

Blue Ribbon Committee  
Statement of Philosophy  
1986-1987

The blue ribbon committee was called into being to study major educational problems arising from our changing times. Indeed, educators all over the country are concerned with the proliferation of knowledge and its rapid obsolescence, with the pace of new developments and the invention of new technologies that call into question the usefulness of much of conventional education. Furthermore, we are facing major changes in student demographics, creating new problems in teaching and learning.

After months of study, we have adopted the view that a lifelong ability to learn would be more important to our students than any specific knowledge that we might give them. It follows that we as a faculty should consider the idea of education as a structure of competencies rather than as an aggregate of specific information.

The following competencies were approved as competencies that should be possessed by all UALR graduates:

Aesthetic Experience  
Critical Thinking  
Ethical and Moral consciousness  
Historical Awareness  
International Awareness  
Mathematical Literacy  
Philosophy and Methods of Science  
Social and Cultural Awareness  
Verbal Literacy

## COMPETENCIES FOR GRADUATES

1. All graduates should be able to demonstrate competence in **reading, writing, speaking, and listening**. Graduates should be able to demonstrate the ability: to read, understand, and interpret the content of written discourse in a variety of disciplines and styles of writing: to write developed, structured, and correct standard English; to speak well and understand the different means and ends of interpersonal communication, small group communication, and public communication; and to listen, to understand, and to interpret the speech to others.
2. All graduates should understand the basic principles of mathematics as a system for representing facts and relationships logically. **Mathematical competence** for graduates, however, consists of three additional components: facility with calculation, an understanding of information conveyed in mathematical and graphic form, and an understanding of the computer as a symbol manipulating device.
3. All graduates should possess the **historical awareness** that allows them to 1) appreciate their historical heritage, 2) appreciate the significance of historical sequence, 3) analyze critically any problems – political, social, economic, intellectual, artistic, technological – in terms of its historical roots.
4. All graduates should be sensitive to the aesthetic components of human experience, and be able to identify and respond to various kinds of aesthetic expression. Graduates should also understand the interrelationship among various art forms and between these art forms and society. This **aesthetic experience** includes appreciation or involvement includes appreciation or involvement in one or more of the arts – literature, theatre, music, and the visual arts.
5. All graduates should develop an understanding of the **philosophy and methods of science** and how these methods are applied to the investigation of the world. The methods of science include gathering and interpreting data, formulating hypotheses, constructing theories and modeling. Graduates should develop an awareness of past and present advances in science and technology and their effect on society, as well as an awareness of the ways in which scientific knowledge has a direct impact on intellectual history and their own views of the universe and the human condition.
6. All graduates should become aware of their own value systems in relation to other systems. This **ethical and moral consciousness** should allow students the ability to recognize issues that may arise from scientific and technological developments which may be inferred from aesthetic and humanistic works. Graduates should also be able to assess values and practices critically in their own profession or discipline.
7. All graduates should be skilled in **inquiry, logical reasoning, and critical analysis**. Graduates should be able to acquire and evaluate relevant information synthesize information in new and useful ways, and offer solutions to problems.

8. All graduates should demonstrate a **social and cultural awareness** that allows them to understand and respect ethnic, racial, and gender difference. Graduates should be able to relate present social institutions and events to the history, condition, and values of different groups within American society.
9. All graduates should develop an **international awareness** that allows them to participate in an interdependent world. They should possess knowledge of various aspects of another culture – religion, government, language, literature, art, history, and geography – and be able to examine their own culture, society and nation from this international perspective.