

## THE WESTERN DEGREE OUTCOMES

Western Degree Outcomes provide a way to communicate what a degree from Western University means. Degree outcomes serve as a shared language of achievement and skills that any Western undergraduate—regardless of disciplines or degree—might use to describe the result of their years of study to a variety of audiences. One might say that Western Degree Outcomes provide a descriptive anatomy of the curricular body of Western University.

Acknowledging the wealth of learning accumulated by following a course of study, Western Degree Outcomes are a capacious group of indicators of a shared university curriculum that spans the full breadth of academic pre-professional and professional disciplines. They make explicit an inventory of academic, professional, and working world competencies that are already the implicit content of the Western University curriculum. They will provide faculty and students with a common language of academic development and application. It is hoped that today's WDOs will provide inspiration as well as guidance for program- and course-level curricular engagement and innovation in the years to come.

The provincial University Undergraduate Degree-Level Expectations (UUDLEs), which form the basis of the Council of Ontario Universities' Quality Assurance Framework, are the de facto institutional learning outcomes for all Ontario universities. Since 2011 the UUDLEs have served as Western's degree outcomes in our quality assurance process, both in cyclical program reviews and new program approvals. The Quality Assurance Framework indicates that "Each university is expected to develop its own institutional expression of the undergraduate and graduate Degree-Level Expectations and to have them applied to each academic program" (QAF, 2). Western Degree Outcomes are our institutional expression of the UUDLEs. Consequently, in Western's quality assurance process for undergraduate programs, program- and course-level learning outcomes will now align with Western Degree Outcomes.

### 1. Knowledge

**Western graduates will have developed** a sense of discovery that drives their ability to ask and frame questions, seeking to make connections that are not immediately obvious among phenomena and ideas. Western graduates will be able to explain the differences and linkages between the theories, research methods and core ideas of the disciplines they have studied, and analyze and solve problems according to the accepted methods of their field or fields. With their knowledge, graduates will have the ability to identify opportunities in their disciplines and see connections between other areas of study in order to imagine, create or produce novel solutions, works or performances.

### 2. Literacies and Interdisciplinarity

**Western graduates will be able to** use disciplinary discourse, technical language, numerical literacy or other appropriate disciplinary systems of knowledge, research methods or ways of knowing to identify, locate and evaluate oral, print, graphic, numerical, scientific or digital information. They will be able to explore complex problems from a variety of perspectives, recognizing bias, and identifying missing or underrepresented voices. Working under conditions of ambiguity or uncertainty, graduates will be able to use disciplinary knowledge in order to research, reason and solve problems from a range of contexts

relevant to practices in their disciplines. In proposing solutions, they will be able to describe limitations of the sources and methods they use.

### 3. Communication

**Western graduates will be able to** interact and collaborate effectively with other individuals and groups using the language and reasoning appropriate to the communicative context, within and across their personal and professional communities and cultures. Graduates will be able to present their ideas or perform their works in a way that is clear and accessible to a variety of audiences. Connecting with peers and experts, they will be able to communicate responsibly through digital and other means.

### 4. Resilience and Life-long Learning

**Western graduates will be able to** adapt to personal and professional changes and challenges across the life course by being self-aware, resilient, and self-reflexive. In addition to their mastery of discipline specific knowledge and methods, graduates will be able to articulate a clear understanding of their own values, interests, and goals as well as the limitations of their own knowledge and perspectives. Accepting that change is ongoing, graduates will recognize the advantages of stepping outside of their comfort zone to continue to enhance their knowledge and capabilities.

### 5. Global and Community Engagement

**Western graduates will be able to** interact ethically and compassionately with others and with the natural and social world. Western graduates will be ready to act locally and imagine globally; practice perspective taking and empathy; understand the interconnectedness of the world as expressed through technology, culture, belief systems, economics, and politics; to understand and to exercise social, political and environmental responsibility both at home and abroad.

### 6. Critical Inquiry and Creative Thinking

**Western graduates will have developed** habits of constructive skepticism, differentiation and intellectual adaptability in their approaches to phenomena, artefacts, issues, or arguments. They will be able to identify underlying assumptions, agendas, purposes, audiences, points of view, paradigms, evidence, implications, and logical strategies and thereby arrive at conclusions about reliability. They will bring habits of careful judgement, an appetite for further refinement, aesthetic engagement, and artistic expression or highly developed problem-solving skills to their pursuits.

