

Goals and Competencies in the General Education Curriculum

As part of its commitment to a liberal arts education, Lander University has adopted eight General Education goals. These goals encompass skills (writing, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning) we expect students to acquire, knowledge of concepts and processes (natural sciences, social sciences, health, aesthetics, and culture). Lander University has chosen these goals with the express purpose of making our students be as well rounded as possible.

Any student successfully completing the General Education curriculum should gain skills and knowledge, known as competencies, which can be demonstrated. Thus, the competencies established here serve as a benchmark of college-level achievement and proficiency students are expected to meet.

Part I: Skill competencies.

The first three General Education goals (A, B, and C) represent skills students are to acquire. In this context, competency is defined as being able to demonstrate these skills. Assessment of skills will be done with the “Academic Profile” from ETS. This instrument provides criterion-referenced proficiency scores in three areas: (1) writing, (2) mathematics, and (3) reading/critical thinking.

Goal A. Acquire skills in communicating clearly.

Communication has two basic components: acquiring information for an external source (ex: reading) and production of information for others (ex: writing).

The skills associated with college-level competency in reading are:

- synthesizing material from different sections of a passage
- recognizing valid inferences derived from material in the passage
- identifying accurate summaries of a passage or of significant sections of the passage
- understanding and interpreting figurative language
- discerning the main idea, purpose, or focus of a passage or a significant portion of the passage.

The skills associated with college-level competency in writing are:

- incorporating new material into a passage
- recognizing agreement among basic grammatical elements (e.g., nouns, verbs, pronouns, and conjunctions) when these elements are complicated by intervening words or phrases
- combining simple clauses into single, more complex combinations
- recasting existing sentences into new syntactic combinations.

Goal B. Acquire quantitative reasoning skills.

The skills associated with college-level competency in quantitative reasoning are:

- solving arithmetic problems with some complications
- simplifying algebraic expressions
- drawing conclusions from algebraic equations and inequalities.
- interpreting a trend represented in a graph, or choosing a graph that reflects a trend
- solving problems involving sets

Goal C. Acquire critical thinking skills.

The skills associated with college-level competency in critical thinking are:

- synthesizing material from different sections of a passage
- recognizing valid inferences derived from material in the passage
- identifying accurate summaries of a passage or of significant sections of the passage
- understanding and interpreting figurative language
- discerning the main idea, purpose, or focus of a passage or a significant portion of the passage.

Part II: Knowledge Competencies

General Education goals D, E, F, G and H represent both conceptual and process knowledge from a variety of disciplines students are expected to understand. In this context, competency is defined as possessing the specified knowledge. Assessment of knowledge will have two components. First, the “Academic Profile” from ETS provides norm referenced scores in the areas of natural sciences and social sciences. Second, knowledge in areas not covered by the “Academic Profile” will be assessed with questions generated internally at Lander University.

Goal D. Acquire an understanding of scientific concepts.

Lander University desires its students have college-level knowledge associated with scientific concepts. Specifically, students are expected to have an understanding of:

- The scientific method
- Laboratory techniques for acquiring quantitative scientific data
- Laboratory techniques for acquiring qualitative scientific data

Goal E. Acquire an understanding of social structure and processes.

Lander University desires its students have college-level knowledge associated with social structures and processes. Specifically, students are expected to have an understanding of:

- Social science research methods.
- Theoretical perspectives of the human condition.
- Past and present relationships within societies between individuals and groups, organizations and institutions.

Goal F: Acquire an understanding of aesthetic works.

Lander University desires its students have college-level knowledge associated with aesthetics. Specifically, students are expected to have an understanding of:

- Techniques and discipline involved in the creation of the arts and literature
- How and why people use the arts and literature to express themselves and their societies
- Aesthetic sensibilities necessary to approach the arts and literature from both objective and subjective perspectives

Goal G. Explore another culture.

Lander University desires its students have college-level knowledge associated with exploring another culture. Specifically, students are expected to have an understanding of:

- How the norms, values, beliefs and practices of the other culture can be compared and contrasted to those in the student's native culture
- Traditions and historical events that are important to the other culture
- Contributions of men and women who are important figures in the other culture
- A foreign language

Goal H: Acquire an understanding of health.

Lander University desires students to have college-level knowledge associated with health. Specifically, students are expected to have an understanding of:

- Health risks factors
- Personal wellness
- Proper nutrition, diet and weight control, physical fitness, stress management, and cardiovascular health