Request for Courses in the Core Curriculum
Form Completion FAQ and Hint Sheet

What is a student learning outcome?
A student learning outcome (SLO) is a statement of what students will know and be able to do. In this case, it is a statement of what students will know and be able to do after taking the core course being proposed.

SLOs are statements of measurable performance. They will always be framed with students as the subject of the sentence and will center on action verbs such as those found in Bloom's taxonomy. Examples are shown in the table below.

Level	The student should be able to. . .
Knowledge	• Define iambic pentameter • State Newton's laws of motion • Identify the major surrealist painters
Comprehension	• Describe the trends in the graph in his or her own words • Summarize a passage from Socrates' *Apology* • Properly translate into English passages from Voltaire's *Candide*
Application	• Describe an experiment to test the influence of light and light quality on the Hill reaction of photosynthesis • Scan a poem for metric foot and rhyme scheme • Use the Archimedes principle to determine the volume of an irregularly shaped object
Analysis	• List arguments for and against human cloning • Determine the variables to be controlled for an experiment • Discuss the rationale and efficacy of isolationism in the global economy
Synthesis	• Write a short story in Hemingway's style • Compose a logical argument on assisted suicide in opposition to his or her personal opinion • Construct a helium-neon laser
Evaluation	• Assess the validity of certain conclusions based on the data and statistical analysis • Critically analyze a novel with evidence to support a critique • Recommend stock investments based on recent company performance and projected value

From Nilson, Linda B. (2010), Teaching at its Best

Do core courses have to list student learning outcomes prescribed by the state?
Not exactly. The SLOs you provide should reflect what you intend students to learn in the course. In order for the course to be accepted as a core course, the learning outcomes must reflect the core objectives required by the state for a course in the relevant component area. This means:

1. You should list all of the high-level learning outcomes for your course (e.g., "students will be able to use energy diagrams to justify concepts in organic chemistry" but not the very detailed, "students will be able to "draw a potential energy diagram for the rotation of groups about the C-C bond of ethane). It is assumed that some of the SLOs you list will not reflect objectives that are required for the core, but that the required objectives will be included in some form.
2. We should be able to detect the required core objectives among your SLOs. You may frame a critical thinking objective, for example, as it relates specifically to your course; all courses addressing the critical thinking objective do not have to list the exact same critical thinking SLO. If one course has "Discuss the rationale and efficacy of isolationism in the global economy" as a SLO, and another has "Compose a logical argument on assisted suicide. . ." we will recognize critical thinking in both.

What is the difference between an outcome and an objective?
The most important definition – regardless of which word is used – is that we're talking about what students get from the course, not what faculty put into it. Generally speaking, outcomes are more specific than objectives, so at least some of the student learning outcomes for your course must fall under the broader category of the required state objectives.

What if some of the SLOs for a core course fall under objectives that are not required for the component area?
All the better. The required objectives for each component area are a minimum for inclusion in the core. If the course will address more, please let us know; it will make our core stronger and assessment easier.

Why do I have to list course assignments?
The new core rules include a significant accountability requirement. Courses must address the required core objectives, and we must provide evidence of student learning to our accrediting body (SACS) and to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. In other words, it isn't enough to put the objectives on the syllabus – we must show that we are measuring how well students are learning these things, and provide evidence that we are using the results of our assessment to make changes. The best way to do this assessment is to use samples of student work from the course. Listing assignments in the course proposal form allows us to be sure students will be demonstrating the core competency somehow, and that we can therefore assess student achievement of it.

How specific do I have to be listing my assignments?
Not all assignments have to be listed – we just need to know there will be a way to assess the competency. But the assignments you list should be specific. Instead of saying "a paper will be assigned," it is better to say "students will write a 5 page essay discussing the rationale and efficacy of isolationism in the global economy." Or, instead of "students will take a test," it is better to say "the final exam will contain 5 multiple choice questions listed below on personal responsibility."

Why can't you just read the syllabus for assignments?
The syllabus often does not make clear which competencies will be demonstrated in which assignments, so your listing them helps us identify the most appropriate assessments. Also, your listing will provide the more detailed information on test questions or other assessments that may be needed.

CORE OBJECTIVES REQUIRED

Component Area	Critical Thinking	Communication Skills	Empirical & Quantitative	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
Communication (6)	√	√		√		√
Mathematics (3)	√	√	√			
Life and Physical Sciences (6)	√	√	√	√		
Language, Philosophy, and Culture (3)	√	√			√	√
Creative Arts (3)	√	√		√	√	
American History (6)	√	√			√	√
Government/ Political Science (6)	√	√			√	√
Social/Behavioral Science (3)	√	√	√		√	

Component Area Option (6)

WID (3)

Math Reasoning (3)

Courses used to complete the Component Area Option must meet the definition and criteria specified in one or more of the foundational component areas above. The Core Objectives required in the corresponding foundational component area apply to each course used to fulfill the Component Area Option.

Examples of additional verbs that might appear in student learning outcomes are listed below. They are sorted by Bloom's taxonomy to help you think about the levels of learning you are expecting. There are many more possible verbs.

Knowledge
- o Match
- o Name
- o Recognize
- o Relate
- o Select
- o Tell

Comprehension
- o Associate
- o Explain
- o Express
- o Interpret
- o Review
- o Summarize

Application
- o Calculate
- o Demonstrate
- o Determine
- o Manipulate
- o Solve
- o Use

Analysis
- o Analyze
- o Classify
- o Compare
- o Contrast
- o Discriminate
- o Model

Synthesis
- o Integrate
- o Compose
- o Develop
- o Formulate
- o Modify
- o Predict

Evaluation
- o Evaluate
- o Critique
- o Defend
- o Persuade
- o Rate
- o Validate

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