ADVICE FOR EI COURSE APPLICATIONS IN VOL CORE
For general information requested on the cover sheet and introductory pages, see instructions elsewhere. The Volcore website has a document entitled "Volcore Instructions" which is applicable to all categories, although all categories don't have all of the same questions. This document pertains specifically to the Volcore category EI, Engaged Inquiries.

EI has five significant questions for the instructor to answer. *(Italics are the specific questions on the application form.)*

Question I from the EI Volcore Application Form
I: Relevant Work: What is the "investigative, creative, or practical work(s) relevant to the course topic" that students will produce? How will students typically complete this relevant work? Demonstrate how this will account for a minimum of 35% of the course grade.

> Relevant work(s) in EI courses may take many forms. This may be a single major assignment, it could be a series of interrelated shorter assignments, this could be an assignment with a cumulative series of intermediate assignments. This may be a thematic portfolio of work collected from different content areas of the course. Faculty may want to list a semester project, with associated sub-components.

> The syllabus should demonstrate clearly that the grading in the course for the relevant work(s) will total a minimum of 35% of the course grade. If the syllabus doesn't explain the grading criteria, the faculty member may provide more information in this explanation. MANY COURSES DO NOT MAKE THIS 35% BREAKDOWN CLEAR, (IN THE PROPOSAL AND/OR IN THE SYLLABUS) AND ARE ASKED TO RESUBMIT.

> The syllabus should reflect the explanations provided on the EI Course Application. See note about Syllabus below.

Question II from the EI Volcore Application Form
*II: El courses must demonstrate that they produce learning outcomes from **at least two** of the following areas, as described above. **Select TWO of the FOUR** Engaged Inquiries Learning Areas:*

_____ *Applied learning*

_____ *Collaborative Learning*

_____ *Reflective Learning*

_____ *Integrative or Multidisciplinary Learning*

The requirement for relevant work(s) totaling a minimum of 35% of the final course grade, <u>does not mean </u>that the above learning outcomes total 35% of the final course grade.

For example, an EI course with a final performance (over 35% of the course grade) involving collaborative and applied learning does not mean that students are graded separately for collaboration and applied learning totaling an additional 35% of the course grade. This may be integrated into the grade. Collaboration should include structured feedback, which may influence the grade, but is not a clear proportion.

As another example, a final project/research paper maybe be over 35% of the grade, while the reflective or integrative learning outcome is a smaller component of the course, but still present.

As another example, reflective assignments and exams testing integrative knowledge combining for 35% of the grade would not constitute an *"investigative, creative, or practical work(s) relevant to the course topic" that students produce*

The "relevant work(s)" refers to WHAT is produced during the course, while the "Learning Outcomes" address HOW the students are learning. The students should, however, be held accountable for the selected learning outcomes.

Since only two learning outcomes are required, it is advised that faculty only select two, providing explanations as required. Selecting more categories increases the review process.

Question III from the EI Volcore Application Form
III. *For each of the TWO LEARNING AREAS indicated above, answer the following questions:*

   a. *How does the course meet this learning outcome?*

   This can be a simple description, that is verified, and clear, in the syllabus.
   Refer to the actual descriptions of Reflective Learning / Integrative Learning / Collaborative Learning / Applied Learning in the EI mission statement, to be sure this learning outcome is actually addressed.

   The learning outcomes should be referenced in the course syllabus. (See notes about syllabus below.)

   b. *For the course itself, how are students evaluated regarding this learning outcome? (Provide information on course grading and examples of evaluation criteria, grading rubrics, scorecards, feedback given to students, or other relevant information.)*

   The evaluation of the selected learning area outcomes is different than the evaluation of the relevant work. This can be a simple description, that could be verified in the syllabus. Additional information about evaluation, as noted, is strongly recommended. Include rubrics or other examples of evaluation criteria. The evaluation is a feedback loop, not necessarily a grade percentage.

   MANY COURSES ARE NOT CLEAR IN THE FEEDBACK LOOP TO STUDENTS REGARDING COLLABORATIVE LEARNING. This need not be a grade, simply

feedback. Some courses are using peer evaluation, rubrics, scorecards, instructor evaluation, etc. This is different than simply grading the project or student work.

Question IV from the EI Volcore Application Form

IV. *What process is used to monitor/oversee that each section of this course is meeting the learning outcomes if multiple sections are taught to ensure consistency semester to semester?*

In most cases, this question should be answered in consultation with the department head.

FOR MULTIPLE SECTIONS OF ONE COURSE, OR FOR DIFFERENT FACULTY TEACHING THE SAME COURSE IN DIFFERENT YEARS.
Answering this question clearly is very important. Typically, this type of statement would suffice: "Each semester/academic year, the department chair (or course coordinator, or department curriculum committee, etc) meet with all faculty teaching the course in order to be sure that common course objectives are being met in a consistent way."

Simply stating "not applicable" or "this is the only section during the semester" does not address the situation when faculty teaching assignments change in coming years (e.g new faculty, retirements, etc.).

Question V from the EI Volcore Application Form

V. Course Assessment

Provide a short description of how this course will be assessed for the Volunteer Core outcomes. According to the revised General Education guidelines, all approved Volunteer Core courses must be assessed according to the guidelines and timeline set by the General Education Committee. For the review, this course will need to provide quantifiable data and results regarding how successful the students were in mastering the learning outcomes chosen above. With that in mind, please be as specific as possible in your plan to measure both of the chosen learning outcomes*. (You can refer to the Volunteer Core assessment document and rubrics on the [Volunteer Core website](#).)

