

# Core Competencies Inventory

## ***What are core competencies?***

Core competencies are learning proficiencies that show your capabilities in applying specific academic skills. Assignments, projects and experiences that accurately represent your learning can demonstrate competencies. Competencies are generally applicable across courses and across majors. For example, you can learn a critical-thinking process and use this core competency in many assignments in a variety of classes. Core competencies make up the big-picture of your learning. The Appalachian State University General Education courses are designed to support your learning in *Critical & Creative Thinking, Communicating Effectively, Making Local to Global Connections and Understanding the Responsibilities of Community Membership*. The Core Competencies Inventory has outlined a variety of subsets related to our four General Education goals. By the end of your first two years at this university you will have multiple opportunities to explore many of these competency subsets. The inventory is designed to assist you in articulating your related learning experiences.

When writing about your core competencies, you should aim for demonstrating evidence that shows or describe how you apply the competencies. If you do not have demonstrated evidence (papers, projects videos, presentations, photos or other media) you can write a highly descriptive experiential reflection. An experiential reflection should answer questions such as what did you learn? How did you apply the concept/process? What did this teach you about other people, majors, concepts, and ideas? What did you create? Why did you create it and how will you apply this to your life, profession, and future educational pursuits? A well balanced, ePortfolio will include both demonstrated evidence and relevant experiential reflections.

When initially completing this inventory first address the areas where you write up an authentic **experiential reflection related to the skill**. Then go back through the inventory and address areas where you can additionally provide supportive artifacts or documentation that demonstrate your skill in action. The areas where you have **both evidence and reflection** will be your areas of notable strengths. Many students will find there are relatively few areas of this inventory where they can provide compelling **evidence** of the competencies described. For a professional ePortfolio you are best served by carefully choosing few highly focused examples from several categories in the inventory. Plan to come back to this inventory and add your accumulating evidence, experience, and reflections as they evolve. Over the span of your education you can expect to add significantly to these strengths.

*This inventory is based on descriptions from the AAC&U Value rubrics, a set of commonly used assessments tools for evaluating student learning in Colleges and Universities.*

## Critical and Creative Thinking

### Critical Thinking

Critical thinking involves researching, analyzing, and looking at different viewpoints before drawing a formal opinion or conclusion. It can be something as simple as checking the sources of an article or as complex as formulating and testing a hypothesis.

Core Competency	Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description	Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts
<p><u>Explaining Issues</u> <i>Thoroughly explaining the problem and its impact on the community and/or world. Delivering all relevant information in a clear and concise manner for a full, well-rounded understanding of the issue.</i></p>		
<p><u>Evidence</u> <i>Information is accurate and obtained from a reliable source. Evidence is substantial enough to use for drawing conclusions and all expert viewpoints are thoroughly explored and questioned.</i></p>		
<p><u>Influence of Context and Assumptions</u> <i>Carefully analyzing your viewpoints/assumptions as well as expert viewpoints/assumptions. Evaluating the relevance of your viewpoint and its connection to the topic when presenting your position.</i></p>		
<p><u>Stating your Position</u> <i>Your position is thoroughly researched, imaginative, and discusses the complexities of the issue. Acknowledging alternative positions and the limits of your position. Similar and alternative viewpoints are synthesized into your position.</i></p>		
<p><u>Drawing Conclusions, Outcomes, and Impact</u> <i>Drawing conclusions that are logical and clearly supported by the evidence. Demonstrating an ability to evaluate information and place evidence and perspectives in priority order.</i></p>		

## Creative Thinking

Creative thinking is your ability to understand information and use it in interesting and original ways. This includes thinking, reacting, and working in an innovative way and risk-taking. Creative thinking skills can be developed through organizing information in new ways, creating visually dynamic presentations, and creative writing.

Core Competency	Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description	Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts
<p><u>Competencies Within Your Major</u> <i>Using creative thinking and processing in relation to your major or field of study.</i></p>		
<p><u>Ability to Take Risks</u> <i>Trying new things, working outside of the parameters of an assignment, actively seeking opportunities to try new approaches, addressing new or controversial topics, advocating for unconventional, unpopular, or neglected topics and/or theories.</i></p>		
<p><u>Problem Solving</u> <i>Developing logical solutions to a problem as well as recognizing the consequence of the solution. Using logic to state the reason for using the proposed solution.</i></p>		
<p><u>Embracing Contradictions</u> <i>Trying new things, working outside of the parameters of an assignment, actively seeking opportunities to try new approaches, addressing new or controversial topics, advocating for unconventional, unpopular, or neglected topics.</i></p>		
<p><u>Thinking Innovatively</u> <i>Thinking and presenting information in a unique or innovative manner. Uses novelty of idea, product, or format to inspire, extend, and create new knowledge. Presenting knowledge, ideas etc. in a way that crosses boundaries of present knowledge.</i></p>		
<p><u>Connecting, Synthesizing, and Transforming Information</u> <i>Using previous knowledge and experience to synthesize and transform information into a new idea or form.</i></p>		

## Communicating Effectively

### Oral Communication

Oral communication involves your ability to present dynamic, purposeful, public presentations which are designed to increase knowledge, promote change in your listeners, and develop understanding. Evidence of oral communication could be a recording of a debate, a presentation, or a monologue.

