

Assessment of Student Learning

Department of Journalism & Public Relations, CSULB

(Initial plan created in 2013; most recent update 2022)

The JPR Department's program assessment is an ongoing, systematic process where faculty and communication professionals measure how well our students learn across our entire journalism and public relations degree programs. We look at the curriculum as a whole, rather than single classes or individual students, to identify gaps and improve teaching. The JPR Department's robust and systematic program assessment plan serves as a transformative tool that helps us understand what students are learning and how we can support them. Program assessment plays a key role the Department's data-informed decision-making.

Under the JPR Department's current Assessment Plan, 10 Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are directly assessed. Two PLOs are assessed each semester, on a rotating basis. Below is a list of these PLOs and the course(s) and assignment(s) used to assess each.

Graduates of the Department of Journalism & Public Relations should be able to:

1) Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles used in journalism and public relations professions, and edit materials for accuracy, clarity, equity, style and grammar.

Journalism and Public Relations: Assessed in JOUR 120: Newswriting and Ethics through a reported news story assigned during the last four weeks of the semester. Students in both majors are required to take JOUR 120.

2) Evaluate information and sources for reliability and factuality.

Journalism: Assessed in JOUR 311: News Reporting and Ethics through a reported news story assigned during the last four weeks of the semester.

Public Relations: Assessed in JOUR 375: Strategic Communication through a series of blog posts aimed at internal communications.

3) Research, gather and assess information and evidence using appropriate methods.

Journalism: Assessed in JOUR 311: News Reporting and Ethics through a reported news story assigned during the last four weeks of the semester.

Public Relations: Assessed in JOUR 494: Research Methods through an assignment that requires students to administer a survey and analyze findings.

4) Apply numerical and statistical concepts in the analysis and utilization of data.

Journalism: Assessed in JOUR 311: News Reporting and Ethics through an assignment requiring students to apply numerical reasoning and basic statistical methods to real-world data in order to identify trends, verify claims, and communicate findings through a clear, accurate, and compelling news story.

Public Relations: Assessed in JOUR 494: Research Methods through an assignment requiring students to design a survey about a PR or mass media topic. Collect 20-25 responses, analyze data and write a report on data findings.

5) Employ pertinent tools and technologies in the creative and strategic presentation of information, images and other storytelling components.

Journalism: Assessed in JOUR 340: Advanced Multimedia Journalism through an assignment requiring students to report a story encompassing audio, video, graphics and/or other multimedia elements.

Public Relations: Assessed in JOUR 470: Digital Public Relations Toolbox through an assignment requiring students to create multimedia campaign materials, such as video press releases, GIFs and social media posts.

6) Communicate and work effectively and respectfully with individuals including those from historically disenfranchised communities of varying racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality, religious, socio-economic and/or ability backgrounds.

Journalism and Public

Relations: Assessed through an assignment in JOUR 498: Internship in which students respond to prompts about the significance of diversity, equity, inclusion and access to the journalism and public relations professions—as well as to their own personal careers. Students in both majors are required to take JOUR 498.

7) Pursue truth, accuracy, fairness and representation, and apply professional ethics in decision-making.

Journalism and Public

Relations: Assessed through a multimedia assignment in JOUR 430: Communication Law and Policy, in which students write a 500-word analysis of an ethical dilemma involving journalism or public relations, and use either the Potter Box or Bok's Model to come to a conclusion. JOUR 430 is a requirement for both majors.

8) Explain the diverse history of communications professionals and media institutions.

Journalism: Assessed through an assignment requiring JOUR 418: Journalism: Past, Present and Future students to write an abstract for their final papers.

Public Relations: Assessed through an assignment requiring JOUR 270: Principles of Public Relations students to write a 250-300 word reflection on a communications professional, group, or movement that contributed to the development of public relations or strategic communication. Examine how factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, disability, or other forms of diversity shaped their experiences, opportunities, contributions, and impact on the field.

9) Describe the principles informing and the seminal cases clarifying and solidifying freedom of speech, press and sunshine laws in the United States.

Journalism and Public Relations: Assessed through practice questions that pose hypothetical scenarios involving legal rights, assigned in JOUR 430: Communication Law and Policy. Students in both majors are required to take JOUR 430.

10) Demonstrate that knowledge and skills attained through the department's curriculum provide adequate preparation for career entry in communication fields.

Journalism and Public Relations: Assessed through 100-hour supervisor evaluations of students enrolled in JOUR 498: Internship. Students in both majors are required to take JOUR 498.