



**Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) Report for Non-Accredited Programs**  
*(updated 9/19/23)*

Program Type: **Non-Accredited Program**

Program Name: B.A. in Public Relations

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Review Cycle:

- Even Year
- Odd Year**

Review Round:

- Round A (Associate Dean review)**
- Round B (Associate Dean + VPAA review)**

All SLO reports are archived here: <https://www.eiu.edu/assess/majorassessment.php>

**DUE: October 15<sup>th</sup>** to your Associate Dean or designee

Each academic program is expected to prepare a Summary of the Assessment Data by Student Learning Outcome. This summary may take the form of a chart or other means of presentation that describes the annual data collected, when it is collected, in which course(s), through which assignment or activity, and by whom. This summary should clearly indicate what the program seeks to discover in its students' learning. The summary should correspond to the record-keeping documents maintained by the academic program.

**PART 1. OVERVIEW OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND MEASURES**

Student Learning Outcome (SLO)	What measures and instruments are you using? This could be an oral or written exam, a regularly assigned paper, a portfolio—administered early and later in coursework.	How are you using this info to improve student learning? What are you hoping to learn from your data? Include <b>target score(s) and results</b> , and specify whether these were met, not met, or partially met for each instrument.	Does your SLO correspond to an <b>undergraduate learning goal (ULG)</b> : writing, speaking, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, responsible citizenship?
Students will acquire <b>disciplinary knowledge</b> of public relations.	Students complete the disciplinary knowledge exam/survey in CMN 2920 (Introduction to Public Relations) and CMN 4460 (Public Relations Capstone)	<p>The objective is for seniors' average score to be at least competent (70%+) and to see higher scores among those taking it during their senior year compared to those taking it at the 2000-level.</p> <p><b>Results:</b>            2000-level: 74.73%            4000-level <b>83.20%</b></p> <p>The objectives were <b>MET</b>. In addition, itemized analysis of post-test survey questions showed improvement on concepts that seniors were least familiar with during the previous assessment period. The assessment will help PR faculty continue emphasizing concepts with comparably less familiarity (see summary of data report for more detail).</p>	
Students will enhance their <b>critical thinking</b> skills.	Critical thinking is assessed with the critical thinking rubric (4-point scale). At the 2000-level, instructors will select a sample from an appropriate assignment in CMN 2920. At the 4000-level, instructors will select a sample of	The objective is for students to demonstrate improvement in their critical thinking skills over the course of their studies. This will be assessed based on the difference in scores between the 2000 and 4000-level class.	Critical Thinking

	<p>student essays from seniors from an appropriate assignment in CMN 4919, 4920 and/or CMN 4921.</p>	<p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2000-level (CMN 2920): 2.83/4</li> <li>• 4000-level (CMN 4919): <b>3.46/4</b></li> </ul> <p>The objectives were <b>MET</b>. The analysis also identified the highest and lowest-rated elements so that instructors can consider how to emphasize instruction on the lowest-rated elements.</p>	
<p>Students will cultivate a sense of <b>responsible citizenship</b> through social and ethical responsibility.</p>	<p>Responsible citizenship is assessed using the Social and Professional Ethics Measure (5-points scale) and the Multicultural Sensitivity Scale (5-point scale) via an online survey. All PR majors are asked to complete the survey.</p>	<p>For seniors, the objective is to reach a score of at least 3.49+. In addition, the expectation is an increase of the average score among seniors.</p> <p><u>Results (Social and Professional Ethics):</u></p> <p>Sophomores: 4.14/5            Juniors: 3.98/5            Seniors: <b>4.18/5</b></p> <p>The objectives were <b>MET</b> with scores above the expected minimum level and a slight increase among seniors.</p> <p><u>Results (Multicultural Sensitivity):</u></p> <p>Sophomores: 4.52/5 (mean)            Juniors: 4.6/5 (mean)            Seniors: <b>4.71/5 (mean)</b></p> <p>The objectives were <b>MET</b> (high scores and an increase among seniors). Results inform discussion on how to continue to reinforce professional ethics and responsible citizenship across the public relations curriculum.</p>	<p>Responsible citizenship</p>