Core Competency	Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description	Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts
<p><u>Organization</u> <i>Using organizational patterns such as introduction, transitional phrases, appropriate sequencing of the body material, and conclusions. Presenting material in a clear and cohesive manner.</i></p>		
<p><u>Language</u> <i>Adapting language based on audience. Using language in a memorable and original way which enhances the effectiveness of the presentation.</i></p>		
<p><u>Delivery</u> <i>Incorporating appropriate delivery techniques such as eye gaze, facial expressions, gestures, and vocal inflection. Using these techniques to create a compelling, polished presentation.</i></p>		
<p><u>Supporting Material</u> <i>Using varied supporting materials such as facts, examples, anecdotes, analogies, metaphors, quotes statistics, and illustrations. Incorporating these materials to support and lend credibility to your presentation.</i></p>		
<p><u>Central Message</u> <i>Ensuring your central message is memorable, compelling, and strongly supported. Clearly and concisely presenting your main points.</i></p>		

## Reading

The reading core competency involves your ability to understand and construct meaning from the materials you read. This can be developed through writing papers based on novels, articles, or other written accounts/data.

Core Competency	Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description	Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts
<p><u>Comprehension</u> <i>Understanding context, metaphor, and implications of the material. Applying possible implications outside of the assignment or beyond the authors intended message.</i></p>		
<p><u>Genre</u> <i>Identifying text across genres. Adjusting reading strategies based on knowledge of genres.</i></p>		
<p><u>Relationship to Text</u> <i>Evaluating the significance or relevance of texts across varied disciplines. Evaluating texts based on their contributions or consequences.</i></p>		
<p><u>Analyzing</u> <i>Analyzing text for related structures, thematic material, and related ideas to build knowledge within or across texts or disciplines.</i></p>		
<p><u>Interpreting</u> <i>Analyzing and understanding the blue-prints or meaning of the text.</i></p>		
<p><u>Reader's Voice</u> <i>Discussing texts with an ethical, independent, and intellectual disposition to facilitate further discussion.</i></p>		

## Written Communication

Written communication is your ability to communicate your ideas through writing. It includes learning how to write in different styles, genres, and keeping in mind the audience for each respective style or genre. Written communication can be developed through professional writing such as cover letters and resumes, or academic writing for courses.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description</b>	<b>Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts</b>
<u>Context/Purpose</u> <i>Keeping your audience in mind while addressing purpose and context of the writing task.</i>		
<u>Content Development</u> <i>Incorporating lush examples and interesting, compelling, and relevant content which supports the point of the piece. Using the content to convey your sense of understanding and mastery of your subject.</i>		
<u>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</u> <i>Demonstrating an understanding of writing conventions within your major including citation formatting, content, organization, and stylistic choices.</i>		
<u>Sources/Evidence</u> <i>Using reliable, credible, high quality sources from within the field of your topic. Using these sources to support, add credibility, and develop your writing.</i>		
<u>Syntax/Mechanics</u> <i>Writing without errors and incorporating a high level of grace and fluidity into your writing.</i>		

## Local to Global

### Global Learning

Global learning is an analysis of global systems such as political, cultural, natural, economic, and social systems. It also considers the impact of these systems on the earth’s sustainability. Through global learning, you should try to understand the effect of local and global communities’ actions, seek to be open-minded about various global systems, and consider important global issues in an analytical and collaborative manner. Experiences that can help your global learning could be studying abroad, attending service trip, or taking a cultural studies course.

