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**Lake Erie College CORE Assessment Guide and Process**

**What is CORE Assessment?**The goal of the General Education Program at Lake Erie College, the CORE (Checkpoints on the Road to Empowerment), is to help students build “proficiencies that will provide the basis for a lifetime of career opportunities, intellectual inquiry, and personal fulfillment.” Students have the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge from across fields. The CORE curriculum is designed to develop proficiencies in students that prepare them to

* Join the conversation, developing effective communication and critical thinking skills.
* Build bridges with international cultures, contributing to the world dialogue as you venture onto exciting new paths.
* Understand the language of nature, applying quantitative reasoning and becoming part of the scientific process.
* Explore the dynamics of people and their societies, discovering yourself as an individual, community member, and citizen.
* Engage with the arts and humanities, appreciating and adding to the full range of human expression across time.

An important aspect of fulfilling this mission is the meaningful assessment of student learning. To foster the skills needed to fulfill these roles, LEC considers the following areas of proficiency to be of primary importance: Analytical Skills, Quantitative Skills, Communication Skills, Aesthetic Skills, and Intercultural Skills. To assess student learning in these five areas, instructors will measure student proficiency using common standards applied across disciplines. The accumulated results shall then be used to inform pedagogy and curriculum.

**Who participates in assessment?**

Each semester, every faculty member and/or adjunct instructor who is teaching a CORE course shall participate in CORE assessment activities.

**How does the assessment process work?**

For each of the five areas of proficiency (A, B, C, D, or E below), we have established a set of program learning objectives (see Program learning objectives section below) and expectations for satisfactory performance (see Assessment Rubrics section below). In order to complete the assessment process each instructor should complete the following steps each semester they are teaching a CORE course.

**Step 1).** First, the course syllabus should clearly reflect the general education goal(s) it fulfills for the CORE.

**Step 2).** For each semester you teach a CORE course, you or the designated assessment coordinator for the course will choose one of the following Proficiencies to assess in your course according to the cycle below.

**Proficiencies**

1. Analytical Skills,
2. Quantitative Skills
3. Communication Skills
4. Aesthetic Skills
5. Intercultural Skills

Keeping in mind that our CORE program has undergone significant revisions which were complete during the spring 2020 semester and in effect the fall of 2020, the following is our learning proficiency assessment cycle.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Academic Years Assessed | Proficiencies Assessed |
| ~~2020-2021~~ *[SUSPENDED DUE TO COVID-19 DATA RELIABILITY CONCERNS AND OTHER FACTORS: MOVED TO 2021-2022 AND ALL BACK BY ONE YEAR]*  Launched in 2021-2022 | A. Analytical Skills, D. Aesthetic Skills, E. Intercultural Skills  English Basic Proficiency |
| ~~2021-2022~~  2022-2023 | B. Quantitative Skills C. Communication Skills |
| ~~2022-2023~~  2023-2024 and thereafter | A. Analytical Skills, B. Quantitative Skills C. Communication Skills D. Aesthetic Skills, E. Intercultural Skills  English Basic Proficiency |

**Step 3).** Once a proficiency has been chosen based on the cycle above, you or the designated assessment coordinator for the course will choose a program learning objective from the corresponding set for that proficiency. For example, if you chose A. Analytical Skills in step 2, choose a program learning objective from the set A1-A7.) This will be the program learning objective you will assess in your course.

**Program learning objectives**The following are the program learning objectives for each proficiency.

**Proficiency A. Analytical Skills**Program learning objectives:

1. Interpret and synthesize information and ideas
2. Analyze and evaluate arguments
3. Construct an argument in support of a conclusion
4. Select and apply scientific and other appropriate methodologies
5. Integrate knowledge and experience to arrive at creative solutions
6. Gather and assess information from printed sources, electronic sources, and observation
7. Construct and support hypotheses

**Proficiency B. Quantitative skills**Program learning objectives:

1. Solve quantitative and mathematical problems
2. Interpret graphs, tables, and diagrams
3. Use statistics appropriately and accurately

**Proficiency C: Communication skills**Program learning objectives:

1. Read, observe, and listen with comprehension and critical perception
2. Develop clear, strategic, and in a well-organized communication
3. Deliver effective presentations
4. Demonstrate competent use of language in a variety of contexts
5. Access sources and use information ethically

**Proficiency D: Aesthetic Skills**

Program learning objectives:

1. Create or perform a work of art
2. Critically reflect upon a work of art

**Proficiency E: Intercultural Skills**Program learning objectives:

1. Apply an understanding of different cultures to an analysis or interpretation of course content
2. Exhibit competence while interacting with peoples, ideas, or artifacts from a variety of cultures and worldviews
3. Apply an understanding of ethical issues in a variety of contexts

**Step 4).** Now that you know which proficiency/program learning objective you will be assessing, you and/or the assessment coordinator for the course will identify a component of your course which asks students to demonstrate your chosen program learning objective. This can be an assignment, an exam, an exam question, an in-class activity, a project, etc. *It should be an existing element of your course, rather than something new you develop specifically for general education assessment.* You will then apply the corresponding rubric for the program learning objective to that component of your course to determine if students failed to meet, met, or exceeded those expectations. For example, if I chose A1 as my program learning objective, I would use rubric A1 to assess some component of my course which ask the students to “Interpret and synthesize information and ideas.” If you teach multiple sections of a course, you would fill out the form for each course.

**Assessment Rubrics**The following are the rubrics used to assess each program learning objective. Other rubrics may be used if they are more relevant, but you’ll want to make sure they are used consistently. Please check with your dean or the chief academic officer for more information. The rubrics may be found in Appendix A of this document.

**Step 5).** Near the end of the semester you will receive a template to complete. Please submit your results by the deadline indicated in the email.

The template will look something like this:

|  |
| --- |
| **Direct Methold of Assessment (e.g., standardized testing service, pre/post-test, portfolio evaluation, capstone course evaluation, etc.):** |
| **Indirect Method of Assessment (e.g., student surveys, survey of graduates, graduate and retention rates, etc.)** |
| **To which PLO is this assessment aligned?**  See chart above and results for each CORE course |
| **Achievement Target:**  No more than 20% in the fails to meet category. |
| **Number of Students in Sample:**  See results for each CORE course. |
| **Individual Course breakdown:** See results for each CORE course. |
| **Strengths of the Program as Per Assessments:**  See results for each CORE course. |
| **Needs for Improvement and challenges presented:**  See results for each CORE course. |
| **Action Plan for Adding Quality Improvements:** |

**Step 6).** This information will be collected internally. The accumulated results shall be made available to you and to Academic Deans to then be used as the basis for implementing improvements in your teaching and/or curricular decisions within the CORE.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**1. How do I determine what to assess (which proficiency & program learning objective in which semester)?**

The chief academic officer or designee will assign a point person (It may be the dean themselves) for each CORE course or perhaps group CORE courses to serve as the assessment coordinator for that course (usually this will be the full-time faculty member in that course discipline). If applicable, this person will also coordinate with other instructors teaching that course which proficiencies and program learning objectives will be assessed and how they will be assessed (to which component of the course the rubrics will be applied). If you are not the designated coordinator for your course, you should seek guidance from that individual to determine your assessment activities for the semester. If you are the designated assessment coordinator for a CORE course, your selection should not only be based on the stated assessment cycle, it should also be informed by previous assessment activities and results.

**2. What do I do if there are multiple sections of a CORE course being taught in a particular semester?**While we are a small institution, in some cases, there might be more than one section of the same course. If there are multiple sections of a particular CORE course being taught in one semester, assessment activities should be coordinated so that data can be compared across sections. For example, multiple sections of CM105: Public Speaking are taught each semester. The instructors for this course would work with the designated CORE course coordinator (lead faculty) to complete assessment in a uniform fashion so results can be analyzed to determine effectiveness across CM105 courses rather than just within particular sections. Many factors are taken into consideration, and the choice may be made to limit the sections assessed.

