

Quick Guide to Considering [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE as Evidence for Degree Program Assessment

This quick guide was prepared by the WSU Office of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness (ACE) and is intended to help WSU programs and faculty consider UCORE's [CAPS] Assessment Reports as a potential source of evidence for degree program assessment. ACE is also available to collaborate with WSU undergraduate degree programs to facilitate faculty discussions to use assessment in decision-making and design rubrics or other tools to measure program learning outcomes. Contact us at ace.office@wsu.edu for more information.

Background

UCORE General Education

WSU's general education program, known as [UCORE](#), helps students acquire broad knowledge of the wider world that complements the specialized focus of the major. UCORE is bookended by a first-year experience course [ROOT] and a senior capstone experience [CAPS]. Additionally, UCORE includes foundational courses and inquiry-based learning courses. Of the 34 total credits students must earn for UCORE, no more than three, three-credit courses may be taken within the major.

WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals and UCORE Learning Outcomes

All undergraduates, regardless of major, are expected to achieve the [WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals](#), which identify core skills and knowledge that all students should develop through their undergraduate studies. The WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals are faculty developed and expressed broadly so as to frame study in UCORE and in the major.

**Critical and Creative Thinking | Information Literacy | Communication
Quantitative Reasoning | Scientific Literacy | Diversity
Depth, Breadth, and Integration of Learning**

UCORE is the centerpiece of the undergraduate curriculum supporting the advancement of the WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals (each UCORE course designator includes a set of student learning outcomes, aligned with the WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals, that articulate what students are expected to achieve as they complete a course in that designator). Additionally, through the achievement of program-level SLOs, students generally demonstrate specialized knowledge and skills in the discipline, as well as disciplinary achievement of some WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals (as appropriate to the disciplinary focus), through depth of study within the chosen academic field.

See the Division of Academic Engagement and Student Achievement (DAESA) website for a [visualization illustrating the relationship](#) between general education requirements, major requirements, writing proficiency requirements, and co-curricular learning experiences in achieving the WSU Learning Goals.

UCORE Assessment

[UCORE Assessment](#) is intended to help faculty, departments, and university leadership determine to what extent undergraduates are achieving the learning outcomes of the UCORE general education program (and the associated WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals). ACE supports UCORE Assessment by managing specific assessment-related initiatives, data analysis, and reporting.

Overview of UCORE's [CAPS] Assessment Reporting

Introduction

UCORE's [Integrative Capstone \[CAPS\]](#) courses provide a culminating student experience for UCORE by asking students to integrate their learning to address authentic situations. Given their position as the culminating experience within the UCORE curriculum, [CAPS] courses carry a strong responsibility to provide evidence of student achievement of the learning outcomes of the UCORE general education program (and the associated WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals).

[CAPS] courses:

- Must be at the 400-level and students must have at least junior standing as a general prerequisite (senior standing strongly preferred).
- Must require students to demonstrate designator student learning outcomes associated with four of the WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals (Critical and Creative Thinking, Integrative Learning, Information Literacy, and Written Communication)
- May require students to demonstrate additional applicable designator learning outcomes associated with Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Literacy, Diversity, and/or Non-Written Communication as appropriate to the course.
- May be for majors-only, for non-majors only, or open to majors & non-majors.
- May occur within or outside the major, depending on the requirements of a student's major. Each department, school, or program determines its [CAPS] policy for its majors. Students may be required to take a [CAPS] course inside the major OR outside the major; OR the choice may be left to the student.

