

The Degree Qualifications Profile Mapped to 2006-2012 NSSE Survey Questions

Introduction to NSSE and Lumina's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)

The imperative for higher education institutions to strengthen the learning experience and provide evidence of the quality of their degree programs has led to greater interest in documenting what students do in college and what they should know and be able to do after earning a degree. Since 2000, NSSE has provided institutions diagnostic information about the quality of students' learning experiences and the extent to which the campus environment is organized to support learning and success. Along with initiatives like AAC&U's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) essential learning outcomes, NSSE has focused attention on quality while providing institutions a common vocabulary, shared understandings and evidence about educational effectiveness.

Promoting Student Learning through the DQP

To advance efforts to define quality in American higher education and develop new capacities to ensure that students achieve the levels of learning they need and deserve, in 2011 Lumina Foundation for Education created a qualifications framework, *The Degree Qualifications Profile* (DQP). The DQP lays out a set of outcomes that students should be able to achieve in five primary areas of competence regardless of major or field of study: Specialized Knowledge, Broad/ Integrated Knowledge, Applied Learning, Intellectual Skills and Civic Learning. The Degree Profile makes explicit expectations regarding learning outcomes across these five areas for associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. The matrix, developed by experts in higher education, focuses on these five competencies and their application, and is designed to advance a shared understanding of what a degree represents in terms of learning. Quite simply, the DQP provides a set of outcomes for student performance appropriate for specific degree levels through statements that indicate the incremental and cumulative nature of learning. It illustrates how students should perform at progressively more challenging levels. As such, achievement in performing at ascending levels creates the criteria for awarding degrees. The specification

of outcomes and competencies immediately prompts the assessment question –“how would we know if our students have attained these outcomes?”

In addition, the DQP emphasizes the importance of educational experiences rich in field related projects, performances, demonstrations and other learning-intensive activities. It also points to the ways in which students can demonstrate their growth in knowledge and competence through conventional testing, and also evidence of learning through assignments and projects in and outside of the classroom. Every learning outcome statement in the DQP leads to and supports the use of evidence from a variety of valid assessment techniques.

To ensure that students achieve the levels of learning they need, institutions and higher education associations have been invited to test and apply the DQP. The information in this DQP NSSE Toolkit provides a prompt for institutions to examine the overlap between their NSSE results of student engagement in educationally effective practices and the learning outcomes expected of all students earning a bachelor's degree. Combining assessments of educational quality from an assessment tool like NSSE, with evidence of what students know and can do, should help institutions identify areas of institutional distinctiveness or strength and expose discrepancies between educational practices and desired learning outcomes.

Integrating NSSE and the DQP

The relationship between the DQP and NSSE can take several forms and the process of mapping NSSE and the DQP can occur at several levels within an institution, including the whole curriculum, components of general education, a department or program, or among class levels (i.e., seniors, or graduate students), and across a particular competency or pedagogical approach such as applied learning.

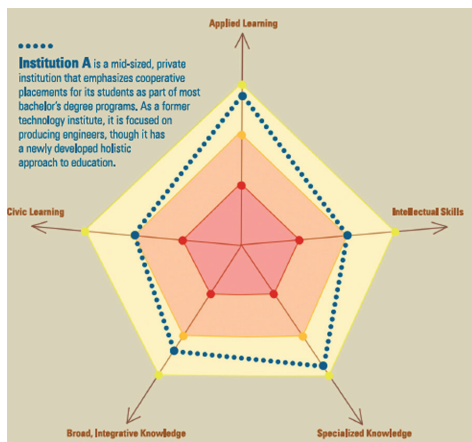
The DQP matrix provides institutions an outcomes-based framework for considering NSSE results. NSSE results provide indicators of educational processes that lead to these competencies, and to outcomes that measure and assess the five major Areas of Learning: Intellectual Skills, Applied Learning, Civic Learning, Broad Integrative Knowledge, and Specialized Knowledge. For example, an institution may wish to inventory the extent to which senior students are reporting experiences that correspond to all five basic Areas of Learning. Moreover, an institu-

tion that claims an emphasis on experiential learning and preparation for the workforce may want to focus their examination on the extent to which seniors are gaining experiences related to the DQP’s Applied Learning (AL) competencies. In this case, a review of senior results on specific NSSE items associated with active learning (1b, d, k) and several higher-order learning approaches (2b,c,d,e) and participation in high-impact practices (7a,b,d,f,g,h) may provide evidence of the extent to which students have gained sufficient experiences in applied learning that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate what they can do with what they know.

