

University of Toronto Mississauga Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (2022)

Preamble

In December 2005, the Council of Ontario Universities issued a set of degree level expectations (drafted by the Ontario Council of Ontario Academic Vice-Presidents or OCAV) which would be used to measure the quality of proposed new programs and existing programs in Ontario's publicly assisted universities. These were developed as part of an initiative to provide guidance to governments in Canada seeking to assess new degree programs and degree granting institutions. In May 2006, OCAV advised the Principals and Deans of the University of Toronto that each division should consult its stakeholders and propose its own degree level framework.

In response, the UTM community developed a set of Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations, or UDLEs, that have served from 2006 to 2022. At that time, it was agreed that once departments had sufficient time to map their curricula and work with these expectations, they would be revisited. Accordingly, a Degree Learning Expectations working group composed of members from disciplines across the curriculum met over 2015-16 to revise and renew UTM's UDLEs. In early 2022, in response to the university's regular 5 to 8 year reviews of academic institutions, the UTM UDLEs were revisited and re-confirmed with revisions by a working group composed of members from across disciplines.

This document, the University of Toronto Mississauga Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (2022), is the result of these working groups' efforts. It provides a set of guidelines that UTM has established for its undergraduate degree level students. In keeping with the practice of other first-entry divisions at the University, we have continued to use as our starting point the six general categories contained in the original 2005 OCAV document.

In practical terms, we envision that this document will be used to guide departments in:

- the review, mapping, evaluation, and development of curricula in their specialist, major, and minor programs;
- the evaluation of specialist, major, and minor program changes and new programs as part of the governance approval process; and
- the assessment and reviews of academic units and their programs by external reviewers and program auditors.

More generally, this document will help to inform and assess the work UTM's faculty, staff, and administrators do when supporting the academic and personal development of UTM students. To help program developers and reviewers situate their development or review of a program in relation to the UDLEs, we have included an interpretive appendix that provides illustrative examples and commentary.

The UDLEs encompass a range of competencies that students will acquire as part of their overall degree experience: some within the context of a major or specialist program, others as part of the complex of personal and intellectual changes that students experience as members of a research-intensive university and of the UTM community.

It is important to stress that these guidelines reflect minimal objectives for UTM students, not fullest aspirations. In envisioning ideal graduates, we hope that many, if not most, UTM students acquire competencies and experience that far exceed these guidelines by taking full advantage of the experiential, inquiry-driven, and collaborative opportunities that UTM has to offer, including research, study abroad, artistic endeavors, volunteer work, and student leadership. We want UTM undergraduate students to form personal and community connections and have moments of meaningful scholarly, artistic, and personal discovery that will remain with them for years to come. Finally, we hope UTM graduates will be distinguished professionals and educators; effective agents of change; and creative, ethical, and intellectual forces in the broader community.

Guidelines for University of Toronto Mississauga Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (2022)

This document provides the general competencies that must be demonstrated by all students in all UTM degree programs; all of these Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations apply to all disciplines, and the committee has taken care to write them so that this is possible.

The term “goals” refers to an instructor-centred, general outcome for each of the fields of study.

The term “learning outcome” refers to a student-centred, specific, and measurable outcome for each of the fields of study.

The H.B.A., H.B.Sc., B.B.A., and B.Com. at the University of Toronto Mississauga are awarded to students who have demonstrated the following competencies:

1. Breadth & Depth of Knowledge

Goals:

Breadth of Knowledge: In the course of their studies, students will gain an awareness and appreciation of the variety of modes of thinking, methods of inquiry and analysis, and ways of understanding the world that underpin different intellectual fields. Students will engage in critical thinking and analytical skills – including with respect to equity, diversity, and inclusion – through courses within and beyond their core field(s) of study, across the humanities, the social and behavioural sciences, and the natural sciences.

Depth of Knowledge: Students will attain depth of knowledge in their core field(s) of study through a progression of introductory, core, and specialized courses.

Outcomes:

- a. Identify and examine the central concepts, theoretical approaches and assumptions, intellectual history, and recent advances of the core field(s) of study.*
- b. Describe the major topics in the core field(s) of study and how they relate to other fields of study.*
- c. Apply critical and analytical skills within and beyond the core field(s) of study, including critical reflections on equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

2. Knowledge of Methodologies

Goals: Students will have knowledge of and experience with different methodologies and approaches relevant to their core field(s) of study.

Outcomes:

Identify and describe methods of inquiry and/or creative activity in their core field(s) of study.

- a. Select and implement appropriate methodologies to engage in inquiry in their core field(s) of study.*
- b. Evaluate the efficacy of different methodologies in addressing questions that arise in the core field(s) of study.*

3. Application of Knowledge

Goals: Students will be able to frame relevant questions for further inquiry within or beyond the core field(s) of study. They will be able to identify and apply the appropriate tools with which they can address such questions effectively. This includes a knowledge of how historical and present discrimination (including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sexuality, gender, and ability) affect these questions, problems, and solutions.

Outcomes:

- a. Gather, review, interpret, produce, present, and critically evaluate information, arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts, hypotheses, and/or creative options.*
- b. Make informed judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts, methods, and intellectual and creative traditions of the core field(s) of study.*
- c. Apply relevant concepts, principles, and techniques within and beyond the core field(s) of study.*
- d. Frame appropriate questions, solve problems, and propose and test solutions.*
- e. Formulate coherent lines of argument.*

4. Communication Skills

Goals: Students will be able to effectively communicate and critically evaluate information, arguments, and analyses, using a range of modes of communication.

Outcomes:

- a. Express information, arguments, and analyses accurately and with clarity, using inclusive language and a range of modes of communication.*
- b. Present work in a variety of formal and informal contexts in forms appropriate to the core field(s) of study.*
- c. Communicate effectively with a diverse range of audiences*
- d. Effectively convey an understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusivity principles by using respectful and inclusive language.*

5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

Goals: Students will acknowledge and appreciate the limits of their own knowledge. They will also gain an awareness of the uncertainty, ambiguity, and limits of our collective knowledge and how these might influence analyses and interpretations.

Outcomes:

- a. Identify the limits of their own knowledge and ability.*
- b. Recognize the uncertainty, power relations, ambiguity, and limits of knowledge and how this might influence analyses and interpretations.*

6. Autonomy and Professional Capacity

Goals: Students will acquire the skills, knowledge, and critical problem solving they need to become informed, ethical, inclusive, independent, and creative thinkers and decision-makers; gain an awareness and appreciation that knowledge and its applications are influenced by and contribute to society as a whole; and lay the foundation for learning as a life-long endeavour.

Outcomes:

- a. Manage and critically reflect on their own learning within and beyond the core field(s) of study.*
- b. Uphold the ethical values of the University, including freedom of expression and scholarly inquiry, academic integrity, equity, diversity, and inclusion, sustainability, and global citizenship.*
- c. Exercise initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in personal and group problem solving and decision-making contexts.*
- d. Identify how their areas of study relate to their personal and professional development.*

Supplementary Materials for the Use of the University of Toronto Mississauga Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (2022)

This document is intended to supplement the UTM Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations guidelines by providing interpretative direction and contextual information that will be useful for the wide range of members of the UTM community involved in the development, renewal and assessment of our programs, as well as external reviewers. Additional materials are available from the many organizations and resources listed at the end of this document.

1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge

University of Toronto Mississauga students are required to complete: i) a double major or ii) a major and two minors; or iii) a specialist program. Major and specialist programs are designed to provide students with both a broad and incisive understanding of a discipline, its practice, and the creation of knowledge within that discipline, including a critical awareness of a variety of historical and regional perspectives and biases.

Furthermore, we expect that, as students progress, they will be challenged with increasingly more difficult material and tasks: that 200-level courses will be more complex, both in content and evaluative measures, than 100-level, and so on. In final years, students in UTM programs have many opportunities to develop their research and applied work skills through activities such as laboratory and fieldwork, internships, essays, senior theses and projects, as best suit their individual career aspirations. Non-departmental members of the UTM community also provide opportunities for students to increase the depth and breadth of their knowledge, as indicated in the links to further resources at the end of this document.

Finally, UTM has a distribution requirement designed to expose students to areas of knowledge outside their main focus. Each student is required to complete a course in each of the main subject areas: science, social science, and humanities.

2. Knowledge of Methodologies

The development and delivery of our curricula are entrusted to faculty participating in, and conversant with, current methods in their disciplines. These curricula are in turn reviewed each year and updated to keep pace with developments in the discipline.

In recent years, programs have intensified their focus on the development of general academic skills, including writing, information literacy, critical thinking, numeracy, and research skills. Many courses integrate lectures from members of our academic skills and library staff to strengthen their understanding of academic skills and research techniques. As of Fall 2022, UTM will also be halfway through its planned rollout of a first-year foundational writing requirement, ISP100H5 *Writing for University and Beyond*, with nearly 2000 students enrolled in this course. This course will also serve as a cohort-building

and transition to university support course for students, with direct teaching by instructors in small classes.

Another area of increasing interest in course and program development is a recognition of the effects of historical bias within methodological development and application, as well as an interest in exposing students to diverse ways of knowing drawing on a wider variety of perspectives and community-engaged methods. This point also applies to UDLE 3, Application of Knowledge.