All Volunteer Core courses are assessed for the Volunteer Core outcomes at least once every ten years. **Because EI is a new Volcore category, courses are receiving EI designation even if the answer to this question about "Course Assessment" is not included or finalized.**

It is up to the department or school in which the course resides to determine the schedule for assessment of Volunteer Core classes. (Assessment document, 4)
Departments should anticipate a rigorous assessment process in the future.
(From the Vol Core Assessment Document, 5-6:)
1. A general description of the student work that will be used to assess each learning objective.
   The student work may be an exam, an essay, a lab report, a reaction paper, a set of homework problems, a short-answer response provided on a mid-term exam, selected multiple-choice questions from a quiz, etc.
   If there are multiple sections of the course and the different sections of the course don't share identical assignments, select student work for each section

that as closely resemble each other as possible.

   More than one learning outcome can be assessed by the same student work.

   The assignment/exam/paper/etc. does not have to be made specifically for the purpose of this assessment. In fact, it is preferable that the student work be an assignment or test that is a normal part of the course.

   Do not use an extra credit assignment; the work needs to be something that all students in the course or section complete.

   Do not assess rough drafts; use final versions only.

2. The sampling method to be used for the assessment. The sample should be as representative of the student population in the course as possible. The sampling method used is based on the number of students that are predicted to take the course:

   Randomly collect at least 20% of the student work from all sections of the course OR work from all students in 20% of the sections of the class.

   If the 20% sample represents 50 or fewer students, at least 50 samples should be collected.

   If the course enrollment is below 50, student work from every student in the course should be collected.

Rubrics for Student Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Rubrics for the assessment of the Vol Core learning outcomes will be provided by the Vol Core

Assessment Subcommittee; rubrics will not need to be developed by the department or the instructor. Rubrics are provided on the Volunteer Core website and on the subcommittee pages.

OTHER COMMENTS / SUGGESTIONS ABOUT EI APPLICATION PROCESS

NOTE REGARDING COURSE SYLLABUS
MANY COURSES HAVE A CLEAR PROPOSAL, BUT THE SYLLABUS DOES NOT REFLECT THIS CLARITY—
The course syllabus should align with the explanations provided in the EI Application Form. We are recommending that EI course syllabi clearly reference the EI "learning outcomes." In addition, the syllabus should clearly identify the "investigative, creative, or practical work(s) that the students produce as part of the EI requirement, which should be worth a minimum of 35% of the final grade.

(You do not need to use the exact EI language, but you do want to be clear what components of the course are related to EI. This will help students as well as faculty who might be asked to teach the course in the future.) Some courses have listed separate Course Learning Objectives, Accreditation Standards as Learning Objectives, and Volcore Learning Objectives.

The Office of the Provost has helpful guidance regarding course syllabi.
https://teaching.utk.edu/the-syllabus/

The Teaching, Learning, and Innovation center also has useful references for best practices in collaboration, internships, and reflection, related to experiential learning:

Best practices in managing groups: https://teaching.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/78/2019/11/The-Process-of-Creating-and-Managing-Groups.pdf
Collaborative Learning: - https://teaching.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/78/2019/09/5-Pillars-of-Collaborative-Work-in-the-Classroom-Setting.pdf
Best Practices in Internships: https://career.utk.edu/faculty-and-staff/internship-n-designated-courses/
Payment for internships: https://teaching.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/78/2018/11/Internship.pdf
Reflective Learning: https://teaching.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/78/2018/04/ReflectionActivities.pdf

NOTE REGARDING THE EI SUB-COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS
This EI Subcommittee has reviewed and approved over 120 courses from almost 200 courses from dozens of departments, with many different disciplinary standards. We are trying to clarify and interpret, while being consistent with the highly varied courses.

The EI sub-committee is not evaluating course content, but WHAT the students are producing (relevant work) and HOW they are learning (two learning outcomes). Because we are not content experts related to a wide variety of courses, please avoid too much discipline-specific jargon and acronyms. Aim for clarity for colleagues from other disciplines.

We typically meet in person (or on zoom) in groups of at least three, and average 10-20 minutes of discussion per course, in addition to the preparation time required of the assigned faculty, and the drafting of a final report. Faculty who are asked to resubmit will receive a detailed letter with suggested improvements. On average, we have spent 90 minutes of faculty time per course in our review process.

MOST COMMON REASONS FOR EI RESUBMISSIONS
The three most common reasons for requesting re-submissios are:
1. Lack of a clear "investigative, creative, or practical work totaling at least 35% of the course grade." (question I above)
2. Unclear Syllabus, (see note above)
3. Lack of feedback loop for collaborative learning (see question II above)

Additionally, lack of clarity about reflective learning and integrative / multi-disciplinary learning has led to requests for resubmissions.

TO SUBMIT THE PROPOSAL
To submit a proposal, please complete the Vol Core EI Application Form and save it as a single PDF file that also contains your syllabus and a sample of at least one significant assignment for the course. Save your PDF file by the name, category, date (e.g. engl101WC_9_22_21)

The PDF should be uploaded using this link - http://tiny.utk.edu/VolCoreProposalDrop AND emailed to gened@utk.edu.

If you are submitting a revision, please also include a brief written "Response to Reviewers" detailing how the requested revisions have been addressed. This "Response to Reviewers" should be included in your single PDF file and the file should be save by course name, category, and the revision and date (e.g. engl101WCrevision050120).