<p>Students will be able to create and implement <b>written</b> message strategies in a diverse range of contexts.</p>	<p>Writing is assessed with a 4-point writing rubric. In the PR Capstone (CMN 4460), students submit a professional PR portfolio with their best work produced during their time at EIU. PR faculty assess students' ability to create and implement written message strategies in a diverse range of contexts based on those final portfolios.</p> <p>In order to assess students' ability to implement message strategies in diverse contexts the Communication Flexibility Measure (5-points scale) is used, and data collected with an online survey.</p>	<p>The goal is for the average writing rubric score to be at least competent (2.49+).</p> <p><b>Result (Writing - MET): 3.34/4</b></p> <p>Element-level analysis of student scores informs what elements of PR writing seniors still need most practice with across PR classes and especially in the two PR Writing class (mechanics &amp; style)</p> <p>PR majors completed the Communication Flexibility survey and seniors should average a score of 3.49+.</p> <p><b>Results (Communication Flexibility - MET): 3.58/5 (seniors)</b></p> <p>Students scored slightly above the minimum expected level on Communication Flexibility. The result, an improvement compared to the last cycle when this objective was not met, encourages PR faculty to continue to create opportunities for students to gain confidence in navigating professional interpersonal communication inside and outside of the classroom.</p>	<p>Writing</p>
<p>Students will be able to create and implement <b>oral</b> message strategies in a diverse range of contexts.</p>	<p>To assess students' ability to implement and create oral message strategies in a diverse range of contexts, the public speaking rubric is used (4-point scale). At the 4000-level, instructors will select a sample from an appropriate speaking assignment in CMN 4919, 4920 and/or CMN 4921</p>	<p>The objective for the speaking assessment is for average scores to be at least competent (2.49+).</p> <p><b>Results (Oral Presentation - MET):</b></p> <p>4000-Level (2): 3.5/4</p> <p>Element-level analysis identified the highest and lowest-rated elements of students' oral presentations so that instructors can consider</p>	<p>Speaking</p>

	<p>In addition, the Communication Flexibility Measure (5-points scale) is used, and data collected via an online survey.</p>	<p>how to emphasize instruction on those elements (see data report).</p> <p>The objective for the average score on the Communication Flexibility Measure among seniors is 3.49+.</p> <p><b>Results (Communication Flexibility –MET): 3.58/5</b></p> <p>Students scored just above the minimum expected level on Communication Flexibility. The result encourages PR faculty to continue to create more opportunities for students to gain confidence in navigating professional interpersonal communication inside and outside of the classroom.</p>	
<p>Students will be able to use <b>quantitative data</b> to analyze, interpret, and evaluate material in an effort to inform strategic decision-making processes.</p>	<p>The Quantitative Reasoning Scale is used to assess students' ability to use quantitative data to analyze, interpret, and evaluate material to inform strategic decision-making processes (4-point scale). Instructors select a sample from an appropriate assignment in CMN 3020, CMN 3980 and/or CMN 4919 to assess quantitative reasoning.</p>	<p>The objective is for students to reach an average score of at least competent (2.49+).</p> <p><b>Results:</b> CMN 3020 &amp; CMN 4919: 3.51/4 (mean)</p> <p>The objective was <b>met</b>.</p> <p>Element-level analysis identified the highest and lowest-rated elements of students' quantitative reasoning, so that instructors can consider how to emphasize instruction on those elements (see extended data report).</p>	<p>Quantitative reasoning</p>

## PART 2. IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES BASED ON ASSESSMENT

A. Provide a short summary (1-2 paragraphs) or bulleted list of any **curricular actions** (revisions or additions) that were approved over the past two years as a result of reflecting on the student learning outcomes data. Are there any additional future changes, revisions, or interventions proposed or still pending?

- PR faculty discussed and decided to add a required class focused on workplace communication/small group communication to enhance communication flexibility and interpersonal/small group communication skills in professional settings among students. This process is currently still pending and part of larger curriculum revision discussions across majors within the School of Communication and Journalism. Specifically, the school is currently considering adding a required class on Workplace communication for all majors in the school.