Another way to relate NSSE results to the DQP is through the DQP “spiderweb”*. The spiderweb provides a graphic for illustrating institutional emphases. The web contains five anchor lines which represent the five primary areas of competence for the associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees. Depending on institution type and the core areas emphasized, institutions can fix points along each line to visualize their own, individualized “core” of learning. The shape of these plotted core areas may vary widely.

For example, the spiderweb in Figure 1 depicts a mid-sized, private technology institute that has balanced its emphasis on educating engineering students with a new holistic approach to education. Although the Applied Learning (AL)* and Specialized Knowledge (SK)* areas still reflect the institution’s major core emphases, the new focus on Broad Integrative Knowledge (BIK)* is represented by the extended anchor line. Review of student responses to

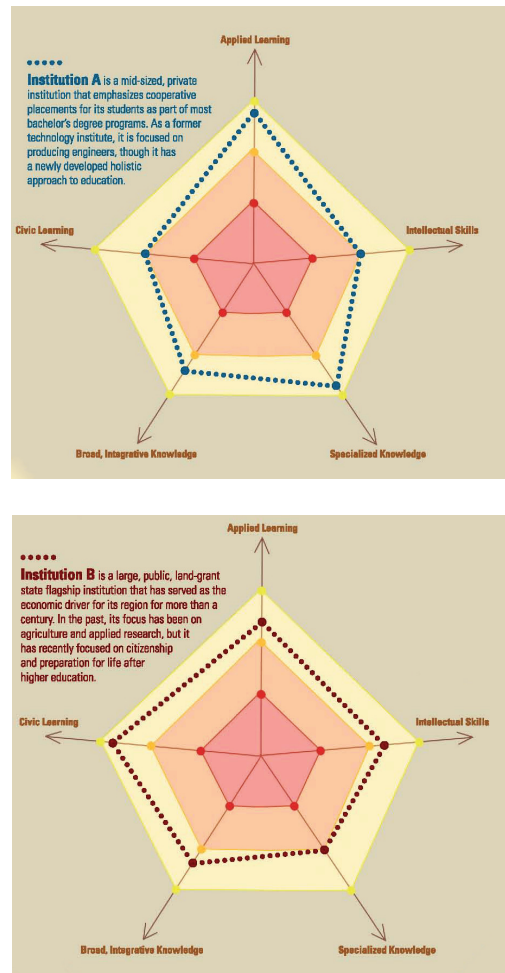
Figure 1



NSSE survey items – particularly multi-year analyses - related to the BIK area such as NSSE item 1d, “Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources,” or NSSE item 1i, “Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions,” (see the chart on page 5) may provide evidence to assess institutional improvement on the adoption of a more holistic approach to undergraduate education.

Two other possible configurations of the spiderweb* are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2



*used with permission from Lumina

**see coding beginning on page 3

A Work in Progress

The NSSE DQP Toolkit is a work in progress. It is based on the beta version of the Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile. As the Lumina criteria are tested and revised as needed by stakeholders, we will update this toolkit to reflect any changes. Our intent in producing the toolkit is to provide NSSE data users a possible way to align with Lumina’s goal to “clearly define quality in American higher education and to develop new capacity throughout postsecondary education to ensure that students achieve the levels of learning they need and deserve.”

Lumina Foundation for Education. (2011). *The Degree Qualifications Profile*. Indianapolis, IN, p. 1.

DQP Five Areas of Learning

The DQP lays out a set of outcomes that students should be able to achieve in five primary areas of competence regardless of major or field of study: Specialized Knowledge, Broad/ Integrated Knowledge, Applied Learning, Intellectual Skills and Civic Learning.

Specialized Knowledge

Each discipline defines specific requirements and may articulate field-dependent outcomes. Across all fields that we call “majors” lie common learning outcomes involving terminology, theory, methods, tools, literature, complex problems or applications, and cognizance of the limits of the field.

Broad/Integrative

Broad higher learning should involve students in the practices of core fields and in developing global, cultural and democratic perspectives. While many institutions of higher education relegate general knowledge to the first two years of undergraduate work, this Degree Profile takes the position that broad learning should be integrated and furthered at all degree levels, and should provide a cumulative context for students’ specialized studies.

Intellectual Skills

Intellectual Skills include two critical fluencies: in communications, both oral and written, and in quantitative applications. Analytic inquiry lies at the core of intellectual skills, encompassing what we do when we think — for example, scrutinizing, managing and configuring knowledge prior to communicating findings, perspectives and interpretations.

Applied Learning

Students demonstrate Applied Learning competencies not only through traditional assignments, but also by actively presenting evidence of mastery. They do this through performances in work settings, interpersonal communication and everyday encounters with economic, social and cultural affairs. In all of these cases, students call on their prior learning while embracing an opportunity for additional learning

Civic Learning

Civic Learning — which is related to but goes beyond the Intellectual Skill has been labeled “Engaging Diverse Perspectives” — also involves active engagement with others. Exposure to these different perspectives helps students develop their own responses to social, environmental and economic challenges at the local, national and global levels.

NSSE Results Support DQP Competencies

As indicated earlier, the specification of outcomes and competencies in the DQP immediately prompts the assessment question — “how would we know if our students have attained these outcomes?” Student engagement results are one source of such evidence of competencies in student learning processes and outcomes. NSSE results can be used systematically overtime, and particularly in concert with other direct measures of student learning, to determine the extent to which an institution is meeting its educational objectives, the strength of its distinct emphases or core learning outcomes, and the extent to which it has changed its core learning areas. NSSE data are especially valuable in identifying areas where institutions can improve. Even more, the results are actionable; that is, they point to aspects of student and institutional performance that institutions can use in shaping the curriculum, pedagogy, instructional emphases, and campus environment to improve educational quality.

Mapping NSSE to the Degree Profile Matrix

This toolkit is a guide to considering the relationship between the DQP and NSSE results. It is not intended to be a “formula” for mapping NSSE results to the Degree Profile matrix. It is a prompt to encourage institutions to think more broadly about how these data can be used as evidence of degree profiles and competencies. Again, NSSE results may be used to support and document institutional improvement efforts, but will be most meaningful when coupled with other measures of student learning outcomes.

The Degree Profile Matrix*

The Degree Profile Matrix presents specific descriptions of the competencies expected at three degree levels. The DQP spiderweb is a summary graphic but the entire DQP is represented in matrix format. The matrix specifies the degree level (e.g., associate, bachelor’s, master’s) on one axis, and the specific areas of knowledge or performance (e.g., written communication, use of specialized tools, using data) on the other axis. The framework of specific student learning outcomes is intended to benchmark degree credentials regardless of a student’s field of specialization. Only the bachelor’s credentials have been mapped to NSSE survey items in this toolkit.

To facilitate mapping DQP competencies to individual NSSE survey items, we have coded the individual Areas of Learning from the Degree Profile Matrix with the abbreviations and numbers noted. To provide additional context for the mapping, we have also included a short summary of the longer descriptions of each Area of Learning from Lumina’s DQP document.

Areas of Learning - Bachelor's Level

Specialized Knowledge (SK)

1. Defines and explains the boundaries, divisions, styles and practices of the field.
2. Defines and properly uses the principal terms in the field, both historical and contemporaneous.
3. Demonstrates fluency in the use of tools, technologies and methods in the field.
4. Evaluates, clarifies and frames a complex question or challenge using perspectives and scholarship from the student's major field and at least one other.
5. Constructs a project related to a familiar but complex problem in the field of study by assembling, arranging and reformulating ideas, concepts, designs or techniques
6. Constructs a summative project, paper or practice-based performance that draws on current research, scholarship and/or techniques in the field.

Broad, Integrative Knowledge (BIK)

1. Frames a complex scientific, social, technological, economic or aesthetic challenge or problem from the perspectives and literature of at least two academic fields and proposes a "best approach" to the question or challenge using evidence from those fields.
2. Produces, independently or collaboratively, an investigative, creative or practical work that draws on specific theories, tools and methods from at least two academic fields.
3. Explains a problem in science, the arts, society, human services, economic life or technology from the perspective of at least two academic fields, explains how the methods of inquiry and research in those disciplines can be brought to bear, judges the likelihood that the combination of disciplinary perspectives and methods would contribute to the resolution of the challenge, and justifies the importance of the challenge in a social or global context.