**3. If I am a CORE course coordinator, how often should I assess a particular proficiency & program learning objective?**The purpose of completing the assessment process in the first place is to use the results to improve student learning. But what does that look like? One metaphor used to describe this process is "Closing the Loop." Closing the loop encompasses analyzing results from assessments, using results to make changes to improve student learning, and then re-assessing those same outcomes in order to determine the effect those changes had on student learning. So this means anytime you assess a particular program learning objective, you should learn from those results, implement changes you see necessary, which can range from adjusting a test question to major curricular change. After the changes are implemented, you assess that same program learning objective again, to determine if the changes you made worked. This is closing the loop. Ultimately, this means you will assess a program learning objective at least twice, leaving enough time in between for implementation of necessary changes to teaching/curriculum, though you will likely return to this indicator periodically to confirm the continued effectiveness of your approach. Working through the stated cycle, you should eventually assess all of those proficiencies & program learning objectives that apply to your course.

**4. What is the bar I should aim for in my assessment results?**Ideally, you should have no more than 20% of students failing to meet expectations in a particular program learning objective. If more than 20% of students fail, considerations for change in pedagogical and/or curricular approach should be made. Once those changes are implemented, the program learning objective should be assessed again to determine if those changes resulted in improvement.

Appendix A:

Assessment Rubrics (faculty may use their own rubrics, but they should generally align with the below)

**A. Analytical Skills  
  
A1. Interpret and synthesize information and ideas**

Exceeds Expectations

* Synthesizes information and ideas (i.e., evidence, statements, graphics, and questions) very well
* Interprets the information and ideas accurately

Meets Expectations

* Synthesizes information and ideas (i.e., evidence, statements, graphics, and questions) adequately
* Interprets most of the information and ideas accurately

Fails to Meet Expectations

* Fails to synthesize information and ideas (i.e., evidence, statements, graphics, and questions)
* Fails to interpret information and ideas accurately

**A2. Analyze and evaluate arguments**

Exceeds Expectations

* Analyzes and evaluates alternative points of view
* Draws conclusions and examines implications
* Can provide evidence and/or explain fallacies and inconsistencies
* Refutes bias, if present

Meets Expectations

* Identifies or offers alternative points of view, where possible
* Draws conclusions
* Accurately recognizes/identifies fallacies and inconsistencies
* Detects bias, if present

Fails to Meet Expectations

* Does not recognize alternative points of view
* Fails to draw conclusions
* Fails to recognize/identify fallacies and inconsistencies
* Fails to note bias, if present

**A3. Construct an argument in support of a thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion**

Exceeds Expectations

* The thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion is clearly stated
* Everything within the argument is directed toward supporting the thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion
* Argument utilizes a reasonable degree of evidence appropriate to the thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion
* Argument expresses a thorough understanding of the complexities of an issue
* Argument anticipates and then effectively responds to likely counterarguments

Meets Expectations

* The thesis, hypothesis or conclusion of the argument is reasonably clear although there may be some ambiguity about the precise nature of the thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion
* Most of the argument supports the thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion, but there is some extraneous material
* Argument is supported with some evidence appropriate to the thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion
* Argument acknowledges some complexities connected with an issue
* Argument acknowledges some potential counterarguments then offers at least some indication of potential responses

Fails to Meet Expectations

* The thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion of the argument shifts and changes as the argument progresses
* A significant portion of the argument offers no real support for the thesis, hypothesis, or conclusion
* The argument relies heavily on emotional appeals as opposed to evidence and reasoning
* The argument oversimplifies a complex issue presenting everything in black and white terms
* The argument ignores obvious counterarguments

**A4. Select and apply methodologies appropriate to a discipline**

Exceeds Expectations

* Selection of Methodologies:
  + The student convincingly justifies the use of multiple methodologies and selects and appropriate methodology for solving problems
* Application of Methodologies:
  + The selected method is correctly applied and documented (if applicable) with, at most, insignificant errors

Meets Expectations

* Selection of Methodologies:
  + The method selected is appropriate to the problem
* Application of Methodologies:
  + The selected method is generally applied correctly with few errors

Fails to Meet Expectations

* Selection of Methodologies:
  + The method selected is inappropriate to the problem
* Application of Methodologies:
  + The application of the methodology is incorrect, incomplete, or has key steps omitted