B. Provide a brief description or bulleted list of **any improvements (or declines)** observed/measured in student learning. Be sure to mention any intervention made that has not yet resulted in student improvement (if applicable).

- While the results from the last assessment cycle were already strong, we saw improvements on all measures (except one). In addition, all objectives were met (vs. 2 objectives partially met and 1 not met during the previous assessment cycle).
- The only learning objective with a decrease among seniors was Critical Thinking. However, this decrease is marginal (-0.08 points), and the assessment showed an increase in growth from 2000 to 4000-level on Critical Thinking over the previous assessment cycle (by + 0.37)
- The results reinforce previous findings of an effective curriculum while showing that measures taken in response, specifically, emphasizing unclear concepts (disciplinary knowledge) and providing even more opportunities for students to practice interpersonal/small group/ and professional communication skills, have been effective and should be continued.

## C. HISTORY OF DATA REVIEW OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS

Please document annual faculty and committee engagement with the assessment process (such as the review of outcomes data, revisions/updates to assessment plan, and reaffirmation of SLOs).

Date of annual (or periodic) review	Individuals or groups who reviewed the assessment plan	Results of the review (i.e., reference proposed changes from any revised SLOs or from point 2.A. curricular actions)
Nov. 29, 2023	Assessment Coordinator, Dept. Chair, PR faculty	Review of assessment data and concepts/skills to be further emphasized in classes
Since September 2024	Assessment Coordinator, Dept. Chair, PR faculty	Discussion and commitment to adding small group/workplace communication class to enhance professional communication skills/communication flexibility among student (ongoing/pending as part of larger curriculum

		discussions across majors in the School of Communication and Journalism)

#### **Dean Review and Feedback**

With four years (two cycles) in since the re-imagining of their assessment plan, the School of Communication and Journalism's Public Relations B.A. continues to evolve and refine its methods and evidence growth in results across the board. Particularly noteworthy are the gains made at the senior level of assessment in the areas of disciplinary knowledge and social/professional ethics. In fact, nearly all measures saw improvements, and all objectives were met. The addition-in-progress of a workplace communication/small group communication required class will likely produce further refinement and even better results. Once again, we commend the School's faculty for being consistently engaged with the assessment data in making decisions about curricular evolution. We look forward to the next two years of data.

Dean or designee



Date

12/23/25

#### **VPAA Office Review and Feedback (for "Round B" SLO report only)**

VPAA or designee

Date

# Summary of the Assessment Data

B.A. in Public Relations

Submitted Oct. 2025

## Disciplinary Knowledge

Disciplinary Knowledge is assessed using a 25-item survey that students complete in CMN 2920 (Introduction to Public Relations) and as seniors in CMN 4460 (Public Relations Capstone). The tests were administered by the instructors, and the data was analyzed and processed by the assessment coordinator.

Students scored an average of **74.73% on the pre-test**<sup>1</sup> (Fall 2023 & Fall 2024) and an average of **83.20%** on the post-test (Spring 2024 & Spring 2025), which equates to a full letter grade increase and **exceeded** the minimum expected outcome for seniors (70+%) (see Fig. 1).

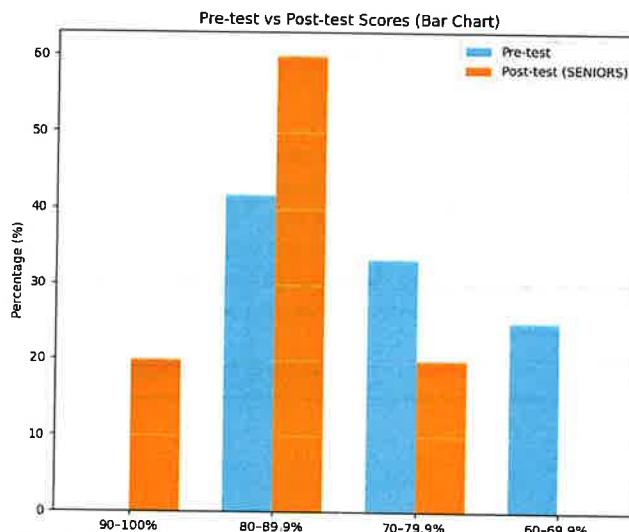


Fig. 1. Comparison of disciplinary knowledge pre-test (2000-level) and post-test (seniors, 4000-level) scores for public relations majors 2023-2025.

<sup>1</sup> The relatively strong results on the pre-test may be due to some students needing to take CMN 2920 out of sequence and having been exposed to disciplinary knowledge on PR before taking CMN 2920.

The post-test result, which is a slight increase of the average score (+1.2%) over the last assessment cycle's outcome, indicates that our public relations classes continue to help students gain and retain disciplinary knowledge while consistently reinforcing important concepts. Notably, no senior scored below the minimum expected threshold of 70% while 80% of seniors scored above 80% (lowest score: 76%, highest score: 92%).

What's more, 14/25 questions were answered correctly by 90%+ of all seniors taking the post-test (vs. only 7 questions on the pre-test). Differently from the previous assessment cycle, when three questions were answered incorrectly by more than 60% of seniors (Q5, Q11, Q12), only one question was answered incorrectly by 60% of seniors (Q10), and the scores improved on all concepts previously identified as requiring reinforcement. In addition, the itemized analysis identified only two questions that were answered incorrectly by 40% (Q10, Q11, Q15) of seniors. All other questions were answered correctly by at least 70% of seniors.

This itemized analysis provides a good base for faculty to identify concepts (namely, PR Ethics Code<sup>2</sup>, differentiation of advertising and public relations, and legitimacy) that may need even more reinforcement.

### Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is assessed in a 2000-level and a 4000-level class based on the 4-point Critical Thinking rubric. The instructors of the classes selected an assignment for this assessment and rated each paper based on the critical thinking rubric.

The scores were as follows -

- 2000-level: 2.83/4 (mean) – Fall 2024
- 4000-level: 3.46/4 (mean) – Spring 2025

The objectives were **met**. At both levels, scores **exceeded** the minimum expected score of 2.49+, and students showed higher levels of critical thinking in the 4000-level class. While the score marginally decreased at the 4000-level when

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the results, a number of students seem to overinterpret the PRSSA Ethics Code as mandating that all viewpoints must be represented in a persuasive public relations campaign.

compared to the previous assessment cycle (-0.08 points), the growth between 2000-level and 4000-level increased (by +0.37 points).

Seniors scored a strong average score of 3.0 or higher on all elements of the critical thinking rubric. The lowest average scores were for "synthesizing evidence in order to draw conclusions" and "expressing ideas with precision and clarity" while seniors scored highest on "applying and identifying relevant course concepts appropriate for the assignment."

### Responsible Citizenship

Responsible Citizenship is assessed using two established survey instruments (Social and Professional Ethics Measure and Multicultural Sensitivity Scale) with 5-point Likert scales. The survey was sent to all PR majors during AYs 23/24 and 24/25 and received 39 complete responses (self-reported student status and major – freshmen: 2; sophomores: 10; juniors: 12; seniors 12). Because of the low rate of responses among freshmen (2), the results were not included. The assessment coordinator processed and analyzed the data.

#### Results (Social and Professional Ethics – Sp24 & Sp25):

Seniors:	4.18/5 (mean)
Juniors:	3.98/5 (mean)
Sophomores:	4.14/5 (mean)

The results **exceed** the expected level of 3.5+ at all status levels. Students come to the major with a relatively high sense of professional responsibility and these levels slightly increased among seniors. The average scores for seniors also increased by 0.40 points (from 3.78) when compared to the last assessment cycle. This indicates that the PR curriculum helps maintain students' high levels of social and professional ethics.

#### Results (Multicultural Sensitivity – Sp 24 & Sp 25):

Seniors	4.71/5 (mean)
Juniors	4.6/5 (mean)
Sophomores	4.52/5 (mean)

The results exceed the expected level of 3.5+ at all status levels, and students showed high levels of multicultural sensitivity. Students enter the major with high levels of multicultural sensitivity and those levels are maintained throughout the duration of the program. Specifically, the data shows an increase of 0.19 from sophomore to senior (it showed a slight decrease of 0.25 during the previous assessment cycle). Overall, the data suggests that students maintain relatively high levels of multicultural sensitivity as they complete the public relations curriculum.

