

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 [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE 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, inquiry-based learning courses in the disciplines, and a diversity course requirement. Of the 34 total credits students must earn for UCORE, no more than three, three-credit courses may be taken within the major. See the [UCORE website](#) for more information.

WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education

As outlined in the WSU Catalog, all undergraduates, regardless of major, are expected to meet WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education, which identify core skills and knowledge that all students should develop through their undergraduate studies. WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education 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 WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education. 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 of WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education (as appropriate to the disciplinary focus), through depth of study within the chosen academic field.

See [Appendix A](#) for a visualization illustrating the relationship between general education requirements, major requirements, writing proficiency requirements, and co-curricular learning experiences in achieving WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education.

UCORE Assessment

UCORE Assessment is intended to help faculty, departments, and university leadership determine to what extent undergraduates are achieving WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education, in the context of the UCORE curriculum. ACE supports UCORE Assessment by managing specific assessment-related initiatives, data analysis, and reporting. See the [UCORE Assessment website](#) for more information.

Overview of [CAPS] Assessment Reporting for UCORE

Introduction

Established as part of WSU's UCORE curriculum beginning in 2012, Integrative Capstone [CAPS] courses bring opportunities for integration, application, and closure to the undergraduate experience, and prepare students for post-baccalaureate work and life-long learning. Each [CAPS] course typically involves the production of a major project that demonstrates the student's cumulative learning toward the bachelor's degree; however, [CAPS] courses and their substantial student projects can vary considerably. For example:

- Many [CAPS] courses ask students to demonstrate a depth of knowledge within their chosen academic field of study that integrates its history, core methods, techniques, vocabulary, and unsolved problems.
- Other [CAPS] courses require students to apply concepts from their general and specialized studies to personal, academic, service learning, professional, and/or community activities.
- Other [CAPS] courses ask students to demonstrate how the methods and concepts of a chosen discipline relate to those of other disciplines through engaging in cross-disciplinary activities.

[CAPS] courses:

- Must be at the 400-level and students need to be at least junior-level.
- Must require students to demonstrate at least four of WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education: Critical & Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Communication (in the form of written communication), and Depth, Breadth, & Integration of Learning (in the form of integrative learning).
- May require students to demonstrate additional WSU Learning Goals as appropriate to the course and discipline (e.g., Diversity, Scientific Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning, and/or other forms of Communication, such as oral or multimodal).
- 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.

[CAPS] Assessment Reporting for UCORE Methodology

Within the UCORE curriculum, [CAPS] courses carry a strong responsibility for providing culminating evidence of student achievement of WSU's Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education. As such, [CAPS] Assessment Reporting for UCORE is intended to gauge student learning on WSU's Learning Goals in the context of the UCORE curriculum at the near-graduation level.

