

Journalism Department Assessment Plan for 2025-2026 **Updated July 1, 2025**

The Department of Journalism uses direct and indirect measures to assess student learning and the effectiveness of the undergraduate journalism curriculum. A designated faculty member creates a report that presents the findings from an annual review of results of direct and indirect measures. Department of Journalism Faculty and members of the Department of Journalism Alumni Board review these findings annually to assess whether and how to adjust the curriculum.

In the 2025-2026 academic year, student learning will be assessed in accordance with [ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies](#). Student learning also will be assessed to evaluate the following Journalism Program Learning Outcomes.

Graduates of the Journalism Program will:

- Produce work that includes the voices of members of a diverse society, not just the official, the well-connected and the powerful.
- Seek to minimize harm by recognizing stereotypes and pushing to correct them.
- Produce audio and visuals to effectively communicate information using industry-standard tools and technologies.
- Be adept at crafting effective messages by writing correctly and clearly in multiple styles and media formats appropriate for various audiences.
- Utilize critical thinking skills to research and verify factual information, to identify misinformation and to detect biases in their reporting and their media consumption.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history of journalism and the role of journalists, including contributions of marginalized groups traditionally overlooked.
- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in the United States and understand how these principles and laws differ from those in other countries;
- Demonstrate an understanding of ethical principles and cultural competencies to create work that aligns with domestic and global professional journalism organizations.
- Correctly apply numerical and statistical concepts where applicable.
- Edit their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style, grammatical correctness, and legal and ethical compliance.
- Compete effectively in media job markets.

Direct Measures for Assessing Student Learning

Students enrolled in Journalism and Society (JRN 1111) complete [one set](#) of multiple-choice questions at the end of each semester. This metric is designed to evaluate students' understanding of journalism's role in history and society, diversity, and basic numeracy.

Students enrolled in Writing and Reporting (JRN 1196) complete [a set assignment](#) at the end of each semester. The assignment assesses students' skills differentiating fact from opinion and understanding of key components of news articles. Students also write a lead, nut graph, and quote. Journalism department faculty members annually review students' responses and writing, and then faculty members evaluate whether and how the curriculum ought to change.

Students enrolled in Journalism Law and Ethics (JRN 3101) complete a [set of multiple-choice and open-ended questions](#) at the beginning and end of each semester. This metric assesses student understanding of journalists' ethical responsibilities, journalists' free expression rights, and relevant legal regulations in the United States and abroad. Faculty members review the students' responses to assess whether and how the curriculum ought to change to foster a deeper understanding of ethics and law in the United States and abroad.

Students complete assignments that reflect their understanding of diversity, representation, and inclusion in each Democracy, Representation, and Inclusion course. Faculty members who teach these courses are asked to apply a [rubric](#) to evaluate a sample of students' work from these courses each semester to assess whether and how the curriculum ought to change to promote student understanding of their roles and journalists' roles in a multicultural society. Faculty members review faculty responses to assess whether and how the curriculum ought to change to promote students' awareness and understanding of diversity, representation, and inclusion.

To gauge students' mastery of Journalism Department learning goals through students' completion of required courses and electives, students' learning is assessed in two ways near the time of their graduation. First, journalism students enrolled in capstone courses complete a [set of multiple-choice questions](#) at the end of each semester. These questions assess every learning goal for journalism majors. Second, at the end of each spring semester, professionals, who are members of the Journalism Alumni Board, assess whether and how a sample of student work from capstone courses reflects mastery of every learning goal for journalism majors. Faculty members review the results from the question set and alumni feedback to determine whether and how the curriculum ought to change.

Although students are not required to complete internships for credit, some students choose to complete internships for credit. Journalism professionals and faculty assess these students' learning. Journalism professionals who are supervising interns are asked to complete a [question set](#) that evaluates students' mastery of every learning goal for journalism majors and ACEJMC competencies and values. Supervisors also provide written feedback about students' performance. The Department of Journalism Internship Coordinator evaluates how supervisors' feedback and samples of students' work reflect students' understanding of every learning goal for journalism majors. The Journalism Department Internship Coordinator shares a summary of these evaluations with the faculty, who consider whether to recommend curricular revision.

Indirect Measures for Assessing Student Learning

Near the midterm point in each semester, instructors of [Philadelphia Neighborhoods courses](#) and [capstone courses](#) complete questionnaires that evaluate students' mastery of each learning outcome for the journalism curriculum. Faculty review instructors' feedback to assess whether curricular change is recommended.

The Department of Journalism Chair assesses the quality of teaching and commitment to diversity by reviewing student feedback forms every semester. The department chair specifically reviews the item that asks whether each instructor, overall, taught the course well and comments on each instructor's willingness to create an inclusive environment for all members of a course. Faculty also periodically perform teaching observations.

Members of the Curriculum Committee and/or Diversity Committee assess how each course addresses access, engagement, diversity, and inclusion. Each spring, these faculty members apply a [rubric](#) for analysis of student-centered learning to analyze syllabi for undergraduate journalism courses.

After completing a Democracy, Representation, and Inclusion course, students are asked to complete a [question set](#) designed to encourage students to reflect upon what they have learned about their roles in a multicultural society, historical power imbalances, in addition to racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

The Department of Journalism annually records students' awards, publications, and internships. These accomplishments are reviewed to consider what students' accomplishments indicate about their mastery of learning outcomes for journalism majors.

The Klein College of Media and Communication performs an annual survey of alumni. This survey records job placement and graduate school entrance of recent graduates. Faculty annually consider what students' post-graduation placements indirectly indicate about students' skill sets.

The Journalism Department annually invites graduates to reflect on how well they felt they learned what they need to succeed in journalism, what aspects of the program helped them learn what they needed to succeed in journalism, and what suggestions they have for improvement of the program. Faculty ask these questions during an annual meeting of the Alumni Board. Faculty also invite alumni to complete a [question set](#) available online.

The Department of Journalism Chair and Department of Journalism Director of Undergraduate Studies welcome faculty members to share their perspectives on students' strengths and their concerns about student learning. The faculty follows up on these conversations during monthly faculty meetings.

During monthly faculty meetings, faculty members are invited to discuss concerns and successes related to students' learning. Based on this indirect assessment, the faculty considers

whether and how to change the curriculum. Recommended changes are discussed annually with the Alumni Board.

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