

Question C

Measurable goals in writing proficiency and critical thinking

Do you have measurable goals for each graduate in the areas of writing proficiency and critical thinking? If so, please send them to me with the goals and include the results for the last five to ten years.

Florida International University establishes measurable goals for both writing proficiency and critical thinking.

Academic Learning Compacts

The Florida Board of Governors (BOG) [mandates](#) that every public university in Florida develop an Academic Learning Compact (ALC) for each of its baccalaureate degree programs. The ALCs identify expected core student learning outcomes for graduates in the areas of communication skills, content/discipline knowledge and skills, and critical thinking skills. Through our Academic Learning Compacts, FIU emphasizes writing and critical thinking skills across all disciplinary lines in the core curriculum and within majors at the upper-division level. The ALC learning outcomes are created by faculty and are discipline specific, which means that faculty can equip students with the necessary skills to transfer course content into their chosen postgraduate career paths. A [complete list](#) of all of the ALCs for each baccalaureate program is accessible on the Web.

To measure skills in critical thinking and writing, faculty members use rubrics to assess the level of proficiency students demonstrate within specific assignments. The rubrics are designed to provide specific guidelines and standards that the student must meet in order to demonstrate competence. Examples of the rubrics that faculty members use can be found at the [AAC&U VALUE Rubrics website](#) that includes nationally-normed rubrics in various areas of content and skills. Faculty use the results of these assessments to develop and implement specific teaching improvements that will improve student learning. Samples of the assessment results for FIU's various degree programs show a variety of approaches to these key competencies [[Student Learning Outcomes 2006-11](#)].

To ensure that each student achieves the core competencies outlined in the ALCs, FIU's Office of Academic Planning and Accountability conducts an audit of the outcomes reported by each [core curriculum course](#) and each of FIU's [academic programs](#). Staff analyze each of the learning outcomes to ensure that writing, critical thinking, and content knowledge/skills are each addressed by at least one student learning outcome.

Requirements for Accreditation

Discipline-specific accrediting agencies and other regulatory agencies often require programs to address critical thinking and writing proficiency. Degree programs in these disciplines fulfill these requirements by establishing learning goals that address the required skills. When properly constructed, these learning goals can simultaneously fulfill the requirements of the specialized accreditation agencies, the BOG's requirements for Academic Learning Compacts, and FIU's requirements for assessment of programs, thus streamlining the different assessment requirements with the preparation of a single report. Samples of the assessment results for FIU's various degree programs indicate some similarities and differences among disciplines [[Student Learning Outcomes 2006-11](#)].

The following is a list of the requirements for writing and critical thinking of six of the accrediting boards to which FIU's programs answer. All of these FIU programs have and maintain full accreditation.

1. *The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education* ([NCATE](#)):

Standard 1a: Teacher candidates have in-depth knowledge of the content that they plan to teach as described in professional, state, and institutional standards. They demonstrate their knowledge through inquiry, critical analysis, and synthesis of the subject. All program completers pass the content examinations in states that require examinations for licensure. Candidates in advanced programs for teachers are recognized experts in the content that they teach.

2. *Florida Educator Accomplished Practices* ([FEAPs](#))

FEAPS 2: Communication

RI4 Writes and speaks in a logical and understandable style with appropriate grammar F2

FEAPS 4: Critical Thinking

RI6 Thinks critically about problems using inquiry to investigate resolutions that benefit all F4

RI5 Reflects on practice with the goal of continuous improvement F3

3. *Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology* ([ABET](#))

A. Baccalaureate degree programs must demonstrate that graduates have: (a) an ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and applied sciences, (b) an ability to design and conduct experiments, as well as to analyze and interpret data, (c) an ability to formulate or design a system, process, or program to meet desired needs, (e) an ability to identify and solve applied science problems, (f) an understanding of professional and ethical responsibility, (g) an ability to communicate effectively, (h) the broad education necessary to understand the impact of solutions in a global and societal context, (k) an ability to use the

techniques, skills, and modern scientific and technical tools necessary for professional practice..

4. *The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business* ([AACSB - International](#))

Standard 15: The standard requires use of a systematic process for curriculum management but does not require any specific courses in the curriculum. Normally, the curriculum management process will result in an undergraduate degree program that includes learning experiences in such general knowledge and skill areas as: communication abilities, ethical understanding and reasoning abilities, analytic skills, use of information technology, dynamics of the global economy, multicultural and diversity understanding, and reflective thinking skills.

5. *American Bar Association* ([ABA](#))

Standard 302: Curriculum

(a) A law school shall require that each student receive substantial instruction in:

1. the substantive law generally regarded as necessary to effective and responsible participation in the legal profession;
2. legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem solving, and oral communication;
3. writing in a legal context, including at least one rigorous writing experience in the first year and at least one additional rigorous writing experience after the first year;
4. other professional skills generally regarded as necessary for effective and responsible participation in the legal profession; and
5. the history, goals, structure, values, rules and responsibilities of the legal profession and its members.

6. *National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration* ([NASPAA](#))

5.1 Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and public service values. The required competencies will include five domains - - the ability to:

- lead and manage in public governance;
- participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

National Survey of Student Engagement

To gather specific data on FIU graduates' achievement of the three core competencies (communication skills, content/discipline knowledge and skills, and critical thinking skills), Florida International University uses the National Survey of Student Engagement, a widely used test instrument that generates data, based on self-report of students, on students' engagement in the educational process. NSSE is normally given to first-year students and to seniors.

The premise of NSSE is that certain student activities serve as behavioral indicators of certain learning outcomes. Because many NSSE variables relate to general education competencies, the results of the NSSE provide useful information on the progress of FIU students toward achieving FIU's established core competencies (given the caution that should always accompany using cross-sectional sampling in a university with many transfer students).

In both 2004 and in 2008, FIU students scored higher than students attending FIU's Carnegie peers on several NSSE questions ($p < 0.01$): all three components of Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills; seven of the eleven components of Written and Oral Communication; and three important elements of Critical Thinking [[General Education Competencies NSSE](#)].

Participating Units

Office of Academic Planning and Accountability (APA)

Office of Planning and Institutional Research

Colleges and Schools

Documentation and Evidence

Description	File
2008-2009 College-level Competencies in Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes.	2008-2009 College-level Competencies in Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes.pdf
2011-2012 Standards and rules and Procedures for Approval of Law Schools.	2011_2012_standards_and_rules_for_we b.authcheckdam.pdf
AAC&U VALUE Rubrics Web site.	http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=35823748&CFTOKEN=68914378
Academic Learning Compacts. Office of Academic Planning & Accountability.	http://apa.fiu.edu/alc.html
Board of Governors, State University System of Florida. Regulation 8.016. BOG Web site.	BOG Regulation 8.016.pdf

Description	File
Criteria For Accrediting Applied Science Programs. ABET Web site.	www.abet.org
Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation. AACSB Web site.	http://aacsb.edu
FEAPs Standards. FLDOE Web site.	http://www.fldoe.org/profdev/FEAPs/
FIU University Core Curriculum Courses Mapped With Competencies. FIU Undergraduate Catalog, 2008-09.	UCC-Courses Matched with Competencies.pdf
General Education Competencies-Summary Of NSSE Results. NSSE Web site.	General Education Competencies NSSE
NASPA Standards 2009. Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. NASPA Web site.	naspaa.org
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. NCATE Web site.	NCATE.org
National Survey of Student Engagement Web site.	http://nsse.iub.edu/
Student Learning Outcomes. Office of Academic Planning and Accountability.	Student Learning Outcomes 2006-2011.pdf