



Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile: Specialized Knowledge Outcomes
Summary of Student Interpretations
Spring 2012

In the spring of 2012, the Departments of Biology, Modern Languages, Nursing, and Psychology administered a survey to junior and senior level majors that asked them to reflect upon DQP learning outcomes and to assess the focus of these in their major as well as their achievement of them. In general, student response rates were strong, with an average response rate of 50%. Student responses across the departments are summarized below.

Please explain in your own words what the following learning outcome means and how it relates to your major:

Defining and explaining the boundaries and major sub-fields, styles, and/or practices in your field.

In general, students in all departments understood this outcome to reference being familiar with the various specialty areas within their majors. Across departments, students struggled to understand what was meant by “boundaries” in this outcome. For example, some Nursing students interpreted “boundaries” to reference boundaries in the care they deliver (i.e. what a nurse is able to do vs. doctor or other health care professional). Modern Languages students noted the term was unclear and sometimes noted language as a way to eliminate global boundaries. Less consensus was found among Nursing student’s understanding of this outcome for Nursing majors as some focused on specific nursing specialties and areas of practice while others focused on understanding the various career paths one might explore. Students in Biology and Psychology were more likely to have a common understanding of what this outcome meant in relationship their majors as focused on the various branches or sub-fields within the major.

Defining and properly using the principal specialized terms used in your field, both historical and contemporaneous.

Wide agreement was found among students across all disciplines as to the meaning of this outcome. Students indicated this meant to them having an understanding of the vocabulary used in their discipline with an importance placed on understanding how the disciplinary vocabulary has evolved over time. Students also expressed a deep appreciation for the importance of understanding the terminology in their respective fields. A few students across departments expressed some confusion with the term “principal specialized terms”. Modern Language students connected this to their language learned while Nursing students focused on practical application of diagnosis, etc.

Demonstrating the fluency in the use of tools, technologies, and methods common to your field.

Students in Nursing and Biology expressed agreement as to the meaning of this outcome as referencing an understanding of the various tools, equipment and technologies used in their fields. Students in Modern Languages were more unsure of how this outcome related to their major as some interpreted this to mean being able to use grammar, vocab etc. within their language of study. Some Modern Languages students also interpreted “fluency” as language fluency. Psychology students generally interpreted this outcome to refer to being familiar with research methodologies, statistical programs, behavioral tests, and/or group therapy methods.

Evaluating, clarifying, and framing a complex question or challenge, using perspectives and scholarship drawn from your major field and at least one other field.

Students in Psychology and Biology seemed to interpret this outcome as developing a research question relevant to their discipline drawing on the current literature. Nursing students, however, were more practice-oriented and interpreted this outcome in a few different ways including critical thinking, exploration of nursing literature, and application of clinical experiences and patient diagnosis. Modern Language students focused on the comprehension of complex texts and applying that to address larger questions. Some Modern Languages students also interpreted this outcome to mean being able to apply their language learned in a variety of settings and to utilize this to address specific issues. In general, many students across disciplines seemed to grasp the interdisciplinary aspect of this outcome.

Constructing a project related to a familiar but complex problem in your field of study by independently assembling, arranging, and reformulating ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques.

Students in Nursing, Biology and Psychology reported this outcome referred to the creation of original research within the major. Some students in nursing interpreted individual patients as “projects” or thought of projects from a more clinical perspective. Students in Modern Languages, while not focusing on research, instead focused on the creation of projects, presentations or papers independently to expand the understanding of a familiar concept.

Constructing a summative project, paper, performance or practice-based performance that draws on current research, scholarship and/or techniques in your field.

In general, students across majors agreed that this outcome referred to a major final project or paper; often the senior comprehensive. Students in Psychology and Biology agreed that this outcome referred to carrying out one’s own research, often through a final paper or project that draws on previous research in the field. Similarly, Nursing students understood this outcome as carrying out a project that incorporates both research and even their nursing skills. Nursing students connected this outcome with “evidence-based” practice. Modern Languages students also interpreted this outcome as creating a large project, but instead of tying in research from the field, these students focused on including past learning from the course and/or major.