

**Swearer Center Learning Outcomes and Associated Competencies**

The Swearer Center has identified a core set of learning outcomes and associated competencies that will inform the development of student programs and initiatives and guide our assessment and evaluation work. This document outlines six high-level learning outcomes and a series of associated competencies.

The format below is as follows: the general learning outcome is stated (in bold) and then a definition is provided (in italics). Underneath are listed a series of competencies associated with that learning outcome. These competencies are discrete and demonstrable skills or sets of abilities that can be acquired through curricular, co-curricular, and/or experiential learning opportunities. In general, the competencies run from those that are more conceptually-oriented -- having to do with understanding, knowledge acquisition and/or creation -- to those that are more action-oriented.

**1. Critical Reflection**

*Demonstrates evidence of growing self-awareness and development through ongoing reflection on experience, practice, and context.*

* Identifies assumptions (taken-for-granted ideas, “commonsense” beliefs, inherited values) that underlie beliefs and actions.
* Assesses and scrutinizes the validity of assumptions through dialogue, practical experiences, and expanded understanding of context.
* Challenges assumptions, becoming more inclusive, critical, and integrative, and uses  
  newly-formed knowledge to more appropriately inform future actions and practices.

(Adapted from: <http://www.uvm.edu/rsenr/nr6/Readings/Critical%20Reflection.pdf>)

**2. Integrative Learning**

*Connects and extends knowledge across fields of study and inquiry and in relation to experiences gained outside of the classroom.*

* Uses skills, approaches, and knowledge from multiple disciplines and perspectives to understand and develop responses to complex questions, challenges, or problems.
* Makes connections between academic studies (theory) and experiential learning contexts (practice).
* Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations.

(Adapted from AAC&U Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric: <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/integrative-learning>)

**3. Cultural Understanding and Humility**

*Demonstrates capacity to be transformed - in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior - by engagements with multiple points of view, experiences, and worldviews.*

* Investigates and understands cultural, historical, social, political, and economic factors that shape communities and the perspectives and identities of community members.
* Investigates patterns of subconscious and conscious bias and stereotyping and recognizes one’s own positionality and privilege.
* Understands dynamics of community mistrust arising from historical and institutional practices and policies.
* Works actively to redress power imbalances in social interactions and decision-making.
* Demonstrates ongoing engagement in lifelong learning, critical self-reflection, and reflective practice across contexts.

(Adapted from Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998; Ross, L., Notes from the field: Learning cultural humility through critical incidents and central challenges in community-based participatory research. Journal of Community Practice, 2010)

**4. Ethical Practice**

*Demonstrates understanding of ethical and social justice concerns and increased sense of social responsibility. Explores intersections between identity and privilege; possesses moral and political courage to take risks to achieve greater public good.*

* Recognizes other points of view and actively considers standpoint of others (empathy).
* Analyzes complex ethical and social justice issues.
* Identifies and challenges power imbalances.
* Acts respectfully and responsibly in all forms of community work.
* Takes informed and responsible action to address ethical and social justice challenges.

**5. Civic, Community, and Public Engagement**

*Understands roots of inequality and injustice in communities and develops knowledge, skills, values, and motivation needed to bring about positive social and political change.*

* Understands how to identify the needs and assets of communities.
* Understands benefits and potential challenges of community-campus partnerships.
* Analyzes structural conditions that have resulted in injustice, inequality, and other forms of social marginality.
* Identifies and analyzes relevant pathways for social change.
* Works collaboratively with community partners to develop and implement appropriate social change strategies.

**6. Effective Action, Collaboration, and Leadership**

*Demonstrates ability to operate effectively - individually and collaboratively - in planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating actions required to advance social change.*

* Understands and articulates multiple modes of social change and interconnected systems and structures of power.
* Identifies points of entry for individual and community action to address systemic challenges and develop strategies for change.
* Identifies strengths and resources in oneself and in teams, and builds constructive and meaningful relationships.
* Navigates existing structures to yield sustainable, just, systemic change.
* Communicates clearly and effectively across contexts, in groups, and in various media.
* Acts effectively as a participatory, inclusive, purposeful, and process-oriented leader.

<https://www.uta.edu/leadership/_downloads/The-Relational-Model.pdf>