UCORE's [CAPS] Assessment Reporting Methodology

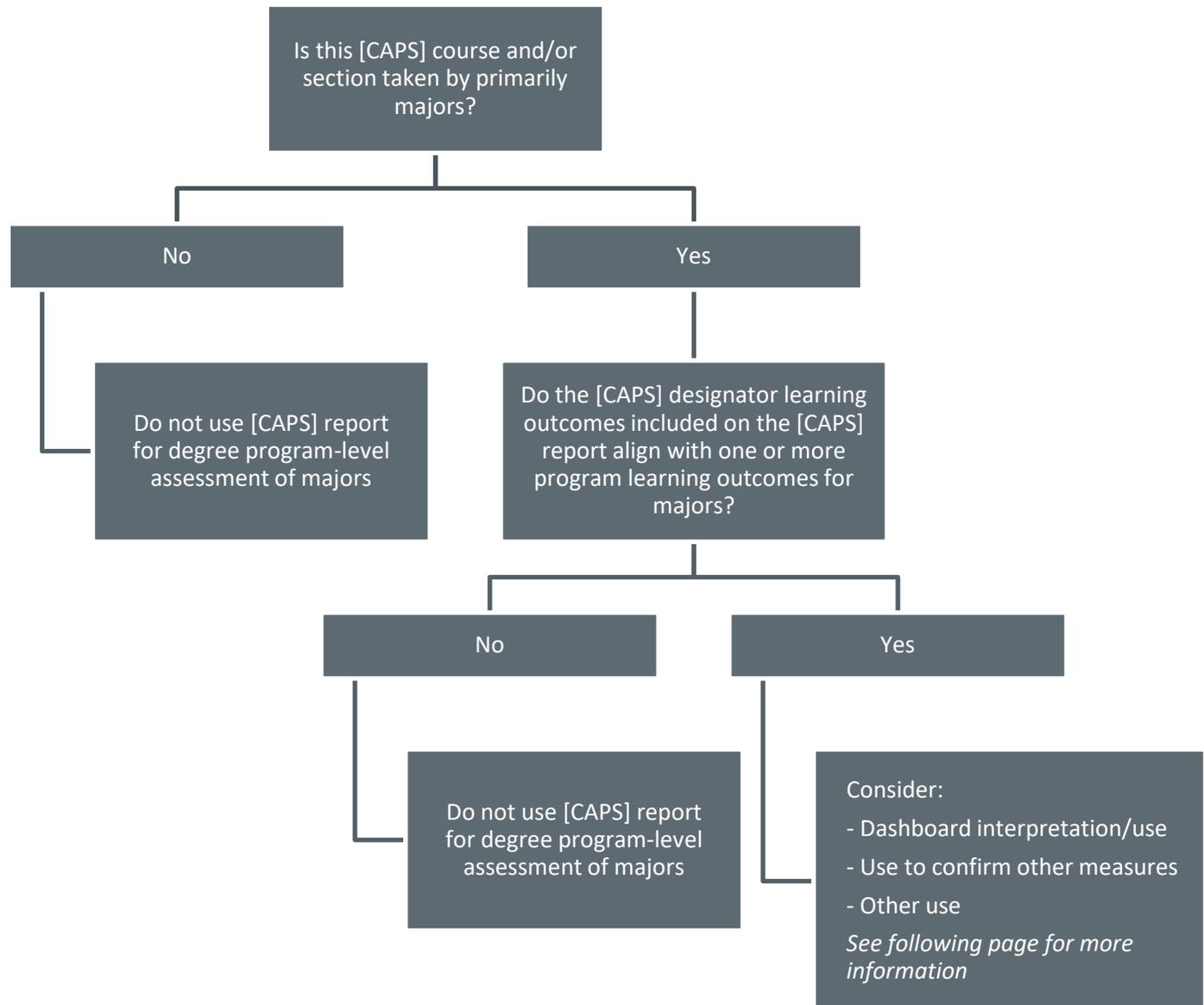
In place since 2015, UCORE's Capstone [CAPS] Assessment is intended to help UCORE understand how well students are achieving the [CAPS] designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals) at the near-graduation level. Each semester, [CAPS] instructors are asked to submit a short report providing an assessment of student achievement of [CAPS] designator learning outcomes in their course (direct measure, using faculty expert judgement). Faculty are also asked to provide information about how the UCORE curriculum could better prepare students for [CAPS] designator learning outcomes and the kinds of changes they plan to make to their course based on assessment. See the [current \[CAPS\] report planning sheet](#) (downloadable word doc with [CAPS] report questions) for details.

Starting in AY 2018-19, the report form was revised to improve [CAPS] assessment by providing descriptors of student performance for "meets expectations" at the graduating undergraduate level, while maintaining a short form that is not burdensome for instructors to complete. Additionally, the report switched to a rotating format starting in AY 2019-20, with four [CAPS] designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals) evaluated per year (i.e., reporting does not include all [CAPS] designator learning outcomes and associated WSU undergraduate Learning Goals each semester). See the [UCORE Assessment Plan](#) for more information.

Each year, [results of UCORE's \[CAPS\] Assessment Reporting](#) are compiled for UCORE Assessment to provide a summary of student achievement on [CAPS] designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals). ACE coordinates the collection, analysis, and summaries of [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE.

Considering [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE as Evidence for Degree Program Assessment for Majors

Typically assessment in a [CAPS] course for majors can contribute toward degree program-level assessment of student learning. If your department/school has one or more 400-level courses designated as a [CAPS], consider the following decision tree to determine whether a given [CAPS] Assessment Report could also contribute to degree program-level assessment for majors:



Additional considerations:

- A [CAPS] course may include primarily seniors, or a mix of juniors and seniors
- A [CAPS] course may or may not be a culminating course for the major (or for some options); see examples in the [Appendix](#)
- The [CAPS] designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals) assessed as part of UCORE's [CAPS] Assessment Reporting may align with some program learning outcomes and not others; the rotating schedule for [CAPS] assessment impacts when [CAPS] designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals) are assessed
- Every course and/or section of every course might not be the same (in terms of % majors, % seniors, additional applicable learning outcomes included, etc.)

