Core Curriculum Submission to the THECB
Component II: Core Objective Assessment Plan

A. Describe the institution's process to determine the appropriate level of attainment to the Core Objectives.

An integral part of the delivery of the core curriculum is the assessment of the core objectives. By design of the Core Curriculum Course Selection Committee, departments were invited to choose between participating in a "communal" assessment process or assuming total responsibility for assessment, analysis, and reporting of results to the University by selecting the "individual" assessment option. The vast majority of departments will participate in the communal assessment of core objectives. In addition, following an assessment cycle and as this process matures, departments will continue to have the option to join the communal assessments facilitated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting (IER).

Faculty members proposing core curriculum courses at The University of Texas at Arlington and participating in the communal assessment included signature assignments where students demonstrate their attainment of the core objective aligned with that course. Within Core Curriculum courses, faculty members will make judgments regarding students' levels of attainment of skills and objectives as part of the good practice of teaching and learning. In addition to good practice in course delivery and assessment, these signature assignments will be collected at an institutional level, sampled by course, and scored by a panel of faculty using rubrics modified from the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics in order to highlight the multiple dimensions of each of the objectives and to describe student attainment of the State's six Core Objectives at the University of Texas at Arlington.

For direct measures, samples of student work from the signature assignments will be gleaned from core courses across the Core Curriculum in which the majority of students are in their second year of college.

While some faculty members individually use some of the VALUE Rubrics within their courses, the institution does not have previous collective information across foundational component areas on our students' attainment of these skills via these instruments. Thus, the University will rely on good practice and other Texas institutions engaged in this activity, such as LEAP Texas, to determine an appropriate attainment level from which to begin to collect information over time. In addition, an emerging assessment input group, with representation from all colleges and schools, has begun to meet to offer insight into issues related to student attainment. The University will begin by evaluating primarily sophomores completing signature assignments; therefore, students will score a Milestone of 2 or higher from a range of 1-4 on the selected AAC&U VALUE Rubrics. As is good practice, following each assessment, the University and appropriate assessment groups and committees, such as the Committee on Undergraduate Curricula, will engage in continuous evaluation of the level of attainment as we learn more about direct measures of our students' best work.

Indirect measures will be used to complement assessment information related to direct student attainment of the core objectives. One indirect measure will be the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). UT Arlington has participated in the NSSE since 2002 as required by The University of Texas System. The survey is administered annually to all first year students and seniors. After being used for over a decade, the NSSE instrument was updated and the new version was launched in spring 2013. The survey questions on the new NSSE version align well with the State's six Core Objectives and will be outlined in the next section. UT Arlington plans to use the NSSE results from the 2013 and 2014 administrations as our benchmarks and to inform our level of expected attainment. After implementation of the new Core Curriculum in fall 2014, longitudinal trends of the results will be monitored over time, compared against previous benchmarks, and will be triangulated with assessment information from our direct measures.

The second indirect measure will be the UT Arlington Exit Survey given to graduating seniors. The University has been gathering information about students' experiences at the institution for more than a decade. Specifically, the last form of the survey addressed some of the THECB's previous Exemplary Educational Objectives (EEOs). Now at a transition in the assessment of the State's Core Objectives, UT Arlington is currently revising the learning outcomes section of the Exit Survey to more closely reflect our expectations of students related to the Six Core Objectives. UT Arlington will expect students to report that they are "very well prepared" or "adequately prepared" related to the attainment of the Core Objectives. Those questions will be aligned with the Six Core Objectives so that the information can be triangulated with results from the direct measures and enrich our understanding of student attainment of the Six Core Objectives.

B. **Describe the institution's plan for assessment of each Core Objective. Include the following components of the institution's assessment plan:**
   - Assessment methods – explain the methodology (institutional portfolios, embedded assessment, etc.), describe the measures (must include at least one direct measure), outline the frequency and timeline of assessment;
   - Criteria/Targets –explain the criteria and targets for the level of attainment of each Core Objective, include references to externally informed benchmarks;
   - Analysis—explain how the results of the assessment will be evaluated; and
   - Actions and Follow-Up—explain the process for improving student learning based on the assessment results.

Assessment Methods

The University of Texas at Arlington will use multiple measures to assess attainment of each of the Core Objectives.

1. **Critical Thinking Skills** – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
   - A panel of faculty will apply a modified version of the AAC&U VALUE rubric for critical thinking to student work gleaned from signature assignments. (Direct)
   - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Indirect)

   The NSSE items related to critical thinking skills to be used are:

   During the current school year, how often have you done the following?
   - Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
   - Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
   - Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
   - Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
   - Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge

   During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?
   - Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
   - Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
   - Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source
   - Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information

   During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

- Identified key information from reading assignments

How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?
- Thinking critically and analytically
- Solving complex real-world problem
- UT Arlington Exit Survey (Indirect)

2. **Communication Skills** – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
- A panel of faculty will apply a modified version of the AAC&U VALUE rubric for written communication to student work gleaned from signature assignments. (Direct)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Indirect)

The NSSE items related to communication skills to be used are:

During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?
- Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials
- Give a course presentation

How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?
- Writing clearly and effectively
- Speaking clearly and effectively
- UT Arlington Exit Survey (Indirect)

3. **Empirical and Quantitative Skills** – to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.
- A panel of faculty applying a modified version of the AAC&U VALUE rubric for quantitative literacy to student work gleaned from signature assignments. (Direct)

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Indirect)

The NSSE items related to empirical and quantitative skills to be used are:

During the current school year, how often have you
- Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)
- Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)
- Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information

How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?
- Analyzing numerical and statistical information
- UT Arlington Exit Survey (Direct)

4. **Teamwork** – to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
   - A panel of faculty will apply a modified version of the AAC&U VALUE rubric for teamwork to student work gleaned from signature assignments. (Direct) National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Indirect)

The NSSE items related teamwork to be used are:

During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?
- Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students
- Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?
- Work with a faculty member on a research project

How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

- Working effectively with others
- UT Arlington Exit Survey (Indirect)

5. **Personal Responsibility** – to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
   - A panel of faculty applying a modified version of the AAC&U VALUE rubric for ethical reasoning to student work gleaned from signature assignments. (Direct)
   - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Indirect)

The NSSE items related to personal responsibility to be used are:

How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

- Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics
- Being informed and active citizen

About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing and other academic activities)
- UT Arlington Exit Survey (Indirect)

6. **Social Responsibility** – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities
   - A panel of faculty will apply a modified version of the AAC&U VALUE rubric for intercultural competence to student work gleaned from signature assignments. (Direct)
   - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Indirect)

The NSSE items related to social responsibility to be used are:

During the current school year, how often have you done the following?

- Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments

During the current school year, how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups?

- People from a race or ethnicity other than your own
- People from an economic background other than your own
- People with religious beliefs other than your own
- People with political views other than your own

How much does your institution emphasize the following?

- Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)
- Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues

About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?

- Doing community service or volunteer work

How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

- Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)
- UT Arlington Exit Survey (Indirect)

Frequency and Timeline of Institutional Assessment

The table below outlines an assessment schedule for UT Arlington for each of the State's Six Core Objectives across the Core Curriculum so that the institution will focus on every Core Objective in each Foundational Component Area by Spring 2017.

Required Core Objectives

Semester	Foundational Component Area	CT	COM	EQS	TW	SR	PR
Fall 2014	Communication		◯				
	Mathematics		◯				
Spring 2015	Mathematics	◯		◯			
	Life and Physical Sciences			◯			
	Social and Behavioral Sciences			◯			
Fall 2015	Life and Physical Sciences	◯	◯				
	Language, Philosophy & Culture	◯	◯				
	Creative Arts	◯	◯				
Spring 2016	Communication				◯		
	Life and Physical Sciences				◯		
	Language, Philosophy & Culture					◯	
	Creative Arts				◯	◯	
	American History					◯	
	Government/Political Science					◯	
	Social and Behavioral Sciences					◯	
Fall 2016	American History	◯	◯				
	Government/Political Science	◯	◯				
	Social and Behavioral Sciences	◯	◯				
Spring 2017	Communication	◯					◯
	Language, Philosophy & Culture						◯
	American History						◯
	Government/Political Science						◯

Analysis

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting will analyze the assessment information and create appropriate reports for distribution.

Actions and Follow-Up

At the course level, faculty members teaching in the Core Curriculum will be continuously assessing students and their attainment of the State's Six Objectives. This iterative process of teaching and assessment in the classroom includes pedagogical adjustments that focus on student success and learning.

Additionally, a recertification process will be implemented through the Committee on Undergraduate Curricula that will continue to ensure the good quality of the courses in the Core Curriculum and that the focus on the State's Six Core Objectives is adequately embedded and maintained over time.

Faculty and administrators will interpret assessment information related to students' attainment of the State's Six Core Objectives. The Committee on Undergraduate Curricula will analyze and interpret the assessment results from direct and indirect measures and will make recommendations related to student learning and attainment to the Provost's Office. In addition, an emerging assessment group, with representation from all the colleges and schools at UT Arlington, as well as Student Affairs, will also study the trends and assessment information related to student learning and attainment of the State's Six Objectives and make recommendations related to student learning, as well as the assessment process and its effectiveness. Assessment information may also inform opportunities for faculty development programs through our newly organized Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) related to good practices in teaching and learning.

Ultimately, UT Arlington seeks to ensure that the State's Six Core Objectives are adequately embedded throughout the Core Curriculum. The emphasis of these Core

Objectives will be well documented through our signature assignments, and UT Arlington's focus on our students and these critical 21st century skills will be clear.