

Liberal Education FAQ

1. Will ULEC allow us to work toward a K and/or S outcome along with an R outcome? Blending the outcomes seems natural and needed in many disciplines. We all have content outcomes we are working toward, now we are blending these Liberal Education outcomes with our content.
2. Is there a percentage of the course that needs to address an outcome? How will this be measured?
3. The R1 learning outcome seems to be written as a baccalaureate outcome, not for the developmental level we are piloting it with. Will the outcomes be adjusted to meet the level of courses ULEC is approving?
4. What happens beyond the Liberal Education Core to the principles of R2? Do the students have opportunities beyond the LE Core to practice this outcome?
5. Will ULEC consider including 300 level courses in LE so students can meet this outcome? What role will upper division courses have in the LE core?
6. Are the outcomes designed for a student's entire baccalaureate degree or only for the LE Core?
7. Does an experience have to meet all of the elements of a learning outcome? For example, can a '100 level experience' provide opportunities for students to meet 2 out of 3 elements while a later, upper division experience, meet the other element?
8. Is it reasonable/feasible to expect that individual courses target all elements?
9. Do we all have to use the rubrics every semester? If so, why? If not, why not?
10. Will we collect data on student progress towards meeting a learning goal in each LE Core experience?
11. Does the campus recommend that, for instance, all lab instructors teach the same labs in the same way so we can collect usable data? How do we know which section will be used to collect data? Will the data be worthwhile if all the instructors do not use the same labs?
12. Since the K2 lab course can meet the requirement for a lab science, why don't we have additional elements for lab-based social science courses, similar to the natural sciences lab courses?
13. Do you believe faculty are the best self-evaluators of our courses?
14. If we are using self-assessment by teachers and students on the results of the rubric, how can we objectively measure progress or receive feedback on how to improve it?
15. Will the rubric evaluations be used for faculty evaluation?
16. Are there plans to evaluate each student individually?
17. Is our goal for learning to get students to a "Benchmark Met" level? If so, why do we have the other two columns?
18. Are these elements seen in a hierarchy or more of a modular type of approach?
19. What recommendations will you make to instructors/departments whose students do not "meet expectations" on the rubrics but get A's or B's in the course? How much course change will be required?
20. How will the rubric evaluations be shared with the campus community?
21. What are your recommendations for sharing the rubrics and outcomes with students?
22. How will the new Liberal Education Core affect transfer students?
23. Where can faculty not involved in committees or Senate have an opportunity to give input related to LE Reform?

Will ULEC allow us to work toward a K and/or S outcome along with an R outcome? Blending the outcomes seems natural and needed in many disciplines. We all have content outcomes we are working toward, now we are blending these Liberal Education outcomes with our content.

An experience can certainly address more than one outcome. In fact, it is expected that a typical experience will address one or two outcomes. In particular, the structural design of the LE Core encourages many natural pairings between outcomes (e.g., knowledge and responsibility outcomes) within a single learning experience. Having said that, there is currently no clear consensus within ULEC on the desirability of a single experience addressing both K3 and K4.

[Return to Questions](#)

Is there a percentage of the course that needs to address an outcome? How will this be measured?

An outcomes based approach to student learning requires something of a paradigm shift away from the current credit-based system. This will take time for all of us to develop. At this point it is anticipated that there will be something of a hybrid approach. While curricular bodies don't have an explicit course percentage measurement, these bodies understand that learning takes time, especially when the particular content is very new to a student, and that this time is important to consider in evaluating whether an experience can truly provide an opportunity for a student to advance in learning to the level that we aspire.

[Return to Questions](#)

The R1 learning outcome seems to be written as a baccalaureate outcome, not for the developmental level we are piloting it with. Will the outcomes be adjusted to meet the level of courses ULEC is approving?

The University Liberal Education Committee believes that the R1 learning outcome, and associated levels of learning identified in the rubric elements, can be met through a variety of offerings appropriate for all of our students.

[Return to Questions](#)

What happens beyond the Liberal Education Core to the principles of R2? Do the students have opportunities beyond the LE Core to practice this outcome?

Global learning is a key component of the UW-Eau Claire experience. Many majors will expect further student learning in global contexts. For example, majors and minors in International Business, Languages, World Politics and International Geography will have this type of learning at the core of their programs. UWEC's strength in international education through exchange programs, both sending students abroad and welcoming students from around the globe to study on our campus, certainly provides numerous opportunities for students to supplement and deepen their understanding of systems, institutions, and issues in local and global contexts and across cultures. Some of these experiences will exist within the core and some, especially in select programs, will occur outside of the core and within the academic programs (such as a study abroad experience for Language majors).

