

# Middle Eastern Studies Minor

## Goal: Establish Cultural Awareness Measure and Benchmark

### Goal Description:

WOLC’s Curriculum and Assessment Committee will explore cultural awareness measures for minor students in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies. Using peer-reviewed research and best practices for Arabic language and culture instruction, the committee will determine appropriate benchmark levels for students in the minor.

### Providing Department: Middle Eastern Studies Minor

#### RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

##### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### Learning Objective: Cultural Competence and Awareness

#### Learning Objective Description:

While WOLC's Curriculum and Assessment Committee explores possible measures for evaluating cultural competence and awareness, the department will temporarily assess cultural awareness using a modified version of the Cross-Cultural Competence Inventory (3CI).

Testing Middle Eastern Studies minors using the modified 3CI will help WOLC to establish an appropriate baseline for these students.

##### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### Indicator: Cultural Competence and Awareness

#### Indicator Description:

Prior to graduation, all graduating minors in Middle Eastern Studies will take the modified 3CI.

#### Criterion Description:

3CI is a 63-item inventory rated on a 7-point Likert scale. The test is statistically reliable and measures cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of cross-cultural behaviors.

#### Findings Description:

No Middle Eastern Studies minors completed the 3CI inventory in the 2023-2024 cycle, thus this metric will be moved forward to the next cycle. The WOLC assessment team identified an additional research paper that reported the internal validation procedure for the instrument. This process removed repetitive questions from the originally published inventory; the instrument that we will deploy in the 2024-2025 cycle consists of 46 items (a 27% reduction in length). The team anticipates that this will improve buy-in and compliance with the instrument.

##### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### Action: Cultural Competence and Awareness

#### Action Description:

The WOLC assessment team will proceed with the most recent version of this instrument, which reduced the inventory from 63 items to 46 (a 27% reduction in length). The instrument will be converted to a Qualtrics survey that will be deployed to a sample of graduating seniors. Based on the Fall 2025 compliance and outcomes, WOLC will determine the efficacy of expanding the testing pool in both number of students and language learning levels.

## Goal: Establish Oral Proficiency Measure and Benchmark

### Goal Description:

WOLC’s Curriculum and Assessment Committee will explore language proficiency testing for minor students in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies (Track A only). Using peer-reviewed research and best practices for Arabic language instruction, the committee will determine appropriate benchmark levels for students in the minor. WOLC is working with IT@Sam and the SHSU Testing

Center to make AVANT language assessment available for testing. Once these assessments are available, WOLC will being pilot testing this more cost-effective measure.

**Providing Department:** Middle Eastern Studies Minor

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Learning Objective: Oral Proficiency**

**Learning Objective Description:**

WOLC is working with IT@Sam and the SHSU Testing Center to make AVANT language assessment available for testing. Once these assessments are available, WOLC will being pilot testing this more cost-effective measure for minors (Track A only)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Indicator: Oral Proficiency**

**Indicator Description:**

Prior to graduation, a sample of a minimum of 50% of graduating seniors (Track A only) will take the AVANT STAMP test in the SHSU Testing Center.

**Criterion Description:**

All minor students taking the AVANT STAMP will obtain a minimum score of Intermediate Low. ACTFL describes this level as follows:

Speakers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target-language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information; for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, and some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate Low sublevel, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few appropriate questions. Intermediate Low speakers manage to sustain the functions of the Intermediate level, although just barely.

Intermediate Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors into short statements and discrete sentences. Their responses are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language. In spite of frequent misunderstandings that may require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

**Findings Description:**

Due to extremely long delays in implementation, AVANT STAMP was not available to students during the previous cycle. This measure will be implemented in the next cycle with a sample of graduating seniors.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Action: Oral Proficiency**

**Action Description:**

WOLC is THRILLED to report that AVANT STAMP is now an active test available on campus. We will organize assessment of a sample of graduating seniors, and these data will be reported at the end of the 2024-2025 cycle.

## **Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):**

#### **Closing Summary**

1) Pilot test the Cross-Cultural Competence Inventory (3CI) with currently enrolled students to establish a benchmark and begin validating the measure.

2) Explore oral language proficiency testing options to replace the cost-prohibitive OPIc.

#### **Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

1) No Middle Eastern Studies minors completed the 3CI inventory in the 2023-2024 cycle. The assessment team discovered a newer version of the instrument that resulted from extensive internal validation of the 63-item instrument. The department will move forward with testing in the 2024-2025 cycle to establish a baseline and determine appropriate sample size for this instrument.

2) WOLC identified AVANT's testing program as an appropriate testing measure for Arabic students. It reduces testing costs by at least 50%. This test was not implemented in the 2023-2024 cycle due to extremely long delays in implementation of the AVANT testing program.

## **New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

#### **Closing Summary:**

After several challenging years for implementing assessment metrics, WOLC is confident that the department will be able to carry out a complete assessment of Middle Eastern Studies minors using the AVANT testing program (Track A only) and the reduced 3CI inventory (Track A and Track B). WOLC has established two goals for the 2024-2025 cycle for the GERM minor program:

- Implement assessment of Cultural Competence using the internally validated version of the 3CI.
  - Deploy Qualtrics version of this instrument beginning in Fall 2024. Pending findings from the Fall 2024 assessment, determine whether to expand assessment to a larger pool of students and/or use the instrument to assess other aspects of the Middle Eastern Studies program (e.g., development of Cultural Competence over time, etc...).
- Implement assessment of Arabic language proficiency using AVANT testing program (Track A only).
  - Deploy assessment to a sample of graduating seniors beginning in Fall 2024. Pending the findings from the Fall 2024 assessment, determine whether to expand proficiency assessment to a larger pool of students and/or use the instrument to assess other aspects of the Middle Eastern Studies program (e.g., development of proficiency over time, etc...).