ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY USING AN ADAPTED AAC&U VALUE RUBRIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

Spring 2025 Report

Measuring Social Responsibility Skills, Spring 2025 Report

Social Responsibility is a key component of the Texas Core Curriculum, emphasizing students' ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) defines Social Responsibility as: "the ability to demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities." As one of the six core objectives mandated by THECB, Social Responsibility objective promotes understanding and participation in civic life, ethical reasoning, cultural diversity, and a global perspective.

At The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), the assessment of Social Responsibility is conducted as part of a multi-year evaluation cycle that ensures all six core objectives are reviewed regularly. To assess student performance, faculty and trained staff score student work samples using the UTA version of Social Responsibility rubric. Student artifacts used for this assessment are collected from embedded Signature Assignments across a representative sample of core courses.

Methods

Participants

Written samples of Signature Assignments were collected from multiple sections of ENGL 2309 World Literature and ENGL 2329 American Literature courses, which are part of the core curriculum and offered every semester at UTA. These courses attract a diverse group of students across UTA. IER staff reviewed ungraded papers to determine their suitability for inclusion in the scoring session and deidentified them to remove names and other personal information, thereby protecting student privacy. The sample of student work analyzed for the Spring 2025 Social Responsibility assessment comprised 267 students. Most students identified as female (69.66%), while male students represented 30.34% of the sample.

In terms of racial and ethnic identity, the largest groups were Hispanic/Latino and White students, each comprising 30.71% of the total. Black/African American students accounted for 17.60%, followed by Asian students at 13.48%. Smaller proportions were observed among students identifying as Multiple Ethnicities (4.12%), Foreign (2.62%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (0.37%). One student did not specify their racial/ethnic identity. Over 60% of the students (62.55%) self-identified as first-generation college students,

while 32.58% were classified as non-first generation. For a small subset of students (4.87%), first-generation status data was unavailable. This demographic breakdown reflects a diverse group of students, which is essential for assessing the development of Social Responsibility, a core objective closely tied to cultural understanding, civic knowledge, and global awareness.

Table 1: Student Demographics

Categorical Information	N	%
Gender		
Female	186	69.66%
Male	81	30.34%
Racial/Ethnic Description		
Hispanic/Latino	82	30.71%
White	82	30.71%
Black/African American	47	17.60%
Asian	36	13.48%
Multiple Ethnicities	11	4.12%
Foreign	7	2.62%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.37%
Not Specified	1	0.37%
First Generation Student		
First Generation	167	62.55%
Non-First Generation	87	32.58%
First Generation Data Unavailable	13	4.87%

The assessment sample for the Spring 2025 Social Responsibility objective included students at various stages of their academic journey. Seniors constituted the largest academic classification group, comprising 40.07% of the students, followed by juniors at 29.96%. Sophomores represented 23.60% of the sample, while fifth-year students and freshmen made up 3.37% and 3.00%, respectively. In terms of enrollment cohorts, over a third of the students (35.21%) enrolled in the 2021–2022 academic year. Another 27.34% began in 2022–2023, while 17.23% enrolled in 2020–2021. Notably, 14.98% of the students began their studies in 2018 or earlier, suggesting the inclusion of non-traditional or extended-program students in the sample. Much of the sample (70.04%) were enrolled full-time, with the remaining 29.96% studying part-time. Additionally, over half of the students (55.43%) had transferred from another institution, while 44.57% began their studies at UTA (see Table 2 for details).

Table 2: *Student Status at UT Arlington*

Categorical Information	N	%
Academic Level		
Senior	107	40.07%
Junior	80	29.96%
Sophomore	63	23.60%
Fifth Year	9	3.37%
Freshman	8	3.00%
Enrollment Year		
2021 - 2022	94	35.21%
2022 - 2023	73	27.34%
2020 - 2021	46	17.23%
2019 - 2020	14	5.24%
2018 and Prior	40	14.98%
Academic Load		
Enrolled Full-Time	187	70.04%
Enrolled Part-Time	80	29.96%
Transfer Student		
Transferred	148	55.43%
Non-Transferred	119	44.57%

Most students assessed for the Social Responsibility core objective in Spring 2025 were enrolled in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation, which accounted for 45.69% of the total sample. Other colleges with notable representation included the College of Architecture, Planning & Public Affairs (11.24%) and the College of Liberal Arts (10.86%). These disciplines often emphasize civic engagement, ethical responsibility, and social awareness, making them natural contributors to the Social Responsibility objective.

