

Department of Economics Undergraduate Student Learner Outcome Goals

The Department of Economics at Iowa State University currently has several 'general' goals for its B.S. graduates. These goals are for students to be able to 1.) solve problems and think critically, 2.) engage in economic reasoning**, 3.) demonstrate leadership skills, 4.) communicate effectively, 5.) make ethical decisions, 6.) understand environmental impacts of human activities, 7.) meet the challenges of living and working in a culturally diverse and global community, 8.) develop a capacity for innovativeness and creativity, and 9.) value the importance of life-long learning. These goals are typically patterned after university goals unless they are denoted with a *, which are college goals, or **, which are department-specific goals.

Regarding each of these general goals, there are more specific additional goals.

1. Problem Solving/Critical Thinking:

- a) Distinguish factual statements from opinions or value judgments.
- b) Summarize, analyze, and interpret research data and policy issues.
- c) Distinguish causal relationships from correlations.**
- d) Determine the accuracy of statements.
- e) Understand the usefulness of abstractions and models.**
- f) Identify assumptions and detect bias.
- g) Critically evaluate their arguments and those of others.
- h) Distinguish relevant information from irrelevant information.
- i) Establish priorities.
- j) Apply a holistic approach to solving complex, issue-laden, problems.

2. Economic Reasoning:**

- a) Distinguish positive ('what is') from normative ('what should be') economics.
- b) Determine the opportunity cost of alternatives.
- c) Apply the concepts of comparative advantage, specialization, and exchange to analyze resource allocation issues.
- d) Identify the conditions under which markets allocate resources efficiently or markets fail.
- e) Apply marginal economic analysis to solve problems.
- f) Conduct comparative static analyses.
- g) Pose and test hypotheses.
- h) Use scientific methods to identify optimal choices among economic alternatives.
- i) Identify decision-makers, objectives, choice variables, incentives, and constraints.
- j) Understand how conclusions depend on assumptions.

3. Leadership:

- a) Organize, facilitate, and participate effectively in a group, team, or organization.
- b) Define a problem or opportunity, implement an action planning process, work toward a goal and justify actions taken.

4. Professional, Interpersonal and Cross-cultural Communications:

- a) Communicate economic and business concepts to professionals, organizations, governments, and the general public.**
- b) Obtain information by accessing electronic or traditional media, listening, or by observation.**
- c) Read, listen, observe and reflect.
- d) Speak and write clearly and persuasively.
- e) Prepare and present effective visual, oral, written, and electronic presentations.

5. Ethics:

- a) Define and assess their ethical perspectives, sense of moral responsibility, and values.
- b) Identify and critically evaluate contemporary ethical and moral issues in professional and private life.

6. Environmental Awareness:*

- a) Explain the physical and biological interactions within ecosystems.
- b) Explain how human activities impact the environment and how societies are affected by environmental change.

7. International/Multi-Cultural Awareness:

U.S. Diversity—Students should achieve two of the following outcomes:

- a) Articulate how their personal life experiences and choices fit within the context of the larger mosaic of U.S. society, indicating how they have confronted and critically analyzed their perceptions and assumptions about diversity-related issues.
- b) Analyze and evaluate the contributions of various underrepresented social groups in shaping the history and culture of the U.S.
- c) Analyze individual and institutional forms of discrimination based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, class, etc.
- d) Analyze how cultural diversity and cooperation among social groups affect U.S. society.

International Perspectives—Students should achieve two of the following outcomes:

- a) Analyze the accuracy and relevancy of their own worldviews and anticipate how people from other nations may perceive that worldview.
- b) Describe and analyze how cultures and societies around the world are formed, are sustained, and evolve.
- c) Analyze and evaluate the influence of global issues in their own lives.
- d) Describe the values and perspectives of cultures other than their own and discuss how the influence individuals' perceptions of global issues or events.
- e) Communicate competently in a second language.

8. Entrepreneurship*

- a) Demonstrate innovativeness and creativity regardless of context.
- b) Identify and pursue opportunities that produce value.
- c) Be persistent in shepherding necessary resources and managing associated risk to facilitate change.

9. Life-long Learning:

- a) Articulate how continued learning after graduation will enrich their lives.
- b) Identify and participate in new areas for learning beyond the classroom and after graduation.

Established: November 2004 (subcommittee, Department of Economics)

Last Revised: August 1, 2016