



# Core Curriculum Projects

## Sam Houston State University Core Curriculum Assessment

Sam Houston State University's Core Curriculum Assessment Plan was approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and went into effect Fall 2014. The plan outlines a variety of different assessment projects that will be utilized by SHSU to evaluate student attainment of the THECB's six Core Objectives. It should be noted that this plan is a living document. The measures and timeline outlined within it are subject to change and modification by the University as necessary.

- [Sam Houston State University's Core Curriculum Assessment Plan](#)

SHSU is committed to providing a quality core curriculum that ensures that our students are gaining a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, developing principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and mastering advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning. To ensure that our students are gaining this vital, and necessary, knowledge, our institution has designed and implemented a core curriculum from which our students gain a knowledge of six specific core learning objectives:

- Critical Thinking Skills - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- Teamwork - 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 - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

- **Social Responsibility:** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

## Core Curriculum Assessment Projects

### Assessment of Written Communication (AWC)

Each academic year approximately 500 student writing artifacts are collected and assessed using a [locally-developed writing rubric](#). Approximately 450 artifacts in each evaluation cycle are selected from upper division courses (3000- and 4000-level), with approximately 50 selected from lower division courses (1000-level) for baseline comparison purposes. Over a three-year period (see the table below), each academic college at SHSU will participate in the AWC and submit artifacts for scoring.

College	2014- 2015	2015- 2016	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2018- 2019	2019- 2020
College of Business Administration		AWC			AWC	
College of Criminal Justice		AWC			AWC	
College of Education	AWC			AWC		
College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication			AWC			AWC
College of Health Sciences			AWC			AWC
College of Humanities and Social Sciences			AWC			AWC
College of Science and	AWC			AWC		

Engineering Technology						
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### English Course-Level Assessment

Each spring semester writing samples from freshman, sophomore, and senior English writing enhanced courses are collected, reviewed, and evaluated against a common, internally developed rubric by the faculty within the Department of English. In addition to being used by the faculty within the Department of English as part of their on-going programmatic assessment, these data will be utilized by the members of the core curriculum committee to help evaluate student written communication.

### Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)

The CAT is a nationally normed, short-answer essay test designed to assess critical thinking and problem solving skills. The CAT was developed at Tennessee Tech University, with support of the National Science Foundation. The CAT is administered each academic year to approximately 500 students in upper division courses (3000- and 4000-level). Over a three-year period (see the table below), each academic college at SHSU will participate in the CAT and submit tests for scoring. For more information on the CAT please visit their [homepage](#).

College	2015- 2016	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2018- 2019	2019- 2020	2020- 2021
College of Business Administration		CAT			CAT	
College of Criminal Justice			CAT			CAT
College of Education		CAT			CAT	
College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication			CAT			CAT
College of Health Sciences			CAT			CAT

College of Humanities and Social Sciences	CAT			CAT		
College of Science and Engineering Technology	CAT			CAT		

### Texas Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills (TACTS)

The TACTS is a locally-developed, proprietary instrument designed to measure critical thinking, empirical, and quantitative skills. This 45 minute, multiple choice exam is administered within PHIL 2303: Critical Thinking. The exam is administered both fall and spring, in a pre-post fashion. In addition to being used by the faculty within the Philosophy Program as part of their on-going programmatic assessment, these data will be utilized by the members of the core curriculum committee to help evaluate student critical thinking and quantitative reasoning.

### Course-Embedded American Government Assessment

Each fall semester, a locally developed pre-to-post test is administered in all sections of POLS 2305: American Government. In addition to being used by the faculty within the Political Science department as part of their on-going programmatic assessment, these data will be utilized by the members of the core curriculum committee to help evaluation social responsibility.

### Course-Embedded Texas Government Assessment

Each spring semester, a locally developed pre-to-post test is administered in all sections of POLS 2306: Texas Government. In addition to being used by the faculty within the Political Science department as part of their on-going programmatic assessment, these data will be utilized by the members of the core curriculum committee to help evaluation social responsibility.

### Course-Embedded Contemporary Moral Issues Assessment

Each fall and spring semester, a locally developed pre- to post-test is administered within sections of PHIL 2306: Contemporary Moral Issues. The instrument consists of 25 multiple-choice questions and is administered to students enrolled in those courses at the start and end of each semester. As the instrument was developed by Philosophy faculty with expertise in teaching and assessing these concepts, it is assumed that the instrument has content-related validity (Banta & Palomba, 2015). Additionally, as this test was embedded within normal sections of PHIL 2306, the student scores represent authentic student work (Banta & Polomba, 2015; Kuh et al., 2015). Student pre-to-post test scores will be analyzed using a

dependent samples *t-test* to determine whether students are making significant learning gains.

### National Survey of Student Engagement 2016 Civic Engagement Topical Module

As part of the 2016 NSSE administration, first-year and senior students participated in the NSSE 2016 Civic Engagement Topical Module. This module was adapted from a pilot survey developed by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and asks students to assess their conflict resolution skills and examine how often they have engaged with local, campus, and state/national/global issues. The module complements questions from the main NSSE Survey about service-learning, community service, volunteer work, and becoming an informed and active citizen. SHSU student responses will be compared to that of an identified comparison group.

### National Survey of Student Engagement

The NSSE is a student perceptions survey designed to assess student and institution behaviors related to good practices in undergraduate education. Through self-selected peer group and student population cohorts, institutions are able to compare student responses on individual questions or on the five NSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice on a national scale. The NSSE will be administered to SHSU freshmen and seniors every other academic year, with the most recent administration taking place in Spring 2016. For more information on the NSSE please visit their [homepage](#).

### Teamwork Self-Reflection Instrument (TSRI)

The locally-developed TSRI was a pilot project implemented on a voluntary basis during the fall 2016 semester to assess students' self-perceived actions and behaviors in a team setting. If successful, this instrument will be used to satisfy general education requirements, and could also provide valuable programmatic assessment data for various constituents. Visit [this link](#) to view the instrument.

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