



# CORE CURRICULUM INSTRUCTOR HANDBOOK

Fifth Edition 2023-2024



More info at: <https://srinfo.sulross.edu/ie/core-curriculum/>

Dear Faculty,

Thank you for teaching one or more of the General Education Core Curriculum courses. Your courses provide students with a rich foundation in the areas of communication; language, philosophy, and culture; American history; mathematics; life & physical science; social & behavioral science; creative arts; and political science. Embedded in all the courses are the six core objectives that equip students with the knowledge and skills to adapt to multiple situations and careers throughout their lives. With the general education lenses that reflect broad ranges of perspectives, students are better able to contribute to our rapidly changing global world.

In 2011, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) adopted the Core Course statewide initiative, which states that **each fall and spring Core Course must integrate one to two assigned core objectives into their courses each year**. The THECB created a list of specific skills to be applied to core courses on an assigned rotation:

	Critical Thinking	Communication	Empirical & Quantitative	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
Communication	X	X		X		X
Mathematics	X	X	X			
Life & Physical Sciences	X	X	X	X		
Language, Philosophy, Culture	X	X			X	X
Creative Arts	X	X		X	X	
American History	X	X			X	X
Government, Political Science	X	X			X	X
Behavioral & Social Sciences	X	X	X		X	
Education	X	X	X		X	
Business	X	X	X		X	

The skills to be assessed for the 2023-2024 academic year for **all core courses** are **Critical Thinking** and **Communication**.

You can find more information about the Texas Core Curriculum requirements here: <https://www.highered.texas.gov/our-work/supporting-our-institutions/institutional-resources/transfer-resources/texas-core-curriculum/>.

And you can always reach out to the Institutional Effectiveness Office for assistance:

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## Core Curriculum Fall and Spring Skill Assessment Process

1. Skills are pre-determined and assigned yearly by THECB. Faculty insert the skill-specific student learning outcome (SLO) into their syllabi; see page 3 for SLOs.
2. Faculty may determine any appropriate method to assess students according to the skill-specific SLOs.
  - a. The assignment must be designed as a pre and post assessment.
  - b. SRSU has a target goal of 60% of students showing improvement between the pre-assessment and post-assessment.
  - c. For examples of assignments to meet SLOs, see page 4.
3. Faculty will use the skill-specific rubrics on page 5 and 6 of this guide to assess the pre and post assignments.
4. Faculty will use the Core Curriculum Instructor's Assessment Collection Tool to describe the assignment and to record student achievement:  
[https://sulross.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_dj3xs2xFW1X7J0W](https://sulross.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dj3xs2xFW1X7J0W).
5. IE reports university-wide results to THECB.

### Important Dates

September 8, 2023	Meeting: Fall Core Curriculum Assessment Process
December 7, 2023	Faculty Report Fall Embedded Assessment Results
January 17, 2024	Reminder: Spring Core Curriculum Assessment Process
May 2, 2024	Faculty Report Spring Embedded Assessment Results

## **Skill-Specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Core Courses**

Please include the SLOs for both **Critical Thinking** and **Communication** skills in your syllabi for fall and spring semesters 2023-2024.

### **Critical Thinking**

Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

### **Communication**

Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

### **Empirical & Quantitative**

Students will develop empirical and quantitative skills to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.

### **Teamwork**

Students will develop teamwork skills to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

### **Personal Responsibility**

Students will develop principles of personal responsibility for living in a diverse world; to include intercultural competency, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

### **Social Responsibility**

Students will develop principles of social responsibility for living in a diverse world, to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

## Examples of Skill-Specific Assignments for Core Courses

### Critical Thinking

Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Present an article from a journal related to an issue or idea presented within the course. Ask students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the article and to identify any biases. Have students rate one another using the Critical Thinking Rubric and record scores.	An additional article could be given with the same expectations. Use the Critical Thinking Rubric to assess students and record scores.

### Communication

Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Provide students with selected readings from the course content and have them write a summary addressing the five criteria on the Communication Rubric.	Provide a related reading and have students write a summary. Use the Communication Rubric to assess scores.

