

Understanding Responsibilities of Community Membership
Appalachian State University, March 2021
Modified version of Civic Engagement*, Ethical Reasoning*, and Intercultural Knowledge* VALUE Rubrics (AAC&U)

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. This rubric has been adapted for assessing Appalachian's General Education learning goal of Understanding Responsibilities of Community Membership. For more information about the VALUE rubrics, see <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>.

Definition

Civic engagement is “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” (Excerpted from Civic Responsibility and Higher Education, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

Ethical Reasoning is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self-identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

Rationale

General education prepares students to become informed, active, and engaged members of local, national, global, and virtual communities. Responsible community members live thoughtfully and purposefully, with concern for the well-being of both self and others. In a world in which political and economic security, environmental sustainability, and global health are constant challenges, learning and problem-solving require communal participation.

Framing Language

Preparing graduates for their public lives as citizens, members of communities, and professionals in society has historically been a responsibility of higher education. Yet the outcome of a civic-minded graduate is a complex concept. Civic learning outcomes are framed by personal identity and commitments, disciplinary frameworks and traditions, pre-professional norms and practice, and the mission and values of colleges and universities. This rubric is designed to make the civic learning outcomes more explicit. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. For students this could include community-based learning through service-learning classes, community-based research, or service within the community. Multiple types of work samples or collections of work may be utilized for assessment.

This rubric is intended to help faculty evaluate work samples and collections of work that demonstrate student learning about ethics. Although the goal of a liberal education should be to help students turn what they've learned in the classroom into action, pragmatically it would be difficult, if not impossible, to judge whether or not students would act ethically when faced with real ethical situations. What can be evaluated using a rubric is whether students have the intellectual tools to make ethical choices.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

Analyze: to break material into its constituent components and determine how the parts relate to one another and/or to an overall structure, purpose, or meaning (adapted from [Colorado College](#)). See *Evaluate* for comparison.

Civic Engagement: participation with local, national, global, and/or virtual communities.

Civic Identity: when one sees themselves as an active participant in society with a strong commitment and responsibility to work with others towards public purposes.

Civic Literacy: (from [CSUMB, 2005](#)): The “knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to work effectively in a diverse society to create more just and equitable workplaces, communities, and social institutions.”

Core Beliefs: those fundamental principles that consciously or unconsciously influence one's ethical conduct and ethical thinking. Even when unacknowledged, core beliefs shape one's responses. Core beliefs can reflect one's environment, religion, culture, or training. A person may or may not choose to act on their core beliefs.

Culture: all knowledge and values shared by a group.

Ethical Perspectives/Concepts: the different theoretical means through which ethical issues are analyzed, either implicitly or explicitly, such as ethical concepts (e.g., rights, justice, equality, duty) or ethical theories (e.g., utilitarian, natural law, virtue).

Evaluate: going beyond analysis to make judgments based on criteria and standards (adapted from [Colorado College](#)). For example, determining the relationship between the function and purpose of a product would constitute analysis, whereas establishing criteria and rating the usefulness of the product based on these criteria would involve evaluation.

UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

Student Learning Outcome	4 Capstone	3 Milestone (Higher)	2 Milestone (Lower)	1 Benchmark	0 No Evidence	N/A Not Applicable
Civic Literacy. Students will evaluate knowledge from their academic experiences to inform their civic engagement.	Evaluate knowledge from their academic experiences to make connections that are relevant to civic engagement.	Analyze knowledge from their academic experiences that is relevant to civic engagement.	Apply knowledge from their academic experiences that is relevant to civic engagement.	Identify knowledge from their academic experiences that is relevant to civic engagement.	No evidence	N/A
Civic Identity and Engagement. Students will thoroughly reflect on their own civic-engagement activities as they relate to their sense of civic identity.	Provide evidence of personal experience with a civic-engagement activity and describe what they have learned about themselves as it relates to a sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.	Provide evidence of personal experience with a civic engagement activity and describe what they have learned about themselves as it relates to a <i>growing</i> sense of civic identity.	Describe a personal experience with a civic engagement activity and describe what they have learned about themselves.	Describe a personal experience with a civic engagement activity.	No evidence	N/A
Civil Communication. Students will engage in civil and reasoned discourse.	Presents complex, multilayered arguments that respectfully acknowledge a variety of other (including opposing) viewpoints or perspectives.	Presents arguments that respectfully acknowledge opposing viewpoints or perspectives.	Express ideas that acknowledge opposing viewpoints or perspectives.	Express ideas with limited awareness of other viewpoints or perspectives.	No evidence	N/A
Ethical Self-Awareness. Students will reflect on their own core beliefs in relation to complex ethical issues.	Analyze core beliefs in relation to complex, multilayered ethical issues and discuss implication(s) for local, national, global, or virtual communities.	Analyze core beliefs in relation to complex, multilayered ethical issues.	Discuss core beliefs related to an ethical issue(s).	Identify core beliefs related to an ethical issue(s).	No evidence	N/A
Ethical Application. Students will apply ethical concepts to an ethical question.	Apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question and discuss implication(s) in local, national, global, or virtual communities.	Apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question.	Discuss ethical perspectives/concepts.	Identify ethical perspectives/concepts.	No evidence	N/A
Perspectives of Others. Students will contextualize personal experiences with diverse cultures, communities, or perspectives and demonstrate the ability to act supportively.	Contextualize personal experiences with diverse cultures, communities, or perspectives and demonstrate the ability to act supportively.	Recognize cognitive and affective perspectives of cultures or communities in addition to their own.	Identify perspectives of other cultures or communities and attempt to understand or respond but remain limited by their own worldview.	Recognize the experience of others but does so through their own worldview.	No evidence	N/A