

GENERAL INFORMATION AND DEFINITIONS



ACADEMIC LEARNING COMPACT

Florida Atlantic University has developed Academic Learning Compacts for each of its baccalaureate degree programs. Academic Learning Compacts identify (a) content/discipline knowledge and skills, (b) communication skills, and (c) critical thinking skills students in that program are expected to demonstrate prior to graduation and the methods by which students will be assessed on these skills. Students may obtain print copies of Academic Learning Compacts for each baccalaureate degree program by contacting the appropriate program or department.

A. CONTENT/DISCIPLINE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. Academic Learning Compacts for each baccalaureate degree program will include at least two of the following three subcategories of content/discipline knowledge and skills.

Declarative knowledge: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the vocabulary, history, theories or concepts specific to the discipline and appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. Skills related to declarative knowledge are usually assessed via in-class or standardized tests, typically in an objective (multiple-choice; short answer) format.

Research skills: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the procedures involved in discipline-specific research (e.g., idea generation, literature review, data collection, reporting) appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are usually assessed via a research report, research project, or thesis.

Technical skills: Student will demonstrate technical skills related to the discipline (e.g., preparation of a business report or lesson plan, mastery of a musical instrument, fluency in a foreign language, use of statistical software) appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are usually assessed via an in-class project (e.g., case study, paper), observation (e.g., juried performance), or portfolio.

B. COMMUNICATION SKILLS. Academic Learning Compacts for each baccalaureate degree program will include at least two of the following four subcategories of communication skills.

Written communication: Students will produce writing that is grammatically correct, well-organized, and properly formatted for the purpose of the assignment and the discipline at a level appropriate for the

awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are usually assessed via individual paper assignments or essays where instructors assess the quality of written expression.

Oral communication: Students will prepare and deliver informative and/or persuasive oral presentations that attend to the audience and are well-organized at a level appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are usually assessed via individual oral presentations in a classroom setting, although sometimes instructors and/or supervisors may assess oral communication across time (e.g., during classroom discussions or at an internship site).

Other forms of communication: Students will prepare and present information or persuasive material using media that may or may not include written or oral communication (e.g., a musical performance, theatrical performance, or art exhibit; a visual, audiovisual, or graphical product) at a level appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are usually assessed via classroom projects, juried performances, or portfolios.

Team/Collaborative communication: Students will demonstrate team-oriented, collaborative skills in which they contribute to group products at a level appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are usually assessed via group papers or presentations and may involve peer-assessment (e.g., group members assess each other), assessment by audience members (e.g., an instructor, supervisor, or peer), or both.

C. CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS. Academic Learning Compacts for each baccalaureate degree program will include at least one of the following three subcategories of critical thinking skills.

Analytical skills: Students will analyze, evaluate, compare/contrast or judge discipline-specific theories, issues, events, or other content at a level appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are usually assessed through examining the quality of argument in a student essay, oral presentation, or formal report.

Creative skills: Students will create a product by synthesizing knowledge from a discipline (e.g., create a new piece of art, interpret a piece of music in a personal and appropriate way, develop a new theory or research proposal) at a level appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are usually assessed by an instructor or supervisor examining a student product for the quality of its synthesis of current knowledge into a new product.

Practical skills: Students will put into practice their knowledge and skills within a discipline (e.g., developing a business proposal or lesson plan, writing a grant) at a level appropriate for the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. These skills are assessed ideally by examining an authentic product the student employs in an appropriate setting (e.g., a student teacher delivering a lesson, an intern proposing a plan to a supervisor); they may also be assessed via in-class projects in which students propose practical solutions based on their understanding of the discipline (e.g., case study analysis).