### Empirical & Quantitative Reasoning

Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Provide students with data in tables or graphs. Ask them to quantitatively corroborate these presentations, interpret data, and justify interpretations. Use the Empirical & Quantitative Rubric to score students.	Provide another set of data with the same assignment parameters. Use the Empirical & Quantitative Rubric to score students.

### Teamwork

Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Have students brainstorm a topic in the course as a group. Students can rate themselves using the Teamwork Scoring Rubric and record scores.	Give another group brainstorm task and have students rate themselves again on the Teamwork Scoring Rubric and record scores.

### Social Responsibility

Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Have a guided group discussion about a cultural topic relevant to the course. Use the Social Responsibility Rubric to score students.	Have a similar discussion later in the semester using the Social Responsibility Rubric to score students.

### Personal Responsibility

Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Assign a research assignment to students about a topic in the course. Score the paper with the Personal Responsibility Rubric.	Provide students a second chance to improve the research assignment. Use the Personal Responsibility Rubric to score students.

## Core Curriculum Scoring Rubric for Communication Skills

Criteria	Not Observed 0	Minimal 1	Improving 2	Proficient 3
<b>Organization</b>		Organizational pattern has little organizational structure; contains random unconnected elements.	Organizational pattern is observable; lacks organization and sometimes disjointed and/or awkward.	Organizational pattern is clearly and consistently observable; contains elements of transition, logical development, and coherent flow of ideas
<b>Technique</b>		Marginal demonstration of appropriateness and quality of technique for the chosen mode.	Attempts to demonstrate appropriateness and quality of technique for the chosen mode.	Demonstrates appropriateness and quality of technique for the chosen mode. For example, executes appropriate genre and disciplinary conventions on written works; or effective oral delivery; or notable craftsmanship of visual works.
<b>Purpose and Audience</b>		Minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task.	Awareness of context, audience, purpose, and the assigned task. The purpose of the message is vague or unclear, and style is moderately appropriate to audience.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context). The purpose of the message can be clearly discerned, and style is appropriate to audience.
<b>Professional or Academic Language</b>		Many errors in grammar and format. Language choices are questionable and ineffective.	Includes some errors in grammar and format that occasionally interfere with communication. Language choices are mundane and partially effective.	Very few errors in grammar and format that do not interfere with communication. Language choices are mostly effective and contributes to the overall meaning.
<b>Supporting Materials</b>		Attempts to use sources to support ideas but insufficiently makes references. Fails to attribute sources as appropriate.	Attempts to use credible or relevant sources to support ideas. References may be weak and sources inconsistently attributed.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the intended message or discipline. Refers to supporting information or analysis, or establishes credibility or authority on the topic, and generally attributes sources as appropriate.

*This Core Curriculum Rubric was adapted from the SRSU Quality Enhancement Plan Cardinal Rubric that drew upon the Association of American Colleges and Universities oral communication VALUE rubric, the National Communication Association's Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students, Texas A&M University's Visual Communication rubric, Otis College of Arts and Design's Fine Arts rubric, Lane Community College Communicating Effectively Rubric, and Stephen F. Austin State University's assessment rubric for Oral and Visual Communication.*

## Core Curriculum Scoring Rubric for Critical Thinking Skills

Criteria	Not Observed 0	Minimal 1	Improving 2	Proficient 3
<b>Think creatively</b>		Specific position (perspective/thesis/hypothesis) is stated but is simplistic and obvious.	Specific position (perspective/thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides and aspects of an issue.	Specific position (perspective/thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue.
<b>Think in an innovative way</b>		Demonstrates limited new ideas or approaches.	Demonstrates some new ideas or approaches.	Consistently demonstrates new ideas or approaches.
<b>Frame questions (inquiries)</b>		Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description. Content has some inaccuracies.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, inaccuracies.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, accurate, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.
<b>Synthesize multiple findings in field into larger whole</b>		Conclusion is tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.

*This rubric was created using the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Ethical Reasoning VALUE Rubric. Retrieved from <https://www.aac11.org/value-rubrics>*