

Auburn University Student Learning Outcomes

What this is: Attached below is a compilation of intended learning outcomes for all students who graduate from Auburn University with a bachelor's degree. Students enroll in college with many different goals, and the university offers numerous programs of instruction to help them reach those goals. This list of intended learning outcomes is more general than those for a typical program of instruction, expressing educational goals we want all Auburn students to reach, no matter what their chosen degree program.

How this differs from a curriculum model: A curriculum model defines the courses students must take and implies thereby what knowledge and skills they should acquire. A statement of intended outcomes begins by defining the knowledge and skills students should acquire and only then considers the means, including curricular means, by which they will acquire them. Individual courses developed and controlled by faculty and departments remain the major building blocks of the university curriculum, but the outcomes model attempts a holistic assessment of a set of skills and competencies students have gained from their college experience. Most of the goals will be introduced in the core curriculum and developed to higher levels of competency within the major and by co-curricular experiences.

Why this matters: As Auburn University faculty we care deeply about our own disciplines, research, service, outreach, and courses, but as educators we must also be concerned about the total effort of the university to educate our students to become contributing members and even leaders of our society. Defining these student learning outcomes allows us to consider what abilities we want all Auburn graduates, regardless of major, to attain. Assessing to what extent students attain these goals will provide us a means to evaluate and enhance the general strength of an Auburn education. The university must be able to define these key educational outcomes and the extent to which graduates have attained them in order to win reaccreditation by SACS in 2013.

Who drafted these goals: The [University Senate's Core Curriculum Oversight Committee](#) is composed of faculty from across campus, including seven representatives from departments that teach Core courses and four faculty representatives from other academic disciplines and the University Libraries. The [Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies](#) chairs the committee, and the [Director of Institutional Research and Assessment](#) provides additional support. The committee drafted these student learning outcomes over a period of several years. It examined models from other universities, but sought to develop student learning outcomes appropriate to Auburn's history and mission. The committee envisions these goals as ambitious, and wants to remind faculty colleagues that every course in the university curriculum—not just classes in the core curriculum—will contribute to student attainment of these outcomes.

What you should do: The Core Curriculum Oversight Committee will ask the University Senate to adopt these student learning outcomes at its May 2008 meeting. Between now and then, the committee seeks input from across campus. Please read and consider the materials below. You may submit comments and questions to the committee directly to hilljul@auburn.edu no later than **April 1, 2008**. The committee will present a revised draft, incorporating faculty comments, to the Senate for action at its May 6, 2008 meeting.

Goal	Student Learning Outcomes
Information Literacy	<p>Students will be information literate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the nature and extent of information needed. 2. Access information effectively and efficiently. 3. Evaluate information critically. 4. Use information to accomplish a specific purpose. 5. Understand the economic, legal, and social issues associated with using information.
Analytical Skills and Critical Thinking	<p>Students will be able to read analytically and critically.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the situation behind the text, including the subject, the intended audience(s), and the writer's relationship to the subject and audience(s). 2. Identify the writer's purpose(s) and the main point or thesis that the author's purpose or set of purposes entails. 3. Analyze the major points made in developing and/or supporting the main point or thesis and the kinds of material used for the development and/or support. 4. Analyze the overall organization of the text as well as the organization of the body paragraphs. 5. Analyze the writer's voice, tone, and style. 6. Analyze the writer's basic assumptions and the implications of what the writer is saying. 7. Evaluate how well the writer accomplishes his or her purpose(s), and identify the elements that contribute to or detract from the effectiveness of the text. <p>Students will be able to critique an argument effectively.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and state the central argument. 2. Identify and evaluate the key assumptions. 3. Identify and evaluate the supporting evidence. 4. Identify implications and/or consequences of the argument. 5. Identify and consider the influence of relevant contexts on the argument. 6. Analyze the presentation of the argument. 7. Evaluate the effectiveness of the presentation of the argument for the intended audience. 8. Evaluate the effectiveness of the presentation of the argument for other audiences. 9. Be aware of their perspective(s) and/or positions on the argument.

Analytical Skills and Critical Thinking (continued)

Students will be able to construct an effective argument.

1. Establish a suitable central thesis, one that is arguable, appropriate, clear, and focused.
2. Construct an argument based on reasonable assumptions.
3. Provide suitable supporting evidence for their thesis, evidence that is relevant, effective, and adequate for the purpose, audience, and writing situation.
4. Anticipate and deal effectively with possible objections or opposing arguments.
5. Be able to structure an argument effectively.
6. Be able to present an argument using an appropriate voice and tone.
7. Be able to present an argument using appropriate language.
8. Be able to present an argument using contextually-appropriate genre conventions.