**A5. Integrate knowledge and experience to arrive at logical and/or creative solutions**

Exceeds Expectations

* Solution:
  + The proposed solution addresses all aspects of the problem, and the implementation is practical, reasonable, and appropriate to the conventions of the field
* Knowledge:
  + The student is able to identify and use relevant knowledge (research, lecture, experimentation, class discussion, and/or experience) to arrive at a solution

Meets Expectations

* Solution:
  + The proposed solution addresses some key aspects of the problem
  + Some thought has been given to implementation strategy
* Knowledge:
  + The student is able to identify and use basic knowledge (through using research, lecture, experimentation, class discussion, and/or experience) to arrive at a solution

Fails to Meet Expectations

* Solution:
  + The proposed solution does not solve the problem as stated or the proposed solution is wholly impractical to implement
* Knowledge:
  + The student is not able to either identify or use relevant knowledge to arrive at a solution

**A6. Locate and assess information from printed sources, electronic sources, and observation**

Exceeds Expectations

* Consistently able to differentiate between sources e.g. newspaper vs professional journal
* Consistently able to differentiate types of information in different sources
* Consistently evaluates the credibility and reliability of sources
* Consistently locates appropriate types of sources that contain desired information

Meets Expectations

* Generally Knows the differences between types of sources, e.g., newspaper vs. professional journal
* Generally understands the differences in types of information between each type of source
* Generally can articulate the credibility or reliability in many sources
* Generally gathers appropriate information for assignment

Fails to Meet Expectations

* Frequently unable to know the differences between types of sources
* Frequently unable to understand the differences in types of information between each type of source
* Frequently unable to articulate the credibility or reliability in many sources
* Frequently unable to gather appropriate information for assignment

**A7. Construct and support hypotheses**

Exceeds Expectations

* Hypothesis shows advanced understanding of concepts
* Hypothesis is testable and realistic (practical)
* Hypothesis is based on observations and/or experimental results
* Background information supports the hypothesis

Meets Expectations

* Hypothesis shows adequate understanding of concepts
* Hypothesis is testable
* Hypothesis is based on limited observations and/or experimental results
* Background information supports part of the hypothesis

Fails to Meet Expectations

* Hypothesis shows little or no understanding of concepts
* Hypothesis is not testable
* Hypothesis is not based on observations and/or experimental results
* Background information does not support the hypothesis

**B. Quantitative Skills**

**B1. Solve quantitative and mathematical problems**

Exceeds Expectations

* Consistently obtains correct answer, including units
* Solution method is appropriate and follows a logical sequence
* Solution contains no errors

Meets Expectations

* Answer obtained is consistent with student's work
* Solution method is appropriate
* Solution contains only minor errors

Does Not Meet Expectations

* Answer is lacking or inconsistent with student's work
* Solution method is inappropriate
* Solution contains major errors

**B2. Interpret graphs, tables, and diagrams**

Exceeds Expectations

* Identifies a misrepresentation of labels or data on a graph, table or diagram
* Accurately uses a graph, table or diagram to solve problems
* Can accurately extrapolate beyond data on an existing graph
* Can accurately transform one form (graph, table, diagram) to another with no errors

Meets Expectations

* Accurately labels or identifies a point on a graph, table, or diagram
* Accurately identifies the trend represented in a graph, table, or diagram
* Accurately plots or positions new data on an existing graph, table or diagram
* Can transform one form (graph, table, diagram) to another with only minor errors

Does Not Meet Expectations

* Cannot label or identify a point on a graph, table, or diagram
* Cannot identify the trend represented in a graph, table, or diagram
* Cannot plot or position new data on an existing graph, table or diagram
* Cannot transform one form (graph, table, diagram) to another

**B3. Use statistics appropriately and accurately**

Exceeds Expectations

* Demonstrates a complete understanding of the relevant statistical concepts
* Displays accuracy in application of the concepts
* Strategy or explanation is fully supported, justified and represented by argument and evidence

Meets Expectations

* Demonstrates some understanding of relevant statistical concepts without significant error
* Carries out the important strategies and skills without significant error
* Strategy or explanation includes some evidence and justification

Does Not Meet Expectations

* Demonstrates major misconception or incomplete understanding of relevant statistical concepts
* Makes critical error(s) in carrying out strategy
* Strategy or explanation is lacking evidence or justification

**C. Communication Skills**

**C1. Read, observe, and listen with comprehension and critical perception**

Exceeds Expectations

* Understands fully the concepts presented
* Expands on or evaluates themes and arguments, and connects them to existing knowledge
* Consistently analyzes and evaluates the credibility of sources

Meets Expectations

* Understands basic meaning of the concepts presented
* Follows themes and arguments, and connects them to existing knowledge
* Generally analyzes and evaluates the credibility of sources

Does Not Meet Expectations

* Misunderstands basic meaning of the concepts presented
* Fails to follow basic themes or arguments and is not able to connect them to existing knowledge
* Fails to recognize the credibility of sources

**C2. Develop clear, strategic, and well-organized communication**

Exceeds Expectations

* Shows evidence of a clear, assertive, insightful thesis, controlling idea, main point, or argument
* Demonstrates creative and/or effective command of discipline-appropriate structure
* Each section develops a main idea carefully, makes thorough use of appropriate examples and evidence, and has a logical relationship to other paragraphs and sub-points
* Shows special attention to audience needs in providing background information, such as using advanced command of discipline's conventions
* Consistently employs effective transitions between ideas
* Consistently follows standards for academic communications; shows creativity in application of these standards

Meets Expectations

* Shows evidence of a basic thesis, controlling idea, main point, or argument
* Uses structure appropriate to the discipline
* Each section develops a main idea, offers examples and evidence, and suggests some relationship to other paragraphs and sub-points
* Includes necessary background information for intended audience
* Generally employs some form of transition between ideas
* Generally follows standards for academic communications

Does Not Meet Expectations

* Has no clear thesis, controlling idea, main point, or argument
* Fails to use structure appropriate to the discipline
* Each section is unrelated to other paragraphs or sub-points and offer inadequate or inappropriate examples and evidence
* Does not consider intended audience for the communication
* Fails to employ transition between ideas
* Fails to use or violates standards for academic communications

**C3. Deliver effective presentations**

Exceeds Expectations

* Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling
* Speaker appears polished and confident
* Use of presentational aids adds interest, increases clarity, provides illustration, and achieves memorability

Meets Expectations

* Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting and understandable
* Speaker appears comfortable
* Use of presentational aids enhances presentation

Does Not Meet Expectations

* Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation
* Speaker appears uncomfortable
* Use of presentational aids detracts from presentation’s effectiveness

**C4. Demonstrate competent use of language in a variety of contexts.**

Exceeds Expectations

* Consistently addresses audience appropriately given purpose of writing or speaking
* Consistently identifies the correct meaning of words within the context
* Consistently uses imaginative, memorable, and compelling language to convey ideas and enhance the effectiveness of the communication form.
* Consistently uses correct/appropriate word choice and discipline-specific terminology

Meets Expectations

* Addresses audience given purpose of writing or speaking
* Generally identifies the correct meaning of words within the context
* Makes thoughtful language choices that generally support the effectiveness of the communication form
* Generally uses correct/appropriate word choice and discipline-specific terminology

Does Not Meet Expectations

* Does not consider audience or purpose of writing or speaking
* Incorrectly identifies the correct meaning of many words within the context
* Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the communication form
* Misuses discipline-specific terminology or basic vocabulary

**C5. Access sources and use information ethically**Exceeds Expectations

* Outside source material is correctly and comprehensively cited
* Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the communication
* Correctly and purposefully chooses and uses paraphrasing, summary, and quotation
* Uses information in ways that are true to original context
* Distinguishes between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution
* Demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential and/or proprietary information

Meets Expectations

* Cites outside source material cited correctly.
* Demonstrates use of credible sources that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the communication
* Correctly uses paraphrasing, summary, or quotation
* Uses information in ways that are true to original context
* Distinguishes between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution
* Demonstrates understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential and/or proprietary information

