Syracuse University

Shared Competencies Course Tagging Toolkit

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A letter from your colleagues

In December 2018, the University Senate approved six Shared Competencies and corresponding framing language to serve as a campus-wide set of undergraduate student learning goals. These learning goals will not only help students identify common connections between seemingly different learning experiences but will also help the University meet the Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation standards.

Course tags have several benefits for students.
- They highlight key knowledge domains and skill sets students can expect to learn in a course.
- They enable students to see, reflect on, and explain connections between individual courses, assignments, and experiences.
- They suggest useful language and highlight tangible examples to discuss during their job or graduate search processes.
- They aid students in navigating various New York State, external accreditation, and major requirements, while developing a course schedule that produces an enriching learning experience.

Course tagging presents an opportunity for academic departments to ensure continuity across course sections and allows faculty to engage in collaborative conversations about course design and curricula. Several of Syracuse University's peer and aspirational institutions engage in similar processes:
- Columbia University
- Harvard University
- Stanford University
- University at Buffalo
- University of Chicago
- University of Maryland
- University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

If you have any questions or would like to meet and discuss the process, please contact us!

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Shared Competencies & Framing Language

Syracuse University prepares undergraduate students for professional and personal success through six institutional learning goals called the Shared Competencies. The Shared Competencies enable students to communicate their learning experiences, provide pathways for academic development, and integrate different aspects of a Syracuse University education.

Competency	Framing Language
Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion	Reflection on the dynamic relationships among power, inequality, identities, and social structures. Thoughtful engagement with one's values, intersectional identities, experiences, and diverse perspectives and people. Application of ethical and inclusive decision-making in the context of personal, academic, professional, and collaborative pursuits.
Critical & Creative Thinking	Exploration and synthesis of ideas, artifacts, issues, and events to inform and evaluate arguments, develop new insights, and produce creative work. Reflection on, and application of divergent modes of inquiry, analysis, and innovation to research, knowledge, and artistic creation.
Scientific Inquiry & Research Skills	Application of scientific inquiry and problem solving in various contexts. Analysis of theories, replication of procedures, and rethinking existing frameworks. Supporting arguments through research, data, and quantitative and qualitative evidence that can generate new knowledge.
Civic & Global Responsibility	Knowledge, exploration, and analysis of the complexity surrounding interdependent local, national, and global affairs. Engagement in responsible, collaborative, and inclusive civic and cross-cultural learning, with an emphasis on public, global, and historical issues.
Communication Skills	Effective individual, interpersonal, and collaborative presentation and development of ideas through oral, written, and other forms of expression to inform, persuade, or inspire.
Information Literacy & Technological Agility	Identification, collection, evaluation, and responsible use of information. Effective, ethical, and critical application of various technologies and media in academic, creative, personal, and professional endeavors.

Conceptual Framework

The Shared Competencies enhance undergraduate education through an integrated learning approach. Integrative learning fosters a student's ability to learn, connect, and demonstrate the competencies across their experiences by:

- putting theory into practice;
- considering the perspectives of different disciplines to advance collaborative problem-solving;
- adapting the skills learned in one situation to problems encountered in another; and
- reflecting on connections made over time between academic, co-curricular, and preprofessional settings.[1]

Undergraduate students develop competencies through their major degree requirements, liberal arts requirements, and experiences. Course tagging presents an opportunity for faculty to help students connect the dots between course assignments and the university-wide learning goals. Courses that are tagged have specific course learning objectives and assignments that are aligned with the Shared Competencies framing language and rubrics.

Shared Competencies Rubrics

The Shared Competencies Rubrics were developed by communities of practice to articulate what Syracuse University students should know and be able to demonstrate by the time they graduate. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in assessing and reflecting on undergraduate student learning. Assessment results are used to study equity in the student learning experience, facilitate professional development for faculty and staff, build on student strengths, and close learning gaps. Review the following rubrics to see which Shared Competency tag would best align to your course.

- Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills
- Civic and Global Responsibility
- Communication Skills
- Information Literacy and Technological Agility

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[1] Miller, R. (2005). Integrative learning and assessment. *Peer Review, 7* (Summer/Fall 2005), 3/4. Retrieved from https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA137915258&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=15411389&p=AONE&sw=w&userGroupName=nysl_ce_syr&aty=ip

Logistics

The deadline to complete the course tagging process is September 1, 2024 for the 2025-26 catalog year. This deadline allows the Office of Academic Affairs to review submissions with enough time to follow up with departments to seek clarification if needed, allows departments to respond, and ensures course tags are included in the 2025-26 Course Catalog and course registration process. Faculty can utilize this checklist to navigate the course tagging process:

Suggested Steps for Course Tagging:
Set aside time during a department meeting to review the Shared Competencies and corresponding rubrics.
If courses have a teaching rotation or are taught across multiple sections, engage all faculty stakeholders in a conversation about how the course tags and assignments will be consistent year to year or across course sections.
If a course is required for multiple academic programs within a school/college (for instance, ECS101 is required for all engineering majors) consult with your associate dean/program coordinator to determine how it should be tagged for the school/college.
For each **required** course/experience or **elective** that may fulfill a distribution requirement, submit a syllabus to the Office of Academic Affairs for review via the course tagging form. The Office of Academic Affairs will review the syllabus and suggest tags based on the course learning objectives and assignments in the syllabus.
Consider using the syllabus as a motivating tool to help students connect the dots between course assignments, course learning objectives, and the course tag. Please refer to an example on page 7.
Reflect on your curriculum map with your course tags in mind. Do students have the opportunity to learn and develop all six competencies through the required courses? If not, consider where students might develop the competencies either in liberal arts requirements and/or experiences.

Course Tagging Rubric

The University Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies created the following rubric dimensions to review course tags. The Office of Academic Affairs revised the dimensions when the process changed to a syllabus review format; however, preserved the intention of the original dimensions.

The Office of Academic Affairs will use this rubric to suggest course tags to the department based on submitted syllabi; department faculty may then approve or justify a change in tags. Syllabi must receive a total score of 2 or higher and each dimension must receive a score of at least 1.

Dimension	Exceeds Criteria 2	Meets Criteria 1	Criteria Not Evident 0
Course Learning Objectives Alignment	Multiple course learning objectives <u>from the syllabus</u> are aligned to a competency.	At least one course learning objective <u>from the syllabus</u> aligns to a competency.	Course learning objectives do not align to a competency and/or the syllabus does not contain a specific section on course learning objectives.
Assignment Alignment & Weight	The connection between assignment(s) and a specific competency are evident in the syllabus. Assignment(s) weight is greater than 30% of their course grade.	The connection between assignment(s) and a specific competency are evident in the syllabus. Assignment(s) weight is equal to 30% of their course grade.	Connection between assignment(s) and a specific competency is not evident in the syllabus and/or assignment weight is not clear in the syllabus.

Syllabus Integration: Connecting the Dots for Students

The course syllabus is an ideal place for students to see how the knowledge, skills, and work produced in class connects to their course, major and institutional learning goals. Below is an example from Syracuse University's MAX 302 syllabus which communicates the connection between the program learning outcomes, course learning objectives, assignments, and Shared Competencies course tags. More examples can be found on the syllabi examples webpage.

CCE PROGRAM VALUES & Learning Outcome Statements	MAX 302 Course Learning Objectives. This semester you will:	Course Assignments	Two Syracuse University Shared Competencies Stressed in MAX 302
VALUES & ETHICS – Students will be able to evaluate ethical practices of citizenship and civic and community engagement in light of different public philosophies, societal and community values, and their own experiences.	Train and get certified formally to conduct ethical social science research.	Reflection #3: CITI Training for Human Subjects Research	
RESEARCH & DISCOVERY – Students will be able to utilize social science research methodologies to discover community and societal facts and values.	Explore Civic Studies research and the research that is associated with your companion major(s).	Reflections #1 and #2	SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY & RESEARCH SKILLS
	Research and write an annotated bibliography, literature review and final research report.	Annotated Bibliography Literature Review Final Research Report	
	Learn about and practice social science research design.	Research Prospectus Revise & Resubmit	
COMMUNITY & CONTEXT – Students will be able to analyze and evaluate the development of civic life in specific locational settings, from global to local.	Identify, analyze, and evaluate facts and values associated with the community and organizations where you believe your MAX 401 Senior Action Plan will occur.	Reflection #4	
COLLABORATION & ENGAGEMENT – Students will be able to interact and work with diverse communities using appropriate and ethical practices.	Present orally the major findings of your research at a public poster session.	Research Poster and Public Presentation	
DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION – Students will be able to create a feasible and sustainable community and/ or civic engagement project or policy with a partner organization.	Create and use a research prospectus as the basis for a research project.	Research Prospectus	CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING