

Recommendations for Departmental Self-Evaluation

Each department should consider using the model below as the starting point for a self-evaluation that will maximize the integration of instruction:

Work together as a department to characterize the basic mode of thinking integral to your field. Then elaborate what is involved (crucially) in that thinking. Spell this out in an integrated way as it might be manifested in a student successfully completing your program, as in the examples below. Then contextualize that description for representative courses in the program or department.

Model Description

Students successfully completing a major in ____ will demonstrate a range of ____ thinking skills and abilities which they use in the acquisition of knowledge. Their work at the end of the program will be clear, precise, and well-reasoned. They will demonstrate in their thinking command of the key ____ terms and distinctions, the ability to identify and solve fundamental ____ problems. Their work will demonstrate a mind in charge of its own ____ ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. They will demonstrate the ability to analyze ____ questions and issues clearly and precisely, formulate ____ information accurately, distinguish the relevant from irrelevant, recognize key questionable ____ assumptions, use key ____ concepts effectively, use ____ language in keeping with established professional usage, identify relevant competing ____ points of view, and reason carefully from clearly stated ____ premises, as well as sensitivity to important ____ implications and consequences. They will demonstrate excellent ____ reasoning and problem-solving.

Example: History Department

Students successfully completing a major in History will demonstrate a range of historical thinking skills and abilities which they use in the acquisition of knowledge. Their work at the end of the program will be clear, precise, and well-reasoned. They will demonstrate in their thinking, command of the key historical terms and distinctions, the ability to identify and solve fundamental historical problems.

Their work will demonstrate a mind in charge of its own historical ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. They will demonstrate the ability to analyze historical questions and issues clearly and precisely, formulate historical information accurately, distinguish the relevant from irrelevant, recognize key questionable historical assumptions, use key historical concepts effectively, use historical language in keeping with established professional usage, identify relevant competing historical points of

view, and reason carefully from clearly stated historical premises, as well as sensitivity to important historical implications and consequences. They will demonstrate excellent historical reasoning and problem-solving.

The Biology Department

Students successfully completing a major in Biology will demonstrate a range of biological thinking skills and abilities which they use in the acquisition of biological knowledge. Their work at the end of the program will be clear, precise, and well-reasoned. They will demonstrate in their thinking, command of the key biological terms and distinctions, the ability to identify and solve fundamental biological problems.

Their work will demonstrate a mind in charge of its own biological ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. They will demonstrate the ability to analyze biological questions and issues clearly and precisely, formulate biological information accurately, distinguish the relevant from irrelevant, recognize key questionable biological assumptions, use key biological concepts effectively, use biological language in keeping with established professional usage, identify relevant competing biological points of view, and reason carefully from clearly stated biological premises, as well as sensitivity to important biological implications and consequences. They will demonstrate excellent biological reasoning and problem-solving.

Philosophy Department

Students successfully completing a major in Philosophy will demonstrate a range of philosophical thinking skills and abilities which they use in the acquisition of philosophical knowledge. Their work at the end of the program will be clear, precise, and well-reasoned. They will demonstrate in their thinking, command of the key philosophical terms and distinctions, the ability to identify and solve fundamental philosophical problems.

Their work will demonstrate a mind in charge of its own philosophical ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. They will demonstrate the ability to analyze philosophical questions and issues clearly and precisely, formulate philosophical information accurately, distinguish the relevant from irrelevant, recognize key questionable philosophical assumptions, use key philosophical concepts effectively, use philosophical language in keeping with established professional usage, identify relevant competing philosophical points of view, and reason carefully from clearly stated philosophical premises, as well as sensitivity to important philosophical implications and consequences. They will demonstrate excellent philosophical reasoning and problem-solving.

Mathematics Department

Students successfully completing a major in Mathematics will demonstrate a range of mathematical thinking skills and abilities which they use in the acquisition of

mathematical knowledge. Their work at the end of the program will be clear, precise, and well-reasoned. They will demonstrate in their thinking, command of the key mathematical terms and distinctions, the ability to identify and solve fundamental mathematical problems.

Their work will demonstrate a mind in charge of its own mathematical ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes. They will demonstrate the ability to analyze mathematical questions and issues clearly and precisely, formulate mathematical information accurately, distinguish the relevant from irrelevant, recognize key questionable mathematical assumptions, use key mathematical concepts effectively, use mathematical language in keeping with established professional usage, identify relevant competing mathematical points of view, and reason carefully from clearly stated mathematical premises, as well as sensitivity to important mathematical implications and consequences. They will demonstrate excellent mathematical reasoning and problem-solving.

Music Department

Students successfully completing a major in Music will demonstrate a range of musical thinking skills and abilities which they use in the acquisition of musical knowledge. Their work at the end of the program will be clear, precise, and well-reasoned and well-performed. They will demonstrate in their musical thinking and performance, command of the key musical terms and distinctions, the ability to identify and solve fundamental musical problems.

Their work will demonstrate a mind in charge of its own musical ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes, as well as musical performance. They will demonstrate the ability to analyze musical questions and issues clearly and precisely, formulate musical information accurately, distinguish the relevant from irrelevant, recognize key questionable musical assumptions, use key musical concepts effectively, use musical language in keeping with established professional usage, identify relevant competing musical points of view, and reason carefully from clearly stated musical premises, as well as sensitivity to important musical implications and consequences. They will demonstrate excellent musical reasoning, problem-solving, and performance.

{This article is adapted from the resource: *Critical Thinking Basic Theory and Instructional Structures*.}