

## AY18 Academic Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) Assessment

### Composite Report: Critical Thinking

**Assessment Type:** Academic Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

**Academic Year:** AY18

**Level:** 300- & 400-Level Academic Program Courses

**Learning Outcome:** PLOs Critical Thinking

**Assessment Method/Tool:** Academic Program Critical Thinking Rubric

**Measurement Scale:** 3-1

**Sample Size:** 11 Academic Programs, 20 courses, 274 Students [31% FTE]  
(on-campus: 197 [23% on-campus FTE]; [online](#): 77 [8% online FTE])

Program	Courses	n	Proficient Median (3)	Adequate Median (2)	Developing Median (1)	Proficient + Adequate Median
<b>Anthropology/Sociology</b>	ANTH 312	14	57%	29%	14%	86%
	SOC 454	10	100%	0%	0%	100%
<b>Art</b>	ART 384	10	65%	25%	5%	95%
<b>Biology</b>	BIOL 323	19	72%	15%	13%	87%
<b>Business Administration</b>	BA 321 (o)	27	78%	22%	0%	100%
	BA 411	13	70%	30%	0%	100%
<b>Chemistry/Biochemistry</b>	CHEM 338	46	61%	26%	13%	87%
	CHEM 401	4	100%	0%	0%	100%
<b>Computer Science</b>	CS 328	16	53%	41%	6%	94%
	CS 409	3	67%	33%	0%	100%
<b>English/Writing</b>	ENGL 316 (o)	17	65%	35%	0%	100%
	ENGL 436	17	33%	45%	22%	78%
<b>History</b>	HIST 383 (o)	18	67%	28%	5%	95%
	HIST 427	16	78%	22%	0%	100%
<b>Politics &amp; Economics</b>	POLS 350 (o)	3	67%	33%	0%	100%
	POLS 450 (o)	1	100%	0%	0%	100%
<b>Psychology</b>	PSY 343	17	40%	43%	17%	83%
	PSY 442	11	58%	32%	0%	100%
<b>Theatre</b>	THEA 369 (o)	8	100%	0%	0%	100%
	THEA 475	4	25%	50%	25%	75%
<b>Composites &amp; Medians</b>	11 programs 20 courses	274	<a href="#">Median</a> 67%	<a href="#">Median</a> 29%	<a href="#">Median</a> 0%	<a href="#">Median</a> <b>100%</b>

## Online Courses Assessed

Program	Online Courses	n	Proficient Median	Adequate Median	Developing Median	Proficient + Adequate Median
<b>Business Administration</b>	BA 321 (o)	27	78%	22%	0%	100%
<b>Computer Science</b>	CS 409 (o)	3	67%	33%	0%	100%
<b>English/Writing</b>	ENGL 316 (o)	17	65%	35%	0%	100%
<b>History</b>	HIST 383 (o)	18	67%	28%	5%	95%
<b>Politics &amp; Economics</b>	POLS 350 (o)	3	67%	33%	0%	100%
	POLS 450 (o)	1	100%	0%	0%	100%
<b>Theatre</b>	THEA 369 (o)	8	100%	0%	0%	100%
<b>Composites &amp; Medians</b>	7	77	<u>Median</u> 67%	<u>Median</u> 28%	<u>Median</u> 0%	<u>Median</u> <b>100%</b>

## Closing the Loop

The institutional effectiveness threshold for Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) assessment is a 100% median of student samples scoring at the Proficient or Adequate levels (a 3 or 2 on the program rubrics). The median for the AY18 Critical Thinking PLO Assessment is 100%, meeting the threshold. Based on the sampling of 274 students from 20 courses across the curriculum, academic programs are ensuring to a remarkable degree that their upper division students demonstrate discipline-based critical thinking abilities. (For specific discipline-based criteria, review the individual program reports on the [Academic Program Assessment Page](#).) Essential to this level of proficiency is reverse design—ensuring that the complete curriculum in a discipline is scaffolded, from the 100- through the 400-levels, so that students are able to demonstrate program outcomes in their upper division coursework. The 100% median threshold underscores EOU’s assumption that all upper division majors in all disciplines should demonstrate aptitude in all program outcomes at least at the Adequate level. In fact, the median for the Proficient is 67%, level 3, with 28% at Adequate, level 2. This Critical Thinking PLO assessment included 77 online students (8% of AY18 FTE) in 7 courses from 6 programs. While the data is not robust, it does indicate that online students also meet the 100% threshold, indicating consistency of effective teaching and learning in both face-to-face and online modalities.

A number of the Closing the Loop Statements for individual programs make exactly this point when accounting for the success of their students. They make the same point accounting for those students who are at the Developing stage—faculty consistently call attention to the fact that most students performing at the Developing stage are transfer students, who have not benefitted from the careful scaffolding of critical thinking capacities built into program curricula. It is no doubt also helpful that program outcomes are aligned with General Education and University Learning Outcomes (GLOs and ULOs), all of them stemming from EOU’s long history and commitment to [AAC&U’s VALUE Rubrics](#) to define what EOU graduates should know and be able to do. The alignment of GLOs, PLOs, and ULOs provides university-wide coherence for teaching and learning.

Equally significant is the close attention to performance dips in individual PLOs in each program. That is, program faculty look closely and analyze carefully what they might need to change in order to enhance teaching and learning for their majors, even when they have met the PLO threshold of a 100% median. This is the very essence of reflective practice and continuous improvement.

While the composite median for programs and courses meets the 100% target, nine of the 20 courses did not meet the target. Three courses were in the 94% - 95% range; four courses in the 83% - 87% range; and one course in the 78% range. The 20 courses assessed represent 11 EOU programs; in 9 cases both a 300- and 400-level course were assessed. In all those instances, at least one of the two courses met the threshold of 100%. In the 2 programs where only a single course was assessed, the thresholds were 95% and 87%, close to the target. However, EOU upper division courses in the majors often have low enrollments and one or two students can skew results. For example, THEA 475 data indicates 25% of the students at the Developing stage, but that 25% represents just one student, a first-year student who was not so identified until the end of the course. While that is a significant advising issue, one would not expect a first-year student to be able to meet the outcomes for a senior-level course—the result confirms increasing expectations as students move through the program.

Variances from the 100% threshold highlight the rationale for using the median to assess EOU's academic PLO outcomes, as it allows for factors beyond a program's control, as in the case of individual students not rising to the occasion for a variety of personal reasons. (The Developing median in the AY18 Critical Thinking assessment remains at 0% nonetheless for both on-campus and online students.) Using this rationale, EOU sets the 100% median threshold, holding students to the highest standard as they approach completion in their majors, while recognizing that a mean does not allow for even minor variances. In the end, EOU can acclaim the effectiveness of its academic programs and those programs can take pride in the quality of teaching and learning for their majors, where the median demonstrates that 67% of graduates attain proficiency in each program's Critical Thinking outcomes, while taking note that programs identify additional approaches to teaching and learning to increase the percentage of students at level 3, as demonstrated in the thoughtful Closing the Loop statements at the end of [each AY18 Critical Thinking course assessment](#), indicating a teaching culture of reflective practitioners dedicated to student success.

### **Action Plan**

- 1) The Vice Provost for Academic Quality (VPAQ) will work with programs using indirect, nationally normed assessments (EDUC) to move toward direct assessment of student work to determine alignment of PLOs with capstone assignment design and capstone artifacts.
- 2) The VPAQ will work with programs to identify effective approaches to working with transfer students in order to increase transfer student success.
- 3) The VPAQ will work with programs to revise overly general PLOs toward discipline-based outcomes, without losing alignment with EOU GLOs—Business Administration, Chemistry/Biochemistry, and Psychology.
- 4) The VPAQ will work with programs, such as Economics, Integrative Studies, and Music, that have not identified Critical Thinking as a program outcome to consider doing so. The VPAQ will also work with

programs, such as Anthropology/Sociology, Biology, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Business Administration, Computer Science, Economics, and Psychology, to consider including a [Quantitative Literacy](#) criterion to their Critical Thinking Outcome.