

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 communication 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

In majors and areas of specialization:

- 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

In majors and areas of specialization:

- 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 — Articulate and evaluate own problem-solving process
- Level 2 — Define problems or design strategies to solve problems using discipline-related frameworks
- Level 3 — Select or design appropriate frameworks and strategies to solve problems
- Level 4 — Implement a solution and evaluate the problem-solving process used

In majors and areas of specialization:

- 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

In majors and areas of specialization:

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

In majors and areas of specialization:

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 toward the global environment

Level 1 — Perceive and describe relationships between self and the world

Level 2 — Recognize interdependence in both theoretical and practical terms

Level 3 — Articulate and empathize with diverse perspectives

Level 4 — Respond to global issues by synthesizing diverse perspectives

In majors and areas of specialization:

Level 5 — Generate theoretical and pragmatic approaches to global problems, within a disciplinary or professional context

Level 6 — Develop responsibility toward the global environment in others

7 Develop effective citizenship

Level 1 — Situate self within different public contexts

Level 2 — Relate own position on issues to others, in public contexts

Level 3 — Employ participatory skills necessary for effective citizenship in a new public context

Level 4 — Define and assume new role in dealing with social and/or professional problems in a public context

In majors and areas of specialization:

Level 5 — Show ability to plan for effective change in social or professional areas

Level 6 — Exercise leadership in addressing social or professional issues

8 Develop aesthetic responsiveness: involvement with 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

In majors and areas of specialization:

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