Using [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE as Evidence for Degree Program Assessment

Dashboard interpretation/use to monitor student performance. Programs may examine [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE to determine the extent to which students are meeting expectations in the [CAPS] context and monitor results for any red flags. For example:

- Examining [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE may provide programs with a useful “dashboard” of general achievement, with additional program-determined measures of achievement near the end of the curriculum for majors (from [CAPS], culminating, and/or other courses near the end of the curriculum) providing more detailed assessment.
- Examining [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE could provide programs with a dashboard for some program learning outcomes while the program is more deeply examining another program-level SLO. For example, program faculty are examining written communication skills in their 400-level [M] courses for their assessment focus, and use [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE to provide a dashboard for critical thinking (e.g., any red flags?).

Use to confirm other measures. Programs may examine [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE to confirm or corroborate additional program-determined measures (e.g., student performance evaluated using a program rubric intended to provide a more detailed assessment of majors in [CAPS], culminating, and/or other courses near the end of the curriculum for majors). The process of triangulating assessment data (to see if the same trends appear) can help increase the validity and credibility of the results.

Other use. Programs may wish to consider [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE in planning degree program assessment. For example:

- When making decisions around which program SLOs to assess in a given semester/academic year, a program may wish to consider which [CAPS] designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Undergraduate Learning Goals) are being assessed as part of the [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE. [CAPS] designator learning outcomes are included as part of UCORE’s [CAPS] Assessment Reporting on a rotating basis (i.e., reporting does not include all outcomes each semester). See the [UCORE Assessment Plan](#) for more information.
- In [CAPS] courses that are also a culminating and/or key course for the major, instructors may be receiving requests to complete multiple assessments -- i.e., the [CAPS] Assessment Report for UCORE and an assessment specifically for the program (such as an embedded assessment using a program rubric). In planning assessment, programs might consider:
 - Planning for clear communication/messaging to [CAPS] course instructors to help prevent confusion around participation (i.e., “I thought I already completed the assessment”).
 - Planning for instructor workload / available faculty time and resources. Instructors typically report that UCORE’s [CAPS] Assessment Reporting adds 30 minutes or less to the time they would have normally spent grading.

Additional Observations about Potentially Using [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE as Evidence for Degree Program Assessment:

- [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE collect data on [CAPS] designator learning outcomes – which may align with your program’s learning outcomes – but may not be focused on specific skills and knowledge in your field/majors.
- A specific [CAPS] course may be “required” in the schedule of study for the major, but the [CAPS] Report for UCORE may not provide assessment on achievement of program SLOs, if they are not a substantial part of the course. See examples in the [Appendix](#).

[CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE Logistics

UCORE/ACE provides each [CAPS] instructor with a pdf copy of their individual [CAPS] assessment report each semester, and encourages [CAPS] instructors to share their [CAPS] assessment report with their department/school. *Note:* UCORE/ACE does not typically provide individual [CAPS] reports to other faculty/staff beyond the instructor; however, faculty program assessment coordinators, undergraduate studies directors, and or chairs/directors may opt to reach out to individual [CAPS] instructors, as appropriate.

Keep in mind that information collected in [CAPS] Assessment Reports may be viewed as potentially sensitive by some stakeholders. As such, consider:

- Clearly communicating the program's intention to examine an instructor's [CAP] Assessment Report as evidence for degree program assessment (i.e., the intention is not to evaluate the instructor).
- Including the [CAPS] instructor(s) in conversations about the results.
- Sharing/discussing the results of [CAPS] Assessment Reports from multiple courses/sections in aggregate, where possible/appropriate.

