Undergraduate Learning Outcomes[1]

SUMMARY

WOU students prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

Through focused study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts, and by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking and practice
- Written and oral/signed communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum using appropriate technology, 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, real-world challenges, and healthy life course decisions

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

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1 WOU's Undergraduate Learning Outcomes are based on the LEAP essential learning outcomes created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. More information about the LEAP outcomes and outcome assessment at WOU can be found at https://www.aacu.org/leap and http://wou.edu/outcomes

Outcome Definitions

- Inquiry and analysis
    - Inquiry is a systematic process of exploring issues/ objects/works through the collection and analysis of evidence that result in informed conclusions/ judgments. Analysis is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.

- Critical thinking
    - Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

- Creative thinking and practice
    - Creative thinking and practice is both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

- Written and oral / signed communication
    - Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.
    - Reading is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (Snow et al., 2002). (From www.rand.org/pubs/ research briefs/RB8024/index1.html)
    - Oral / signed communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the audiences' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

- Quantitative literacy
    - Quantitative Literacy (QL) – also known as Numeracy or Quantitative Reasoning (QR) – is a "habit of mind," competency, and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals with strong QL skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate).

- Information literacy
    - The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand. - The National Forum on Information Literacy.

- Teamwork and problem solving
    - Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions).
    - Problem solving is the process of designing, evaluating and implementing a strategy to answer an open-ended question or achieve a desired goal.

- Civic knowledge and engagement – local and global
    - Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from Civic Responsibility and Higher Education, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompassed actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.
    - Global learning is a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability. Through global learning, students should 1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences, 2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and 3) address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.

- Intercultural knowledge and competence
    - Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts." (Bennett, J. M. 2008. Transformative training: Designing programs for culture learning. In Contemporary leadership and intercultural competence: Understanding and utilizing cultural diversity to build successful organizations, ed. M. A. Moodian, 95-110. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.)

- Ethical reasoning and action
    - Ethical Reasoning is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different

ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self-identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
    o Lifelong learning is "all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence". An endeavor of higher education is to prepare students to be this type of learner by developing specific dispositions and skills described in this rubric while in school. (From The European Commission. 2000. Commission staff working paper: A memorandum on lifelong learning. Retrieved September 3, 2003, www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/ lifelong-oth-enl-t02.pdf.)

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
    o Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.