Essential Studies Assessment
Critical inquiry & Analysis

Spring 2025

Assessing Essential Studies
Critical Inquiry & Analysis

Training Overview

1. Review of UND Essential Studies (ES)
2. Review of ES Assessment process
3. Assessing Critical Inquiry & Analysis
   a. AAC&U Inquiry & Analysis VALUE Rubric overview
   b. Understanding and using the Inquiry & Analysis VALUE Rubric
4. Reporting assessment results
5. Resources and Contact Information

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UND Essential Studies

Essential Studies courses must focus on at least one of the 6 ES learning goals:

Critical Inquiry and Analysis

Inquiry is a systematic process of exploring issues, objects or works through the collection and analysis of evidence that results in informed conclusions or judgments. Analysis is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.

Quantitative Reasoning

Quantitative Reasoning is competency and comfort in working with numerical data, using it to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations, and to create and clearly communicate sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence, such as by using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate.

Written Communication

Written Communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing text, data, and images.

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Continued

Essential Studies courses must focus on at least one of the 6 ES Learning Goals:

Oral Communication

Oral communication involves a purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Information Literacy

Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.

Intercultural Knowledge & Skills

Intercultural knowledge and skills foster the capacity to meaningfully engage with the perspectives of people whose cultures and identities are different from one's own. To meaningfully engage with others' perspectives, one must be aware of how those perspectives are shaped by larger social structures, by issues of contemporary importance, and by issues that arise in global society.

ES Learning Goals' Assessment

- Each Learning Goal is assessed every **3 years**

Spring 2025	Critical Inquiry & Analysis
Fall 2025	Quantitative Reasoning

- ES course faculty are required to use the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics to evaluate each Learning Goal

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Critical Inquiry & Analysis
Spring 2025 Courses

ACCT 315	ART 273	ENGL 302	MUSC 260	PHIL 130	SPST 300
ANTH 270	BADM 101	ENGL 315	MUSC 263	PHIL 250	T&L 252
ART 110	BIOL 111	ENGL 415	MUSC 264	PHIL 251	THEA 110
ART 112	BIOL 150	FA 150	MUSC 270	POLS 115	THEA 161
ART 200	BIOL 151	GEOL 101	MUSC 271	POLS 220	THEA 230
ART 204	CHEM 116	GEOL 102	MUSC 272	PSYC 111	THEA 260
ART 211	CHEM 254	GEOL 103	MUSC 273	PSYC 250	THEA 326
ART 220	CJ 201	GEOL 106	MUSC 275	PSYC 270	
ART 230	CSCI 110	GEOL 112	OLEE 201	SOC 115	
ART 240	CSCI 160	HON 391	PHE 101	SOC 253	
ART 245	ENGL 225	MUSC 100	PHE 240	SOC 361	
ART 253	ENGL 226	MUSC 101	PHIL 101	SOC 475	
ART 260	ENGL 227	MUSC 150	PHIL 120	SPST 200	

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Understanding and Using the Rubric

The rubric is designed to help students understand concisely what they are expected to know in relation to Inquiry & Analysis.

- **Definition of Inquiry & Analysis**:
  – Inquiry is a systematic process of exploring issues/ objects/ works through the collection and analysis of evidence that result in informed conclusions/ judgements.
  – Analysis is the process of breaking down complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.

- **Six categories that make up the Inquiry & Analysis construct:**
  – Topic Selection
  – Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views
  – Design Process
  – Analysis
  – Conclusions
  – Limitations and Implications

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Inquiry & Analysis Rubric

INQUIRY AND ANALYSIS VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

AACU — Association of American Colleges and Universities

Definition

Inquiry is a systematic process of exploring issues/objects/works through the collection and analysis of evidence that result in informed conclusions/judgments. Analysis is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
Topic selection	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.
Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views	Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.
Design Process	All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized from across disciplines or from relevant subdisciplines.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed, however, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework.
Analysis	Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus.
Conclusions	States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.	States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to the inquiry findings.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings.
Limitations and Implications	Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Discusses relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents relevant and supported limitations and implications.	Presents limitations and implications, but they are possibly irrelevant and unsupported.

Inquiry & Analysis VALUE Rubric

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Understanding and Using the Rubric

- The rubric scores range from 1 (benchmark) to 4 (capstone)
  - The scores are normalized based on national performance by students of the associated year of attendance.
    - A 1 for first-year students and a 3 or 4 for graduating students.
    - A zero indicates work that does not meet the minimum rating.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	2	Benchmark 1
Topic selection	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.

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Using the Rubric

Evaluate each student's work using the Inquiry & Analysis Rubric

- Use <u>one</u> course assignment/project/etc. that you think will best demonstrate the student's ability to showcase the Critical Inquiry & Analysis criteria.

- Assign a score based on student performance (0-4) within each category on the rubric.
  - 5 of 6 aspects of the rubric required

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Reporting Results

During finals week (May 2025), you will receive a survey link to report your course(s) aggregate results from the Rubric:

- Identify course
- Identify course delivery method
  - *Report data separately for on-campus/ online/ hybrid courses*
- Describe the measure (artifact/exam/portfolio/project/etc.) used to evaluate this ES Goal
- Number of students evaluated

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Reporting Results

- Report the **number of students** who performed at each level [0,1,2,3,4] *for each category**:

  – Topic Selection

  – Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views

  – Design Process

  – Analysis

  – Conclusions

  – Limitations and Implications

*Must report on at least 5 of the 6 categories.

Reporting Results

- Report the number of students who performed at each level for the **_outcome overall_**. (faculty perspective)

  - Did not meet benchmark level 1
  - Benchmark
  - Early Milestone
  - Advanced Milestone
  - Capstone
  - Total

Failure to submit your assessment data may result in removal of the course from the ES program for the next academic year.

So, what now?

- Identify an assignment (project/ final paper/ etc.) in your course that will best demonstrate students' competence in Critical Inquiry & Analysis

- When that assignment is graded, also use the Inquiry & Analysis Rubric to evaluate
  - Compile the results from the Inquiry & Analysis rubric
  - Or simply use the rubric to grade (if appropriate)

- Report the results (number of students who are at each criteria level)

- Provide this data at the end of the semester (a link will be sent to you during finals week)

Resources

- UND Essential Studies Website
  - https://und.edu/academics/essential-studies/
  - Click on Faculty Info

    - Learning Goals
    - Validation/Revalidation information
    - Assessment
    - Syllabus Language
    - Course Development

Contacts

Essential Studies Program/ Course Questions

- Karyn Plumm, Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies & Student Success and Director of Essential Studies

OR

- Contact your college's [Essential Studies Committee](#) representative

Essential Studies Assessment Questions

- Shane Schellpfeffer, Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Accreditation
- Karina Knutson, Assessment & Accreditation Specialist

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