Intellectual Skills (IS)

1. Differentiates and evaluates theories and approaches to complex standard and nonstandard problems within his or her major field. (Analytic inquiry)
2. Incorporates multiple information resources in different media or languages in projects, papers or performances, with appropriate citations; and evaluates the relative merits of competing resources with respect to clearly articulated standards. (Use of information resources)
3. Constructs a cultural, political or technological alternate vision of either the natural or human world through a written project, laboratory report, exhibit,

performance, or community service design; defines the distinct patterns in this alternate vision; and explains how these patterns differ from current realities. (Engaging diverse perspectives)

4. Translates verbal problems into mathematical algorithms, constructs valid arguments using the accepted symbolic system of mathematical reasoning, and constructs accurate calculations,
5. estimates, risk analyses or quantitative evaluations of public information through presentations, papers or projects. (Quantitative fluency)
6. Constructs sustained, coherent argument or presentation on technical issues or processes in more than one language and in more than one medium for general and specific audiences; and works through collaboration to address a social, personal or ethical dilemma. (Communication fluency)

Applied Learning (AL)

1. Presents a project, paper, performance or other appropriate task linking knowledge and skills from work, community or research activities with knowledge acquired in academic disciplines; explains how elements were combined to shape meaning or findings; and shows the relationship to relevant scholarship.
2. Formulates a question on a topic that addresses more than one academic discipline or practical setting, locates appropriate evidence that addresses the question, evaluates the evidence in relation to the problem's contexts, and articulates conclusions that follow logically from analysis.
3. Completes a field-based assignment in the course of study that employs insights from others; evaluates a significant question in relation to concepts, methods or assumptions in at least one academic field; and explains the implications of learning outside the classroom.

Civic Learning (CL)

1. Explains diverse perspectives on a contested issue and evaluates insights gained from different kinds of evidence reflecting scholarly and community perspectives.
2. Develops and justifies a position on a public issue and relates this position to alternative views within the community or policy environment.
3. Collaborates in developing and implementing an approach to a civic issue, evaluates the process and, where applicable, weighs the results.

*Adapted from: Lumina Foundation for Education, Inc. (Jan. 2011). *The Degree Qualifications Profile*.

2006-2011 NSSE Survey Items Mapped to Degree Profile Matrix Criteria
DPM Criteria

1	Academic and Intellectual Experiences		
	a.	Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	
	b.	Made a class presentation	SK.6, IS.2, IS.4, IS.5, AL.1
	c.	Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	
	d.	Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	SK.4, BIK.1, BIK.2, BIK.3, AL.1, AL.2
	e.	Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	BIK.3, IS.3, IS.5, CL.1, CL.2 CL.3
	f.	Come to class without completing readings or assignments	
	g.	Worked with other students on projects during class	
	h.	Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	
	i.	Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	SK.4, BIK.1-BIK.3
	j.	Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	
	k.	Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course	AL.1, AL.3, CL.1-CL.3
	l.	Used an electronic medium (Listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	IS.2
	m.	Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	
	n.	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	
	o.	Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	
	p.	Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	
	q.	Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance	
	r.	Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	
	s.	Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	
	t.	Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.)	AL.3
	u.	Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	IS.3, IS.5, CL.1, CL.2
	v.	Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	IS.3, IS.5, CL.1, CL.2

2006-2011 NSSE Survey Items Mapped to Degree Profile Matrix Criteria - cont.

DPM Criteria

2	Mental Activities		
	a.	Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	
	b.	Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	SK.4-SK.6, IS.1-IS.3, IS.5, AL.1-AL.3
	c.	Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	SK.4-SK.6, IS.1-IS.3, AL.1-AL.3
	d.	Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	SK.4-SK.6, IS.1-IS.5, AL.1-AL.3, CL.1-CL.3
	e.	Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	
3	Reading and Writing		
	a.	Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	
	b.	Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	
	c.	Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more	
	d.	Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	
	e.	Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	
4	Problem Sets		
	a.	Number of problem sets that take you more than an hour to complete	
	b.	Number of problem sets that take you less than an hour to complete	
5	Exams		
	Mark the box that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work.		
6	Additional Collegiate Experiences		
	a.	Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance	
	b.	Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	
	c.	Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	
	d.	Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	CL.1-CL.3
	e.	Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	BIK.3, IS.3, AL.3, CL.1-CL.3
	f.	Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	CL.1-CL.3

2006-2011 NSSE Survey Items Mapped to Degree Profile Matrix Criteria - cont.

