

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 communications ability (effectively send and respond to communications for varied audiences and purposes)

- Level 1 — Identify own strengths and weaknesses as communicator
- Level 2 — Show analytic approach to effective communicating
- Level 3 — Communicate effectively
- Level 4 — Communicate effectively making relationships out of explicit frameworks from at least three major areas of knowledge
- Level 5 — Communicate effectively, with application of communications theory
- Level 6 — Communicate with habitual effectiveness and application of theory, through coordinated use of different media that represent contemporary technological advancement in the communications field

In WRITING,
READING,
SPEAKING,
LISTENING
USING MEDIA,
QUANTIFIED
DATA, and
THE COMPUTER

2 Develop analytical capabilities

- Level 1 — Show observational skills
- Level 2 — Draw reasonable inferences from observations
- Level 3 — Perceive and make relationships
- Level 4 — Analyze structure and organization
- Level 5 — Establish ability to employ frameworks from area of concentration or support area discipline in order to analyze
- Level 6 — Master ability to employ independently the frameworks from area of concentration or support area discipline in order to analyze

3 Develop workable problem-solving skill

- Level 1 — Identify the process, assumptions, and limitations involved in problem-solving approaches
- Level 2 — Recognize, analyze and state a problem to be solved
- Level 3 — Apply a problem-solving process to a problem
- Level 4 — Compare processes and evaluate own approach in solving problems
- Level 5 — Design and implement a process for resolving a problem which requires collaboration with others
- Level 6 — Demonstrate facility in solving problems in a variety of situations

4 Develop facility in making value judgments and independent decisions

- Level 1 — Identify own values
- Level 2 — Infer and analyze values in artistic and humanistic works
- Level 3 — Relate values to scientific and technological developments
- Level 4 — Engage in valuing in decision-making in multiple contexts
- Level 5 — Analyze and formulate the value foundation/framework of a specific area of knowledge, in its theory and practice
- Level 6 — Apply own theory of value and the value foundation of an area of knowledge in a professional context

5 Develop facility for social interaction

- Level 1 — Identify own interaction behaviors utilized in a group problem solving situation
- Level 2 — Analyze behavior of others within two theoretical frameworks
- Level 3 — Evaluate behavior of self within two theoretical frameworks
- Level 4 — Demonstrate effective social interaction behavior in a variety of situations and circumstances
- Level 5 — Demonstrate effective interpersonal and intergroup behaviors in cross-cultural interactions
- Level 6 — Facilitate effective interpersonal and intergroup relationships in one's professional situation

6 Develop responsibility for the environment

- Level 1 — Perceive and describe the complex relationships within the environment
- Level 2 — Observe and explain how the behavior of individuals and groups has an impact on the environment
- Level 3 — Observe and explain how the environment has an impact on the behavior of individuals and groups
- Level 4 — Respond holistically to environmental issues and evaluate the response of others
- Level 5 — Identify a researchable environmental problem and independently develop responsible alternative solutions
- Level 6 — Select and rigorously support a responsible solution to an environmental problem with an implementation strategy

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 of professional responsibility in the contemporary world
- Level 6 — Take personal position regarding implications of contemporary events

8 Develop responsiveness to the arts

- Level 1 — Express response to selected arts in terms of their formal elements and personal background
- Level 2 — Distinguish among artistic forms in terms of their elements and personal response to selected art works
- Level 3 — Relate artistic works to the contexts from which they emerge
- Level 4 — Make and defend judgments about the quality of selected artistic expressions
- Level 5 — Choose and discuss artistic works which reflect personal vision of what it means to be human
- Level 6 — Demonstrate the impact of the arts on your own life to this point and project their role in personal future