### 7. Professionalism and Ethical Conduct

**Western graduates will be able to** recognize the ways in which their conduct affects others in their field or fields, profession, community, or society. They will be able to work effectively with others practically (e.g. time management, conflict resolution); ethically (e.g. division of intellectual responsibility and credit) and socially (e.g. respecting cultural differences, work preferences). Graduates will be able to apply their studies responsibly to situations they find in the world around them, with the ability to explore ideas, issues, and the world at large from viewpoints other than their own.

**Table 1: Detailed UUDLE - WDO Alignment Chart**

University Undergraduate Degree-level Expectations	Western Degree Outcomes
<p><b>1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>B. 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</li> <li>C. 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</li> <li>D. developed, detailed knowledge of and experience in research in an area of the discipline</li> <li>E. developed critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline</li> <li>F. the ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Knowledge</b></p> <p>Western graduates will have developed a sense of discovery that drives their ability to ask and frame questions, seeking to make connections that are not immediately obvious among phenomena and ideas. Western graduates will be able to explain the differences and linkages between the theories, research methods and core ideas of the disciplines they have studied, and analyze and solve problems according to the accepted methods of their field or fields. With their knowledge, graduates will have the ability to identify opportunities in their disciplines and see connections between other areas of study in order to imagine, create or produce novel solutions, works or performances.</p> <p><b>2. Literacies and Interdisciplinarity</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to use disciplinary discourse, technical language, numerical literacy or other appropriate disciplinary systems of knowledge, research methods or ways of knowing to identify, locate and evaluate oral, print, graphic, numerical, scientific or digital information.</p> <p><b>6. Critical Inquiry and Creative Thinking</b></p> <p>Western graduates will have developed habits of constructive skepticism, differentiation and intellectual adaptability in their approaches to phenomena, artefacts, issues, or arguments. They will be able to identify underlying assumptions, agendas, purposes, audiences, points of view, paradigms, evidence, implications, and logical strategies and thereby arrive at conclusions about reliability. They will bring habits of careful judgement, an appetite for further refinement, aesthetic engagement, and artistic expression or highly developed problem-solving skills to their pursuits.</p>
<p><b>2. Knowledge of Methodologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. an understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques;</li> <li>b) devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods; and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Knowledge</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to explain the differences and linkages between the theories, research methods and core ideas of the disciplines they have studied, and analyze and solve problems according to the accepted methods of their field or fields.</p>

<p>c) describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship.</p>	<p><b>2. Literacies and Interdisciplinarity</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to use...disciplinary systems of knowledge, research methods or ways of knowing to identify, locate and evaluate oral, print, graphic, numerical, scientific or digital information. Graduates will be able to use disciplinary knowledge in order to research, reason and solve problems from a range of contexts relevant to practices in their disciplines. In proposing solutions, they will be able to describe the limitations of the sources and methods they use.</p> <p><b>4. Resilience and Life-long Learning</b></p> <p>In addition to their mastery of discipline specific knowledge and methods, graduates will be able to articulate a clear understanding of their own values, interests, and goals as well as the limitations of their own knowledge and perspectives.</p>
<p><b>3. Application of Knowledge</b></p> <p>A. the ability to review, present and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) develop lines of argument;</li> <li>b) make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study;</li> <li>c) apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline;</li> <li>d) where appropriate use this knowledge in the creative process.</li> </ul> <p>B. the ability to use a range of established techniques to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and information; propose solutions;</li> <li>b) frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem;</li> <li>c) solve a problem or create a new work.</li> </ul> <p>C. the ability to make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.</p>	<p><b>1. Knowledge</b></p> <p>Western graduates will have developed a sense of discovery that drives their ability to ask and frame questions, seeking to make connections that are not immediately obvious among phenomena and ideas. .... Graduates will have the ability to identify opportunities in their disciplines and see connections between other areas of study in order to imagine, create or produce novel solutions, works or performances.</p> <p><b>6. Critical Inquiry and Creative Thinking</b></p> <p>Western graduates will have developed habits of constructive skepticism and intellectual adaptability in their approaches to phenomena, artefacts, issues, or arguments. They will be able to identify underlying assumptions, agendas, purposes, audiences, points of view, paradigms, evidence, implications, and logical strategies and thereby arrive at conclusions about reliability. They will bring habits of careful judgement, an appetite for further refinement, aesthetic engagement, and artistic expression or highly developed problem-solving skills to their pursuits.</p> <p><b>2. Literacies and Interdisciplinarity</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to use disciplinary discourse, technical language, numerical literacy or other appropriate disciplinary systems of knowledge, research methods or ways of knowing to identify, locate and evaluate oral, print, graphic, numerical, scientific or digital information.</p>

