

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program Sociology

1) Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed?

- a. Demonstrate the critical, mathematical, informational, analytic, expressive and creative skills that are essential tools of the educated person well-prepared for a meaningful life and vocation.
- b. Understand the major ideas and methods of inquiry of the scholarly disciplines that comprise the university and be able to use those methods of inquiry as beginning practitioners to address complex contemporary problems.
- c. Be able to identify and articulate the strengths and limitations of the disciplines and the relationship of the disciplines to one another and demonstrate an understanding of the breadth and diversity of human knowledge as well as its openness to integration in more comprehensive wholes.
- d. Be conversant with and able to discuss intelligently enduring questions and issues that are fundamental to human inquiry and that have shaped the traditions from which the university has emerged.
- e. Demonstrate the ability to apply more than one disciplinary perspective to the same enduring question or complex contemporary problem.
- f. Be familiar with the scholarly exploration of religious faith and understand how faith and reason are related in the search for truth.
- g. Demonstrate the ability to examine their values and experiences and integrate what they learn with the principles that guide their lives.
- h. Be prepared and disposed to use their talents and education as engaged global citizens and responsible leaders in service of the common good.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.

The learning outcomes appear on the University Core website:

<http://www.bc.edu/sites/core/learning-outcomes.html>

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

During fall term, the Assessment Committee distributes to all instructors of core Sociology courses (a) a list of the names of a randomly-selected 25% sample of students enrolled in their course(s), and (b) a rubric. The rubric varies each year, but always assesses two of the eight general core formal learning outcomes. Instructors apply the rubric to a 5-page paper or essay exam question from each student in the sample.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Assessment Committee consists of two full-time faculty members, one of whom is the Director of Undergraduate Studies. The Assessment Committee is responsible for (a) creation of the rubric for student work, (b) data collection, compilation, and analysis, (c) provision of summary data and recommended actions to the full faculty, and (d) communication with administration, including annual reports to the Dean of Arts & Sciences. Annually at the spring retreat, the full faculty discusses the Assessment Committee's report and decides upon programmatic changes.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

Prior to this year, we assessed the 25% sample of core students using the same rubric that we used to assess senior Sociology majors. We collected data but did not act upon it, pending core reforms.

The department wishes for faculty to be involved in the renewed core, but Enduring Questions courses (capped at 19 students) have the potential to reduce a faculty member's student credit hours. We value faculty teaching in the "old" core as well. Therefore, the faculty agrees that anyone who teaches an EQ class will not use that class to replace any ordinarily-taught 60-person core course within the academic year.

All five items rubric items were new this year. It was unclear whether weak results on two questions indicated genuine problem areas or rather were an artifact of item wording. Next year, the committee will revise and refine the assessment rubric.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.**

2016