Table 3: Students by Colleges/Schools

College/School	No. of Students	Percentage
College of Nursing & Health Innovation	122	45.69%
College of Architecture, Planning & Public Affairs	30	11.24%
College of Liberal Arts	29	10.86%
College of Engineering	23	8.61%
College of Education	20	7.49%
Division of Student Success	20	7.49%
College of Science	15	5.62%
College of Business	7	2.62%
School of Social Work	1	0.37%

The College of Engineering (8.61%), College of Education (7.49%), and the Division of Student Success (7.49%) also contributed significantly, reflecting interdisciplinary integration of the core objective. Smaller representations were observed from the College of Science (5.62%), College of Business (2.62%), and School of Social Work (0.37%) (see Table 3 for details).

Assessment Instrument

Evidence of Social Responsibility in the Signature Assignment was measured using an adapted rubric, specifically the AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Rubric (AAC&U, 2009). The AAC&U VALUE Rubrics were developed as part of a national initiative to assess student learning outcomes in the core curriculum and have been extensively studied and validated for over ten years. In this adapted version, five of the six measures from the original rubric were retained verbatim, while the Verbal and Non-verbal Skills dimension was removed to better align with implementation strategies at UTA. The dimensions included in the present analysis were: 1) Knowledge: Cultural Self-Awareness, 2) Knowledge: Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks, 3) Skills: Empathy, 4) Attitudes: Curiosity, and 5) Attitudes: Openness. For details on all dimensions, see Appendix A.

The rubric functions as a matrix that provides narrative descriptions of expected work quality and corresponding point values for scoring the six measures. The point values range from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating baseline performance (Benchmark-1), 2 indicating approaching milestone (Milestone-2), 3 indicating achieved milestone (Milestone-3), and 4 indicating the highest mastery (Capstone-4) of Social Responsibility. AAC&U, the authors of the rubric, permit zero ratings if the paper does not meet the minimum content or quality standards defined in the rubric. Numerical ratings were set above the benchmark according to AAC&U recommendations (Greenhoot & Bernstein, 2012) and a standard acceptance criterion in the assessment community. Therefore, the attainment target was set at a score of 2 (Milestone-2).

Raters, Rater Calibration, and Scoring

Thirteen qualified UTA faculty and staff raters with advanced degrees participated in an in-person scoring session. During the session, each rater read and rated each paper silently in a group setting. To facilitate tracking, each rater was assigned a unique code number, which was included with the rating sheet to allow IER to monitor raters and the rating process.

An IER staff member, lead the discussion on the core curriculum goals, facilitated the rater calibration process, and conducted the scoring day. During calibration, the facilitator guided the raters through a discussion of the rubric dimensions and helped the group operationalize the levels for each skill measure. After discussing the rubric, the facilitator used one student work sample as an anchor paper for the calibration process. All raters scored the anchor paper across all five rubric dimensions, which was followed by a facilitated group discussion to clarify each dimension of the Social Responsibility rubric and to develop a shared approach to scoring.

The scoring process began once the raters felt comfortable with the dimensions and rating intervals. At least two raters reviewed each paper, and ratings were assigned using the rubric. Ratings were collected as they were completed and entered into a spreadsheet by IER staff, who reviewed the data to ensure no missing ratings or other concerns that may need immediate resolution. If the values of the skill measure scores for a paper from the two raters were identical or within one point difference, then the two scores were considered in agreement and averaged. For example, if Rater A scored the Empathy measure with a value of 2 and Rater B scored the same measure with a value of 3, then the rating was considered in agreement, and scores for that dimension were averaged, resulting in a score value of 2.5. However, if there was a difference of more than two points on any single dimension, a third rater was asked to read and assign scores for the paper. In such cases, three scores were averaged together to determine the final score. For example, if Rater A scored the Empathy measure with a value of 1 and Rater B scored the same measure with a value of 4, the rating was not in agreement, and a third rater was asked to read and score the paper.

Analysis and Results

Inter-rater Agreement

To evaluate the reliability of the assessment process, agreement between raters was analyzed to see how frequently the two raters agreed on scoring. The inter-rater agreement was observed throughout the scoring session to determine if re-calibration on one or more scale dimensions was necessary due to frequent low agreement. During the Social Responsibility scoring session, no re-calibration was needed.

