

Core Ability Assessment Executive Summary

M State uses the Core Abilities as its common learning outcomes. The Core Abilities exist as the learning goals that serve as the foundation of our students' educational experience. The Core Abilities align with the statewide Minnesota Transfer Curriculum and the College's mission and vision. Faculty members assess the Core Abilities on an annual basis.

M State Mission Statement

Provide dynamic learning for living, working and serving.

M State's mission is to provide accessible education with vigor and integrity to diverse learners, preparing them for dynamic living, working and serving.

M State Vision Statement

A success story for every student and stakeholder.

College-Wide Core Abilities

A. Demonstrate effective communication

Indicators

1. Learner writes clearly, concisely and accurately in appropriate context and format.
2. Learner speaks clearly, concisely and accurately in a variety of contexts and formats.
3. Learner comprehends written and verbal communication.

B. Demonstrate critical thinking

Indicators

1. Learner draws conclusions based on evidence.
2. Learner distinguishes between facts, fallacies, inferences and judgments.
3. Learner considers multiple perspectives in problem solving.

C. Demonstrate quantitative and logical reasoning

Indicators

1. Learner performs computations using appropriate methods.
2. Learner demonstrates numerical and logical reasoning.

D. Demonstrate personal and social responsibility

Indicators

1. Learner demonstrates personal integrity and professional ethical practices.
2. Learner demonstrates respect for the rights, views and work of others.
3. Learner demonstrates personal accountability.
4. Learner demonstrates multicultural and global awareness.
5. Learner demonstrates the ability to work in a team.

E. Demonstrate effective use of information technology

Indicators

1. Learner applies technology to create solutions.
2. Learner uses technology to communicate.

M State continues extensive work to improve its assessment of learning processes. The assessment work group, AASC Shared Governance Council, faculty and academic and student development services administrators have provided significant input to inform improvements to processes in the last three years. The active Assessment of Student Learning: Analyzing and Refining AQIP Action Project focuses on core ability assessment and comprehensive program review.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, M State's assessment work group began to design the core ability assessment model. Broad-based input was provided by AASC, Shared Governance Council, faculty and the academic administrative team. M State's participation in the Multi-State Collaborative Assessment Project helped to inform the decision to use the Association of American Colleges and Universities Value (AAC&U) rubrics for the core ability assessment model. The core ability assessment model was finalized in 2015-2016, and the first college-wide assessment of the core abilities was conducted and continues to date. Prior to implementing the improved core ability assessment process, M State had limited assessment of student learning data, which was noted in the 2013 systems appraisal feedback.

Faculty members utilize a capstone or end-of-term assignment as an artifact that aligns with the core ability they have identified to assess. Faculty members identify the appropriate AAC&U rubric and position the level of student performance along the performance levels of the rubric - benchmark 1, milestones 2 or 3, or capstone 4. For the 2017-2018 core ability process cycle, 100 percent of tenured faculty have completed the first step of the process, which is to select the course, student artifact and rubric they will be using to complete core ability assessment.

Summary of Results

The core ability data from 2015-2016 show the Effective Communication core ability as a strong area of student learning/performance for M State students, particularly with respect to Indicator 2 – the learner speaks clearly, concisely and accurately in a variety of contexts and formats. The percentage of student artifacts that were scored at the milestone 2 or above learning levels was at least 94 percent across all the Oral Communication Rubric reported categories. In addition, the data indicates that the Personal and Social Responsibility core ability is a strong area of student learning/performance, particularly for Indicator 5 - the learner demonstrates the ability to work in a team. The percentage of student artifacts that were scored at the milestone 2 or above learning levels was at least 93 percent in the Teamwork Rubric reported categories. The Critical Thinking core ability data indicates that Indicator 2 - learner distinguishes between facts, fallacies, inferences and judgments is a strong area of learning. The percentage of student artifacts scored at the milestone 2 or above learning levels was at least 91 percent across the rubric categories. Indicator 3 - learner considers multiple perspectives in problem solving showed similar results; ratings of student artifacts at the milestone 2 or above levels ranged from 91 percent to 99 percent. Indicator 1 - learner draws conclusions based on evidence suggests an area for learning improvement, as student artifacts scoring at the milestone 2 or above level were lower at 85 percent. The quantitative and logical reasoning core ability data indicates that Indicator 1 - learner performs computations using appropriate methods continues as a stronger area of learning than Indicator 2 - learner demonstrates numerical and logical reasoning. The percentage of student artifacts scored at the milestone 2 or above learning levels was at least 84 percent along the rubric categories for Indicator 1. The percentage of student artifacts scored at the milestone 2 or above for Indicator 2 ranged from 70 percent to 93 percent.