3. Application of Knowledge

The requirements for each of our major and specialist programs require that students complete courses at increasing levels of complexity. At each level, from first year through fourth year, students develop the competencies that we have designated as essential for advanced undergraduate work in their discipline. Our programs provide students with ample opportunities to gain and practice these competencies within their disciplines and through extensive academic support from the UTM organizations listed in the final section, the Resources List. Many programs at UTM have capstone or summative experiences in the final year of study that require students to demonstrate these competencies at the level deemed appropriate to their disciplines, often involving experiential learning. These include both independent research projects and work placements in the private sector, government, and NGOs.

Critical reflection is a crucial part of our students' education, including assessment of data, arguments, assumptions, and conclusions, and a knowledge of how historical and present biases affect questions, problems, and solutions.

4. Communication Skills

Communication is one of the ways in which students convey their mastery of a subject. It is therefore essential to our mandate as educators that students have the capacity to communicate the material they have learned in a clear and coherent manner to diverse audiences using inclusive language. This includes an awareness of accessible communication methods, as well as gender- and culturally-inclusive approaches.

In addition to the foundational writing project noted above, all major and specialist programs within UTM are expected to provide students with opportunities for writing development, completion of writing assignments, oral class participation, and group work. The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) provides writing instruction and works with students to develop their oral presentation skills. In the few programs that do not offer writing instruction but assign and assess writing tasks, faculty and TAs are expected to work with the RGASC to arrange for writing support and instruction in academic and transferable skills.

We expect that students will have access to courses in which they can formally present material and/or interact with their peers and instructors in the communication of

information. In upper-level research courses and in the Research Opportunity Program, students present their work through posters and presentations. Many UTM programs have expanded the use of group work in recent years, which enables students to exchange ideas and engage in collaborative problem solving. Other methods of communication, including numerical, graphical, and visual communication, are well-established in some programs but are only in initial stages of development from a UTM-wide perspective.

Increasingly, information and instructional technology inform the teaching-learning relationship and expand the forum for discourse. It is important that students acquire the ability to use these modes of communication in ways that promote inquiry and debate and respect members of our community.

5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

Each major and specialist program within UTM moves students from a more general understanding of the structure and scope of the discipline at the 100 and 200-level to a specialized and nuanced appreciation of a discipline's depth and intricacies at the 300- and 400-level. We expect students to have the capacity to do advanced library and electronic searches on published material. This process in itself develops their awareness of the complexity of areas of study and the expansive body of knowledge that underpin every subfield in a given discipline. The design and content of courses at each level, approach to pedagogy, assignments, and rigorous standards we observe for evaluation, reinforce students' awareness of their limitations.

UTM programs often employ self-reflection and peer reviews as additional tools to enhance students' acknowledgement and appreciation of the limits of their own knowledge, as well as our collective knowledge. An awareness of the uncertainties, biases, and power relations involved in analyses and interpretations is also a key aspect of student education in all programs.

6. Autonomy and Professional Capacity

It is vital that students acquire an appreciation of the values and practices of respect, equity, inclusion, and academic freedom that are integral to our educational mandate. We have a wide range of student clubs, activities, events, and programs – both academic and non-academic – that offer students the opportunity to learn more and participate in the variety of communities that comprise our institution and address and promote issues such as social justice, global citizenship, and sustainability. Students must understand and follow the procedures and policies governing classroom and course protocol, registration, and academic and non-academic conduct, and plot a course of study that will be intellectually rewarding and lead them to graduation. UTM provides extensive student advising, transitional support for students in first year, and information about expectations with respect to academic integrity and professional conduct.

Equally important is the development in UTM students of an ability to self-assess, self-regulate, and self-correct with respect to their learning and academic choices. Similarly, it is important that students acquire some sense of how their degree fits within the broader context of their lives, both personal and professional. Program coordinators, career services, and counseling staff can all contribute to a development of this understanding.

Finally, UTM aspires to instill students with a sense of the importance of sustainability in all aspects of human endeavours, as well as their role as global citizens. Both of these aspirations require respect for diversity, an awareness of personal and collective limitations and humility, and a true desire for inclusiveness. We continue to strive for this level of inclusive (educational) excellence in all our academic programs, and beyond them.

Additional Resources at UTM *(Work in progress – suggested links welcome!)*

- UTM Library: <https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/ReferenceUTML/ReferenceUTML/>, offers instruction in research techniques and the use of electronic and library resources,
- Educational Technology Unit in the UTM Library: <https://utm.library.utoronto.ca/services/instructional-technology>
- Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/>
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Office at UTM: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/edio/home>
- Centre for Student Engagement: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/utm-engage/>, works with departments to provide Exam and work experience opportunities
- Accessibility Services at UTM: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessibility/>

Additional Resources at U of T

- CTSI: <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/>

Links to useful documents:

- Report of the UTSC Campus Curriculum Review: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/curriculum-review/sites/utsc.utoronto.ca/curriculum-review/files/docs/UTSC%20Campus%20Curriculum%20Review-Full%20Document-FNL.pdf>