The percentage of agreement between raters was calculated to see how frequently the two raters agreed on scoring for the same student and to gauge the effectiveness of the assessment

process. The percentage of agreement among raters for all categories remained between 81% and 91% for the five SR categories. Generally, a minimum of 70% inter-rater agreement is considered a baseline required agreement. Agreement scores above 70% indicate that the scoring is reliable. Table 4 displays the interrater agreement percentages for the five dimensions of the UTA Social Responsibility VALUE Rubric. Agreement was determined based on whether two raters assigned scores within a one-point difference. High agreement percentages across all dimensions indicate a strong level of consistency in the scoring process.

Table 4. Scoring Agreement Percentage Among Raters for SR Skills Dimensions

Dimension (UTA Social Responsibility VALUE Rubric)	Percentages
Knowledge (Cultural self-awareness)	93.26%
Knowledge (Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks)	92.51%
Skills (Empathy)	91.39%
Attitude (Curiosity)	94.76%
Attitude (Openness)	90.64%

Note: The agreement percentage was computed by dividing the number of agreements by the total number of ratings

The highest agreement was observed in the Attitude (Curiosity) dimension at 94.76%, followed closely by Knowledge (Cultural self-awareness) at 93.26%, and Knowledge (Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks) at 92.51%. These results suggest that raters shared a clear and consistent understanding when evaluating students' awareness of cultural identity and frameworks, as well as their curiosity toward intercultural learning. The dimension Skills (Empathy) showed a slightly lower yet still strong agreement at 91.39%, while the Attitude (Openness) dimension had the lowest percentage at 90.64%. These figures reflect a high level of agreement, indicating that raters were largely aligned in evaluating students' receptiveness to diverse cultural perspectives. These results support the reliability of the rubric and suggest that faculty raters were well-calibrated during the assessment process, promoting confidence in the validity of the scoring outcomes.

Apart from the simple percentage agreements, researchers widely measure the reliability of rating agreements between different raters to eliminate chance agreements using Intraclass Correlation Coefficient, the measure of the consistency among raters when scoring the same subjects independently. In the Social Responsibility scoring process, all raters have advanced

degrees and work experience and attended the same training just before the scoring session to mitigate biasness and chance agreement. The inter-rater agreement was also computed to follow best research practices. The extent to which different raters agree on their judgments establishes the validity and credibility of measurements or ratings.

The inter-rater agreement was determined to check the consistency level of the rating by calculating the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC). High ICC values indicate more reliability between rater scores. Commonly accepted guidelines were used to interpret the ICC results. These suggest that the range of 0.40 to 0.74 is considered fair to good inter-rater agreement, with results above 0.74 classified as excellent inter-rater agreement and results lower than 0.40 considered poor inter-rater agreement (Fleiss, 1986; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). The ICC values for each dimension of the Social Responsibility assessment, calculated using a two-way random effects model, are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Intraclass Correlation Coefficient for Social Responsibility Skills

Dimension (SR VALUE Rubric)	Coefficient
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	0.73
Knowledge (Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks)	0.61
Skills (Empathy)	0.63
Attitude (Curiosity)	0.62
Attitude (Openness)	0.71

Note 1: less than 0.40 = poor agreement; between 0.40 and 0.74 = fair to good agreement; greater than 0.74 = excellent agreement.

Note 2: The intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) was calculated as a two-way random effects model. Values in this model type with random rater pairings are typically expected to be lower than those where rater pairings are fixed throughout the rating day.

The highest ICC was observed for Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness) at 0.73, closely followed by Attitude (Openness) at 0.71. These scores approach the threshold for excellent agreement, indicating strong consistency among raters when evaluating students' recognition of their own cultural identities and openness to new perspectives. The remaining three dimensions—Skills (Empathy) at 0.63, Attitude (Curiosity) at 0.62, and Knowledge (Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks) at 0.61—also fall within the fair to good reliability range. These results suggest that while there was slightly more variability in scoring these dimensions, overall interrater consistency remained solid across the rubric. Given that the ICCs were derived

from a model using randomly assigned rater pairs (rather than fixed pairs throughout the rating day), these values are considered satisfactory and reflect dependable measurement across the Social Responsibility dimensions.

Students Performance

Table 6 displays the mean scores and standard deviations for each of the five dimensions assessed using the UTA Social Responsibility VALUE Rubric. Scores were based on a four-point scale, where higher values indicate stronger demonstration of the targeted skill or attribute.