General Timeline

Fall Semester Reporting:

- Late September: [CAPS] instructors receive an email from ucore.wsu@wsu.edu with initial information about reporting for the fall term
- Early December: [CAPS] instructors receive another email from ucore.wsu@wsu.edu with their link to the [CAPS] report form in Qualtrics (i.e., reporting opens)
- Mid-January: Fall reports are due (i.e., reporting closes)
- Mid-February: [CAPS] instructors receive a pdf copy of their individual report from ucore.wsu@wsu.edu via email, and are encouraged to share their report with their department/school, as some results may also contribute to degree program assessment

Spring Semester Reporting:

- Late February: [CAPS] instructors receive an email from ucore.wsu@wsu.edu with initial information about reporting for the spring term
- Late April: [CAPS] instructors receive another email from ucore.wsu@wsu.edu with their link to the [CAPS] report form in Qualtrics (i.e., reporting opens)
- Mid-May: Spring reports are due (i.e., reporting closes)
- Mid-August: [CAPS] instructors receive a pdf copy of their individual report from ucore.wsu@wsu.edu via email, and are encouraged to share their report with their department/school, as some results may also contribute to degree program assessment

Academic Year Results Summary:

- Mid-September: WSU-wide summary of results for UCORE for the academic year is posted to the [UCORE Assessment](#) website

Appendix: Examples of Relationships Between Departmental [CAPS] Courses and Major Programs of Study

The following examples are conceptual and are not intended to be inclusive of all the various [CAPS] courses at WSU (for instance, some [CAPS] may serve multiple groups of students); additionally, a department/school may offer multiple [CAPS] that each serve different purposes.

Key for Curriculum Maps:

I = Introduce: skills and knowledge introduced at basic level

D = Develop: deepen skills and knowledge, with practice and feedback

C = Competent: apply skills and knowledge at a complex level expected of a student near end of curriculum

Example 1: Dept offers a [CAPS] course that is also the culminating course for the degree/major

- [CAPS] fulfills UCORE requirements, advancing required and additional applicable designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Learning Goals), as appropriate to the course
- [CAPS] advances some program SLOs for the degree/major; majors demonstrate achievement of program SLOs (*Note: program SLOs may or may not align with WSU Learning Goals*)

Curriculum Map: Courses in Program of Study, BA/BS Degree or Major							
Program SLOs for Degree/Major	CRS 101	CRS 203	CRS 315 or 316	CRS 324	CRS 414, 435, or 456 (Elective)	CRS 480	CRS 495 [CAPS]
SLO #1	I	D	D	D		C	C
SLO #2	I	D		D	C (456 only)		C
SLO #3	I	I	D		D	C	C
SLO #4		I		D	D	C	

Example 2: Dept offers a [CAPS] course that is required in the degree/major schedule of study, but it is not the culminating course for the degree/major

- [CAPS] fulfills UCORE requirements, advancing required and additional applicable designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Learning Goals), as appropriate to the course
- [CAPS] advances some program SLOs for the degree/major; majors may or may not demonstrate achievement of program SLOs

(*Note: program SLOs may or may not align with WSU Learning Goals*)

Curriculum Map: Courses in Program of Study, BA/BS Degree or Major							
Program SLOs for Degree/Major	CRS 101	CRS 203	CRS 315 or 316	CRS 324	CRS 410 [CAPS]	CRS 414, 435, or 456 (Elective)	CRS 480
SLO #1	I	D	D	D	D		C
SLO #2	I	D		D	C	C (456 only)	
SLO #3	I	I	D			D	C
SLO #4		I		D	D	D	C

Example 3: Dept offers a [CAPS] course that is not required in the degree/major schedule of study, but it is an elective for the degree/major

- [CAPS] fulfills UCORE requirements, advancing required and additional applicable designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Learning Goals), as appropriate to the course
- [CAPS] may advance some program SLOs for the degree/major; majors may or may not demonstrate achievement of program SLOs

(Note: program SLOs may or may not align with WSU Learning Goals)

Curriculum Map: Courses in Program of Study, BA/BS Degree or Major						
Program SLOs for Degree/Major	CRS 101	CRS 203	CRS 315 or 316	CRS 324	CRS 424 [CAPS], 435, or 456 (Elective)	CRS 480
SLO #1	I	D	D	D		C
SLO #2	I	D		D	C (456 only)	
SLO #3	I	I	D		D	C
SLO #4		I		D	D	C

Example 4: Dept offers a [CAPS] course that is not required in the degree/major schedule of study, and it serves primarily non-majors

- [CAPS] fulfills UCORE requirements, advancing required and additional applicable designator learning outcomes (and associated WSU Learning Goals), as appropriate to the course
- [CAPS] does not advance program SLOs for the degree/major; majors do not demonstrate achievement of program SLOs

Curriculum Map: Courses in Program of Study, BA/BS Degree or Major						
Program SLOs for Degree/Major	CRS 101	CRS 203	CRS 315 or 316	CRS 324	CRS 414, 435, or 456 (Elective)	CRS 480
SLO #1	I	D	D	D		C
SLO #2	I	D		D	C	
SLO #3	I	I	D		D	C
SLO #4		I		D	D	C

CRS 470 [CAPS]

Key for Curriculum Maps:

I = Introduce: skills and knowledge introduced at basic level

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