Core Learning Goals Certification

– Frequently Asked Questions

Faculty Guide to Core Certification

For information about the Core Curriculum, contact:

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For information on the Core certification process, or any aspect of assessment planning, implementation and/or analysis, contact: Karen Dennis, kdennis@sas.rutgers.edu

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How can I clarify which of our courses are Core-certified, and in which learning goal(s)?

Each semester, the [CRC](#) sends a reminder about Core assessment to all departments with any Core-certified courses *(even those that are not in their [reporting year](#) of the cycle).* A list of the Core goals certified in each course is included.

For additional course lists, contact Karen Dennis at kdennis@sas.rutgers.edu

All Core-certified courses can also be found on the Core Learning Goals Assessment Website, at https://sakai.rutgers.edu/core/.

Select "**Available Courses**" and enter the subject code to filter the list to those in your department.

Clicking a course number link will launch a customized reporting form that includes the specific Core goal(s) certified in that course.

How can I tell if a course in another department has been certified in any Core learning goals?

ALL Core-certified courses are on the sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/core website, under the Core categories they satisfy (*e.g., 21st Century Challenges, Natural Sciences, Arts & Humanities, etc.*)

You can also see these course lists in Degree Navigator (DN). And in the Schedule of Classes, certification in the Core will be noted above the section information.

However, these are "student views" of the Core. DN has been programmed so that students don't need to see the details of all the Core learning goals in order to satisfy their Core Curriculum requirements, and so these lists display only the *category codes* - 21C, NS, HST, SCL, ITR, etc.

If for any reason you need more specific information about goals certified in another department's course(s), you can find all Core-certified courses on the Core Learning Goals Assessment Website, at https://sakai.rutgers.edu/core/.

On the Core courses webpage, I don't see the learning goals – just notations like 21C, NS, SCL, WCR. What's that about?

To simplify the Core Curriculum for students, [Degree Navigator](#) (DN) has been programmed so that they can satisfy their requirements without the need to see all the details of the specific [Core learning goals](#) .

All "student views" of the Core, [in print](#) or [online](#), therefore display only Core *requirement codes* - 21C, NS, HST, SCL, ITR, *etc.*

Where students *do* need to distinguish among Core goals, they've been coded accordingly: *e.g,* AHo, AHp, AHq, AHr; QQ and QR; WCD and WCR.

This is what you see on the ***sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/core*** website, and what you will also see in [Degree Navigator](#) and the [Schedule of Classes](#).

We encourage faculty to use these codes on syllabi in Core-certified courses as well, to avoid student confusion. *If you have questions as to which code(s) may apply, contact Karen Dennis (*[*kdennis@sas.rutgers.edu*](#)*).*

Certain Core learning goals match my course really well, so I'm putting them on my syllabus – that's OK, right?

NO! It's crucial that students not be misled about what courses will meet their Core Curriculum graduation requirements. If the course has not been formally certified, you should *not* cite any Core goal on a syllabus.

Individual requests from students or faculty to apply a course to Core requirements won't be entertained, so it's vital not to suggest a course will satisfy any Core requirement unless it has been through the faculty approval process.

If you think learning outcomes in your course match well with any Core learning goal(s), your department can submit a certification proposal: see the *Faculty Guide* for the criteria.

We *do* want to encourage faculty to include course-specific learning goals on their syllabi – that's a "best practice," allowing you to assess student learning in courses and programs over time. But unless your course is officially certified in Core learning goals, *those* should not be on your syllabus.

We offer a course that is just like one that's in the Core: how do we get it on the certified list?

It must be reviewed by the faculty [Core Requirements Committee (CRC)](#), representing all New Brunswick schools that require students to complete the Core Curriculum.

Departments submit course proposals to the [CRC](#), which then makes recommendations for certification, subject to formal approval in the [faculty meeting](#) at the end of each semester.

See the [*Faculty Guide to Core Certification*](#), which lays out the criteria the CRC uses when reviewing courses for possible certification in the Core, and the documents required for a proposal.

For more on the proposal process, see:
[*We want to propose a course for the Core Curriculum….*](#)

Can we add a course to the Core Goals list right away? / this semester? / before registration this semester?

A course can only be added to the Core goals list after it has gone through formal review, first by the **Core Requirements Committee (CRC)**.

At the end of each semester, the CRC then asks for formal approval of its recommendations in the **SAS Faculty & Affiliates Meeting**.