### Writing

Writing was assessed based on a professional public relations portfolio<sup>3</sup> submitted by seniors in CMN 4460 (Public Relations Capstone) during the Spring 2024 & 2025. The instructors of the class assessed two documents with significant written content from each student's portfolio using the 4-point writing rubric which assesses elements of organization, content, style, format and design, spelling, and grammar. In addition, the Communication Flexibility scale is used to complement the writing assessment.

On average, student documents scored **3.34/4** (competent) on the **writing assessment**, which **exceeded** the minimum expected score (2.49+). Compared to the previous assessment cycle, scores slightly increased by 0.11 points (from 3.23).

This indicates that, overall, students gain solid writing skills as they complete their major. Similarly to the previous assessment cycle, mechanics and style continue to be the two lowest scored areas.

### Communication Flexibility - Results (Sp 24 & Sp 25):

Seniors	3.58/5
Juniors	3.27/5
Sophomores	3.39/5

**The objective was met.** Seniors' average scores were just above the minimum expected level (3.49+) and increased by +0.28 points compared to the results from the previous assessment cycle (from 3.3 to 3.58) when the objective was only partially met.

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<sup>3</sup> The documents included in the portfolios should represent the students' best work and have received several rounds of feedback and revisions. We, thus, expect scores to be high.

From sophomore to senior, the survey indicates a slight increase in communication flexibility, thus, a growing comfort in adjusting to and navigating diverse professional and interpersonal communication contexts.

## Public Speaking and Effective Use of Oral Messages

Two separate assessments were used to assess students' skills in this category. First, public speaking was assessed in two 4000-level classes using the 4-point Oral Presentation rubric. Instructors in CMN 4919 and CMN 4920 selected a presentation assignment to assess students' oral presentation skills. Secondly, public relations majors completed the communication flexibility survey, which was sent to all public relations majors (n=39).

### Results (Oral Presentation):

4920 & CMN 4921: **3.5/4 (mean)**

Students **exceeded** the minimum expected score of 2.49+ and showed similarly high presentation skills across two 4000-level classes (highest average score: 4; lowest average score: 2.7/4). Only one out of 13 students assessed received an average score below 3.

While students scored highest on "Voice" (mean: 3.6/4) and "Organization" (mean: 3.6/4), they scored lowest on "Analysis" (3.38/4), which includes audience-centeredness, clear purpose and support of main points. It will be useful to reinforce this element of strong oral presentation even more in our public relations classes.

### Communication Flexibility Results (Sp 24 & Sp 25):

Seniors	3.58/5
Juniors	3.27/5
Sophomores	3.39/5

**The objective was met.** Seniors' average scores are just above the minimum expected level (3.49+). Seniors' average scores also increased by 0.28 points compared to the results from the previous assessment cycle (from 3.3 to 3.58) when the objective was only partially met.

From sophomore to senior, the survey indicates a slight increase in communication flexibility, thus, a growing comfort in adjusting to and navigating diverse professional and interpersonal communication contexts.

### Quantitative Reasoning

Instructors applied the Quantitative Reasoning Scale in CMN 3020 (Public Relations Research and Evaluation) and CMN 4919 (Public Relations Campaigns) to assess quantitative reasoning based on one assignment with central relevance to quantitative reasoning.

#### Results:

CMN 3020/CMN 4919: 3.51/4 (mean)

The results **exceeded** the minimum expected threshold of 2.49+ and average scores slightly increased compared to the last assessment cycle (by 0.14 from 3.37/4). This indicates that our students gain quantitative reasoning competence in public relations contexts. While the average score was above 3.0 for all seven assessed elements of quantitative reasoning, students scored lowest (3.1/4) on reading and interpreting data visualizations. Thus, we may examine where teaching this skill may be emphasized even more in our curriculum.