

Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment Plan Adopted Fall 2020

Revisions to Assessment Plan: Fall 2022 and Fall 2025

ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY

This assessment plan is fueled by our mission statement, which reads: “The Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications aims to be recognized as a leading communications school in developing industry-ready, culturally literate, diverse and internationally competitive journalists and communicators with high standards of excellence.” In keeping with the essence of the mission statement, the faculty has identified school objectives couched in one overarching long-term goal to produce exceptional graduates with high standards of excellence who can help diversify the future leadership of the media and communication industry nationally and internationally.

To accomplish this objective, assessment measures both student learning and program effectiveness throughout a student’s academic experience—from introductory coursework through internship experiences and culminating senior capstone projects.

Rather than relying on a single measure of success, SHSJC uses multiple direct and indirect assessment measures that collectively evaluate learning outcomes across the curriculum.

The school’s assessment plan has most recently been revised in Fall 2025 and is in alignment with the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) professional values and competencies.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The School’s assessment plan is organized around five measurable program objectives.

1. Developing ethical, competent, knowledgeable graduates
2. Requiring external internship experience for both Journalism and Strategic Communications majors
3. Requiring majors to demonstrate command of the English language
4. Requiring majors to demonstrate aptitude for conventions of their chosen major
5. Exposing students to a variety of perspectives and information governing the role of media in our society

To address the first school objective, developing ethical, competent, knowledgeable graduates, the faculty regularly reviews the industry’s needs, demands and expectations and revises the school’s curriculum to ensure our students can meet those expectations. The most recent curricular revisions occurred in fall of 2020, spring 2025 and fall 2025.

All revisions were designed to keep pace with the rapidly changing demands and expectations of the industry and align the school’s curriculum accordingly. The revisions were also made to ensure students incorporate the 10 Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications professional values and competencies into their understanding of professional requirements as journalists and strategic communicators.

Benchmarks used to assess the effectiveness of the program curriculum are grounded in the following basic assumptions:

- The program will reflect and embrace the ACEJMC professional values and competencies.
- The program will provide students with a foundation of theoretical understanding in their chosen major, strong professional and hands-on skills and an initial grounding in the highest standards of their chosen profession.
- The program curriculum introduces students to a broad range of courses in liberal arts and the sciences along with courses in journalism and communications to help round out the students' education to prepare them for careers as journalists and communication professionals.
- The program's administration, faculty, staff are appointed based on their knowledge and capabilities to best prepare students to meet the needs of the industries and the school's facilities are organized and upgraded to ensure students are up-to-date with industry standards.

ASSESSMENT MEASURES

Course Embedded Assessment

The successful completion of each course in both curriculums of the school's programs of study, Journalism and Strategic Communication, requires that the student can articulate a mastery or firm understanding of the analytical, critical and/or problem-solving skills taught and demonstrate such mastery at the conclusion of a course. They must also demonstrate their ability to apply those skills in the workplace. The goals for learning are outlined in each course syllabus and depending upon the course, include practical application like developing and executing a media package, the first amendment, camera operation, news editing, etc.

Faculty assess student mastery through objective examinations, reporting assignments, writing samples, projects and presentations, research assignments, collaborative projects and the collection of student work over his/her tenure at the Scripps Howard School. Learning outcomes are published in every syllabus and evaluated using common rubrics, as relevant.

Internships

Student internships are also a foundational part of assessment. Each student is required to work as an intern at a news organization or strategic communications firm where their knowledge and abilities are tested. Students can further work in journalism or communications roles in various industries. To receive curriculum credit for the internship, the student must have been assessed by his/her supervisor and the assessment is included in the student's internship review. The student also is required to submit an assessment of their experiences during the internship. These assessments provide a clearer picture of the student's abilities, industry needs and how well the school is addressing both. As of Fall 2024, students are required to take JAC 465 Internship in Journalism and Communications as part of their curriculum completion. Students receive a grade for the course based on the supervisor evaluations submitted as part of course requirements.

Senior Capstone

The Scripps Howard School assesses the capstone projects completed by all seniors in JAC 495. This work product serves as an assessment of the culmination of a student's education, and requires knowledge, understanding and application of the principles from each of the required courses in the curriculum. The capstone course is major specific to ensure skills necessary for each major are adequately assessed. Further, industry professionals will be invited to evaluate capstone projects in addition to faculty.