After that, the courses can be added to the relevant **Core goals lists online** and in **Degree Navigator** (DN).

Once that faculty approval is formalized, the course will count toward the Core requirements for *all students who have already taken it, as well as those who will take it in the future*.

For more information, see:
We want to propose a course for the Core Curriculum...

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What courses are appropriate for the Core Curriculum?

See the *[Faculty Guide to Core Certification](...)*, especially pages 5-6, for the detailed criteria the [Core Requirements Committee (CRC)](...) uses in reviewing courses for possible certification in the Core:

❑ the [Core learning goals](...) are *front and center* in the course design.

❑ there is a plan for assessing aggregate student achievement of the Core goal(s).

❑ the course is accessible to a wide range of students, and the Core goals have not been met by prerequisites.

❑ the course addresses the Core goal(s) *every time* it is offered.

Can Topics courses be certified in the Core?

Only in a few very limited cases –
see *page 6* of the [*Faculty Guide to Core Certification*](#).

Can online courses be certified in Core learning goals?

Yes. *But special policies apply to online courses* –
refer to page 6 of the [*Faculty Guide to Core Certification*](#).
This includes a requirement to file assessment reports every time the course is offered.

Please also note that the SAS faculty has adopted the following policy, which also governs the [CRC](#) review process: [*SAS policy on Online/Hybrid Course Proposals*](#)

Can courses be certified in multiple Core goals?

Yes. Indeed, in certain categories of the [Core Curriculum](#), there are goals that need to be 'clustered' in combinations – *e.g., Natural Sciences [NS]; Social and Historical Analysis [HST & SCL]; Writing & Communication [WCD, WCR], etc.*

see the ***notes to faculty*** for the various Core categories on *pages 2-4*, and the general guidelines on *pages 5-6*, in the [*Faculty Guide to Core Certification*](#).

The guidelines also are detailed within the [Course and Curriculum Proposal system](#).

I'm developing a new SAS course – can I propose it for certification in the Core at the same time?

Yes - see the *Faculty Guide to Core Certification*, especially *pages 5-6.*

When you're ready to propose the course, follow the *Course & Curriculum Proposal* steps to ADD a new course *AND* propose it for certification in Core goals.

The proposal will be reviewed independently by the SAS Curriculum Committee and the Core Requirements Committee (CRC), but any recommendation by the CRC to certify a new course in Core goals is subject to its approval by the Curriculum Committee, and formal approval in the SAS Faculty & Affiliates meeting at the end of each semester.

This course is cross-listed - which department should submit a proposal for Core goals certification?

As long as all cross-listing departments agree to certification of the proposed [Core goals](#), and all relevant course numbers are identified, It doesn't matter who submits the course in the [proposal system](#).

Documentation of this approval can take the form of an e-mail from the Undergraduate Chair/ Director of each department, attached to the proposal as "Additional Information."

Please note: Core assessment results will be accessible to all the cross-listing departments through the [Core Learning Goals Assessment Website](#).

> *Please also note that once a course has been certified in Core learning goals, it may **not** be temporarily "cross-listed" with 'Topics' or other course numbers/sections in your own or any other department.*

We're planning a new permanent cross-listing with another course that *already is certified in Core goals*. Do we have to go through the CRC?

- No – but this will require the other department to change their catalog description to note the new cross-listing, so be sure they propose this Change [to] an Existing SAS Course when you Add a New SAS Course.

- Create a document that contains that agreement and a statement like the following:

  "*Name of This Course - 01:000:000* has been certified in Core goal(s) <list specific goal(s)>. Any section taught under this new permanently cross-listed course number will follow the original Core assessment plan."

- On the New Course form, check the box "Do you also want to propose this course for certification in the Core learning goals?"

- In the Core list, check the goals that are certified in the existing course(s).

- In the drop-down menu for "Method of Assessment for Core Curriculum," select the method being used in the already-certified course.

- Attach the document (above) in the Core Assessment Plan upload field.

- At the bottom of the form, identify the other department(s), and note their agreement.

Please note: Core assessment results will be accessible to all the cross-listing departments through the Core Learning Goals Assessment Website.

We want to propose a course for the Core Curriculum: what's the first step?

See the *Faculty Guide to Core Certification,* especially *pages 5-6,* for the criteria the CRC uses in reviewing courses for possible certification in the Core.

Proposals for Core goals certification must be officially endorsed by your department – and agreed to by any cross-listing department(s).

