The Essential Learning Outcomes

Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

Focused *by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring*

Intellectual and Practical Skills, including

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Practiced extensively*, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance*

Personal and Social Responsibility, including

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Anchored *through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges*

Integrative and Applied Learning, including

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies

Demonstrated *through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems*

Note: This listing was developed through a multiyear dialogue with hundreds of colleges and universities about needed goals for student learning; analysis of a long series of recommendations and reports from the business community; and analysis of the accreditation requirements for engineering, business, nursing, and teacher education. The findings are documented in previous publications of the Association of American Colleges and Universities: *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (2002), *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree* (2004), and *College Learning for the New Global Century* (2007). For further information, see www.aacu.org/leap.

LEAP

Degree Qualifications Profile

**A template of competencies required for the award of college degrees at the associate, bachelor's, and master's levels*

Knowledge

At each degree level, every college student should demonstrate competence in using both specialized knowledge from at least one field **and** broad, integrative knowledge from arts and sciences fields. **Both kinds of knowledge** should be pursued from first to final year, providing opportunities for **integration across fields and application to complex problems**—in the student's area of emphasis, in out-of-school settings, and in civil society.

Broad/Integrative Knowledge

Key areas include the sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, and global, intercultural and democratic learning.
In **each area**, students:
- Learn key concepts and methods of inquiry
- Examine significant debates and questions
- Make evidence-based arguments

In **addition**, at each degree level, students:
- Produce work that integrates concepts and methods from at least two fields

Specialized Knowledge

Students demonstrate depth of knowledge in a field and produce field-appropriate applications drawing on both major field and, at the B.A. level and beyond, other fields. Students learn:
- Discipline and field-specific knowledge
- Purposes, methods, and limitations of field
- Applied skills in field
- Integrative skills and methods drawing from multiple fields and disciplines.

Intellectual Skills

Students **hone and integrate intellectual skills across the curriculum**, applying those skills both to complex challenges within major fields and to broad, integrative problem-solving challenges. Skills include:

- Analytic inquiry
- Information literacy
- Engaging diverse perspectives
- Quantitative fluency
- Communication fluency

Civic Learning

Students acquire knowledge required for responsible citizenship both from their formal studies (see knowledge and skills, above) and from community-based learning, and **demonstrate their ability to integrate both forms of learning in analyzing and addressing significant public problems and questions**. Civic learning may be demonstrated through: research, collaborative projects and/or field-based assignments.

Applied Learning

Students demonstrate their ability to **integrate and apply their learning** (see knowledge and skills, above) in complex projects and assignments that may include: research, projects, practicums, internships, work assignments, performances, and creative tasks.

*The Degree Qualifications Profile was commissioned by the Lumina Foundation following a series of national discussions about learning outcomes frameworks. It was released by the foundation as a **beta version** in January 2011 and is being tested in a number of grant-funded national experiments.