Core Competency	Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description	Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts
<u>Global Self-Awareness</u> <i>Understanding your identity and its role within a global context. Addressing significant issues in the human and natural world, and how your identity affects these issues.</i>		
<u>Perspective Taking</u> <i>Considering various perspectives (cultural, ethical, disciplinary) in complex situations affecting the natural and human world.</i>		
<u>Cultural Diversity</u> <i>Understanding multiple and varied world views, experiences, and power structures and applying that knowledge to produce meaningful interactions with other cultures.</i>		
<u>Personal and Social Responsibility</u> <i>Personally addressing ethical, social, and environmental challenges that affect global systems. Evaluating the broader implications and consequences of interventions.</i>		
<u>Understanding Global Systems</u> <i>Using knowledge of the historic and contemporary role of various organizations and their impact on the human and natural world. Advocating to solve complex issues or problems in the world.</i>		
<u>Applying Knowledge to Contemporary Global Contexts</u> <i>Using your knowledge and skills to create workable, sophisticated, and appropriate solutions to address global problems.</i>		

## Intercultural Knowledge and Competence

Intercultural knowledge and competence is your awareness of and behaviors toward various cultures; it supports effective and appropriate interaction in various cultural contexts. You can gain experience in intercultural knowledge through cultural studies courses, studying abroad, leadership opportunities in a diverse club, and student mentoring.

Core Competency	Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description	Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts
<p><u>Cultural Self-Awareness</u> <i>Acknowledging and articulating your own biases and cultural rules; awareness of how experiences have shaped your world view and understanding of how to respond to biases</i></p>		
<p><u>Cultural Worldview</u> <i>Understanding the complexities of important elements in people of other cultures such as history, economy, values, social norms, traditions, politics, and beliefs.</i></p>		
<p><u>Empathy</u> <i>Demonstrating an ability to understand intercultural experience of others and act in a supportive manner and recognizing the feelings of another cultural group.</i></p>		
<p><u>Verbal and Nonverbal Communication</u> <i>Understands various cultural norms with regards to gesture, body contact, and personal space which people use to communicate. Uses this knowledge to skillfully communicate and understand people from other cultures.</i></p>		
<p><u>Curiosity</u> <i>Having a drive to learn about diverse cultures, and seeking accurate, articulate sources which expand your knowledge of other cultures.</i></p>		
<p><u>Openness</u> <i>Purposefully initiates interactions with people from diverse cultures. Valuing meaningful interactions with various cultures.</i></p>		



***Responsibilities of Community Membership***

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is using your individual skills, knowledge, and talents to benefit your community and civic life; it means making a difference in the community. Civic engagement improves the quality-of-life in civic life and can include political involvement, volunteering, organizing fundraisers, and anything that benefits the community as a whole.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description</b>	<b>Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts</b>
<p><u>Diversity of Communities and Cultures</u> <i>Adjusting your attitudes and beliefs as a result of working within and learning from diverse communities and cultures. Actively promoting engagement with diverse cultures and communities.</i></p>		
<p><u>Analyzing Knowledge</u> <i>Connecting your knowledge and learning from your discipline to civic engagement and participation in civic life, politics, and government.</i></p>		
<p><u>Civic Identity and Commitment</u> <i>Providing evidence of civic action and involvement. Describing how these experiences have shaped you and how it relates to your civic identity and commitment to further civic actions.</i></p>		
<p><u>Communication</u> <i>Using language to appropriately express, listen, and adapt to others to create and maintain relationships to further civic action.</i></p>		
<p><u>Reflection and Actions</u> <i>Demonstrating independence and initiative in leading a team to complete civic activities, and demonstrating reflective insights about aims and accomplishments.</i></p>		
<p><u>Civic Contexts and Structures</u> <i>Actively works to collaborate within and across community contexts and structures to complete civic aims.</i></p>		

## Ethical Reasoning

Ethical reasoning is the ability to recognize and discern between right and wrong conduct. It includes listening to different ethical perspectives, assessing your individual ethical values, and considering the consequences of actions, and analyzing your views as they evolve. Activities that develop this type of reasoning could be debate and studying philosophy.

Core Competency	Demonstrated Evidence: Type and Description	Experiential Reflection: Keywords and Concepts
<p><u>Ethical Self-Awareness</u> <i>Analyzing your core beliefs and the origin of your core beliefs to add depth and understanding to discussions.</i></p>		
<p><u>Understanding Ethical Perspectives</u> <i>Naming ethical theories and explaining the meaning and details of theories.</i></p>		
<p><u>Recognition of Ethical Issues</u> <i>Recognizing complicated ethical issues and understanding the various layers and complexities of said issues. Understanding the cross-relationships among various issues.</i></p>		
<p><u>Applying Ethical Perspectives</u> <i>Independently applying ethical perspectives to various situations or ethical questions. Considering the implications of your solution or response.</i></p>		
<p><u>Evaluating Different Perspectives</u> <i>Stating your position on an ethical issue as well as objections, implications, and assumptions of your position. Reasonably defending against objections to your position.</i></p>		