

## **Learning Outcomes Assessment Overview**

### **Washburn University Mission Statement**

Washburn University enriches the lives of students by providing opportunities for them to develop and to realize their intellectual, academic, and professional potential, leading to becoming productive and responsible citizens. We are committed to excellence in teaching, scholarly work, quality academic and professional programs, and high levels of faculty-student interaction. We develop and engage in relationships to enhance educational experiences and our community.

### **Overview**

Washburn University undergraduates will participate in a variety of curricular and co-curricular experiences in pursuit of their degree. The Learning Outcomes requirement is designed with the intent of providing students with the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge, so they are equipped to engage with our rapidly changing world over their lifetimes. All Washburn University graduates should have engaged in a program of study that included 5 core Learning Outcomes:

1. Communication (COM)
2. Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning and Literacy (QSRL)
3. Information Literacy and Technology (ILT)
4. Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT)
5. Global Citizenship, Ethics and Diversity (GCED).

Assessment will be accomplished utilizing a combination of direct methods such as course-embedded assessments, university-wide assessments, national standardized exams, and indirect methods such as student, alumni, and employer surveys.

Courses, both major and non-major that address the learning outcomes will identify a project or projects to be utilized for assessment of the specific learning outcome. Faculty will use an approved rubric, e.g. the appropriate VALUE Rubric developed by AAC&U to evaluate the designated projects. An online mechanism will be available to facilitate data collection. The

course-embedded assessment data in combination with data collected through the administration of the ETS Proficiency Profile, other university-wide direct methods of assessment, and alumni and constituent surveys will be reported, analyzed, and shared with constituents following the approved assessment plan for each learning outcome.

In summary, the key components for each learning outcome in the assessment plan are:

- (a) multiple course-embedded assessments.
- (b) a minimum of one summative, university-wide assessment.
- (c) a minimum of one indirect assessment e.g. alumni survey.
- (d) regular review, discussion of the data, and a mechanism for appropriate action.

### **Learning Outcome Statements**

A successful assessment plan requires explicit statements of the learning outcomes, the following learning outcomes are under consideration by the faculty.

#### **Communication**

Communications skills involve the ability to clearly express and understand ideas in written, oral and non-verbal forms. Communication includes the practical exchange of information, which can include the ability to listen, comprehend and respond to others, as well as the creative expression of ideas in the visual, written and performing arts. In oral and written communication, students will demonstrate the ability to shape a central thesis, organize an argument, and formally support that argument. Students will be able to understand and interpret creative expression based on knowledge of the forms and principles of various expressive media.

#### **Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning and Literacy**

Quantitative reasoning involves the ability to work with numerical data and the higher-order thinking skills required to make and understand mathematical arguments. Scientific literacy involves the acquisition and application of skills and knowledge necessary to understand the nature and content of science, and to evaluate scientific arguments using evidence-based reasoning. Students will be able to understand and develop arguments supported by quantitative evidence, clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, statistical inference, mathematical equations and functions, etc., as

appropriate), and apply mathematical and scientific methods to solve problems from a wide array of contexts and everyday situations.

### **Information Literacy and Technology**

Information Literacy and Technology involves the ability to locate, select, use and evaluate information obtained from appropriate electronic and/or printed resources, including a critical analysis of the information and the credibility of the sources of information. It also involves the ability to use technology to research, organize, present and/or communicate information in meaningful ways. Additionally, Information Literacy and Technology includes skills such as the ability to understand the development of technology and its impact on society, the ability to understand and use existing technologies and information to address real-world issues, and the ability to recognize emerging technological trends and their possible impact on the future.

### **Critical and Creative Thinking**

Critical Thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of assessing and evaluating ideas and forms. It involves clarifying questions, reflecting upon meaning, comparing multiple viewpoints, and evaluating evidence to make an informed judgment. Creative Thinking involves the production of original ideas, forms or works by making connections, generating alternatives, and elaborating or exploring new applications of accepted practices through innovation and/or invention. Critical and creative thinkers gather information from experience, observation, reasoning, reflection and communication. They explore and synthesize related ideas, connect them to prior knowledge, and apply them to new contexts.

### **Global Citizenship, Ethics and Diversity**

Global Citizenship refers to the broad understanding of peoples and cultures in the United States and around the world, and to humankind's place and effects in the world. Global Citizenship includes a respect for the commonalities and differences in peoples, including an understanding of values, beliefs and customs. It places an emphasis on the economic, religious, political, geographic, linguistic, historic, environmental and social aspects that define cultures. It places an emphasis on ethics, equality and human rights, an appreciation for diversity, the interconnectedness of societies and cultures, and a commitment to finding solutions to problems that can affect the world.

## **Assessment Plan**

Through meeting the **oral and written communication learning outcome**, students will demonstrate the ability to shape a central thesis, organize an argument, and formally support that argument. Students will be able to understand and interpret creative expression based on knowledge of the forms and principles of various expressive media.

