicating knowledge gain across the 6 competency areas.

Schedule:

These pre-test/post-test data are collected annually from both freshmen and seniors -- either once or twice during the year. These are competencies that our accrediting body, ACEJMC, have encouraged us to assess.

Key personnel:

The JCM assessment committee is responsible for collecting and analyzing the data, working with the faculty members who teach MC 101 and the senior capstone courses.