Students will be able to apply simple mathematical methods to the solution of real-world problems.

1. Demonstrate mathematical skills sufficient to interpret and critically evaluate quantitative information presented in news and other reports published for general audiences.
2. Perform calculations with integers, fractions (rational numbers), decimals, ratios, and percents.
3. Use arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, and statistical methods, to solve problems.
4. Interpret quantitative or symbolic models such as formulas, graphs, tables, and charts, and draw inferences from them.
5. Represent mathematical information symbolically, numerically, visually, and verbally.
6. Generate and apply conclusions based on patterns.
7. Recognize that mathematical and statistical methods have limitations.

Students will be able to select and use techniques and methods to solve open-ended, ill-defined or multi-step problems.

1. Develop problem statements or definitions.
2. Identify problem constraints, assumptions, and opportunities.
3. Generate and evaluate alternative solutions.
4. Determine the most effective or valid solutions.
5. Communicate or implement the solution to the problem.

Effective Communication

Students will be able to write effectively.

1. Demonstrate effective rhetorical strategies appropriate to the purpose, audience, context, and genre, including strategies related to content, structure, voice, tone, and style.
2. Use writing for inquiry, learning, and thinking; understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks (including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources); be able to integrate their own ideas with those of others; and understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power.
3. Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text; develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading; be able to critique their own and others' work; and understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes and be able to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their own part.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of genre conventions, including conventions related to content, format, structure, paragraphing, tone, style, and documentation, as well as knowledge of the conventions of Standard Written English.
5. Conduct web-based research; employ research strategies using electronic data bases; use the computer for the various stages in writing (including drafting, revising, responding and editing); and understand how rhetorical strategies used in writing traditional texts differ from those used in composing online genres such as hyper-text, electronic communication, and graphics.

Students will demonstrate effective oral communication skills.

1. Structure ideas clearly and expressively, using appropriate language free from bias and understand what it means to be an ethical and credible speaker.
2. Recognize appropriate opportunities for communication and identify the most suitable and effective mediums for message dissemination.
3. Communicate candidly (in an open and direct manner) and effectively as an individual, in pairs, or in small groups.
4. Actively listen to oral arguments and recognize when a recipient does not understand a message, adapting it as necessary.

Informed and Engaged Citizenship	<p>Students will be informed and engaged citizens of the United States and the world.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the world they live in and its history: be able to describe social, political, economic, or cultural systems within and outside the United States and to describe how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, and change. 2. Demonstrate the ability to analyze these systems and relationships: be able to critically analyze both contemporary and historical perspectives on contemporary issues and to critically analyze one's own culture, history, and society. 3. Demonstrate awareness of avenues of engagement with these systems: be able to relate local, national, and global social policy; to recognize the social responsibility of the individual within a larger community; and to distinguish the possibilities, values, and limitations of social change.
Intercultural Knowledge and Diversity Awareness	<p>Students will understand and appreciate the diversity of and within societies of the United States and the world.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize the roles various people play in their culture: be able to relate the contributions of groups and individuals to cultures, societies, or history; to critically analyze one's own culture, history, or society; and to critically analyze other cultures within and outside the United States. 2. Appreciate socio-cultural and international diversity among people: be able to demonstrate knowledge of issues in the United States and the world that concern people of different races, ethnicity, nationalities, religions, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or those with disabilities or from different geographical locations; and be able to demonstrate knowledge of cultures outside the US, including knowledge of values, beliefs, traditions, and customs within other nations. 3. Demonstrate understanding of the need for awareness of intercultural diversity when relating to others in various cultures and situations.
Scientific Literacy	<p>Students will understand and appreciate methods and issues of science and technology.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulate the philosophical and historical foundations of modern science. 2. Understand the scientific method and demonstrate an ability to apply it across a variety of situations. 3. Demonstrate an ability to conduct, and interpret the results of experiments aimed at better understanding natural phenomena. 4. Understand major issues and problems facing modern science and technology, including issues related to ethics, cultural values, public policies, and the impact of human activity upon the planet. 5. Demonstrate knowledge in one area of science, including understanding its basic principles, laws, and theories.

Aesthetic Appreciation and Engagement	Students will understand and appreciate the arts and aesthetics as ways of knowing and engaging with the world. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop and articulate criteria for aesthetic judgment.2. Understand how various art forms and/or works of art both reflect and inform society at large, historically and/or in the present.3. Be able to study, create, or participate in some form of artistic expression as a means of understanding the creative process.
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