Portfolio Assessment

Each student completing a capstone project must also develop a website which showcases their portfolio developed over the course of the four years. Each course from the foundation level includes a portfolio specific assignment, intended to build the student's portfolio. Students are encouraged to treat

their websites as living documents and continually update their portfolios as they progress throughout the program.

Student portfolios include feature writing, broadcast scripts, multimedia news packages, public relations campaigns, digital content, created websites, graphic designs, social media campaigns, research papers, analytics and resumes.

ASSESSMENT FOCUS BY CURRICULUM STAGE

Assessment is progressive throughout the program to ensure students demonstrate increasing levels of competency throughout the program.

100-level (First Year)

At the 100-level, assessment is focused on establishing foundations in writing, ethics and media literacy.

200-level (Second and Third Year)

Assessment at the 200-level focuses on building reporting, research and critical thinking skills.

300-level (Third Year)

Courses at the 300-level focus on ensuring students can apply professional skills and building analytics and multimedia skills.

400-level (Fourth Year)

The courses at the 400-level focus on advanced specialization, leadership and strategy. Assessment is more focused on tracking skills. The 400-level also includes evaluations on internships and senior capstone to assess workplace performance and program mastery.

ASSESSMENT RECORDS

The annual assessment regime is reported to Hampton University for research and institutional effectiveness by each school or department at the end of May. The results of portfolio and senior capstone reviews are published in the Nuventive system for the university's records.

ASSESSMENT TEAM

The assessment team consists of the Curriculum and Assessment committee, the administrative leadership team, the professors who teach the JAC 495 Senior Capstone course, and industry professionals including a member of the advisory council.

ACEJMC COMPETENCIES

Assessment is tied to the ACEJMC student competencies that are listed in the syllabus of each faculty member. These 10 competencies, as of fall 2022, are defined in the assessment process and the assessment team determines if the work products meet the specific criterion as defined in the competencies.

Each of the assessment criteria is tied to at least one of the main core courses in the school's curriculum. These courses are listed in each of the learner outcomes under assessment methods. If there is a deficiency in a measure, there is a need to review assessment of the teaching methodologies, application of criterion by the student in the class or additional tools to support students in eliminating the deficiency.

PROCESS FOR REVISIONS

If a measure is missed by more than 10 points or if a measure is deficient for two years or more in a row, the administrative leadership team will assess the course that is referenced in the measure to see if content changes or adjustments in the level of attention given to specific content should be made. This is done in conjunction with the faculty member who teaches the course. These changes are made over the summer and are placed into effect for the fall semester following the spring assessment.

ASSESSMENT REVISIONS

FALL 2020

- In fall 2020, an internship evaluation form for supervisors and students to complete included the 12 ACEJMC competencies to provide an independent review of student's mastery of the competencies.
- Faculty were encouraged to include industry professionals in their classes as guests to share their real-world experiences and expertise, and to assist in the evaluation of student capstone projects.

FALL 2022

- Based on recommendations from the 2020 accreditation visit, grammar assessment was identified as a need for upper class Strategic Communication majors. The program already exists for all students at the 100 and 200 level courses. In Fall of 2022, Strategic Communication majors are required to study the material in JAC 410 and JAC 495 Senior Capstone – Strategic Communication.
- The internship evaluation forms have been updated with the revised ACEJMC competencies.

FALL 2025

- Grammar test will be paused as of Fall 2025 while a more comprehensive evaluation of student competencies is developed with a focus on mastery of basics in the 100 and 200 level courses.
- The mission statement for the school has been updated to include "industry-ready". The full mission statement is below:
The Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications aims to be recognized as a leading communications school in developing industry-ready, culturally literate, diverse and internationally competitive journalists and communicators with high standards of excellence.

CURRICULUM REVISIONS

FALL 2020

- New Courses Added to Curriculum:
 - JAC 320: PR, Campaigns and Media Brand Marketing
 - JAC 330: Social and Multimedia Analytics
 - JAC 430: Advanced Media Analytics
 - JAC 453: Media Innovation, Graphics and Virtual Reality
- Separation of Majors for Senior Capstone Class
 - JAC 495 – 1: Senior Capstone – Journalism
 - JAC 495 – 2: Senior Capstone – Strategic Communication

- New requirement for Strategic Communication majors
 - JAC 410: Content Editing

FALL 2024

- New requirement for all majors
 - JAC 465: Internship in Journalism and Communications

SPRING 2025

- New Course Added to Curriculum:
 - JAC 416: Science Journalism

SPRING 2026

- Expanded list of specialized skills
 - Added JAC 301: Web Design and Production
 - Added all 400-level JAC courses
- New requirement for all majors
 - Students must receive a passing grade for CSC 120: Introduction to Computers rather than a C grade or higher to match university requirements.
- New outside course requirements

Courses have been added to better equip students to understand the interdependence of countries around the world and meet assessment objective of “exposing students to a variety of perspectives and information governing the role of media in our society.”