1. To establish benchmarks all entering students will complete the COMPASS exam.

2. All Washburn Students will earn passing grades in courses used to meet the communication learning outcome.
3. After completing one year of course-work at Washburn University all students will be at the target level for communication outcomes as measured by performance on a University writing assessment.
4. After completing 80 hours but prior to graduation Washburn students will be at target level or higher as evaluated through the scoring of a designated writing sample.
5. During major specific experiences e.g. capstone courses or seminars, all Washburn students will be evaluated at target level or higher in oral and written communication as evaluated by an approved departmental rubric.
6. The Washburn senior cohort will score at or above the national mean on the writing component of the ETS Proficiency Profile.
7. Alumni will be surveyed after 5 years.
8. Employers will be surveyed periodically.

Through meeting the **scientific and quantitative literacy learning outcome**, students will be able to understand and develop arguments supported by quantitative evidence, clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, statistical inference, mathematical equations and functions, etc., as appropriate), and apply mathematical and scientific methods to solve problems from a wide array of contexts and everyday situations.

1. To establish benchmarks all entering students will complete the COMPASS exam.
2. All Washburn Students will earn passing grades in courses used to meet the scientific and quantitative literacy learning outcome.
3. After completing 80 hours but prior to graduation Washburn students will be at target level or higher as evaluated through the scoring of a university quantitative and scientific literacy test to be developed by the Natural Sciences and Mathematics Division.
4. The Washburn senior cohort will score at or above the national mean on the quantitative component of the ETS Proficiency Profile.

5. Alumni will be surveyed after 5 years.
6. Employers will be surveyed periodically.

Through meeting the **information and technology literacy learning outcome**, students will be able to locate, select, use and evaluate information obtained from appropriate electronic and/or printed resources, including a critical analysis of the information and the credibility of the sources of information, to use technology to research, organize, present and/or communicate information in meaningful ways, to understand the development of technology and its impact on society, and to use existing technologies and information to address real-world issues, and the ability to recognize emerging technological trends and their possible impact on the future.

1. All Washburn Students will earn a grade of C or better in core information literacy and technology literacy courses.
2. At the completion of the Information Literacy core, students will demonstrate appropriate level of proficiency as measured by the ETS *iCritical Thinking*™ Certification exam or an alternative approved instrument.
3. After completing 80 hours but prior to graduation all Washburn Students will be at target level or higher as evaluated through the scoring of a course embedded assessment requiring information and technology literacy.
4. Alumni will be surveyed after 5 years.
5. Employers will be surveyed periodically.

Through meeting the **critical and creative thinking learning outcome**, students will be able to formulate clarifying questions, reflect upon meaning, compare multiple viewpoints, evaluate evidence to make an informed judgment, generate original ideas, forms or works by making connections, generating alternatives, and elaborating or exploring new applications of accepted practices through innovation and/or invention.

1. All Washburn Students will earn passing grades in courses used to meet the critical and creative thinking learning outcome.
2. After completing 12 – 24 credit hours of course-work at Washburn University all students will be at the target level for critical and creative thinking learning outcome as measured

by performance on an approved project evaluated using the university-wide critical and creative thinking rubric.

3. After completing 80 hours but prior to graduation all Washburn Students will be at target level or higher as evaluated through the scoring of a designated work sample.
4. During major specific experiences e.g. capstone courses or seminars, all Washburn students will be evaluated at target level or higher in critical thinking as evaluated by an approved departmental rubric.
5. Alumni will be surveyed after 5 years.
6. Employers will be surveyed periodically.

Through meeting the **global citizenship learning outcome**, students will demonstrate a respect for the commonalities and differences in people, including an understanding of values, beliefs and customs, an appreciation for diversity, the interconnectedness of societies and cultures, and a commitment to finding solutions to problems that can affect the world.

1. All Washburn Students will earn passing grades in courses used to meet the global citizenship learning outcome.
2. After completing 80 hours but prior to graduation all Washburn Students will be at target level or higher as evaluated through the scoring a university global citizenship assessment. [For example, students may be required to develop an electronic portfolio that documents their acquisition of the skills and knowledge associated with this learning outcome. The student could use both curricular and co-curricular experiences as part of the portfolio.]
3. Alumni will be surveyed after 5 years.
4. Employers will be surveyed periodically.

### **Mechanism for Acquiring Learning Outcome Designation**

Departments will submit a course syllabus and a 1 – 2 page narrative addressing the following questions:

- a. Which learning outcomes will be addressed in the course?
- b. How will they addressed?
- c. How will the learning outcomes be assessed? Specifically describe at least two course assessments that will be evaluated using the approved rubric for the each learning outcome. Students must complete one assessment at the end of course.

### **Review Structure**

An appointed committee will be charged with approving the designation of a course as meeting a specific learning outcome. The committee will be responsible for approving university-wide rubrics used as part of the assessment of the learning outcomes. The committee will also be responsible for the collection, analysis and communication of the assessment data.