

Niagara University General Education Goals

Niagara University's mission is to educate its students and enrich their lives through programs in the liberal arts and through career preparation, informed by the Catholic and Vincentian traditions. We seek to fulfill this mission through four enabling goals:

Our Mission

- 1. As a university, Niagara prepares its students for positions of responsibility in the professions and in the broader society. Through teaching, research and service in programs of study at the baccalaureate and graduate levels, Niagara University seeks to develop within its students a passion for learning.*
- 2. The university's commitment to the Catholic faith provides perspective in the search for truth and meaning. Catholic doctrine and its moral code inspire respect for the God-given dignity of every person and all faith traditions. Students experience the vision and reality of a gospel-based, values-centered education.*
- 3. As a Vincentian University, Niagara draws inspiration from St. Vincent de Paul, who organized his contemporaries to respond compassionately to people's basic needs. Continuing this tradition, Niagara seeks to inspire its students to serve all members of society, especially the poor and oppressed, in the local community and in the larger world.*
- 4. Overall, through its curricular and extra-curricular programs, Niagara University seeks to develop the whole person, mind, body, heart, and soul, for the benefit of one's personal and professional life.*

The first three enabling goals of our mission set forth a framework in which key components of our General Education program are developed, student learning outcomes articulated, and assessment measures developed. The fourth is an overarching goal to which the overall general education experience contributes.

Four key components of Niagara University's general education program closely link to the enabling goals: 1.) Critical Thinking Skills; 2.) Information Literacy Skills; 3.) Communication Skills and the Ability to Work Effectively with Diverse Groups; and 4.) A Strong Ethical and Values Foundation. **These four key components comprise the student learning goals for Niagara's General Education program.**

For each of the four key components of Niagara University's General Education program, there are clearly identified Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). These SLOs describe the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes that students develop as a result of successfully completing the General Education requirements at Niagara University.

1.) Critical Thinking Skills

Niagara prepares its students for positions of responsibility in the professions and in the broader society, including critical thinking skills.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrated ability to seek knowledge and truth by weighing evidence, evaluating facts and ideas critically, and thinking independently
- Demonstrated ability to use mathematical or statistical analysis in problem solving
- Demonstrated understanding of core critical thinking skills of different fields of study (natural science, social science, literature, history, humanities)
- Demonstrated understanding of key political, economic, diplomatic, social and scientific developments that are shaping the 21st century, and a willingness to explore their potential implications for the future
- Demonstrated understanding of Western/American heritage in literature and art

2.) Information Literacy Skills

Niagara prepares its students for positions of responsibility in the professions and in the broader society, including the development of information literacy skills and technological competency.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrated ability to analyze a problem (Identify the need for information)
- Demonstrated ability to conduct appropriate research (Access information)
- Demonstrated ability to differentiate between facts and popular misconceptions (Evaluate Information)
- Demonstrated ability to synthesize a solution (Uses information)
- Demonstrated ability to ethically attribute sources of information (Demonstrated ability to attribute information)
- Demonstrated ability to integrate emerging technologies into research and communication

3.) Communication Skills and the Ability to Work Effectively with Diverse Groups

Niagara prepares its students for positions of responsibility in the professions and in the broader society, including communication skills and the ability to work effectively with diverse groups.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively through written means
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively through oral means
- Demonstrate ability to communicate across cultural boundaries
- Demonstrated ability to function effectively in group settings to accomplish common goals

4.) A Strong Ethical and Values Foundation

Niagara prepares its students for positions of responsibility in the professions and in the broader society, through: perspective in the search for truth and meaning; respect for the God-given dignity of every person and all faith traditions; commitment to social justice; a strong ethical

foundation; and the inspiration to make a positive difference in the world by serving all members of society, especially the poor and oppressed.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrated knowledge of the religious and philosophical foundations and evolution of Western/American heritage
- Demonstrated appreciation of cultural diversity, the validity of other cultures and the social and political ramifications of cultural integration globally and at home
- Demonstrated knowledge of religions including Catholicism, and of the philosophical and religious basis of Catholic values
- Demonstrated knowledge of the philosophical foundations of ethics
- Demonstrated knowledge of current professional ethical norms or expectations
- Demonstrated sense of social justice, including awareness of Catholic thought; knowledge of St. Vincent De Paul, the Vincentian tradition and corresponding values; and a disposition to act on behalf of those in need toward fostering community change in the Vincentian Spirit