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.

Student Learning/Competency Areas

- Broad knowledge of disciplines and fields outside the major
- Specialized knowledge in a major
- Applied learning – using what is learned in the real world
- Intellectual skills – thinking critically
- Civic learning – using studies to influence the world
- Digital information literacy in the internet age

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**Associate level, the student**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Intellectual Skills</th>
<th>Civic Learning</th>
<th>Digital Information Literacy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad, specialized knowledge</td>
<td>Identifies, categorizes in writing and a case distinguishing among ideas, concepts, theories, and skills acquired in academic settings.</td>
<td>Describes his or her own civic and cultural backgrounds related to the digital world.</td>
<td>Summarize security, privacy, ethical, and legal issues related to the digital world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad, integrative knowledge</td>
<td>Applies practical approaches to problems. (Analytic inquiry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge acquired in specialized education field of study</td>
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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 is advanced, tested and revised. Identifies, categorizes and appropriately cites information for an academic project, research paper or performance in the field. (Use of information resources)

Describes the field’s current terminology, perspectives on key debates within the field and in society. Illustrates the field’s current terminology while examining perspectives on key debates within the field and in society.

Locates, gathers and gathers evidence and information on an assigned research topic addressing a course-related question or a related question of practice in a work or community setting; offers and examines competing hypotheses in answering the question. Takes an active role in the community communication, (work, community, service, and co-curricular activities) and examines civic issues encountered and insights gained.

Selects and applies recognized methods in interpreting discipline-based problems. Selects and applies substantially error-free recognized prose methods in interpreting both argumentative and narrative forms to general and specialized audiences. (Communication fluency)

Provides substantially error-free concepts products, of the exhibits, or field while performance executing in the field. Analytical, practical or creative tasks. Explains their use either in the field of study or in interpreting social or economic trends. (Quantitative fluency)

Generates illustrates substantially core concepts products, of the exhibits, or field while performance executing in the field. (Use of technology to categorize, organize, and critique information collaboratively)

Presents substantially error-free concepts products, of the exhibits, or field while performance executing in the field. Analytical, practical or creative tasks. Explains their use either in the field of study or in interpreting social or economic trends. (Quantitative fluency)

Use technology to enhance communication, community, service, and co-collaboration curricular activities) and examines civic issues encountered and insights gained.

Assembles evidence relevant to problems, describes its significance and uses it in analysis.
Describes the ways in which at least two disciplines define, address and justify the importance of a contemporary challenge or problem.

Identifies, categorizes and distinguishes among ideas, concepts, theories and practical approaches to problems.

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### At the Bachelor's level, the student

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Applied Learning</th>
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<th>Digital Information Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defines and explains the boundaries, divisions, and styles and practices of the field.</td>
<td>Frames a complex and scientific challenge or problem from the perspectives and literature of at least two academic fields and proposes a “best approach” to the question or challenge using evidence from those fields.</td>
<td>Differentiates and evaluates theories and approaches to complex standard and non-standard problems within his or her major field.</td>
<td>Represents knowledge insights and skills gained from work, from community different or research kinds of activities with evidence reflecting knowledge scholarly acquired in and academic community disciplines; perspectives.</td>
<td>Explains how elements were combined to shape meaning or findings; and shows the relationship to relevant scholarship.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Defines and properly uses the principal terms in the field, both historical and practical work that draws on specific theories, tools and methods from at least two academic fields.

Produces, independently or collaboratively, an investigative, creative or practical work that draws on specific theories, tools and methods from at least two academic fields.

Incorporates multiple information resources in different media or languages in projects, papers or performances, with appropriate citations; and evaluates the relative merits of competing resources with respect to clearly articulated standards.

Formulates a question on a topic that addresses more than one academic discipline or practical setting, locates appropriate 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.

Analyzes security, privacy, ethical, and/or legal issues related to the digital information world.

Demonstrates fluency in the use of tools, the arts, technologies, society, and human methods in services, the field.

Constructs a cultural, a field-based approach to a civic issue, employs insights from evaluates others; the perspective a written project, significant and, at least two academic fields, explains performance methods, how the or methods or community assumptions of inquiry service in at and design; least one research defines academic in those disciplines patterns in this the combination differ from of current disciplinary realities. perspectives engaging and diverse methods perspectives) would contribute to the resolution of the challenge, and justifies the importance of the challenge in a social or global context.

Explains a problem in science, the arts, technologies, society, and human methods in services, the field.

Engaging diverse perspectives)

Summarizes policies to responsibly handle information.
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 mathematic algorithms, constructs valid arguments using the accepted symbolic system of mathematic reasoning, and constructs accurate calculations, estimates, risk analyses or quantitative evaluations of public information through presentations, papers or projects. (Quantitative fluency)

Appraise sources of information in the digital world.

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)

Use technology to categorize, organize, and critique information collaboratively.

Use multimedia tools to capture, consolidate, and communicate information.

 Constructs a summative project, paper or practice-based performance that draws on current research, scholarship and/or techniques in the field.
Determine the nature and extent of information needed, access and evaluate that information; and efficiently and ethically use the information for a specific purpose.
At the Master’s level, the student

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elucidates the major theories, research methods, and approaches major to inquiry, and/or inquiry or practice within the field; articulates relevant sources; and illustrates their relationship to allied fields.</td>
<td>Articulates how the field has developed and employs in an essay or project principal ideas, techniques, or methods at the forefront of the field. (Analytic inquiry)</td>
<td>Disaggregates a discrete project, paper, exhibit, or other performance reflecting in the integration of the student’s field, knowledge taking into account practicum, scholarly work, and community or research perspectives.</td>
<td>Assesses and develops a position on a significant public policy question in the student’s field, taking into account scholarly and community perspectives.</td>
<td>Appraises the digital information world, security, privacy, ethical, and/or legal issues related to the resulting product; and assesses the significance of the work in light of major debates or developments in the primary field(s).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Assesses the contribution of major figures and organizations in the field; describes its major methodologies and practices; and implements at least two such methodologies and practices through projects, papers, exhibits or performances.

Designs and executes an applied, investigative or creative work that draws on the perspectives and methods of other fields and assesses the resulting gains and difficulties.

Provides adequate evidence through projects, notebooks, or project computer files or setting up an out-of-class setting of requiring expanding, application assessment of or refining advanced knowledge of either a knowledge resource, or an information practical resource challenge; or an articulates information insights gained from the field. (Use of information assesses, resources) 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.

Creates, designs and implements adequate evidence through a performance, a project, notebooks, or project computer files or setting up an out-of-class setting of requiring expanding, application assessment of or refining advanced knowledge of either a knowledge resource, or an information practical resource challenge; or an articulates information insights gained from the field. (Use of information assesses, resources) 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.

Analyzes information to solve real-world problems.

Articulates and defends the significance and implications of his or her specialized work in terms of challenges, trends and developments in a social or global context. (Engaging diverse perspectives)

Use technology to effectively and efficiently access, analyze, and use information to support research.
| Initiates, assembles, arranges and reformulates ideas, concepts, designs and techniques in carrying out a project directed at a challenge in the field beyond conventional boundaries | 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 performance while the student seeking a degree in a quantitative field articulates and undertakes multiple appropriate applications of quantitative methods, concepts and theories. (Quantitative fluency) | Evaluate and use technology to enhance communication, community, collaboration, and critical thinking. | 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) | Establish the nature and extent of information needed, access and evaluate that information; and efficiently and ethically use the information for a specific purpose. |