

6 STEPS TO EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

Macalester faculty and staff have developed six learning goals for students to achieve by graduation. Use these goals to navigate your learning experiences at Macalester, e.g., in meetings with your faculty advisor, when selecting particular courses, in choosing co-curricular programs, or when applying for a job on campus.

macalester.edu/sixsteps



MACALESTER COLLEGE



By the time you graduate...

1

YOU WILL DEMONSTRATE INTELLECTUAL DEPTH AND BREADTH.

You will study a wide range of disciplines. Our general education requirements introduce you to different ways of approaching questions. In addition, you will be required to have a major, which allows you to go deep within one or more areas of study. The combination of a wide variety of subjects and one you know well will allow you to use multiple perspectives to analyze issues and problems.



2

YOU WILL THINK CRITICALLY AND ANALYZE EFFECTIVELY.

You will apply critical thinking skills to analyze issues, question assumptions, and evaluate relevant information (books, literature, data, and more) before you come to a conclusion. Critical thinking is a cornerstone of a liberal arts education.





You will be able to...

- Use bodies of knowledge, theories, or methodologies within a field to analyze issues, solve problems, express or appreciate aesthetic values, or achieve desired goals;
- Use bodies of knowledge, theories, or methodologies to recognize and address unresolved questions or issues in a field;
- Compare and contrast how different fields analyze issues, solve problems, express aesthetic values, or achieve desired goals;
- Produce novel applications, creative expressions, or new insights connected to bodies of knowledge from one or more fields.

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- Question both stated and unstated assumptions and explore issues from multiple perspectives;
 - Gather information (quantitative, qualitative, interpretive, aesthetic, normative) most relevant to an issue;
 - Recognize when further information is necessary;
 - Synthesize and critique relevant information to formulate defensible conclusions, build upon existing knowledge, or create novel ideas;
 - Reevaluate conclusions when considering new information relevant to an issue.
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By the time you graduate...

3

YOU WILL COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY.

You will inform, express, or persuade effectively in a variety of forms, including writing, speech, and visual media. This will be important as you share information and ideas with others in a variety of contexts.



4

YOU WILL DEMONSTRATE INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE.

You will have the knowledge and self-awareness to understand how best to interact with others using sensitivity and kindness. You will achieve this goal as you learn about other cultures and identities within the Macalester community and beyond.





You will be able to...

- Consider audience perspectives or needs and the context in which communication occurs;
 - Articulate findings, ideas, positions, or perspectives, or convey information: (a) in writing using many genres and styles; (b) in oral form in prepared presentations, group discussions, or performances; (c) in visual forms such as graphs, illustrations, art work and multimedia;
 - Listen attentively when interacting with others, either as presenters or audience members.
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- Engage with ideas and people that challenge your cultural perspectives;
 - Reflect on how your cultural background may affect interactions or relationships with others;
 - Demonstrate empathy by acting in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings and perspectives of another cultural group;
 - Articulate the complexity arising from interrelationships among various aspects of culture, such as language, history, values, politics, religious practices, and unequal distributions of power and resources;
 - Navigate differences by drawing on relevant cultural frames of reference and adapting perspectives and behaviors accordingly.
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By the time you graduate...

5

YOU WILL MAKE INFORMED CHOICES AND ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY.

You will make informed choices based on your ethical standards. Ethical considerations often vary across cultural and community lines. Understanding others' values and taking into account your own goals and beliefs when making a decision is a crucial part of your Macalester education.

6

YOU WILL ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITIES.

During your time at Macalester, you will participate in many activities that enrich communities. This can happen anywhere—your home community, the Twin Cities area, even internationally. When you engage with other communities, you can apply what you have learned from your experiences at Mac and contribute to the common good.



You will be able to...

- Discern how your choices and ethical stances are grounded in larger community values or ethical standards;
- Recognize and compare ethical standards associated with communities different from your own;
- Articulate a well-reasoned choice or ethical stance on an issue, while understanding its limits;
- Anticipate the intended and unintended implications of your choices and ethical stances;
- Respond accordingly to the consequences of your choices and ethical stances.

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- Identify distinctive characteristics of communities (e.g., beliefs, history, expectations, assets, strengths, issues, and challenges);
 - Describe interrelationships among local, national, and international issues and how they affect communities;
 - Participate in activities that contribute to communities while respecting their distinctive characteristics (e.g., beliefs, history, expectations, assets, strengths, issues, and challenges);
 - Reflect upon your role, motivation, and actions with regard to your involvement within and across communities;
 - Work collaboratively within and across communities to achieve a civic aim.
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Macalester's Mission

"Macalester is committed to being a preeminent liberal arts college with an educational program known for its high standards for scholarship and its special emphasis on internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society." (approved by the Board of Trustees in 1992)

Your future at Macalester is largely up to you! Your Macalester education will be transformative. You will have learning opportunities within and outside the classroom that will prepare you to be a learner throughout your life, to seek academic excellence, to take responsibility for your choices, and more. It will be an exciting and fun four-year process, from which you will gain important skills before you graduate.

The mission statement touches on four key parts of a Mac education: scholarship, internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society. While these are listed as four separate things, you couldn't be a Mac student without any one of them—and combined, they demonstrate what Mac is all about.

SCHOLARSHIP

Students are expected to pursue academic work with high standards both in and out of the classroom. Scholarship means taking challenging classes, reading in the library late into the night, writing and editing an essay, or participating in a class discussion. Your engagement with academic work will occur outside of classroom assignments too—in your dorm room at two in the morning, as you and your roommate pick apart a reading from your first-year course, in Cafe Mac, in discussions at the Department of Multicultural Life, or at the Institute for Global Citizenship.

INTERNATIONALISM

As the world gets smaller and smaller, metaphorically, everyone engages more and more with people from a variety of perspectives. Whether you are from another country or just live down the hall from someone who is, learning how to interact respectfully with people from different countries will be an invaluable part of your Mac experience.

MULTICULTURALISM

The Mac community includes people from a wide variety of social groups and identities. As a student at Macalester, you must understand different experiences and identities, understand privilege, and be aware of how to create a comfortable environment for all members of our community.

SERVICE TO SOCIETY

Macalester is located in the heart of the Twin Cities. Your learning experiences will get you out into this community and beyond. As you explore our surroundings, you must understand how to contribute to communities as partners, respecting and appreciating differences and ultimately enhancing these communities.

This introduction to Macalester's institutional learning goals and outcomes was written by the Assessment Office. Cole Callahan '14 and Madeline Spolin '15, student employees in the Assessment Office, were the lead authors. We also acknowledge the Student Learning Committee for its work in developing the institutional learning goals and outcomes, which were adopted in 2012.
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