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:

知識 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.

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 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.*