COLUMBIA COLLEGE
Cohesive Curriculum and Aligning Curriculum with College and Program Objectives

NOTE:	Clarification of Terms
Must; Shall; Will:	These words or phrases indicate actions or activities that are *essential* or *mandatory*.
Should:	This word implies that it is highly desirable to perform certain actions or activities, but not essential or mandatory.
May or Could; Can:	These words imply freedom or liberty to follow an alternative to the action or activity being presented in a document.

COHESIVE CURRICULUM

Each program at Columbia College has been designed by department personnel to give students the opportunity to synthesize, practice and increasingly develop their knowledge, skills, and competencies over the course of the program. This means that important learning objectives will be introduced early in a program in one course and will be elaborated on in subsequent courses which will allow students ongoing exposure and further opportunities to develop important knowledge, skills, competencies and/or values, attitudes, and behaviours.

For example college-wide learning objectives such as written communication skills, computer literacy, information retrieval and evaluation, decision making, problem solving, group effectiveness, and team work skills should be integrated into most every course possible and, wherever possible, a component of each class. Continued attention to these learning objectives by faculty will enable students to develop and strengthen them throughout their program of study. The same is done with many program specific learning objectives. As students proceed through their program, they are expected to acquire more complex abilities and skills and more is expected of them.

ALIGNING CURRICULUM WITH COLLEGE AND PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Each program at Columbia College has developed a matrice such as the sample below which demonstrates how it has aligned the college-wide learning objectives and program specific learning objectives with its courses. Most learning objectives in a four year degree, for example, are introduced in junior level courses, reinforced in intermediate courses and demonstrated in either intermediate or senior level courses. The chart below demonstrates where institution wide and program specific learning objectives may be introduced and reinforced.

Curriculum Alignment Matrix									
Course	Inst Obj 1	Inst Obj 2	Inst Obj 3	Inst Obj 4	Program Obj 1	Program Obj 2	Program Obj 3	Program Obj 4	Program Obj 5
100	X					X		X	
125	X	X					X		X
200	X	X	X		X		X		
210	X	X	X	X		X			X
300	X	X	X	X			X		X
350	X	X	X	X	X			X	
400	X	X	X	X	X				X
465	X	X	X	X		X		X	
483	X		X				X		X
491	X		X				X		X

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Columbia's Learning Objectives

Seven college-wide learning objectives have been identified by members of the College community as the seven key learning objectives that we want all learners in each program to achieve. Under each heading the College lists a number of specific statements that describe the behaviour that students should display upon graduation from a diploma program. Students enrolled in a certificate program or pre-career program will not be expected to demonstrate the same breadth or depth of behaviour upon graduation but should be introduced to most College learning objectives. This will be determined by each Department Chair.

In addition to the list of College-wide learning objectives, each department has developed its own department-wide list of learning objectives. Each department has also developed a specific list of learning objectives for each separate program.

Program specific learning objectives are normally assigned to one or more courses where faculty will assist learners in acquiring and demonstrating their objectives as part of a course requirement. While some courses may introduce a learning objective, other courses will expand or broaden the learning objective.

Faculty should, wherever possible, incorporate each College-wide learning objective formally as well as informally in their specific course(s) curriculum plans. For example, faculty should, if possible, approach their behaviour in a classroom much the same as a supervisor would at work. For example, a faculty member will inform his/her students that each of them will approach classroom related activities much as they, acting like professionals, would conduct themselves in a professional workplace. The faculty member would display the behaviour of a positive, supportive, and engaging supervisor who coaches, mentors, guides and assists those with whom they are working, while the students would accept support and supervision from their faculty member while working together with fellow team members in an active and collaborative manner. (1. Workplace Behaviour)

Faculty may, where reasonable, ask students to complete assignments using a computer. (2. Computer Literacy)

Faculty would encourage students to use effective communication skills while communicating with others. (3. Communication)

Faculty would encourage students to work collaboratively and cooperatively with other students as they interact inside and outside the classroom. (4. Group Effectiveness and Team Work)

Faculty would create opportunity for students where needed, to gather, review, and evaluate information. (5. Information Retrieval and Evaluation)

Faculty would introduce students to problems or situations where they need to apply newly acquired knowledge, concepts, and skills. (6. Problem Solving and Decision Making)

Faculty would introduce students to situations where they learn more about the proper morals and ethics that are demonstrated by professionals in the field they are preparing to enter. (7. Ethical Reasoning)

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As a result of incorporating learning outcomes in their courses, by applying effective facilitating techniques that focus on student learning, and by adapting effective student assessment (testing, measuring, and assessing learning), graduates will demonstrate the desired knowledge, skills and values in these areas.

In summary, College learning objectives describe the essential knowledge, skills, and values the students need to acquire as they complete all their courses and graduate from a program.

Learning Objectives and Assessment

The following diagram demonstrates that to develop an effective learning environment the first step is to determine the most desirable learning objectives. This is followed by the development of an appropriate means of objectively assessing students to determine if they have acquired a learning objective. Almost at the same time, faculty determine what learning activities they will engage students in that will give them an opportunity to acquire the learning objectives. Students are then given an opportunity to experience the learning environment and activities after which the faculty member assesses their performance, measures their outcome and records the results. They then reflect on what happened and use this learning to determine if they will make any changes to this loop the next time they are helping learners acquire the learning objective. They may also use this to modify their approach to other learning objectives involving this current group of students.

This open-ended cyclical approach to facilitating and learning enhances the continued improvement of student learning and increases their potential for success.

Learning Objective and Assessment Feedback Loop

1. Determine learning objectives

2. Develop methods of assessing learning

3. Determine learning activities to engage students

4. Implement learning activities

5. Assess and measure results

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