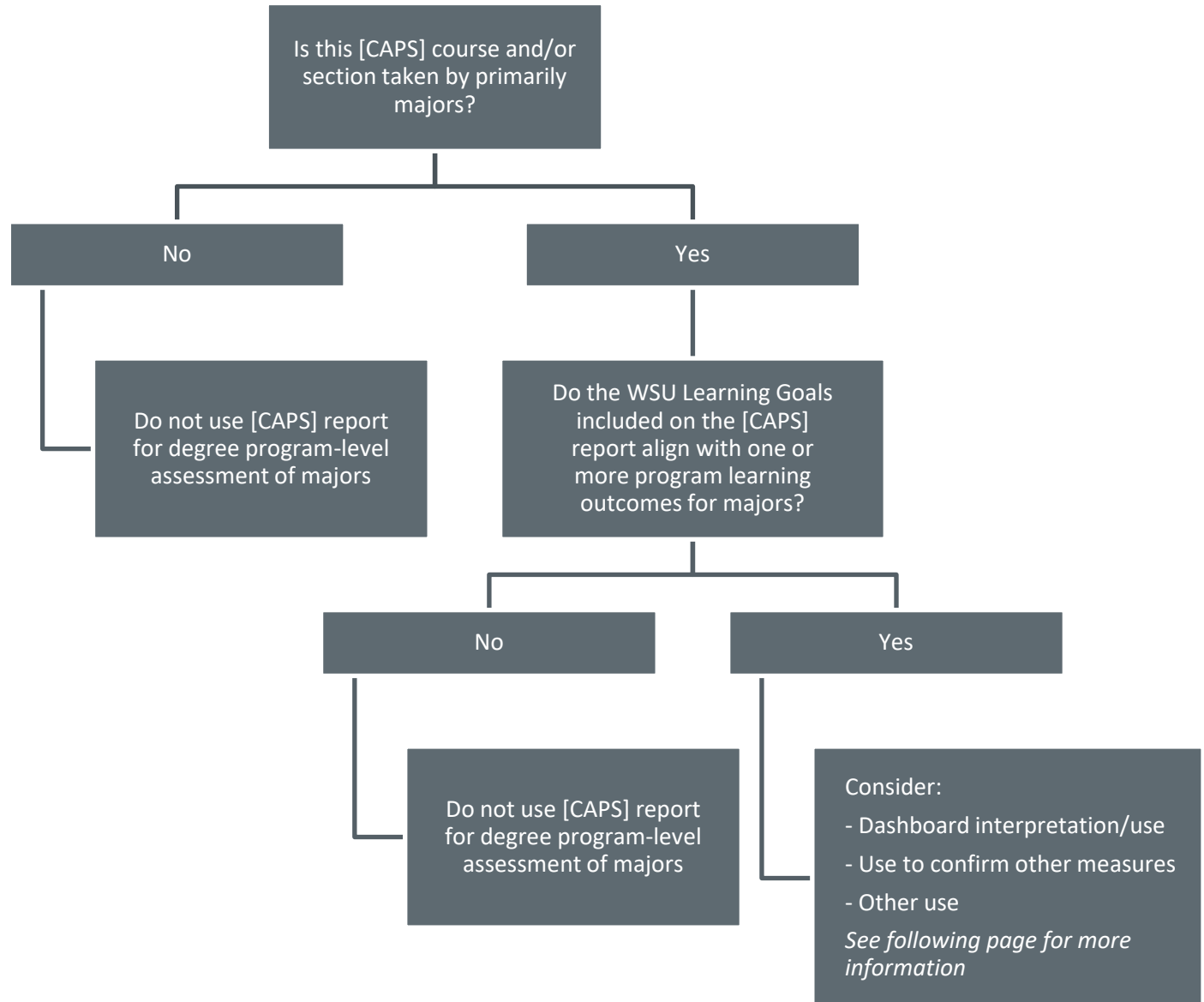
As outlined in the [required elements for \[CAPS\] courses](#), instructors submit a short [CAPS] Assessment Report for UCORE each semester. The report asks instructors to provide an overall holistic assessment of student performance of all students in their [CAPS] course (direct measure, using faculty expert judgement) for the WSU Learning Goals demonstrated in their course. Instructors also report on student preparedness for [CAPS] level work and the kinds of changes they have made to their course (and/or plan to make) 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 for graduating senior," while maintaining a short form that is not burdensome for instructors to complete. Additionally, starting in AY 2018-19, WSU Learning Goals are included as part of [CAPS] Assessment Reporting for UCORE on a *rotating basis* (i.e., reporting does not include all WSU Learning Goals each semester). See the [UCORE Assessment Plan](#) for more information.

Each year, [results of \[CAPS\] Assessment Reporting for UCORE](#) are compiled to provide a summary of student achievement. 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 [Appendix B](#)
- The WSU Learning Goals assessed as part of [CAPS] Assessment Reporting for UCORE may align with some program learning outcomes and not others; the rotating schedule for [CAPS] assessment may impact when WSU Learning Goals are assessed that align with some program learning outcomes
- Every course and/or section of every course might not be the same (in terms of % majors, % seniors, optional learning goals 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 senior achievement measures (from [CAPS], culminating, and/or other senior-level courses) providing more detailed assessment of senior majors.
- 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 program-determined senior achievement measures (e.g., student performance evaluated using a program rubric intended to provide a more detailed assessment of senior majors in [CAPS], culminating, and/or other senior-level courses). 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 WSU Learning Goals are being assessed as part of [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE. WSU Learning Goals are included as part of [CAPS] Assessment Reporting for UCORE on a rotating basis (i.e., reporting does not include all WSU Learning Goals 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 [CAPS] Assessment Reporting for UCORE 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 WSU’s Seven Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education – 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 for senior major achievement of program SLOs, if they are not a substantial part of the course. See examples in [Appendix B](#).

[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 provide individual [CAPS] reports to other faculty 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 A: Visualization of Undergraduate Education – Supporting Student Achievement of WSU’s Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education

Achieving WSU’s Seven Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education

All undergraduates, regardless of major, are expected to achieve WSU’s Seven Learning Goals of Undergraduate Education. Identified by faculty as core skills and knowledge necessary for the academic success that leads to career, personal, and civic competencies, the Seven Learning Goals frame general education, study in the major, and co-curricular experiences.

WSU Graduates Demonstrate:

1. Critical and Creative Thinking
2. Information Literacy
3. Communication
4. Quantitative Reasoning
5. Scientific Literacy
6. Diversity
7. Depth, Breadth, and Integration of Learning

Note: This visual is conceptual and not intended to convey proportionality of credit hours or time commitment. Specific requirements will vary and are defined in the WSU Catalog. Students may also pursue additional majors, minors, and/or certificates.