During the 2016-2017 cycle, data again point to the Effective Communication core ability as a strong area of student learning/performance for M State students, particularly with respect to Indicator 2 - the learner speaks clearly, concisely and accurately in a variety of contexts and formats. The percentage of student artifacts that were scored at the milestone 2 or above learning levels was 95 percent in two of the rubric categories. In addition, the data indicates that the Personal and Social Responsibility core ability is a strong area of student learning/performance, particularly for Indicator 5 - the learner demonstrates the ability to work in a team. The percentage of student artifacts that were scored at the milestone 2 or above learning levels was at least 94 percent across the reported rubric categories. The Critical Thinking core ability data indicates that Indicator 2 - learner distinguishes between facts, fallacies, inferences and judgments is a stronger area of learning than Indicator 3 - learner considers multiple perspectives in problem solving. The percentage of student artifacts scored at the milestone 2 or above learning levels was at least 90 percent across the rubric categories, whereas the percentage of student artifacts that scored at the milestone 2 or above level for problem solving ranged from 71 percent to 92 percent. The quantitative and logical reasoning core ability data indicates that Indicator 1 - learner performs computations using appropriate methods is a stronger area of learning than Indicator 2 - learner demonstrates numerical and logical reason. The percentage of student artifacts scored at the milestone 2 or above learning levels was at least 91 percent along the rubric categories for Indicator 1, whereas the percentage of student artifacts that scored at the milestone 2 or above for problem solving ranged from 77 to 95 percent.

In both cycles of core ability assessment, the assessment work group reviewed the data for the multicultural and global awareness indicator of the Demonstrating Personal and Social Responsibility core ability and the Effective Use of Information Technology core ability and determined additional data is needed for both core abilities.

The analysis of the core ability assessment data led to a formal discussion at a fall 2017 faculty in-service. During this discussion, faculty and academic administrators identified questions about potential curriculum gaps related to the Demonstrate Personal and Social Responsibility core ability, multiculturalism and global awareness indicator and the Effective Use of Information Technology core ability. There was agreement that additional faculty input and curriculum review are needed in these areas to do more meaningful analysis.

Continuous Improvement Actions

Through analysis of the core ability assessment data, M State has identified specific continuous improvement actions. (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

- 1) Faculty input will be sought by conducting a survey in May 2018 to evaluate the core ability assessment process and to request specific input on possible curricular gaps relative to the Personal and Social Responsibility and Information Technology core abilities.
- 2) When it convenes in fall 2018, the Institutional Effectiveness Council will review core ability assessment data and will propose specific goals for improving student learning for additional review by all faculty. It is important to note that AAC&U *On Solid Ground* report, which is posted at [Evidence Library](#), "makes no attempt to set specific threshold or target scores for achievement at 2 and 4 year institutions. That said, the rubrics reflect the collective best thinking and ambitions for learning within higher education in the United States, so it is not unreasonable to say that scores at the two Milestone levels are appropriate for students who have completed the majority of their coursework for an associate's degree."

- 3) The co-curricular assessment process will begin collecting data in the spring of 2018. The co-curricular assessment process, finalized in January of 2018, is inclusive of the core abilities.

Attached Resources

- Assessment of Student Learning Handbooks
- Core Ability Assessment Data, 2015-2016
- Core Ability Assessment Data, 2016-2017
- Core Ability Assessment Forms and Reporting Tools, 2015-2017