DPM Criteria

7	Enriching Educational Experiences		
	a.	Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	AL.1, AL.3, IS.3, CL.3
	b.	Community service or volunteer work	AL.1, AL.3, CL.3
	c.	Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	
	d.	Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	BIK.2, AL.1, AL.3
	e.	Foreign language coursework	IS.2, IS.5
	f.	Study abroad	AL.3
	g.	Independent study or self-designed major	BIK.2, AL.3
	h.	Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)	SK.5, SK.6, AL.1
8	Quality of Relationships		
	a.	Relationships with other students	
	b.	Relationships with faculty members	
	c.	Relationships with administrative personnel and offices	
9	Time Usage		
	a.	Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	
	b.	Working for pay on campus	
	c.	Working for pay off campus	
	d.	Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	
	e.	Relaxing & socializing (watching TV, partying, etc.)	
	f.	Providing care for dependents living with you (parents, children, spouse, etc.)	
	g.	Commuting to class (driving, walking, etc.)	
10	Institutional Environment		
	a.	Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	
	b.	Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	
	c.	Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	
	d.	Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	
	e.	Providing the support you need to thrive socially	

2006-2011 NSSE Survey Items Mapped to Degree Profile Matrix Criteria - cont.

DPM Criteria

	f.	Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	
	g.	Using computers in academic work	
11	Educational and Personal Growth		
	a.	Acquiring a broad general education	BIK.1-BIK.3, IS.1-IS.5, AL.1-AL.3, CL.1-CL.3
	b.	Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	SK.1-SK.6
	c.	Writing clearly and effectively	SK.2, BIK. 3, IS.5, AL.1-AL.3, CL.1
	d.	Speaking clearly and effectively	SK.2, BIK. 3, IS.5, AL.1-AL.3
	e.	Thinking critically and analytically	SK.3-SK.5, BIK.1-BIK.3, IS.1-IS.5, AL.1-AL.3, CL.1-CL.3
	f.	Analyzing quantitative problems	IS.4
	g.	Using computing and information technology	SK.3, IS.2
	h.	Working effectively with others	BIK.2, CL.3
	i.	Voting in local, state, or national elections	CL.2, CL.3
	j.	Learning effectively on your own	
	k.	Understanding yourself	
	l.	Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	BIK.3, IS.3, AL.3, CL.1, CL.2
	m.	Solving complex real-world problems	BIK.1, BIK.3, IS.3, IS.5, AL.1, CL.1-CL.3
	n.	Developing a personal code of values and ethics	CL.1, CL.2
	o.	Contributing to the welfare of your community	CL.1-CL.3
	p.	Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	
12	Academic Advising		
	Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?		
13	Satisfaction		
	How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?		
14	Satisfaction		
	If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?		

Additional Information:

Copies of this document are available on the NSSE Institute Web Site.

nsse.iub.edu/links/DQP_toolkit

We welcome any feedback or comments you may have on the NSSE DQP Toolkit. As noted earlier, the toolkit is a work in progress and we will continue to update it to reflect any changes in the Lumina criteria. We would also like to hear how you and your colleagues may be using the DQP with your NSSE data. Please contact Jillian Kinzie (jikinzie@indiana.edu) to share your example or discuss your use of the DQP.

Adapted from: Lumina Foundation for Education, Inc. (Jan. 2011). *The Degree Qualifications Profile. Defining degrees: A new direction for American higher education to be tested and developed in partnership with faculty, students, leaders, and stakeholders.*

NSSE DQP Toolkit, First Edition, June, 2012

NSSE Updated for 2013

We are pleased to announce the release of an updated NSSE survey. The update maintains NSSE's signature focus on providing diagnostic and actionable information related to engagement in effective educational practice, while incorporating what we have learned from more than a decade of research and experience with NSSE.

Look for the following in the updated NSSE instrument:

- Refinements of existing measures and new scales
- New measures related to effective teaching and learning
- Improved clarity and applicability of survey language, including terms related to online instruction
- Updated terminology, primarily related to technology

These enhancements reflect our continued commitment to improve and respond to contemporary assessment needs. The updated NSSE survey will advance institutional improvement efforts as it has been built upon rigorous testing, institutional feedback and recent advances in educational and survey research.

Find more details on the NSSE Web site. nsse.iub.edu/nsse2013.



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