

TEXAS A&M ESSENTIALS

provost.tamu.edu

February 2017



By the time a student receives a master's or doctoral degree from Texas A&M University, what do we expect them to have learned?

RESOURCES:

- Office of Institutional Assessment: assessment.tamu.edu
- AAC&U: aacu.org/resources/studentssuccess/
- Council of Graduate Schools: cgsnet.org/best-practices

Office of Graduate and Professional Studies

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Graduate Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes articulate the results we expect students to gain during their educational experiences. Sometimes these results or outcomes are identified by a particular course, sometimes by a degree program, and sometimes by the institution. A course-level learning outcome, for example, might ask that students genuinely understand a mathematical concept or a physiological process. A degree program-level outcome may be more abstract, such as having students demonstrate that they can solve real-world problems by using an approach typical of their field or discipline.

The institutional-level student learning outcomes, listed below, ask students to connect their course- and degree-level learning to overall goals determined to be critically important to a university's graduates as they make their way in the world after graduation.

First and foremost, of course, we expect students to have mastered the subject matter knowledge in their individual courses and seminars, and in other capstone or research-related degree requirements.

The broader institutional student learning outcomes are at a higher order of thinking that asks students to connect the pieces of their education into a whole that synthesizes what they have learned. By not only knowing facts and understanding basic concepts but demonstrating an ability to apply those facts and concepts creatively in new situations, students gain the flexible thinking and effective communication that allows them to thrive in today's complex world.

How do we know that students achieve these outcomes? No evaluation processes are perfect, of course. But we do collect samples of graduate student work from a wide range of sources and by several methods: surveys of students themselves, written work from a wide range of disciplines and at varying levels, self-reflections from students, and participation in national studies. Texas A&M's Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA) leads these efforts and reports results internally to university officials as well as externally to state and regional organizations.

RECOMMENDED UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE

A student who graduates from TAMU with a master's degree will:

- Master degree-program requirements, including theories, concepts, principles, and practice, and develop a coherent understanding of the subject matter through synthesis across courses and experiences.
- Apply subject matter knowledge in a range of contexts to solve problems and make decisions.
- Use a variety of sources and evaluate multiple points of view to analyze and integrate information and to conduct critical, reasoned arguments.
- Communicate effectively.
- Use appropriate technologies to communicate, collaborate, conduct research, and solve problems.
- Develop clear research plans and conduct valid, data-supported, theoretically consistent, and institutionally appropriate research.
- Choose ethical courses of action in research and practice.

RECOMMENDED UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A DOCTORAL DEGREE

A student who graduates from TAMU with a doctoral degree will:

- Master degree-program requirements, including theories, concepts, principles, and practice; develop a coherent understanding of the subject matter through synthesis across courses and experiences; and apply subject matter knowledge to solve problems and make decisions.
- Apply a variety of strategies and tools, use a variety of sources, and evaluate multiple points of view to analyze and integrate information and to conduct critical, reasoned arguments.
- Communicate effectively.
- Develop clear research plans, conduct valid, data-supported, theoretically consistent, and appropriate venues to a range of audiences.
- Use appropriate technologies to communicate, collaborate, conduct research, and solve problems.
- Teach and explain the subject matter in their discipline.
- Choose ethical course of action in research and practice.



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