 - INS 220: Introduction to International Relations or substitute
 - One political science elective
- Expanded substitution options for ETR 210: Introduction to Entrepreneurship to improve students’ understanding of finances and introduce entrepreneurial thinking.
 - ETR 202: ETR Foundations: Preparing for Success
 - FIN 290: Personal Finance
 - MGT 301: Business Organization and Management
 - MKT 305: Principles of Marketing.

APPENDIX 1: Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) professional values and competencies.

1 	Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located
2 	Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
3 	Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts
4 	Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies
5 	Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
6 	Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and service to all people and communities
7 	Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work

8 	Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concept
9 	Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
10 	Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

APPENDIX 2: Assessment Matrix

COURSE NAME	ACEJMC COMPETENCIES										ASSESSMENT TOOLS	
	1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 	7 	8 	9 	10 	Direct	Indirect
JAC 101 Media in a Multicultural Society	•	•							•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations
JAC 105 Grammar and AP Style				•	•		•		•	•	Exam Quizzes Grammar	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 110 Introduction to Media Writing	•	•	•		•				•	•	Exam Quizzes Grammar	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 200 Introduction to Visual Media		•		•					•	•	Final Project	PSA Peer reviews
JAC 210 Reporting and Newswriting Across Platforms	•	•	•		•			•	•	•	Exam Quizzes Grammar	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 220 Principles of Public Relations		•				•			•	•	Exam Quizzes	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 230 Principles of Advertising		•		•		•			•	•	Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 265 Introduction to Radio and Television Production		•							•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 301 Web Design and Production	•		•	•	•				•	•	Quizzes Website	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 305 Visual Communication				•					•	•	Final Project	PSA Peer reviews
JAC 307 Digital Photography and Imaging				•					•	•	Final Project	PSA Peer reviews
JAC 310 Advanced Reporting and Newswriting Across Platforms	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	Exam Quizzes Grammar	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 320 PR, Campaigns & Media Brand Marketing			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Final Project Presentation	PSA Peer reviews
JAC 330 Social and Multimedia Analytics	•	•	•	•			•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 340 Broadcast Newswriting	•		•		•		•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 403 Media Entrepreneurship		•				•		•	•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 404 Media Ethics	•					•	•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 405 Media Law	•					•	•		•	•	Quizzes Case Review	PSA Presentations Peer reviews

JAC 406 Media Management						•		•	•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 408 Sports Journalism				•	•				•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 410 Content Editing			•	•		•	•	•	•	•	Exam Quizzes Grammar	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 412 Feature and Editorial Storytelling			•		•		•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 414 Business Journalism					•	•	•	•	•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 415 Photojournalism			•	•					•	•	Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 416 Science Journalism				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Quizzes PSA Final Project	Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 420 Media Research	•	•				•	•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 425 Crisis Communication	•					•	•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 430 Advanced Media Analytics				•		•	•	•	•	•	Quizzes Exam Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 440 News Production							•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 445 Animation and Motion Graphics				•					•	•	Final Project	PSA Peer reviews
JAC 450 Special Topics in Journalism and Communications					•		•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 451 Specialized Skills in Journalism and Communications					•		•		•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 452 International Journalism and Communications	•		•		•	•	•		•	•	Final Project Presentations Quizzes	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 453 Media Innovation, Graphics & Virtual Reality				•					•	•	Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 454 Civil Rights Era and the Media	•		•						•	•	Quizzes Final Project	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 465 Internship in Journalism and Communications	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		Supervisor evaluation Student evaluation

JAC 495 Senior Capstone: Journalism	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Grammar Final Project Website	PSA Presentations Peer reviews
JAC 495 Senior Capstone: Strategic Communication	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Grammar Final Project Website	PSA Presentations Peer reviews

PSA – Portfolio Specific Assignment