Review the "NUTS AND BOLTS" checklist on *page 9* of the *Faculty Guide* for the required documents, and the questions you must be prepared to answer in the submission process.

Note that special policies apply to *online courses – refer to page 6 of the* Faculty Guide*, &* SAS policy on Online/Hybrid Course Proposals

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NUTS AND BOLTS: Submitting Course for Certification in the Core Curriculum

- Requests for certification must be endorsed and submitted by the offering department through the online Course Catalog Application System. Undergraduate Chairs can request access to this system by emailing Assistant Dean Karen Dennis at kdennis@sas.rutgers.edu. NetID and password are required for login to the Course Catalog Application, at https://secure.sas.rutgers.edu/apps/sascc/main

- Review the syllabus: Does the course fit the Core and meet the CRC's criteria? Is/are the Core goal(s) consistently front and center in the course design?

  If students will have achieved a proposed goal in prerequisite courses, there is no need to proceed any further, as CRC does not certify courses for goals that students will necessarily already have achieved.

  ☐ Front and center
  ☐ Assessment plan
  ☐ Accessible
  ☐ Always

- Does the syllabus include the proposed Core Learning Goals on the first page, to maximize transparency for students and for the CRC?

  ☐ ☐ Be prepared to submit this syllabus as a pdf, text (txt, Word, or RTF), or Excel file.

  ☐ ☐ Does the syllabus also list *course-specific* learning outcome goals/objectives? These may be the same as the Core goals.

- To be certified for any Core learning goal, a course must have a plan for assessing aggregate student achievement of that goal each time the course is offered. Generally, this will be a simple statement that the course will use the CRC's Core rubrics to score a particular assignment, AND representative samples of that assignment – e.g. specific exam questions or paper assignments.

  ☐ ☐ Be prepared to submit this assessment plan as a pdf, text (txt, Word, or RTF), or Excel file attachment.

  ☐ If there are course goals beyond the Core goals, be prepared to briefly describe the method to be used in assessing those course-specific goals (you may enter "refer to syllabus"). A separate document is not required here, but the method must be identified in a drop-down menu.

- Be prepared to answer the following questions in the affirmative:

  ☐ *"Has this course been discussed with and consented to by officers of those departments which offer courses with which it might overlap or which offer pre-requisite courses? If yes, name the department(s) and explain…"*

  ☐ *"Has this proposal been discussed with and consented to by departments which offer courses formally cross-listed with this course? If yes, name the department(s) and explain…"*

What documents do we need for a certification proposal?

The "NUTS AND BOLTS" checklist on *page 9* of the *Faculty Guide* identifies all the required documents, and the questions that must be answered in the process.

The basics are:

❑ a syllabus with the Core learning goal(s) *front and center* in the course design.

❑ an assessment plan that outlines how student learning outcomes for those Core goals will be assessed and reported.

❑ approval of the proposal by any formally cross-listing department(s).

❑ special policies apply to *online courses – refer to page 6 of the Faculty Guide, & SAS policy on Online/Hybrid Course Proposals*

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NEW BRUNSWICK

NUTS AND BOLTS: Submitting Course for Certification in the Core Curriculum

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  ⊔ *"Has this course been discussed with and consented to by officers of those departments which offer courses with which it might overlap or which offer pre-requisite courses? If yes, name the department(s) and explain…"*
  ⊓ *"Has this proposal been discussed with and consented to by departments which offer courses formally cross-listed with this course? If yes, name the department(s) and explain…"*

How long does the Core proposal review take? When will we know the outcome?

The [Core Requirements Committee (CRC)](#) reviews proposals on a rolling basis, as they are submitted to the [course & curriculum proposal system](#).

The CRC typically meets every three weeks through the Fall and Spring*****, and will consult with the submitting department if more information may be required to complete that review.

Once a decision is made, your Undergraduate Chair/Director will be notified promptly.

CRC recommendations must be formally approved at the [faculty meeting](#) at the end of each semester; after that, the courses are added to [Degree Navigator](#) and the relevant [Core goals lists online](#).

** See [**sasoue.rutgers.edu**](#) :* [CRC Members & Meetings](#)

What if the CRC doesn't accept the proposal for the Core?

Generally the [CRC](#) will consult with the submitting department(s) during the review to request more information and/or to clarify the criteria for certification, before finalizing any decision.

If the CRC finds it cannot recommend certification for one or more of Core goal(s) you have proposed, the Chair will communicate the reasons for this decision to your Undergraduate Chair/Director.

See the [Faculty Guide to Core Certification](#) , especially pages 5-6, for the criteria the CRC uses in reviewing courses for possible certification in the Core.

When will students learn that a course has been approved for Core learning goals?

At the end of each semester, after the [SAS Faculty & Affiliates meeting](#) at which the [CRC](#) recommendations receive formal approval, the courses will be added to the relevant [Core goals lists](#) online and in [Degree Navigator](#) (DN).

Once a new or existing course is certified in this way, it will count toward the Core for *all students who have already taken it,* as well as students who will take it in the future.

However, it's vital not to suggest that any course will count for the Core ***unless and until it has been formally approved***.

When does certification in the Core take effect? What about students taking the course now?

Once a new or existing course is formally certified in the Core Curriculum, it will count toward the Core for *all students who have already taken it,* as well as students who will take it in the future.

Courses are added to the relevant Core goals lists online and in Degree Navigator at the end of each semester, after the faculty meeting at which the CRC recommendations receive formal approval.

Are there guidelines for how to indicate that a course has been certified in Core learning goals – on the syllabus, on our department webpages?

A generic course synopsis (or full syllabus) including the certified [Core goal(s)](#) should be available at all times through the department webpage and the [Schedule of Classes](#).

[*Preparing Course Synopsis & Book Links for the Schedule of Classes*](#)

Once the course is certified, faculty may add the Core graphic to the syllabus next to the Core goal(s):

For the Core graphic, see the [Sample Syllabus Format with Links](#)

On the syllabus, please use the official wording of the [Core learning goal(s)](#) , without alteration. *We suggest labeling these with the* **requirement code(s)** *rather than specific goal letters – e.g.,* **21C** *for any of the goals a – d;* **SCL** *instead of* **(j) + m**, *and so on – since this is the "Student view" of the Core,* [in print](#) *and* [online](#).

Several faculty teach this course: does it matter whose syllabus we submit?

Any representative syllabus that clearly outlines the nature of required work should be suitable.

However, to illustrate that the proposed <u>Core learning goal(s)</u> are indeed *front and center* in the course despite this variation in instructors, other syllabi can be uploaded as "Additional Information." Or you may develop a generic syllabus for this purpose, in consultation with the faculty who regularly teach the course.

See page 6 of the <u>Faculty Guide to Core Certification</u> for more guidelines on the posting of syllabi and generic course synopses after Core goals certification.

See also:

<u>*Sample Syllabus Format with Links*</u>

<u>*Preparing Course Synopsis & Book Links for the Schedule of Classes*</u>

What should be in an assessment plan?

Assessment plans should identify *what, when, and how* student learning outcomes on the [Core goal(s)](#) will be measured. A "***best practice***" is to consistently include an assignment or exam that asks students to "do" the [Core goal(s)](#) in the context of specific course material, and then score the outcomes using uniform rubric(s).

The assessment plan should include ***one or more representative example(s)*** of the question(s) or required paper(s) that would serve as the assessment prompt(s), and may simply state that the [CRC Rubrics](#) will be used to score the assignment.

You also may identify a set of **objective test questions** directly relevant to a [Core goal](#), and specify what percentage must be answered correctly for each level of achievement on the rubric(s): e.g., a "*satisfactory*" outcome might be getting 79%-70% correct.

To facilitate faculty use of rubrics for Core and other learning goals assessment, a ***rubric tool in Sakai*** is pre-populated with the [Core Rubrics](#), and can be customized to add course-specific criteria, or to design rubrics from scratch.

Detailed instructions for using this tool are in the HELP section in Sakai and on the OUE website: [Using Rubrics in Sakai](#)

*For more information on assessment options, see **pages 6-8** of the [Faculty Guide](#).*

Is it OK to plan to assess just a sample of students for the Core goal(s)?

In some courses with very large enrollments, yes – the most practical approach might be to directly assess a random sample of student work.

Please keep in mind, however, that it's important that samples be substantial and representative. This is to ensure that we develop credible information on how effectively students overall are achieving the <ins>Core learning goals</ins>.

The assessment plan, therefore, should clearly describe how the sample would be selected for each specific <ins>Core goal</ins> proposed.

For help in determining an effective sampling approach in your course(s), contact Karen Dennis (<ins>kdennis@sas.rutgers.edu</ins>).

Can a single assignment in the course be used to assess multiple Core goals?