<p><b>4. Communication Skills</b></p> <p>A. the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences.</p>	<p><b>3. Communication</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to interact and collaborate effectively with other individuals and groups using the language and reasoning appropriate to the communicative context, within and across their personal and professional communities and cultures. Graduates will be able to present their ideas or perform their works in a way that is clear and accessible to a variety of audiences. Connecting with peers and experts, they will be able to communicate responsibly through digital and other means.</p> <p><b>5. Global and Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to interact ethically and compassionately with others and with the natural and social world.</p>
<p><b>5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge</b></p> <p>A. 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.</p>	<p><b>2. Literacies and Interdisciplinarity</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to... explore complex problems from a variety of perspectives, recognizing bias and identifying missing or underrepresented voices. Working under conditions of ambiguity or uncertainty, graduates will be able to use disciplinary knowledge in order to research, reason and solve problems from a range of contexts relevant to practices in their disciplines. In proposing solutions, they will be able to describe limitations of the sources and methods they use.</p> <p><b>4. Resilience and Life-long Learning</b></p> <p>Accepting that change is ongoing, graduates will recognize the advantages of stepping outside of their comfort zone to continue to enhance their knowledge and capabilities.</p> <p><b>5. Global and Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be ready to act locally and imagine globally; practice perspective taking and empathy; understand the interconnectedness of the world as expressed through technology, culture, belief systems, economics, and politics; to understand and to exercise social, political and environmental responsibility both at home and abroad.</p>
<p><b>6. Autonomy and Professional Capacity</b></p> <p>A. Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;</li> <li>b) working effectively with others;</li> </ul>	<p><b>7. Professionalism and Ethical Conduct</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to recognize that their conduct affects others in their field or fields, profession, community, or society. They can work effectively with others practically (e.g. time management, conflict resolution); ethically (e.g. division of intellectual</p>

<p>c) decision-making in complex contexts.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>C. Behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility.</p>	<p>responsibility and credit) and socially (e.g. respecting cultural differences, work preferences). Graduates will be able to apply their studies responsibly to situations they find in the world around them, with the ability to explore ideas, issues, and the world at large from viewpoints other than their own.</p> <p><b>4. Resilience and Life-long Learning</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be prepared to adapt to personal and professional changes and challenges across the life course by being self-aware, resilient, and self-reflexive. In addition to their mastery of discipline specific knowledge and methods, graduates will be able to articulate a clear understanding of their own values, interests, and goals as well as the limitations of their own knowledge and perspectives.</p> <p><b>5. Global and Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Western graduates will be able to interact ethically and compassionately with others and with the natural and social world. Western graduates will be ready to act locally and imagine globally; practice perspective taking and empathy; understand the interconnectedness of world systems through technology, culture, belief systems, economics, and politics; to understand and to exercise social, political and environmental responsibility both at home and abroad.</p>
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**Table 2:** Summary UDLE - WDO Alignment Chart

<b>UDLE</b>	<b>WDO</b>
Depth and Breadth of Knowledge	Knowledge Critical inquiry and Creative Thinking Literacies and Interdisciplinarity
Knowledge of Methodologies	Knowledge Literacies and Interdisciplinarity Resilience and Life-long Learning
Application of Knowledge	Knowledge Critical Inquiry and Creative Thinking Literacies and Interdisciplinarity
Communication Skills	Communication Global and Community Engagement
Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	Literacies and Interdisciplinarity Resilience and Life-long Learning Global and Community Engagement
Autonomy and Professional Capacity	Professionalism and Ethical Conduct Resilience and Life-long Learning Global and Community Engagement