

ALVERNO COLLEGE
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

ABILITY-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM

The curriculum is an ability-based, outcome-oriented approach to liberal arts/professional education. To earn a degree at Alverno College a student demonstrates the eight broad abilities listed below, at increasingly complex levels, in general education and in her areas of specialty.

These abilities constitute liberal education at the college and undergird and infuse advanced study in the disciplines and professions. Within the curriculum of a given major, the student develops the abilities according to the distinctive requirements of the disciplines and professions.

Throughout her course of studies, the student participates in performance-based assessments and learns to assess herself. Her progression toward a degree is based upon these assessments, both internal and external.

With demonstrated achievement at each level the student receives one level unit. For a Bachelor's degree, in addition to 32 units awarded when the first four levels of each of the eight abilities have been demonstrated, the student must achieve another 8 units, at least one of them at level 6. Advanced levels of any given ability require more time and effort to achieve than lower ones. For an Associate of Arts degree in General Studies, a student demonstrates her ability at the first four levels in each of the eight areas.

Abilities and Developmental Levels

1 Develop effective communications skill

- Level 1 — Identify own strengths and weaknesses as initiator and responder in communication situations of the following types, including a variety of audiences: reading, writing, listening, speaking, graphing and reading graphs
- Level 2 — Analyze written and oral communication situations
- Level 3 — Communicate with clarity of message-exchange in communication situations of the following types, including a variety of audiences: reading, writing, listening, speaking, graphing and reading graphs
- Level 4 — Demonstrate sufficient understanding of basic concepts of at least 3 major areas of knowledge to communicate in terms of them
- Level 5 — Demonstrate understanding of communication as historical process involving development of meaning and form in relation to technological and cultural forces
- Level 6 — Communicate effectively through coordinated use of 3 different media that represent contemporary technological advancement in the communications field

2 Sharpen analytical capabilities

- Level 1 — Identify explicit elements of a work (a work may be an article, artifact, or process)
- Level 2 — Identify implicit elements of a work
- Level 3 — Identify relationships in a work
- Level 4 — Analyze the structure and organization of a work
- Level 5 — In the interpretation and/or creation of one or more works, develop new hypotheses, new conclusions, or new relations of materials and means of production
- Level 6 — Produce a single work that demonstrates facility in 3 types of analysis: elements, relationships, organizing principles

3 Develop workable problem-solving skill

- Level 1 — Identify the process, assumptions, and limitations involved in problem-solving approaches
 - Level 2 — Formulate questions which yield to the problem-solving approach
 - Level 3 — Apply the problem-solving process to a problem
 - Level 4 — Apply the problem-solving process to a new area of knowledge (area different from problem in level 3)
 - Level 5 — Design and implement original research project of sufficient complexity to involve direction of or collaboration with others
 - Level 6 — Demonstrate that problem-solving is an assumed approach in one's own search for knowledge and one's reflection upon experience
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4 Develop a facility for making value judgments and independent decisions

- Level 1 — Identify own values
- Level 2 — Demonstrate understanding of philosophy, history, religion, arts, and/or literature as reflection of values
- Level 3 — Demonstrate understanding of relationship of values to scientific and technological development
- Level 4 — Make value judgments for which you (a) identify viable alternatives and (b) forecast and weigh consequences
- Level 5 — Demonstrate understanding of the validity of value systems differing from culture to culture
- Level 6 — Communicate value judgments effectively, either to defend them or to persuade others to them, and demonstrate commitment to them

5 Develop facility for social interaction

- Level 1 — Identify and analyze own strengths and weaknesses in group situations
- Level 2 — Analyze behavior of self and others within a theoretical framework
- Level 3 — Evaluate behavior of self and others within a theoretical framework
- Level 4 — Demonstrate effective social behavior in variety of situations and circumstances — both private and public, within one's own culture
- Level 5 — Demonstrate effective social behavior in variety of situations and circumstances, beyond as well as on college campus, involving different cultures or subcultures and large as well as small groups
- Level 6 — Demonstrate effective organizational activity

6 Achieve understanding of the relationship of the individual and the environment

- Level 1 — Identify environmental components
- Level 2 — Identify relationships between individual attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviors, and environmental components
- Level 3 — Demonstrate an understanding of the interaction effects of cultural and physical setting upon individual and group behavior
- Level 4 — Analyze alternative courses of action regarding a particular environmental problem on the basis of their feasibility, cultural acceptability, and technical accuracy
- Level 5 — Assess the consequences of various courses of action in regard to a selected environmental problem and the likelihood that goals will be achieved
- Level 6 — Defend a choice among solutions to a particular environmental problem

7 Develop awareness and understanding of the world in which the individual lives

- Level 1 — Demonstrate awareness, perception and knowledge of observable events in the contemporary world
- Level 2 — Analyze contemporary events in their historical context
- Level 3 — Analyze interrelationships of contemporary events and conditions
- Level 4 — Demonstrate understanding of the world as a global unit by analyzing the impact of events of one society upon another
- Level 5 — Demonstrate understanding and acceptance of personal responsibility in contemporary events
- Level 6 — Take personal position regarding implications of contemporary events

8 Develop knowledge, understanding, and responsiveness to the arts and knowledge and understanding of the humanities

- Level 1 — For each selected art, express response and demonstrate understanding of elements, and for each selected humanity, demonstrate understanding of the elements characteristic of its method (to be achieved for a total of 3 arts and/or humanities including at least 1 of each)
- Level 2 — Express response to and demonstrate understanding of one of the arts in relationship to other arts, and demonstrate understanding of an artistic work as an expression of philosophy, religion, or history
- Level 3 — Express response to and demonstrate understanding of the arts, and demonstrate understanding of the humanities, in both cases as expressions of interrelationships between the individual and society
- Level 4 — Demonstrate understanding of works of other cultures and their impact upon modes of expression of one's own culture
- Level 5 — Formulate independent judgments regarding the relative intrinsic and extrinsic values of artistic or humanistic expressions and persuasively communicate the significance of their worth
- Level 6 — Demonstrate facility of self-expression in one or more artistic or humanistic modes and commitment to their importance