

# UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE LEARNING GOALS

Approved by University Faculty Senate 4/13/11

## Students at the University of Baltimore will...

1. Apply strategies that enhance professional and personal competence.  
Outcomes: This set of skills is demonstrated by the ability to:
  - a. Recognize the implications of their financial and economic decisions.
  - b. Work in teams while filling different roles.
  - c. Use digital technology to communicate and investigate.
  - d. Find and judge the credibility of different sources of information.
  
2. Connect knowledge with choices and actions that engage others in diverse local and global communities.  
Outcomes: This set of skills is demonstrated by the ability to:
  - a. Make informed choices regarding conflicting situations in their personal and public lives and to foresee the consequences of these choices.
  - b. Recognize the importance of civic engagement in their personal lives and society.
  - c. Reflect on how one's own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities.
  - d. Articulate the interconnectedness of global, regional, local and personal interests.
  
3. Acquire knowledge about models of ethical behavior and understand its implications in the development of personal and professional relationships.  
Outcomes: this set of skills is demonstrated by the ability to:
  - a. Make well reasoned choices regarding conflicting situations in their personal and public lives and to foresee the consequences of these choices.
  - b. Give well supported reasons for deciding on right moral conduct in an interdependent group.
  - c. Apply an ethical decision-making process to social, workplace, and personal dilemmas.
  
4. Communicate effectively in various media.  
Outcomes: This set of skills is demonstrated by the ability to:
  - a. Express ideas and facts to others effectively in a variety of written, oral, and visual formats.
  - b. Communicate in one-on-one and group settings.
  - c. Make efficient use of information resources and technology for personal and professional communication
  - d. Comprehend, interpret and analyze texts.
  
5. Think critically and creatively to solve problems and adapt to new environments.  
Outcomes: This skill is demonstrated by the ability of students to:
  - a. Generate and explore new questions.

- b. Analyze complex issues and make informed decisions
  - c. Synthesize information to arrive at reasoned conclusions
  - d. Evaluate the logic, validity and relevance of data
6. Gather and evaluate information using scientific, quantitative, humanistic and aesthetic methods.
- Outcomes: This set of skills is demonstrated by the ability to:
- a. Apply the scientific method to solve relevant problems
  - b. Use mathematical concepts and techniques that can be applied to other disciplines.
  - c. Use knowledge of humanities in various personal and professional situations.
  - d. Engage with and appreciate aesthetic perspectives
7. Develop an integrated and specialized knowledge and skills base.
- Outcomes: This set of skills is demonstrated by the ability to:
- a. Acquire substantial knowledge and understanding of at least one field of study (intellectual depth)
  - b. Compare and contrast approaches to knowledge in different disciplines (intellectual breadth)
  - c. Modify one's approach to an issue or problem based on the contexts and requirements of particular situations (adaptability).

**General Education Outcomes Assessment Plans**  
**(Procedures Approved Jan 13, 2010, by University Faculty Senate)**

**Biological & Physical Sciences**

1. To be able to evaluate scientific reports and discriminate among sources (including peer-reviewed sources).  
This learning goal can be assessed through
  - assigning peer-reviewed articles to students to read and summarize; or
  - having students read and evaluate scientific reports written by other students (i.e., students acting as peer reviewers and having their reviews evaluated).
2. To be able to discriminate science from non-science and demonstrate that science constitutes the testing of hypotheses about natural phenomena through observation.  
This learning goal can be assessed through
  - pertinent questions on exams/quizzes or homework; or
  - the writing of laboratory and other kinds of scientific reports.
3. To be able to access specific scientific information on a topic.  
This learning goal can be assessed through
  - assigning peer-reviewed articles to students to read and summarize; or
  - writing assignments that utilize the scientific literature.
4. To be able to use some of the technology commonly used by scientists to gather and process data [optional for non-laboratory courses];  
This learning goal can be assessed through
  - the utilization of appropriate methods of data presentation in laboratory and other kinds of scientific reports; or
  - laboratory exercises that involve the use of the microscope and subsequent detailed description of observed specimens;
  - pertinent questions on exams/quizzes or homework.
5. To be able to quantify and evaluate scientific data and demonstrate an appreciation of the role of variability in this process.  
This learning goal can be assessed through
  - the writing of laboratory and other kinds of scientific reports; or
  - pertinent questions on exams/quizzes or homework.
6. To be able to demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental terminology, concepts, and significant historic figures of the discipline being taught.  
This learning goal can be assessed through
  - pertinent questions on exams/quizzes or homework.

**Social & Behavioral Sciences**

Over the course of five years (one outcome per year), all learning outcomes could be assessed. Within a given year, one of the following procedures could be used:

- a. sections of courses offered within each discipline that qualify as general education social and behavioral sciences would be randomly sampled; an assignment, series of test questions, or other evaluation relevant to each course would be designed to measure the objective using course embedded assessment; OR

- b. all courses qualified as general education social and behavioral sciences within each discipline would focus on a selected outcome; an assignment, series of test questions or other evaluation would be designed to measure the outcome in each section offered; students' work would be randomly sampled from all sections within each discipline for assessment purposes.

A set of suggested exercises or test questions for each general education course could be designed for measuring each outcome. These would be general so that individual faculty members could select from a test bank or create anew each semester.

### **Mathematics**

Over the course of three years (one objective per semester) all learning objectives can be assessed. Within a given semester one of the following procedures could be used:

1. sections of courses qualified as general education mathematics which are being offered would be randomly sampled; an assignment, series of test questions or other evaluation relevant to each course would be designed to measure the objective using course embedded assessment; OR
2. all courses qualified as general education mathematics would focus on a selected objective; in each section being offered an assignment, series of test questions or other evaluation would be designed to measure the objective; students' work would be randomly sampled from all sections for assessment purposes.

For each general education course a set of suggested exercises or test questions could be designed for measuring each outcome. These would be general so that the individual faculty member can select from a test bank or create them anew within each semester.

### **Arts & Humanities**

The following procedures are recommended as strategies for assessing the arts and humanities learning outcomes:

- a. Students will be required to write one term paper or two shorter papers (totaling 2000-2500 words). The quality of these papers will be measured by means of a rubric that addresses the degree to which the papers meet arts and humanities learning outcome #3 and at least three of the other four arts and humanities learning outcomes, as defined in the paper assignment(s). If two papers are assessed, they should show improvement over the course of the academic term.
- b. Students will write several short critical responses to assigned readings, creative works, and/or historical writings characteristic of the arts or humanities discipline(s) addressed in the course. These short essays (approximately 200 words) may be assigned as out-of-class writing (via either an online forum or submitted copy) or in-class exercises. This rubric-based assessment strategy evaluates the application of learning outcomes 1 and 2 plus at least one of the other learning outcomes (3, 4, and/or 5).
- c. Students will take mid-term and/or final examinations testing learning outcomes 1, 2, 4, and 5.
- d. A formal in-class presentation may be substituted for assessment strategy (a) or (b), provided that the assignment design allows the quality of each student's presentation to be measured for the same learning outcomes as strategies (a) or (b).

- e. Students may be required to write critiques of other students' short written assignments and/or in-class presentations. These critiques would measure outcomes 1 and 5 across a range of artifacts broader than those selected by students for their own, individual assignments. This strategy can potentially address outcomes 3 and 4, according to the specific arts or humanities discipline(s) being studied.

### **English Composition**

To assess whether or not these learning outcomes are being met, the following assessment strategies are recommended:

1. Pre- and post-test evaluations;
2. Standardized rubrics;
3. Exit writing exams;
4. End-of-semester student surveys; and
5. Assessments of students' skill transferability as evidenced by their writing in other courses outside English composition.

### **IT Fluency**

Over the course of three years (one-two objectives per semester) all learning objectives can be assessed. Within a given semester one of the following procedures can be used:

1. Sections of various courses identified as fulfilling the information literacy requirement would be randomly sampled; an assignment, a series of test questions or other evaluation relevant to the course would be designed to measure the objective using course embedded assessment; OR
2. All courses identified as fulfilling the information literacy requirement would focus on a selected object; in each section/course an assignment, a series of test questions or other evaluation would be designed to measure the objective; and students' work.
3. Examples of assignments for each objective are:
  - Objective 1: Research proposal, research log, research review, research map;
  - Objective 2: Tool selection and search strategy assignment, test questions, research proposal;
  - Objective 3: Research review;
  - Objective 4: Citation station assignment, annotated bibliography, research paper;
  - Objective 5: Analysis of biased websites; evaluation of sources, annotations, test questions;
  - Objective 6: Evaluations of sources; web resource guide, research proposal; reflective presentation on research/writing process;
  - Objective 7: Identification/resolution of ethical dilemmas, test questions, plagiarism assignment, citation Station assignment, paraphrasing assignment, research paper.

### **Speech Communication**

One or more of the following procedures could be used to assess the speech communication learning outcomes:

1. Students will be required to give organized informative and persuasive speeches. The quality of those speeches will be determined by means of a rubric that measures the degree to which the speeches met the learning outcomes numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8. Their improvement throughout an entire semester will measure learning outcome number 6.

2. Students will write critiques of peers and professional speeches, so that they may practice active listening strategies, as well as identification of variables in the communication process, disfluencies in oral delivery, rhetorical strategies, features of ethical or unethical communication, and the extent to which the message is tailored to the audience(s) and situation. This assessment strategy tests comprehension of learning outcomes 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9.
3. Students will be given descriptions of a particular audience. Students will present a speech tailored to the demographic, attitudinal, and situational specifics of the audience. The quality of that speech will be determined by means of a rubric that measures the degree to which the speech met the learning outcomes numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 as stated above.
4. Speech-grading rubric sheets could be examined and evaluated to assure that they are assessing the learning outcomes numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8.
5. Students could take communication anxiety surveys at the beginning of the semester, at the end of the semester, and one year after they have completed the course. Lowered communication anxiety would indicate increased confidence in oral communication, a stated goal of the speech communication course under learning objective number 6.
6. A standardized final written examination could be given at the end of each course, testing comprehension of the non-performance learning outcomes, including numbers 1, 6, 7, and 9.

Assessment strategies 1 and 2 will be used every semester. Assessment strategies 3, 4, 5, and 6 can be used to tease out problems with comprehension of specific learning outcomes, as strategies 1 and 2 indicate that there are problems.

## **UB Writing Competencies**

Upon graduation, UB students will demonstrate the following competencies:

1. *Students will use a dynamic process when writing:*

- a. Students will break down a writing task into distinct parts.
- b. Students will infuse creativity into this process when appropriate.
- c. Students will understand differences among stages of this process (such as outlining, drafting, revising, and proofreading) and know when to employ each.
- d. Students will use writing processes for inquiry, critical thinking, learning, reflection, and communication.

2. *Students will demonstrate compositional excellence:*

- a. Students will demonstrate mastery of compositional strategies including introductions, theses, main ideas, supporting details, evidence, transitions, and conclusions.
- b. Students will achieve appropriate levels of unity, coherence, and development.
- c. Students will adapt and combine expository patterns of development (such as description, comparing and contrasting, narration, classification, analogy, or cause/effect) when producing texts.
- d. Students will develop and use their opinions and various types of found information – including quantitative and visual information – to analyze, explain, and argue.
- e. Students will synthesize different types of information effectively.
- f. Students will assess information critically and use relevant analytical and reasoning strategies while presenting complex information in texts.

3. *Students will demonstrate linguistic competence:*

- a. Students will understand the social, historical, and linguistic complexities of language.
- b. Students will revise and edit written language for semantic, syntactic, orthographic, and stylistic improvements.

c. Students will write concisely and use appropriate levels of formality.

4. *Students will produce civil discourse:*

a. Students will write ethically and use appropriate attribution and documentation whenever necessary.

b. Students will write with integrity and use written discourse to improve their lives, communities, workplaces, and professions.

5. *Students will demonstrate rhetorical flexibility:*

a. Students will apply key rhetorical principles in a variety of academic, professional, and personal writing tasks.

b. Students will write for different purposes and audiences in different genres and will employ different appeals and writing styles to accomplish unique rhetorical tasks.

c. Students will articulate the similarities and differences between unique types of rhetoric including visual, verbal, and digital rhetoric.

6. *Students will demonstrate technical proficiency when communicating ideas in writing.*

a. Students will use traditional and new media when drafting, revising, editing, sharing, composing, and producing texts.

b. Students will use electronic resources to locate, evaluate, organize, and use information.

c. Students will understand similarities and differences between print and electronic media and use them advantageously when producing texts.