

# Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The American Public University System (APUS) has adopted the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) framework across its associate, bachelors, and master's degree programs. The DQP framework illustrates students' expected knowledge and skill set upon earning a degree. Based on more than a decade of research across all levels of higher education, the framework defines expected learning outcomes that all graduates need regardless of academic specialization.

The DQP framework is aligned with APUS's mission of providing a quality higher education while preparing students for service and leadership in a diverse, global society. To ensure that AMU and APU students are prepared for success, student learning outcomes are defined at three levels: institutional (outlined in this catalog); degree program (identified in the degree program descriptions on the AMU/APU websites); and course (identified in the syllabi for each course) levels.

## Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

AMU and APU students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in the following learning areas upon completion of any academic program in any discipline:

- Applied learning is used by students to demonstrate what they can do with what they know.
- Intellectual skills are used by students to think critically and analytically about what they learn, broadening their individual perspectives and experiences.
- Specialized knowledge is the knowledge students demonstrate about their individual fields of study.
- Broad knowledge transcends the typical boundaries of students in the first two years of higher education and encompasses all learning in broad areas through multiple degree levels.
- Civic learning is that which enables students to respond to social, environmental and economic challenges at local, national and global levels.
- Digital Information Literacy is concerned with responsibly, safely, ethically, effectively and efficiently accessing, evaluating, collaborating, organizing, and distributing information in the digital world. It includes using tools, technologies, techniques, and best practices, to develop responsible and safe consumers and communicators of information in the digital information world to support research and to solve real world problems.

## Program Level Student Learning Outcomes

AMU and APU students are expected to achieve student learning outcomes **at the degree program level** upon graduation from a particular degree program. Student learning at the degree program level is assessed through end-of-program capstone experiences to ensure the student has achieved proficiency of the knowledge and skills expected of a professional in the respective discipline. Signature assessments, standardized tests, and rubrics are examples of measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of students achieving desired learning outcomes at the degree program level.

## Course Level Student Learning Outcomes

AMU and APU students are expected to achieve **course level** student learning outcomes upon completion of a course. Course developed exams, simulations, case studies, discussion boards, collaborative research projects, and writing assignments are examples of measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of students achieving desired learning outcomes at the course level.

## Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

APUS is committed to student learning assessment and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The learning outcomes assessment program at APUS:

- Provides students with useful information about their current skills, knowledge, and competencies.
- Enables the university to evaluate the effectiveness of its academic courses and programs in terms of achieving the desired learning outcomes for its students.
- Is used for continuous improvement at all levels of the institution.
- Ensures that students are prepared for success in work and citizenship in a diverse, global society.

APUS uses a variety of direct and indirect assessment measures to evaluate student learning and improve the quality of teaching and learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The assessment of student learning at APUS is guided by the student learning outcomes posted in the catalog, AMU/APU websites, and courses. Student learning outcomes assessment is conducted at the institutional, degree program, and course level, whereby each level is aligned and designed to complement each other; providing a comprehensive view of student learning and the effectiveness of academic programs.

Students are required to participate in learning outcomes assessment activities at APUS and will be given adequate notice of any course and/or non-course related assessment activities they are responsible for completing. APUS is committed to protecting the privacy of its students including ensuring the confidentiality of student work submitted for assessment as well as the feedback resulting from assessment activities. For more information, the APUS Learning Outcomes Assessment website (<http://www.apus.edu/community-scholars/learning-outcomes-assessment>) establishes the framework for the conduct of student assessment across the institution.

## Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

### At the Associate level, the student

Specialized Knowledge	Broad, Integrative Knowledge	Intellectual Skills	Applied Learning	Civic Learning	Digital Information Literacy
Describes the scope and principal features of the field of study, citing core theories and practices, and offers a similar explication of a related field	Describes how existing knowledge or practice is tested and revised	Identifies, and distinguishes among ideas, concepts, theories and practical approaches to problems (Analytic inquiry)	Describes in writing a case in which knowledge and skills acquired in academic settings are applied to a challenge in a non-academic setting; evaluates the learning gained; and analyzes a significant concept or method related to the course of study in light of learning from outside the classroom	Describes their own civic and cultural background, including origins, development, and assumptions and predispositions	Develops an appropriate research question using continual refinements and improvements that includes feedback from classmates and instructor

Illustrates the field's current terminology and perspective on key debates within the field and in society. Describes and examines appropriate on key debates within the field and in society. Identifies, categorizes and cites information for an academic project, paper or performance (Use of information resources). Locates, gathers and organizes evidence on an assigned research topic addressing a course-related question or a question of practice in a work or community setting; offers and examines competing hypotheses in answering the question. Describes historical and contemporary positions on democratic values and practices, and presents his or her position on a related problem.

Generates substantially error-free products exhibits performance in the field. Illustrates core concepts of the field while executing analytical, practical or creative tasks. Describes how cultural perspectives could affect interpretation of problems in the arts, politics or global relations (Engaging diverse perspectives). Takes an active role in the community (work, service, co-curricular activities) and examines civic issues encountered and insights gained. Evaluates and selects sources using basic criteria such as relevance to the research question and currency of the information.

Selects and applies recognized methods in discipline-based problems. Presents accurate calculations and symbolic operations and explains their use either in the field of study or in interpreting social or economic trends (Quantitative fluency). Communicates information from sources accurately.

Assembles evidence relevant to problems, describes its significance and uses it in analysis. Presents substantially error-free prose in both argumentative and narrative forms to general and specialized audiences (Communication fluency). Attempts to cite sources using a consistent citation style that is appropriate to the discipline.

Describes the ways in which at least two disciplines define, address and justify the importance of a contemporary challenge or problem. Discusses some of the ethical and legal issues revolving around the consumption and production of information in a digital environment.

## At the Bachelor's level, the student

Specialized Knowledge	Broad, Integrative Knowledge	Intellectual Skills	Applied Learning	Civic Learning	Digital Information Literacy
Defines and explains the boundaries, divisions, styles and practices of the field	Frames a complex, scientific, social, technological, economic or aesthetic challenge from the perspective and literature of at least two academic fields and proposes a "best approach" to the question or challenge using evidence from those fields	Differentiates and evaluates theories and approaches to complex standard and non-standard problems within their major field (Analytic inquiry)	Presents a project, performance or other task linking knowledge and skills from work, community or research activities with knowledge acquired in academic disciplines; explains how elements were combined to shape meaning or findings; and shows the relationship to relevant scholarship	Explains diverse perspectives on a contested issue and evaluates insights gained from different kinds of evidence reflecting scholarly community perspectives	Develops an appropriately specific research question or thesis by engaging in independent background research

Defines and properly uses the principal terms in the field, both historical and contemporarily	Produces, or collaboratively, creative work that draws on specific theories, tools and methods from at least two academic fields	Incorporate multiple resources in different languages in projects, papers or performance with appropriate citations; and evaluates the relative merits of competing resources with respect to clearly articulated standards (Use of information and resources)	Formulates a question that addresses more than one discipline or practical setting, locates evidence that addresses the question, evaluates the evidence in relation to the problem's contexts, and articulates conclusions that follow logically from analysis	Develops and justifies a position on a public issue and relates this position to alternative views within the community or policy environment	Accesses information using a variety of search strategies and search tools, refining searches as appropriate
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Demonstrates fluency in the use of tools, technologies and methods in the field

Explains a problem in science, the arts, society, human services, economic life or technology from the perspective of at least two academic fields, explains how the methods of inquiry and research in those disciplines can be brought to bear, judges the likelihood that the combination of disciplinary perspectives and methods would contribute to the resolution of the challenge, and justifies the importance of the challenge in a social or global context

Constructs a cultural, political or technological alternate vision of either the natural or human world through a written project, laboratory report, exhibit, performance or community service design; defines the distinct patterns in this alternate vision; and explains how these patterns differ from current realities

Completes a field-based assignment in the course of study that employs insights from others; evaluates a significant relation to concepts, methods or assumptions in at least one academic field; and explains the implications of learning outside the classroom

Collaborates in developing and implementing an approach to a civic issue, evaluates the process and, where applicable, weighs the result

Evaluates and selects sources using multiple criteria, including relevance, currency, authority, and purpose

Engaging (diverse perspectives)

Evaluates, clarifies and frames a complex question or challenge using perspective and scholarship from the student's major field and at least one other

Translates verbal problems into mathematical algorithms, constructs valid arguments using the accepted symbolic system of mathematical reasoning, and constructs accurate calculations, estimates, risk analyses or quantitative evaluations of public information through presentations, papers or projects (Quantitative fluency)

Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources to achieve a specific purpose that goes beyond summarizing those sources

Constructs a project related to a familiar but complex problem in the field of study by assembling, arranging and reformulating ideas, concepts, designs or techniques	Constructs sustained, coherent argument or presentation on technical issues or processes in more than one language and in more than one medium for general and specific audiences; and works through collaboration to address a social, personal or ethical dilemma (Communication fluency)	Quotes, paraphrases, and cites information correctly and consistently, with very few citation errors and misinterpretations/misuses of source material
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Constructs a summative project, paper or practice-based performance that draws on current research, scholarship and/or techniques in the field	Clearly articulates several ethical and legal issues revolving around the consumption and production of information in a digital environment
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## At the Master's level, the student

Specialized Knowledge	Broad, Integrative Knowledge	Intellectual Skills	Applied Learning	Civic Learning	Digital Information Literacy
Elucidates the major theories, research methods and approaches to inquiry, and/or schools of practice in the field; articulates relevant sources; and illustrates their relationship to allied fields	Articulates how the field has developed in relation to other major domains of inquiry or practice	Disaggregates and reformulates and employs in an essay or project principal ideas, techniques or methods at the forefront of the field (Analytic inquiry)	Creates a discrete project, paper, exhibit, performance or other appropriate task reflecting integration of knowledge acquired in practicum, scholarly work, community or research activities with knowledge and skills from at least two disciplines representing different segments of the curriculum (e.g., computer science and anthropology); documents the sources of the knowledge and skills reflected in the integration; articulates in writing	Assesses and develops a position on a significant public question in the student's field, taking into account scholarly and community perspectives	Effectively develops a focused and sophisticated research question or thesis that engages with questions and ideas that are important to scholars in the discipline

how these elements influenced the resulting product; and assesses the significance of the work in light of major debates or developments in the primary field(s)

Assesses the contribution of major figures and organizations in the field; describes its major methodology and practices; implements at least two such methodology and practices through projects, papers, exhibits or performance	Designs and executes an applied or creative work that draws on the perspective and methods of other fields and assesses the resulting gains and difficulties	Provides adequate evidence through papers, projects, notebooks, computer files or catalogues of expanding or refining either a recognized resource or an information base within the field (Use of information resources)	Creates, designs and implements a performance or project in an out-of-class setting requiring application of advanced knowledge to a practical challenge; articulates insights gained from the field experience with appropriate citations, selected approaches or scholarly debates applicable to the problem; articulates a reasoned judgment on selected issues in the field; and assesses standards for professional performance and continuing development	Accesses information using effective, well-designed search strategies and search tools that are most appropriate for the specific topic, efficiently and creatively refining searches on the fly as needed	with specific reference to the experience	Articulates major challenges involved in practicing the field, elucidates its leading edges, and delineates its current limits with respect to theory, knowledge and practice	Articulates and defends the significance and implications of their work in terms of challenges and developments in a social or global context	Addresses in a project, paper or a core issue in the field of a different culture, political order or technological context, and elucidates how the perspective contributes to results that depart from current norms, dominant cultural assumptions or technologies (Engaging diverse perspectives)	Evaluates and selects a comprehensive set of sources to engage with that are appropriate to the discipline and the scope of the research question, using multiple criteria to assess relevance, currency, authority, accuracy, purpose, audience and ideological perspective
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<p>Initiates, assembles, arranges and reformulate ideas, concepts, designs and techniques in carrying out a project directed at a challenge in the field beyond convention; boundaries</p>	<p>Not seeking a degree in a quantitative field employs and applies mathematic logical or statistical tools to problems within the field in a project, paper or performanc while the student seeking a degree in a quantitative field articulates and undertakes multiple appropriate applications of quantitative methods, concepts and theories (Quantitativ fluency)</p>	<p>Clearly and effectively communicates, organizes, and synthesizes complex and often contradictory information from sources and/or independent experiments and other data collection strategies to advance knowledge in the discipline</p>	<p>Creates sustained, coherent explanations and reflections on the student's own work in two or more media or languages to both general and specialized audiences (Communication fluency)</p>	<p>Quotes, paraphrases, and cites information correctly and consistently, always using information in ways that are true to the original context</p>
				<p>Analyzes some of the more advanced ethical and legal issues revolving around the consumption and production of information in a digital environment, such as ongoing controversies about topics such as fair use and privacy in social networking environments</p>

## At the Doctoral level, the student

Specialized Knowledge	Broad, Integrative Knowledge	Intellectual Skills	Applied Learning	Civic Learning	Digital Information Literacy
Makes judgments about the merit and efficacy of relevant theories, approaches and concepts of the discipline	Articulates and defends the use of theories, approaches and relevant concepts to the discipline in a professional and academic setting	Judges the appropriateness of qualitative and quantitative methods in the discipline	Applies theories, concepts, and appropriate methods in both the real world and simulated real world examples	Analyzes and gains an appreciation for the decision making, beliefs, language, culture and psychology of foreign actors	Demonstrates advanced digital information literacy skills in research and knowledge promulgation, defends choices made

Makes informed judgments about issues and challenges related to the discipline	Defends research, positions, and judgments made about issues and challenges in a professional and academic setting	Communicates in the style of the discipline in oral and written form	Judges the work of peers and demonstrates ethical and professional behavior in group projects	Reflects upon and analyze lessons learned from partaking in simulated real world, and real world exercises
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Articulates the development and current academic and professional practice of the discipline

Abides by ethical and professional standards

Integrates theories, approaches, methods, and analysis, and contributes to the body of knowledge in the discipline