Ontario Council of Academic Vice Presidents (OCAV)
Guidelines for University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations

Introduction

The globalization of higher education has led to the need to be able to compare and contrast the variety of qualifications granted by academic institutions for credit transfer, graduate study preparation and professional qualification. Similarly, jurisdictions with decentralized systems are looking for ways to measure academic equivalencies. In addition, in order to be able to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of all aspects of instruction, institutions, accrediting authorities and funding bodies have begun to clarify the outcomes expected of graduates. OCAV, aware of a national initiative to state degree expectations, has prepared this document to reflect expectations of performance by the graduates of the Baccalaureate/Bachelors programs of Ontario’s publicly assisted universities.

The degree level expectations presented below elaborate the intellectual and creative development of students and the acquisition of relevant skills that have been widely, yet implicitly, understood. Below, they are explicitly stated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge</th>
<th>Baccalaureate/Bachelor’s Degree</th>
<th>Baccalaureate/Bachelor’s Degree: Honours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:</td>
<td>This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) a general knowledge and understanding of many key concepts, methodologies, theoretical approaches and assumptions in a discipline</td>
<td>a) a developed knowledge and critical understanding of the key concepts, methodologies, current advances, theoretical approaches and assumptions in a discipline overall, as well as in a specialized area of a discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) a broad understanding of some of the major fields in a discipline, including, where appropriate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and how the fields may intersect with fields in related disciplines</td>
<td>b) a developed understanding of many of the major fields in a discipline, including, where appropriate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and how the fields may intersect with fields in related disciplines</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) an ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline</td>
<td>c) a developed ability to: i) gather, review, evaluate and interpret information; and ii) compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options, relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) some detailed knowledge in an area of the discipline</td>
<td>d) a developed, detailed knowledge of and experience in research in an area of the discipline</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 2. Knowledge of Methodologies

- An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to:
  - evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques; and
  - devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods.

### 3. Application of Knowledge

- The ability to review, present, and interpret quantitative and qualitative information to:
  - develop lines of argument;
  - make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study; and

- The ability to use a basic range of established techniques to:
  - analyse information;
  - evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study;
  - propose solutions; and

- The ability to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Communication Skills</th>
<th>... the ability to communicate accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences.</th>
<th>... the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge</td>
<td>... an understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and how this might influence their analyses and interpretations.</td>
<td>... an understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge and how this might influence analyses and interpretations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6. Autonomy and Professional Capacity | a) qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring:  
  • the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making;  
  • working effectively with others;  

  b) the ability to identify and address their own learning needs in changing circumstances and to select an appropriate program of further study; and  

  c) behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility. | a) qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring:  
  • the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;  
  • working effectively with others;  
  • decision-making in complex contexts;  

  b) the ability to manage their own learning in changing circumstances, both within and outside the discipline and to select an appropriate program of further study; and  

  c) behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility. |

Updated: October 24, 2005
Working Group on University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations
Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents