

**Office of Academic
Planning and Assessment**

A Report of the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)

2016-2017

Description of the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)

The CAT is a nationally normed, short-answer essay test designed to assess critical thinking and problem solving skills. The CAT was developed at Tennessee Tech University, with support of the National Science Foundation. The CAT is administered each academic year to approximately 500 students in upper division courses (3000- and 4000-level). Over a three-year period, each academic college at SHSU will participate in the CAT and submit tests for scoring. The student data presented within this report reflect student performance regarding the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Core Learning Objective of Critical Thinking (THECB, 2017). The THECB (2017) defines Critical Thinking as "creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information."

Methodology

A total of 537 students in upper division courses in the College of Business Administration (336) and in the College of Education (201) took the CAT in Spring 2017. A total of 689 students were scheduled to take this test, but 152 students chose not to participate.

The tests were scored by faculty and staff volunteers during a two-day scoring session in July 2017. Facilitators trained by the Center for Assessment and Improvement of Learning at Tennessee Tech University lead the scoring sessions to ensure norming and validity. The scored tests were mailed back to the Center for Assessment and Improvement of Learning for analysis. The following is a listing of the colleges and departments that participated in the CAT for 2016-2017:

1. College of Business Administration
 - a. Department of Economics and International Business
 - b. Department of General Business and Finance
 - c. Department of Management and Marketing
2. College of Education
 - a. Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Results

Readers are directed to Table 1 for a breakdown of these results.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Student Scores on Critical Thinking and Assessment Test (CAT) in the College of Business Administration and the College of Education for 2016-2017

| College/Department | <i>n</i> | Min. | Max. | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------------------------|----------|------|------|----------|-----------|
| Overall | 537 | 1 | 26 | 12.67 | 4.53 |
| College of Business Administration | 336 | 2 | 26 | 13.04 | 4.46 |
| Economics and International Business | 62 | 7 | 26 | 13.79 | 4.96 |
| General Business and Finance | 26 | 5 | 19 | 12.19 | 3.32 |
| Management and Marketing | 248 | 2 | 26 | 12.94 | 4.42 |
| College of Education | 201 | 1 | 25 | 12.04 | 4.58 |
| Curriculum and Instruction | 201 | 1 | 25 | 12.04 | 4.58 |

Reference

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2017). Elements of the Texas Core Curriculum. Retrieved from: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=427FDE26-AF5D-F1A1-E6FDB62091E2A507>