Example 1 – Virginia Tech CLE (Curriculum for General Education)[1]

Virginia Tech has 7 areas of learning outcomes, including "Critical Thinking in the Humanities."

These courses expect students to do the following:
1. Identify fundamental concepts of the humanities.
2. Analyze texts and other created artifacts using theories and methods of the humanities.
3. Interpret texts and other created artifacts within multiple historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts.
4. Synthesize multiple complex sources and create a coherent narrative or argument.

All students must take 6 hours in this area.

Rubric for Critical Thinking in the Humanities:

Learning Indicator	Below Competent	Competent	Above Competent
1. **Identify fundamental concepts in the humanities.**	Recognize humanistic concepts without connections to aesthetic works/objects. Restrict thinking to established, rigid categories.	Apply and connect humanistic concepts to aesthetic works/objects. Recognize established categories as socially constructed.	Apply humanistic concepts to other disciplines. Apply other disciplinary concepts to the humanities. Pose new fundamental concepts and modes of understanding.
2. **Analyze texts and other created artifacts using theories and methods of the humanities.**	Accept established canons as given. Restrict one's thinking to untheorized "common sense." Take information from sources without interpretation or evaluation.	Interpret aesthetic works/objects both as part of and beyond established canons. Recognize that there are objects of study beyond the traditional/obvious. Apply theory to analyses. Craft a critical argument based on evidence.	Interrogate ideas/challenge the notions of the canons, and/or invents new canons. Choose objects of study beyond the traditional/obvious. Recognize limits of theories and imagine new theories. Offer evidence from unconventional sources or viewpoints.

[1] Virginia Tech Pathways to General Education https://www.pathways.prov.vt.edu/about/outcomes.html

3. **Interpret texts and other created artifacts within multiple historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts.**	Interpret texts/artifacts as individual and outside of historical/social context.	Interpret texts/artifacts as embedded in products of historical/social contexts.	Imagine how texts and artifacts could better challenge systems of power.
	Accept narrow forms of rationality as the highest order of experience.	Reflect on sensory experience with artifacts.	Build discourses that are challenging, uncomfortable and embrace uncertainty.
4. **Synthesize multiple complex sources and create a coherent narrative or argument.**	Summarize without synthesis of multiple sources in the field. Narrative or argument is incoherent and/or does not consider dissenting points of view. Does not articulate a critical stance.	Synthesize multiple complex sources within the field and create a coherent narrative or argument by engaging dissenting points of view and taking a critical stance.	Connect interdisciplinary sources to generate a novel narrative or argument that integrates dissenting points of view and produces a creative, compelling, and inclusive critical stance.

Example 2 - University of Maryland[2]

Humanities is part of a 4-area general education:

Fundamental Studies	Distributive Studies	Diversity	Signature Courses
Academic Writing (FSAW)	History and Social Sciences (DSHS)	Cultural Competency (DVCC)	I-Series (SCIS)
Analytic Reasoning (FSAR)	Humanities (DSHU)	Understanding Plural Societies (DVUP)	
Math (FSMA)	Natural Sciences (DSNS)		
Oral Communications (FSOC)	Natural Science Lab (DSNL)		
Professional Writing (FSPW)	Scholarship in Practice (DSSP)		

Courses in the foundational humanities disciplines study history and the genres of human creativity. It includes courses in literatures in any language, art, art history, classics, history, music, and music history as well as courses in the foundational disciplines of linguistics and philosophy.

One learning outcome: Demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis related to a specific topic in the humanities and to support the thesis with evidence and argumentation. [Rubric follows.]

Criterion for review of student work	Descriptions of levels of student performance			
	Advanced	**Proficient**	**Beginning**	**Unacceptable**
Formulates a thesis	Presents a precise, focused, and defendable thesis that is appropriate to the source material and field; takes into account evidence and opposing viewpoints or judgements; suggests the arguments that will follow	Presents a coherent, debatable thesis appropriate to the source material and field	Presents a declarative statement that begins to connect facts and cohere as a thesis	No appropriate thesis; mere statement of fact or opinion
Marshals use of texts (primary and/or secondary) in support of thesis	Supports thesis with organized layers of relevant and meaningful text analysis; provides sophisticated argumentation; demonstrates insightful and independent thought	Supports thesis with texts in a manner that considers their value in substantiating the argument; demonstrates some independent thought and initiative	Supports thesis with texts in a simplistic, obvious manner, often using direct quotations in place of argumentation	No use of texts to support thesis
Provides context/milieu	Provides an in depth analysis of historical, environmental, social and/or intellectual factors through which the text(s) should be examined	Provides some historical, environmental, social and/or intellectual background through which the text(s) should be examined	Provides superficial connections between events/environments and the text(s)	No context is advanced for interpreting the text(s)
Presents a conclusion	Presents a conclusion that supports the thesis, logically and persuasively derives from the arguments, and establishes its significance	Provides a conclusion with reasonable links to the arguments presented	Provides a conclusion with only weak links to the arguments presented	Does not provide a conclusion or provides one that is not relevant to the thesis

The Humanities Rubric was developed by the Humanities Faculty Board, supported by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment with the Humanities instructors upon review of the AAC&U VALUE rubrics and according to standards determined by the Humanities Faculty Board for student performance in the General Education Humanities courses. The rubric defines the standards for student performance in Humanities courses at the University of Maryland.

Example 3 – Inquiry

Both the University of Kentucky and Indiana University use two common student learning outcomes for their "cornerstone" courses that all students take (math, science, arts/humanities, social sciences).

University of Kentucky – Learning Outcome I: Intellectual Inquiry [3]

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of and ability to employ the processes of intellectual inquiry.

Indiana University - Learning Outcomes for "Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing"[4]

- Access, use, and critically evaluate a variety of information sources.
- Apply principles of inquiry to define and analyze complex problems through reasoning and discovery.

Example 4 – Revising Student Learning Outcomes[5]

"The 1997 Campus Learning Objectives were written by faculty, for faculty. The two examples below illustrate high aspirational goals with no clear path for attaining them within the university:

1. Educated persons should develop the skills to understand, accept, and relate to people of different backgrounds and beliefs. In a pluralistic world one should not be provincial or ignorant of other cultures; one's life is experienced within the context of other races, religions, languages, nationalities, and value systems.
2. Educated persons should be expected to have some understanding of and experience in thinking about moral and ethical problems. A significant quality in educated persons is the ability to question and clarify personal and cultural values and thus be able to make discriminating moral and ethical choices.

The new Campus Learning Outcomes are written purposefully in a clear and concise language, which helps students understand expectations of them:

1.) Communicate clearly and effectively in written and oral forms; 2.) Access, use, and critically evaluate a variety of relevant information sources; 3.) Apply principles of inquiry to define and analyze complex problems through reasoning and discovery; 4.) Demonstrate the ability to relate within a multicultural and digitally connected world; 5.) Demonstrate a deep understanding of a field of study

Each new outcome comes with an explanatory paragraph to provide clarity, which helps faculty members, students, and stakeholders better understand the intent of each outcome. It is clear that the new outcomes are simpler, streamlined, and easier to assess compared with the old objectives."

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[3] University of Kentucky. http://www.uky.edu/registrar/content/uk-core
[4] Indiana University East. http://www.iue.edu/catalog/policies/documents/IU_East_General_Education_Curriculum_2017.pdf
[5] Excerpts from Alexander, R., