Institutional Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes for Undergraduate General Education at the University of Rhode Island

A. Build ***knowledge*** of diverse peoples and cultures and of the natural and physical world.

1. Understand the context and significance of the ***arts and humanities*** using theoretical and historical perspectives. [more]

2. Understand and apply knowledge, theories, and methods of the ***physical and life sciences***. [more]

3. Understand theories and methods of the ***social and behavioral sciences***. [more]

B. Develop intellectual and practical ***skills*** for academic and lifelong learning.

4. ***Write texts***, in various forms, that are reflective of scholarly needs and incorporate multiple audiences. [more]

5. ***Communicate effectively*** via oral presentations and active participation in problem-solving teams. [more]

6. Apply ***mathematical***, ***statistical, and formal reasoning*** to appropriate problems. [more]

7. Develop ***information literacy*** to independently research complex issues. [more]

C. Exercise individual and social ***responsibilities***.

8. Develop ***civic knowledge and engagement***. [more]

9. Develop and exercise ***global competence***. [more]

10. Develop and exercise ***multicultural competence***. [more]

D. ***Integrate and apply*** these abilities and capacities, adapting them to new settings, questions, and responsibilities to lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

11. Generate a ***creative or scholarly product*** that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection. [more]

A. Build ***knowledge*** of diverse peoples and cultures and of the natural and physical world.

Rationale: The foundation of all academic efforts begins with a broad base of knowledge covering all areas of human accomplishment and experience, broadly categorized as the arts and humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences. Therefore, URI students will gain exposure to the theories and practices of these three areas, as well as on their relationships to one another, regardless of each student's major. Students will demonstrate critical thinking and evaluation in each of the following areas.

1. Understand the context and significance of the ***arts and humanities*** using theoretical and historical perspectives.

   Students will:

   - Develop an appreciation and/or skills in creative expression and interpretation.
   - Understand the historical context of events, theories, and creative works.

2. Understand and apply knowledge, theories, and methods of the ***physical and life sciences***.

   Students will:

   - Understand and apply the scientific method.
   - Gain an appreciation of both theoretical and practical aspects of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematical disciplines.
   - Learn to make inferences from data to determine whether conclusions or solutions are reasonable.

3. Understand theories and methods of the ***social and behavioral sciences***.

   Students will:

   - Analyze and interpret data and standards of evidence for a variety of social problems or human conditions.
   - Understand the impact of human diversity and thought processes on social structures.
   - Apply ethical and economic considerations to social and professional scenarios.

B. Develop intellectual and practical ***skills*** for academic and lifelong learning.

Rationale: Knowledge, by itself, is insufficient for development of well-rounded individuals. URI graduates will need to demonstrate specific skills in personal, public, and professional venues to succeed in their studies as well as their future lives. URI students will receive focused training and practice in the skill areas of writing, oral communication, mathematics, and information literacy and apply all four to a wide variety of projects. These skills will be developed over time at the foundational level and within discipline specific major courses, which will lay the foundation for success in their future careers and lifelong learning.

Projects that are assessed for skill development will involve an iterative component, either review and resubmit or sequential exercises allowing for the development of student skills.

4. ***Write texts***, in various forms, that are reflective of scholarly needs and incorporate multiple audiences.

   Students will:

   - Demonstrate proficiency in written work that is reflective of rules and norms expected in completed work with appropriate conventions of format and structure.

   - Utilize a variety of written communication techniques that match professional needs as well as interdisciplinary communication.

   - Communicate in a manner that demonstrates critical reasoning, ability to draw inferences, as well as utilize a variety of theoretical lenses.

   - Utilize information, both scholarly and popular, in a responsible and ethical manner which credits all original sources quoted, re-created, and paraphrased.

Examples of Assessable Projects

- Term papers
- Reading response papers
- Forum reflections
- Capstone projects or portfolios
- Creative works such as poetry, scripts, short stories, etc.
- Discipline appropriate products such as lab reports, technical reports, case notes, reviews, case studies, etc.

This Skill Is Not Assessable Using

- Classroom notes
- Online communication such as email, tweets, or social media posts
- Stand alone projects without feedback or opportunity for revision, unless a series of similar assignments are given

5. ***Communicate effectively*** via oral presentations and active participation in problem-solving teams.

   Students will:

   - Learn to communicate orally with a variety of audiences, working alone or in teams.
   - Create and present appropriate supporting materials and visual information for their oral presentations.
   - Demonstrate that they can employ a repertoire of communication skills for developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships.
   - Demonstrate an understanding of the unique perspective and presentation skills required in their major field of study.

Examples of Assessable Projects

- Short class presentations – 5-15 minutes – alone or in a group
- Creation of supporting material (handouts, PowerPoints, posters, etc)
- Participation in a poster session
- A recorded presentation, PowerPoint with voice-over, podcast, webinar, etc for distribution and review
- Formal in-class debate
- Small group discussions with formal reporting out (all students report)

This Skill Is Not Assessable Using

- Online written communication
- In-class discussion without formal presentations

6. Apply ***mathematical***, ***statistical, and formal reasoning*** to appropriate problems.

   Students will:

   - Learn fundamental mathematical skills and develop proficiency, beginning at appropriate levels relevant to background and experience.
   - Apply mathematical and computational skills to solve problems, draw inferences, and determine reasonableness.
   - Apply formal reasoning based on principles of logic.
   - Interpret and present mathematical and statistical data, including graphs and tabular data.

Examples of Assessable Projects

- Solved problem sets which demonstrate mastery of a variety of sub-fields within the area of mathematics such as geometry, algebra, calculus, and statistics
- Data results collected through lab experiments, including analysis of the results, appropriate presentation, and conclusions
- Discipline appropriate calculations such as those related to drug dosages, caloric intake, circuit design, power requirements, body mass index, economic indices, etc.

This Skill Is Not Assessable Using

- Data presented without appropriate labels or interpretation
- Lab notebook drafts
- Classroom notes or stand alone calculations
- Unsubstantiated data

7. Develop ***information literacy*** to independently research complex issues.

   Students will:

   - Recognize and analyze their information needs.
   - Identify appropriate research tools to answer their information needs, and use those tools efficiently.
   - Evaluate information for relevance, currency, bias, and authority.
   - Understand the ethical use of information, including issues of privacy, plagiarism, and proper citation.

Examples of Assessable Projects

- Search for information using a subject-appropriate tool (e.g. periodicals index, database, etc.)
- Evaluate information for relevance, currency, bias, and authority
- Create or critique the display of information including graphs, charts, maps, and other kinds of visual information
- Examine the issues that surround the creation, distribution, and preservation of information
- Learn to create and manipulate information using discipline-specific electronic tools (MatLab, SPSS, etc), as long as analysis of the final form of the information is examined

This Skill Is Not Assessable Using

- The internet as a form of communication
- Standard electronic tools (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and similar programs)
- Course management software or online textbook components
- Research conducted through labs or field observations, unless it also involves performing literature searches and evaluating the results

C. Exercise individual and social **responsibilities**.

Rationale: Knowledge and skills, however, are still insufficient. To be a fully functioning citizen, students must develop a sense of their place in society at the local, national, and global levels. URI students will be exposed to the experience and practice of civic engagement, diversity, and global perspectives to clearly perceive and engage with the world in which they live. Recognizing that many URI students are already engaged contributors in their communities, these outcomes can possibly be fulfilled through co-curricular and experiential learning activities.

8. Develop ***civic knowledge and engagement***.

   Students will:

   - Acquire and apply a rich understanding of the values and struggles that have established democratic institutions and have expanded human freedom and justice, engaging directly in addressing the needs of the larger community.

   - Understand how government regulations, codes, and laws are introduced, refined, approved, and implemented as well as how they impact society.

   - Be able to contribute to the community through engagement in projects with non-profit, for-profit, or government organizations.

   - Understand how they can contribute to society through the practice of their major disciplines.

Examples of Assessable Projects

- Participate in pre-approved club, team, or organization leadership, campus leadership, or student government, including positions such as club treasurer, orientation leaders, college ambassadors, or other roles with significant contributions
- Complete courses or projects that contribute to the URI minor in leadership studies
- Study and analyze current or historical political processes
- Demonstrate involvement in community organizations or state and local governments, with pre-approved learning objectives and reflection
- Document involvement in military service, such as ROTC or National Guard
- Complete discipline specific projects or internships that help the local community

This Skill Is Not Assessable Using

- Internship experiences that do not account for impact on the community
- Paid tutoring or work-study positions on campus
- Participation in a club, team, or organization that does not involve leadership or planning roles, but only meeting or event attendance

9. Develop and exercise ***global competence***.

   Students will:

   - Explore global histories, cultures, and languages along with economic and political dynamics, to build awareness and address challenges in the contemporary world.

   - Appreciate global research, practice, and projects that inform current professional and intellectual advancement locally and nationally.

   - Understand how academic, research, and commercial endeavors have global influence and ethical implications.

   - Examine how global culture and issues affect the practice of their major disciplines.

Examples of Assessable Projects

- Study abroad which includes formalized objectives and a final project
- Integrate literature that originates outside of the United States into research or term papers
- Demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language and / or culture
- Examine documents and / or media relating to or produced by foreign culture and discuss orally or in writing
- Compare and contrast elements of multiple foreign cultures in an oral or written presentation
- Engage in leadership of a club, team, or organization dealing with global issues or identity

This Skill Is Not Assessable Using

- Projects or courses that focus primarily on immigration or cultural experiences within the United States

10. Develop and exercise ***multicultural competence***.

    Students will:

    - Understand that diversity includes, but is not limited to issues of class, race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and physical / mental ability.

    - Recognize and analyze power structures, privilege, and explicit and implicit prejudice within the United States.

    - Develop problem solving, advocacy, and change management skills for achieving social equity.

    - Examine how various power imbalances affect the practice of their major disciplines.

Examples of Assessable Projects

- Examine historical documents and / or media relating to the multicultural origin of American society and discuss orally or in writing
- Analyze the meaning of diversity and multiculturalism, including the legal and ethical aspects of affirmative action, prejudice, and discrimination
- Engage in meaningful cross cultural discourse with people whose voices, experiences, and ideas are different from one's own
- Participate in a University-approved experiential learning project that exposes students to the experience of privilege, oppression, and implications for pursuit of opportunity
- Develop an action plan for addressing diversity issues and resolving conflicts linked to difference in a specific community
- Engage in leadership of a club, team, or organization dealing with multicultural issues or identity

This Skill Is Not Assessable Using

- Study of historical and/or foreign "settings" unless it reflects back in a meaningful way on the student's own experience in the modern United States.

D. **Integrate and apply** these abilities and capacities, adapting them to new settings, questions, and responsibilities to lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

Rationale: Finally, the student must clearly demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge, skills, and responsibility in a coherent and comprehensive display of scholarly or practice-based work. This is the fundamental goal of the URI General Education program -- to enable students to develop themselves as scholars and individuals ready to employ knowledge, skills, responsibilities, and synthesis to solve problems and engage confidently with the personal, public, and professional spheres.

11. Generate a ***creative or scholarly product*** that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection. All products must include reflection and synthesis of both general education and major coursework.

    - Students could write a substantial research paper that demonstrates knowledge from a broad spectrum of coursework
    - Students could create a portfolio of representative work collected through experiential learning
    - Students could produce a creative work illustrating mastery of fundamental skills in their medium, including reflective commentary
    - Students could complete a project where they design and create a new product or process
    - Students could create a portfolio of major-oriented scholastic work supplemented by reflective essays

Note: Students may apply for experiential learning to fulfill requirements in any of the general education outcome areas. In general, 45 hours of involvement in experiential learning will equate to 1 credit. This could be fulfilled through 15 hours of contact time and 30 hours of outside preparation time, as in traditional university coursework. Any general education credit must involve formal ASSESSMENT. Thus, experiential learning should include formal goal setting in advance, and creation of a final product either written or oral, including reflection on the learning that has occurred.