Table 6. Means for Social Responsibility Skills Measure Scores

Measurement Dimensions	N	Mean	SD
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	167	2.49	0.69
Knowledge (Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks)	167	2.70	0.74
Skills (Empathy)	167	2.62	0.70
Attitude (Curiosity)	167	2.44	0.70
Attitude (Openness)	167	2.37	0.69

The highest average score was observed in Knowledge (Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks) with a mean of 2.70 (SD = 0.74), suggesting that students most consistently demonstrated an understanding of diverse cultural perspectives and global frameworks. This was closely followed by Skills (Empathy) with a mean of 2.62 (SD = 0.70), indicating a generally strong capacity among students to recognize and consider others' perspectives. Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness) yielded a mean of 2.49 (SD = 0.69), reflecting moderately high performance in students' ability to reflect on their own cultural identity. The two attitudinal dimensions—Curiosity and Openness—scored slightly lower, with means of 2.44 (SD = 0.70) and 2.37 (SD = 0.69), respectively.

These results suggest that while students demonstrate a fair degree of interest in and openness to cultural differences, these areas may benefit from further instructional emphasis and experiential learning opportunities. Overall, the mean scores across all dimensions suggest that students are developing key competencies related to Social Responsibility, particularly in cognitive and empathetic skills, though there remains room for growth in fostering attitudinal dispositions such as curiosity and openness.

Summary, Observations, and Limitations

This report presents results from communal rating sessions of UTA student work to assess Social Responsibility achievement as part of the core curriculum. The assessment of Signature Assignments used an adapted rubric to measure student learning in Social Responsibility domain—a modified version of the AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE rubric.

Students demonstrated strongest performance in the cognitive and skill-based dimensions of Social Responsibility, particularly in Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks (M = 2.70) and Empathy (M = 2.62). Cultural Self-Awareness (M = 2.49) also yielded a moderately high average, indicating that many students were able to reflect on their own cultural identities and values in relation to others. The attitudinal dimensions, Curiosity (M = 2.44) and Openness (M = 2.37), scored slightly lower. Rater agreement was consistently high across all dimensions, with agreement percentages ranging from 90.64% to 94.76%, reflecting strong consistency in scoring judgments among evaluators. Reliability (ICCs) ranged from 0.61 to 0.73, indicating fair to good agreement across all rubric dimensions. Notably, Cultural Self-Awareness (ICC = 0.73) and Openness (ICC = 0.71) approached the threshold for excellent reliability, further affirming the robustness of the scoring process.

The assessment relies on embedded signature assignments, which vary by instructor and course. Differences in assignment prompts, structure, or expectations may affect the degree to which students demonstrate targeted competencies, potentially introducing variability in results. The data represent a snapshot of one semester (Spring 2025), limiting the ability to draw conclusions about long-term trends or broader generalizability across cohorts or disciplines. While the assessment includes students from diverse racial, ethnic, and academic backgrounds, some colleges and schools were underrepresented in the sample, which may limit the applicability of findings across the full student population at UTA.

References

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and Competence VALUE rubric. Retrieved on 08/15/2016 from
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Appendix A: UTA's Version of Social Responsibility VALUE Rubric

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY RUBRIC

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
Knowledge *Cultural self-awareness*	Articulates insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g. seeking complexity; aware of how her/his experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description.)	Recognizes new perspectives about own cultural rules and biases (e.g. not looking for sameness; comfortable with the complexities that new perspectives offer.)	Identifies own cultural rules and biases (e.g. with a strong preference for those rules shared with own cultural group and seeks the same in others.)	Shows minimal awareness of own cultural rules and biases (even those shared with own cultural group(s)) (e.g. uncomfortable with identifying possible cultural differences with others.)
Knowledge *Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks*	Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates partial understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates surface understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.
Skills *Empathy*	Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.	Recognizes intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview and sometimes uses more than one worldview in interactions.	Identifies components of other cultural perspectives but responds in all situations with own worldview.	Views the experience of others but does so through own cultural worldview.
Attitudes *Curiosity*	Asks complex questions about other cultures, seeks out and articulates answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.	Asks deeper questions about other cultures and seeks out answers to these questions.	Asks simple or surface questions about other cultures.	States minimal interest in learning more about other cultures.
Attitudes *Openness*	Initiates and develops interactions with culturally different others. Suspends judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Begins to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others. Begins to suspend judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Expresses openness to most, if not all, interactions with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, and is aware of own judgment and expresses a willingness to change.	Receptive to interacting with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, but is unaware of own judgment.

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Adapted for the University of Texas at Arlington
from AAC&U's Intercultural Knowledge VALUE Rubric
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