Fails to Meet Expectations

* Struggles to cite sources.
* Demonstrates weak attempt to use credible sources to support ideas in the communication.
* Incorrectly uses paraphrasing, summary, and/or quotation.
* Uses information in ways that are not true to original context
* Fails to distinguish between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution
* Demonstrates little understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential and/or proprietary information

**D. Aesthetic Skills**

**D1. Create or perform a work of art**

Exceeds Expectations

* Work shows an understanding of process
* Work shows technical proficiency at or above an appropriate level for the class
* Work clearly shows an understanding of context at or above an appropriate level for the class

Meets Expectations

* Work suggests an understanding of process
* Work suggests a technical proficiency at appropriate level for the class
* Work suggests an awareness of context at appropriate level for the class

Does Not Meet Expectations

* Work does not suggest an understanding of process
* Work does not suggest technical proficiency
* Work does not suggest an awareness of context

**D2. Critically reflect upon a work of art**

Exceeds Expectations

* The student initiates and sustains a discussion of the creative contexts the author or artist has worked in and the creative choices made
* The student confidently and fluently uses discipline-specific language to support critical reflection fully informed by engagement with the work

Meets Expectations

* When prompted, the student engages in a discussion of the creative contexts the author or artist has worked in and the creative choices made
* The student capably uses discipline-specific language to support critical reflection informed by engagement with the work

Does Not Meet Expectations

* The student resists a discussion of the creative contexts the author or artist has worked in and the creative choices made
* The student is unable to use discipline-specific language to support critical reflection informed by engagement with the work

**E. Intercultural Skills**

**E1. Apply an understanding of different cultures to an analysis or interpretation of course content**

Exceeds Expectations:

* Demonstrates a thorough understanding of how culture impacts a range of issues within a topic or topics studied in a course.
* Accurately presents multiple perspectives in an interpretation or analysis of a range of issues within a topic or topics studied in a course.

Meets Expectations:

* Demonstrates some understanding of how culture impacts a range of issues within a topic or topics studied in a course.
* Presents some understanding of multiple perspectives in an interpretation or analysis of a range of issues within a topic or topics studied in a course.

Fails to Meet Expectations:

* Does not demonstrate an understanding of how culture impacts a range of issues within a topic or topics studied in a course.
* Does not accurately present multiple perspectives in an interpretation or analysis of a range of issues within a topic or topics studied in a course.

**E2. Exhibit competence while interacting with peoples, ideas, or artifacts from a variety of cultures and worldviews**

Exceeds Expectations:

* Identifies the importance of and demonstrates critical self-awareness of one's cultural beliefs, values, and expectations.
* Accurately interprets and applies cultural beliefs, values, and expectations in regard to human diversity.
* Analyzes substantial connections between the worldviews, power structures, and experiences of multiple cultures historically or in contemporary contexts, incorporating respectful interactions with other cultures and worldviews.

Meets Expectations:

* Identifies the importance of but does not demonstrate critical self-awareness of one's cultural beliefs, values, and expectations
* Accurately interprets appropriate cultural beliefs, values, and expectations but does not apply these in regard to human diversity.
* Explains and connects two or more cultures historically or in contemporary contexts with some acknowledgement of power structures, demonstrating respectful interaction with varied cultures and worldviews.

Fails to Meet Expectations:

* Neither identifies the importance of nor demonstrates critical self-awareness of one's cultural beliefs, values, and expectations
* Neither accurately interprets nor applies appropriate cultural beliefs, values, and expectations in regard to human diversity.
* Describes the experiences of others historically or in contemporary contexts through one cultural perspective, demonstrating very little openness to varied cultures and worldviews.

**E3. Apply an understanding of ethical issues to a variety of contexts**

Exceeds Expectations:

* Demonstrates and initiates comprehensive ability to discuss world ethical issues and to act with informed awareness of contemporary issues in their historical context.

Meets Expectations:

* Demonstrates, when prompted, the ability to discuss world ethical issues and to act with informed awareness of contemporary issues in their historical context.

Fails to Meet Expectations:

* Demonstrates inadequate ability to discuss world ethical issues and to act with informed awareness of contemporary issues in their historical context.