Yes. Especially for certain "clustered" categories of the Core learning goals – e.g., Writing & Communication [*WCD, WCR*] – this may be appropriate and practical.

However, it's important to be sure the assignment requires students to demonstrate achievement of *all* the desired learning outcomes for these proposed Core goals, so that you can clearly distinguish student performance on each goal in the assessment results.

Your assessment plan should be specific about this, and ***include one or more representative example(s)*** of how the required work would prompt students to demonstrate those different skills and abilities.

Can I just submit my grading outline as the assessment plan?

NO. For clarification of the distinctions between grading and assessment, see *page 7* of the [*Faculty Guide to Core Certification*](.) .

Your grading outline might *include* assessment of Core and course-specific learning goals, but a certification proposal needs to clearly identify the elements that directly demonstrate the [Core goal learning outcomes](.).

FYI: to facilitate faculty use of rubrics for Core and other learning goals assessment, a **rubric tool in Sakai** is pre-populated with the [Core Rubrics](.). This can be customized to add course-specific criteria, or to design rubrics from scratch.

Detailed instructions for using this tool are in the HELP section in Sakai and on the OUE website: [Using Rubrics in Sakai](.)

Where can I find a Core Assessment Report form?

The Core goals assessment reporting system is online at https://sakai.rutgers.edu/core/

There is a reporting form for each Core-certified course number on the Available Courses tab.*

You can use the "Filter List" option to find specific course(s), but opening any form will show you what is required.

For FAQs on Core assessment reporting, click HERE

* *cross-listed courses will appear under all relevant subject codes.*

Where can I find the Core rubrics?

The [Rubrics for Core Curriculum Learning Goals](#) are included in the [*Faculty Guide to Core Certification*](#).

They also can be found on the SAS Office of Undergraduate Education [website](#), at [*http://sasoue.rutgers.edu/core/rubrics-for-core-goals*](#), *and…*

…to facilitate faculty use of rubrics for Core and other learning goals assessment, there is a *rubric tool in Sakai* which is pre-populated with the [Core rubrics](#).

This can be customized to add course-specific criteria, or to design rubrics from scratch: when you use it to score an assignment, it calculates the assessment scores for you.

Detailed instructions about using this rubric tool are in the HELP section in Sakai and on the OUE website: [Using Rubrics in Sakai](#)

I'm trying to submit a course for the Core, but I can't get into the online course proposal system – what's wrong?

Proposals to certify a course in the Core, like proposals to add, drop, &/or change SAS courses, must be endorsed by your department/program (*and sometimes other depts., too*).

For this reason, only authorized users can submit proposals to the <u>Course and Curriculum Proposal System</u>. Generally that will be the department chair, program director, and undergraduate chair/director (as well as School deans).

If you *should* have this access, but can't log in with your NetID and password, contact Karen Dennis: <u>kdennis@sas.rutgers.edu</u> or (848) 932-2278.

I'm a new user of the course proposal system –
can I get some help or instructions?

For help with the <u>Course and Curriculum Proposal System</u>, e-mail
Karen Dennis at <u>kdennis@sas.rutgers.edu</u>, or call (848) 932-2278.

Detailed instructions for using the proposal system can also be found
in the *<u>Step by Step Guide - Submit proposal(s) for Core certification.</u>*

See <u>sasoue.rutgers.edu</u> for these related guides:

- *<u>Getting Started with the Proposal System</u> - a flow chart*

- *<u>Step by Step through Course & Curriculum Proposals</u> - detailed
  instructions for using the catalog system to send proposals to the CRC
  and/or the SAS Curriculum Committee, including to change, add, or
  drop SAS courses, majors and/or minors.*

We're thinking about proposing courses for certification in the Core and *have more questions…*

For more information, see:

* *Faculty Guide to Core Certification*
* *Step by Step Guide - Submit proposal(s) for Core certification*

For help with the Core certification process, the online proposal system or any aspect of assessment planning, implementation, and/or analysis, contact:

> Karen Dennis
>
> Assistant Dean for Assessment
>
> Office of Undergraduate Education, School of Arts and Sciences
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> kdennis@sas.rutgers.edu
>
> Phone: 848-932-2278

For more information, especially about **academic policy related to the Core Curriculum,** contact:

> Susan E. Lawrence
>
> Dean for Educational Initiatives and Curriculum, SAS
>
> slawrence@sas.rutgers.edu

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