

Degrees of Excellence Executive Summary

The Student Learning and Assessment Committee presents the Degrees of Excellence (DOE) baccalaureate degree outcomes for your consideration. These outcomes are intended to assess student learning across the degree. They were developed while focusing on the question: What does it mean to earn a baccalaureate degree from Northeastern State University?

Outcomes 1 & 2, consisting of critical thinking¹ and integrating knowledge², should be primarily assessed within the general education courses and curriculum. Outcomes 3 & 4, consisting of specialized knowledge and the application of that knowledge in a post-baccalaureate setting, should be assessed at the program level. They assume an appropriate level of competency in the foundational skills assessed in outcomes 1 & 2.

We recognize the multitude of assessment efforts currently ongoing at the course and program level. The DOE outcomes are intended to combine these efforts into an integrated assessment strategy. The outcomes are based upon national best practices and reflect the most important skills and competencies possessed by NSU graduates. They are presented and assessed progressively, and as such are intended to correlate with current course and program assessments. Many courses and programs already have assignments that will align to these outcomes. It is intended that those assignments will serve a multi-purpose role of assessing course or program outcomes in addition to the degree level outcomes. It is not our intention to require multiple assessment instruments for the same or similar outcome(s).

The Student Learning & Assessment Committee invites your feedback on the outcomes. We are in the process of developing the infrastructure for implementation. Your contributions and feedback are welcome throughout the process.

¹ Outcome # 1 assesses analytic inquiry, information literacy, engaging diverse perspectives, quantitative fluency, and communication fluency.

² Outcome # 2 assesses student ability to identify issues, acquire and apply diverse information, and communicate the findings in an appropriate format.

Degrees of Excellence - Baccalaureate Degree Outcomes

Outcome # 1: Intellectual Skills

- Analytic Inquiry
 - raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
 - evaluates approaches to address complex problems;
 - tests proposed solutions to complex problems.
- Information Literacy
 - determines the extent of information needed
 - accesses the needed information effectively and efficiently
 - evaluates the reliability and comparative worth of various information sources
 - uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
 - uses information ethically and legally
- Engaging diverse perspectives
 - explains alternative systems of thought, including their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences
- Quantitative fluency
 - writes an equation using mathematical symbols that expresses a relationship
 - performs arithmetic operations on algebraic expressions and solves linear equations
 - evaluates the validity of procedures in solving a mathematical problem
 - interprets mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables, and schematics, and draws inferences from them
- Communication fluency

- constructs coherent written and oral arguments for general and specific audiences;
- constructs coherent written and oral narratives for general and specific audiences; and
- collaborates with others to advance an argument or design an approach to resolving a social, personal or ethical dilemma.

Outcome # 2: Integrative Knowledge

- Produces, independently or collaboratively, an investigative, creative or practical work that draws on specific theories, evidence, tools and methods from diverse perspectives.

Outcome # 3: Specialized Knowledge in the Major

- Explains the boundaries and major areas of specialization within the major;
- Properly utilizes discipline specific vocabulary;
- Demonstrates the ability to effectively use the tools, technologies and methods common to the major;
- Evaluates a complex question using appropriate perspectives and evidence drawn from the student's major; and
- Constructs a summative project that draws on current research, scholarship and/or techniques in the major.

Outcome # 4: Capstone Experience in the Baccalaureate Degree

The integration of the major with baccalaureate degree expectations reflecting the intersection of academic and post-baccalaureate settings.

Demonstrates competency at the baccalaureate level in analytic inquiry, information literacy, engaging diverse perspectives, quantitative fluency, and communication fluency.

Demonstration can be achieved through one or more of the following as appropriate:

- Formulates a question on a topic that addresses more than one academic discipline, a public issue, or practical setting where the student:

- locates appropriate evidence that addresses the question;
 - evaluates the evidence in relation to the problem's contexts, and
 - articulates conclusions that follow logically from such analysis.
- Completes an immersive performance, field-based project, exhibit, or internship related to the discipline and course of study where the student:
 - implements insights from others into the project;
 - evaluates a significant challenge or question faced in the project in relation to core concepts, methods or assumptions in his or her major field;
 - describes the effects of learning outside the classroom on his or her research or practical skills;
 - explains in writing or another medium how those elements were combined in the product to shape its intended meaning or findings; and
 - employs appropriate citations to demonstrate the relationship of the product to literature in its field.