Portland State University
Undergraduate Campus-wide Learning Outcomes
Criteria and Rationales

Portland State University strives to provide its students an educational experience based on the core values and unique strengths reflected in the following undergraduate learning outcomes. These campus-wide outcomes communicate the University’s priorities to prospective students, help current students understand the guiding principles behind their educational experiences, and provide a framework for campus-wide assessment of student learning. Through engaging with these outcomes in their broad-based general education experiences, in-depth intellectual explorations within their majors, and the opportunities they encounter outside the classroom through Student Affairs and extra-curricular activities, students will graduate from PSU prepared to contribute responsibly to society in the 21st century.

CWLOs are presented in alphabetical order.

Communication:

Students will communicate effectively in a range of social, academic, and professional contexts using a variety of means, including written, oral, numeric/quantitative, graphic, and visual modes of communication using appropriate technologies.

- Employ appropriate strategies: select communication approaches and media that are responsive to task, audience, and context
- Apply standards and conventions: demonstrate awareness of disciplinary and professional expectations and use them with proficiency and skill
- Demonstrate engagement in responsive/iterative/generative processes: critically select useful sources, synthesize relevant information, and revise the message, leading to the purposeful articulation of their argument, stance, or purpose
- Remain open and interactive: collaborate with others and listen to feedback and external input, in order to improve students’ expression of idea

Rationale: Students need communication skills in order to contribute to and engage in the intellectual, social, cultural, and economic complexities they encounter in their personal, academic, and professional lives. The ability to communicate effectively allows students to acquire new information and skills, to interact meaningfully with others, and to use their knowledge to serve the community and find personal fulfillment.

Creative and Critical Thinking:

Students will develop the disposition and skills to evaluate, strategize, organize, analyze and evaluate relevant information and ideas. Students will work in imaginative ways characterized by innovation, divergent thinking and risk taking.

- Analyzes, generates, and evaluates alternative points of view and explanations
- Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, and questions
- Justifies key results and procedures; explains assumptions and reasons
- Follows where evidence and reason lead
- Actively seeks out and follows through on untested and potentially risky approaches
- Integrates alternate, divergent or contradictory perspectives
- Extends a novel or unique idea in order to create new boundary-crossing knowledge
- Connects, synthesizes, and transforms existing ideas in innovative and original ways

**Rationale:** To be effective in careers and participate meaningfully in a civil society, students need a repertoire of strategies for problem identification and solution. Integral to this effort, students must be able to knowledgably and responsibly push beyond boundaries in new and atypical combinations in order to achieve original solutions.

**Disciplinary and/or Professional Expertise:**

Students will gain mastery at a baccalaureate level in a defined body of knowledge through attainment of their program’s objectives and completion of their major.

**Rationale:** The major is at the core of the student's academic experience, providing the context for intellectual development in a focused subject area. Students should be able to use their disciplinary knowledge and skills to understand their world and to participate in civil society. Mastery of the discipline at the bachelor’s level provides a base of knowledge and experience for lifelong learning and continued intellectual growth.

**Diversity:**

Students will recognize and understand the rich and complex ways that group and individual inequalities and interactions impact self and society.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the depth and complexity of differences among cultural groups in relation to history, values, politics, communication style, economy, or beliefs and practices.
- Understand the centrality of injustice, discrimination and prejudice on human histories and lives.
- Recognize power differences between groups in the ability to be heard and seen as legitimate.
- Articulate and reflect on one’s own social/personal identity and experiences of power and oppression.
- Articulates a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal and non-verbal communication and is able to skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.
- Engage in respectful communication across social differences.

**Rationale:** Students need the capacity to become engaged citizens in order to meaningfully participate in and contribute to local, national and international communities. In order to do this, students need the capacity to communicate across differences to address longstanding and persistent real-world issues/challenges related to class, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, language, race, and sexual orientation.

**Engagement:**

Students will engage in learning that is based on reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships, and through this engagement will apply theory and skills in diverse venues, linking the conceptual to the practical.

- Students will define and give examples of mutually beneficial outcomes (for students and community partners) facilitated by a community project in which they were engaged.
• Students will analyze and give personal examples of the ways in which participation in community-based projects deepened their understanding of course content or academic field of study.
• Students will articulate key responsibilities associated with being an effective contributor to (democratic) societies.
• Students will provide evidence of responsible participation in community-based activities and describe what she/he has learned about her/himself as a result of this participation.

**Rationale:** Engaged students are more effective learners, and have an enhanced capacity to apply their knowledge in ways that can have benefits extending from the personal to the global level. This outcome is aligned with the vision of Portland State as “an urban university known for excellence in student learning, innovative research, and community engagement.”

**Ethics and Social Responsibility:**

Students will develop ethical and social responsibility to others, will understand issues from a variety of cultural perspectives, will collaborate with others to address ethical and social issues in a sustainable manner, and will increase self-awareness.

• Students will demonstrate an understanding of social and ethical responsibilities within their discipline.
• Based on course-related experiences, students will demonstrate the practice of ethical conduct standards as they relate to the course content and projects.
• Students will be aware of and act in a way that is ethically sound in the classroom and their communities. This includes, but is not limited to, academic honesty.
• Students will demonstrate the ability to understand ethical issues from multiple points of view and recognize the complexities and intersections of real world social issues.

**Rationale:** Students who have self-awareness and an ethical responsibility to others will be alumni who contribute to their community by enhancing the quality of life for all. This is consistent with Portland State’s mission which includes enhancing the intellectual, social, cultural and economic qualities of life by providing access throughout the life span.

**Internationalization:**

Students will understand the richness and challenge of world cultures and the processes of globalization, and will develop the skills and attitudes to function as “global citizens.”

**Knowledge:**

K.1 Demonstrates knowledge of global issues, processes, trends and systems (i.e. economic and political interdependency among nations; environmental-cultural interaction; global governance bodies).

K.2 Demonstrates an understanding of his/her culture in global and comparative context—that is, recognizes that his/her culture is one of many diverse cultures and that alternate perceptions and behaviors may be based in cultural differences.

K.3 Demonstrates an understanding of how his/her field (academic/professional) is viewed and practiced in different international contexts.

**Skills:**
S.1 Uses diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference to think critically and solve problems.

S.2 Uses information from other languages and other countries:
   • to enhance learning in other academic areas
   • as a window to cultural understanding
   • to enhance language and cultural knowledge

S.3 Interprets issues and situations from more than one cultural perspective.

Attitudes:

A.1 Can articulate differences among cultures; demonstrates tolerance for the diverse viewpoints that emerge from these differences.

A.2 Demonstrates an ongoing willingness to seek out international or intercultural opportunities.

Rationale: Students need the ability to think broadly and participate meaningfully in communities ranging from the local to the global. No culture, and no university educated individual within a culture, can function without understanding the current level of interdependence among cultures.

Sustainability:

Students will identify, act on, and evaluate their professional and personal actions with the knowledge and appreciation of interconnections among economic, environmental, and social perspectives in order to create a more sustainable future.

• Students will be able to describe the environmental integrity, economic vitality and social equity aspects of sustainability and give examples of how they are interrelated.
• Students will be able to explain how sustainability relates to their lives as citizens, workers and individuals and how their actions impact sustainability.
• Students will describe the roles of individuals and institutions in decision making processes that impact sustainability.
• Students will learn how to apply concepts of sustainability locally, regionally and globally by engaging in the challenges and solutions of sustainability in a broader context.
• Students will evaluate proposed solutions to problems considering their environmental, social and economic impacts.

Rationale: Understanding sustainability is essential to join the international discourse and work cooperatively in the closely interconnected world of the new millennium. PSU is a leader in local, regional, and global knowledge creation and practice of sustainability, and therefore has the opportunity and challenge to publicly support, inform and lead students and communities in creating a sustainable future, and can provide a place for students who have this inclination to get an education.