

# The Kentucky Graduate Profile and Essential Learning Outcomes

*High-impact practices, breadth & depth of learning, active and applied learning experiences, work-based learning...*

According to extensive research, these learning experiences contribute to college graduates' preparation by developing the essential skills all graduates need for a meaningful career and personal success.

## The Kentucky Graduate Profile and Academic Quality

The **Kentucky Graduate Profile** espouses that *all* students graduating from public postsecondary institutions in Kentucky will have had multiple, intentional opportunities to develop their abilities through the institution's curriculum and co-curricular offerings. Kentucky graduates will be able to articulate *and* demonstrate these essential skills to prospective employers.

Academic quality will be demonstrated by general education and the academic programs' partnering to ensure the curricula are relevant, intentional, and scaffolded to provide opportunities for *all* students—not only to be introduced to these essential concepts—but to build upon them over the course of their college careers.

In addition, experiences outside the classroom, such as participation in student groups and experiential learning activities, also contribute to a holistic, integrated educational experience that leads to the attainment of these essential skills.

Kentucky's statewide definition of academic quality<sup>1</sup> is "the measurable degree to which an educational experience is coherent, engaging, and transformational for all learners." There are three major elements to this definition:

- A coherent educational experience is well organized and scaffolded with a clear connection between general education and majors.
- Engaging learning opportunities intentionally address student interest, facilitate active involvement, and motivate students to pursue their academic and professional goals.

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<sup>1</sup> CPE staff worked with several campus constituency groups, including the general education chairs, teaching and learning center directors, and chief academic officers, to compile their ideas, combined with research, into this definition.

- Transformational refers to positive change in knowledge, skills and perspectives.

Working with both campus faculty and staff, as well as students and employers, CPE has compiled a list of essential skills that students need to be successful after graduation. While these outcomes are common across institutions, each institution provides a unique experience, and each student has a unique experience within the same institution.

## The Essential Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes are considered essential to the success of students in higher education. While this list is not inclusive of all the skills that employers value, the list represents the most frequently identified qualities supported by research and advocated by AAC&U, the Quality Assurance (QA) Commons, and NACE, among others.

### **1. Communicate effectively.**

*Graduates will develop their ability to communicate effectively by listening, weighing influencing factors, and responding accurately and professionally. They will learn to express their thoughts coherently in writing, orally, and in formal presentations.*

### **2. Think critically in order to solve problems and create new ideas and solutions.**

*Graduates will develop their ability to think critically by evaluating assumptions and assessing information to make informed conclusions. They will also learn to think creatively by combining ideas in original ways or developing new ways of addressing issues.*

### **3. Apply quantitative reasoning skills to analyze and solve numerical problems.**

*Graduates will hone their ability to provide solutions guided by data and choosing the best methodologies for arriving at informed conclusions.*

### **4. Demonstrate cultural competency.**

*Graduates will reflect on their own cultural identities, appreciate cultural and intellectual differences, and effectively interact with people from diverse backgrounds. They will have multiple opportunities to collaborate, communicate and work respectfully with people with different perspectives, ideas and cultural beliefs.*

### **5. Adapt to changing circumstances while leading and supporting others.**

*Graduates will have learned how to accept change and find effective ways to work and thrive in different settings. They will learn to motivate others in the pursuit of a common goal and to coach others in the pursuit of this goal.*

**6. Perform professionally within their chosen field of study or occupation.**

*Graduates will have learned the importance of adhering to the code of ethics in their chosen profession and acting with honesty and fairness. They will have many opportunities to prioritize their tasks, manage their time, take initiative, and demonstrate accountability and reliability.*

**7. Engage in civic life to improve society.**

*Throughout their college careers, students will learn from opportunities to engage in political, social and other activities to address issues that benefit society.*

**8. Collaborate and work in teams.**

*Graduates will have had numerous opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, become effective team members, and manage conflict.*

**9. Demonstrate evidence of applied and integrated learning.**

*Graduates will be able to articulate and apply the theoretical content of their academic preparation with relevant knowledge and abilities essential to their chosen career.*

**10. Use information for decision making.**

*Graduates will be able to identify, evaluate, and responsibly use information needed for decision making.*