[Return to Questions](#)

Will ULEC consider including 300 level courses in LE so students can meet this outcome? What role will upper division courses have in the LE core?

Applications for inclusion in the LE Core are welcome from upper division courses. It is expected that courses in LE Core will be broadly accessible to students from all programs of study at UWEC. As such, it is expected that prerequisites will be minimal. That said, ULEC realizes that, in some cases, prerequisite skills such as mathematics, writing, and language competencies are critical for success. The need for any prerequisites must be clearly articulated in an application.

An exception to the prerequisite philosophy is present in courses within the S3 (Creativity) and I (Integrated Learning) outcomes. Within these two outcomes, our LE Core framework allows for and indeed invites contributions from Program-specific experiences that align with the stated outcomes and their associated rubric elements. Program experiences such as capstones, internships and faculty-student scholarly collaborations are examples of experiences where learning within these outcomes is likely to occur. ULEC welcomes applications from Programs that articulate these connections.

[Return to Questions](#)

Are the outcomes designed for a student's entire baccalaureate degree or only for the LE Core?

The goals of the baccalaureate and goals for the Liberal Education Core are one and the same. The 11 learning outcomes of the LE Core are aligned with the four goals of the baccalaureate degree. The baccalaureate degree at UWEC consists of a student's degree program (Bachelor of Arts [BA], Bachelor of Business Administration [BBA], Bachelor Science in Nursing [BSN], etc.), the student's major program of study, a minor program of study (if necessary) and the Liberal Education Core. The articulation of learning within the LE Core is identified through the 11 LE Core learning outcomes. Learning outcomes within a student's major and/or minor are determined by the programmatic home for the major and/or minor.

[Return to Questions](#)

Does an experience have to meet all of the elements of a learning outcome? For example, can a '100 level experience' provide opportunities for students to meet 2 out of 3 elements while a later, upper division experience, meet the other element?

Any experience that meets a Liberal Education Core learning outcome is expected to provide students with an opportunity to meet each of the rubric elements for a given outcome. It is certainly possible to further parse, for example, 'benchmark exceeded' but that parsing isn't thought necessary for assessing the quality of the LE Core.

The LE Core is not currently designed to allow 100 level courses to meet only certain elements, with upper division courses meeting the remaining elements. The LE Core was designed with the understanding that each experience would address all of the elements.

[Return to Questions](#)

Is it reasonable/feasible to expect that individual courses target all elements?

Yes, we believe it's reasonable for courses to provide students with opportunities to meet each element of the rubric for a given outcome.

[Return to Questions](#)

Do we all have to use the rubrics every semester? If so, why? If not, why not?

It is crucial that all LE Core experiences use the rubric to collect data on student learning each time the experience is taught. This approach has several benefits. It will give instructors regular feedback on student learning, which can inform timely curricular modifications to improve student learning. It will also give the campus a rich set of data to aggregate and allow for more meaningful and useful conversations in assessing the quality of the LE Core. We acknowledge that this is an additional workload expectation, but we have simplified the process of collection as much possible so as to align with the natural workload of teaching.

[Return to Questions](#)

Will we collect data on student progress towards meeting a learning goal in each LE Core experience?

Yes, instructors will be expected to collect data each time that they teach a course. This data will be reported in an aggregate way so that individual student data will only be known to the instructor. The data will be further aggregated by outcome to facilitate broader campus dialogue and actions regarding the quality of learning within the LE Core.

[Return to Questions](#)

Does the campus recommend that, for instance, all lab instructors teach the same labs in the same way so we can collect usable data? How do we know which section will be used to collect data? Will the data be worthwhile if all the instructors do not use the same labs?

All instructors of a lab course within outcome K1 need to address all elements of the rubric. This does not mean that all labs need be taught in the same way. It simply means that all students participating in such experiences will have opportunities to advance their understanding of the natural sciences through learning experiences directed at each of the elements.

All sections will report student learning data to help us measure the effectiveness of the Liberal Education Program. As such, assessment data will be aggregated across all laboratory sections and shared broadly with the university and specifically with various curricular bodies for discussion and appropriate actions. Individual instructors will have access to this aggregate data to reflect on the effectiveness of their own teaching practice specifically as it relates to student learning under the K1 lab learning outcome.

[Return to Questions](#)

Since the K2 lab course can meet the requirement for a lab science, why don't we have additional elements for lab-based social science courses, similar to the natural sciences lab courses?

A K2 lab course will need to address the elements of the K2 rubric as well as the two elements articulated in the K1 rubric that address lab experiences.

[Return to Questions](#)

Do you believe faculty are the best self-evaluators of our courses?

We believe that faculty teaching the course are in the best position to determine the progress of student learning in their sections. Faculty are encouraged to discuss student learning with each other through opportunities afforded through formal departmental curriculum meetings, hallway conversations, and CETL communities of practice.

[Return to Questions](#)

If we are using self-assessment by teachers and students on the results of the rubric, how can we objectively measure progress or receive feedback on how to improve it?

We believe the self-assessment data will provide a realistic picture of student learning in the LE Core. Instructors are best equipped to use that data to make informed, intentional adjustments to their curriculum to improve student learning. Continual collection and reflection on the assessment results will help us make meaningful progress toward improving student learning in the LE Core.

[Return to Questions](#)

Will the rubric evaluations be used for faculty evaluation?

Absolutely not. The process of collecting data on student learning under each outcome is intended to inform the campus on the quality of the Liberal Education Core. Faculty evaluation is a separate matter and is clearly articulated in department evaluation plans.

[Return to Questions](#)

Are there plans to evaluate each student individually?

The use of a rubric associated with a learning outcome is always for the purpose of assessing the quality of the Liberal Education Program. There are no plans to assess each student individually in regards to their achievement of the learning outcomes within the LE Core. Even setting aside obvious practical concerns, our assessment plan would make it impossible to drill down to this level.

[Return to Questions](#)

Is our goal for learning to get students to a “Benchmark Met” level? If so, why do we have the other two columns?

The use of the categories ‘benchmark not met’, ‘benchmark met’, and ‘benchmark exceeded’ was determined to provide guidance for campus conversations about the Liberal Education Core, and to help individual faculty and groups of faculty reflect on student learning in their courses. We chose to use only three columns to facilitate data collection so that we can move on to the important work of reflecting both collectively and individually on the data.

[Return to Questions](#)

Are these elements seen in a hierarchy or more of a modular type of approach?

There is no assumption of a hierarchy among the elements. None is to be considered more or less important than others. The order is simply a result of the fact that something has to be listed first.

[Return to Questions](#)

What recommendations will you make to instructors/departments whose students do not “meet expectations” on the rubrics but get A’s or B’s in the course? How much course change will be required?

No significant course change will necessarily be required. Rather, the assessment process provides opportunities to continuously consider and refine LE Core experiences and the LE Core. The decision about a course grade is entirely up to the instructor.

[Return to Questions](#)

How will the rubric evaluations be shared with the campus community?

Aggregate data will be shared with departmental, college and university level curriculum committees. Our processes will be transparent and will invite critical reflection on our efforts on our students' behalf. The use of rubrics within the Liberal Education Core is intended for the evaluation of the LE Core in support of delivering this Core at the highest quality. Individual course assessment data will not be shared with the campus community.

[Return to Questions](#)

What are your recommendations for sharing the rubrics and outcomes with students?

UWEC's shared governance procedures includes student representation on department, college, and university curriculum committees. As such, students are full participants in the Liberal Education Core. We will regularly update the Student Senate Academic Policies Committee as to our efforts and through that body invite the entire student body to provide feedback to us. Instructors are also encouraged to share the rubrics with students in their courses.

[Return to Questions](#)

How will the new Liberal Education Core affect transfer students?

Transfer students will need to meet all requirements for the baccalaureate degree, as has always been the case. A great deal of work has been done in anticipation of the transition to the LE Core in 2016-17. In particular, equivalencies have been determined for over 22,000 courses in UWEC's transfer information system. Moreover, students who have earned an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Sciences liberal arts degree from one of the UW Colleges will have already satisfied our Liberal Education Core requirements. As the campus continues work in this transition period, appropriately identified courses will be modified and new courses will be created in order to facilitate the successful transition to UWEC for transfer students.

[Return to Questions](#)

Where can faculty not involved in committees or Senate have an opportunity to give input related to LE Reform?

There are numerous opportunities for faculty to be involved in the process. In fact, this involvement is necessary in order for UWEC to thrive as a learning community. Beyond university-wide committees, there are opportunities within formal departmental committee structures to have conversations about the role of liberal education in the education of our students. Our Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) is also an excellent resource for the mutual sharing of information and best practices regarding liberal education. Of course, informal hallway and on-campus and off-campus exchanges often provide the best way for timely dialogue that can directly impact the quality of student learning experiences to which we all aspire.

[Return to Questions](#)