Collaboratively developed by the Office of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness and UCORE Director, with input from the Vice Provost of Academic Engagement and Student Achievement, Associate Vice Presidents in the Division of Student Affairs, the Liaison Council for Undergraduate Assessment, and faculty representatives.

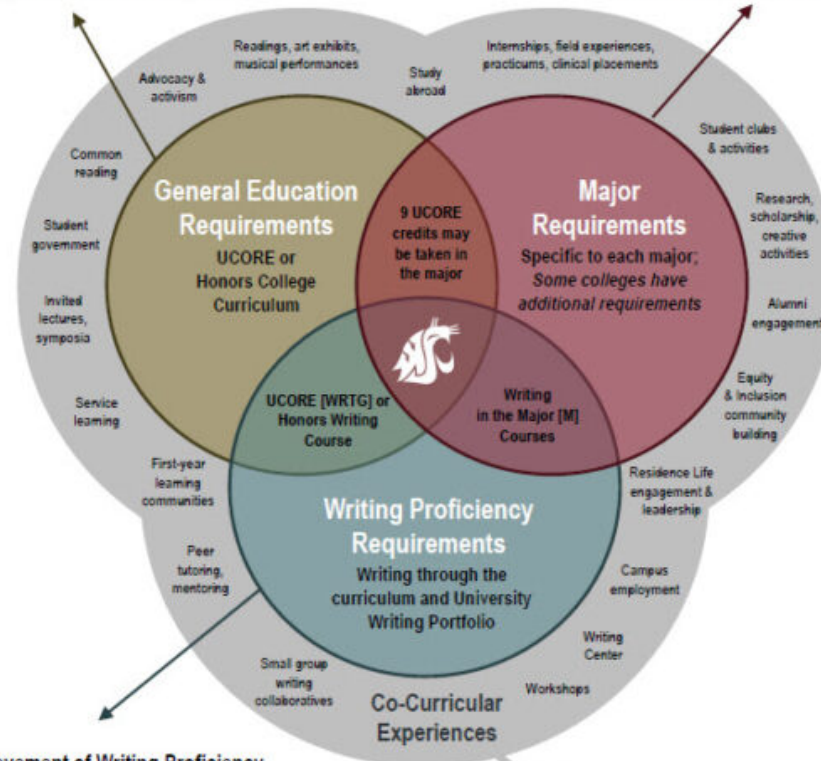
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Achievement of UCORE or Honors Student Learning Outcomes

Students demonstrate, at a minimum threshold, achievement of WSU’s Seven Learning Goals, sufficient for making decisions and taking informed actions in a rapidly changing world, through breadth of inquiry, and development of widely applicable skills and competencies.

Achievement of Program-Specific Student Learning Outcomes

Students demonstrate specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities in the discipline, as well as disciplinary achievement of some of WSU’s Seven Learning Goals, as appropriate to the disciplinary focus, through depth of study within the chosen academic field.



Achievement of Writing Proficiency Student Learning Outcomes

Identified as a WSU priority by faculty, administration, and regents, students demonstrate proficiency in their knowledge, skills, and abilities as writers through formal and informal writing for many purposes and audiences, including within the discipline, to advance WSU’s Seven Learning Goals.

Co-Curricular Learning Experiences

Co-curricular experiences develop knowledge, skills, and abilities applicable to education, career and civic participation. Students may demonstrate some of WSU’s Seven Learning Goals through co-curricular activities and outcomes.

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

[CAPS] which advance one or more program SLOs for majors, and are designed for senior level achievement (e.g., the “C”s in the following examples), may provide the most straightforward use of [CAPS] Assessment Reports for UCORE for program-level assessment. 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 complex level expected of a graduating senior

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

- [CAPS] fulfills UCORE requirements, advancing required (and, as appropriate, optional) WSU Learning Goals
- [CAPS] advances some program SLOs for the degree/major; majors demonstrate senior 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 a culminating course for the degree/major

- [CAPS] fulfills UCORE requirements, advancing required (and, as appropriate, optional) WSU Learning Goals
- [CAPS] advances some program SLOs for the degree/major; majors may or may not demonstrate senior-level 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, as appropriate, optional) WSU Learning Goals
- [CAPS] may advance some program SLOs for the degree/major; majors may or may not demonstrate senior-level 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, as appropriate, optional) WSU Learning Goals
- [CAPS] does not advance program SLOs for the degree/major; majors do not demonstrate senior-level 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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C = Competent: apply skills and knowledge at complex level expected of a graduating senior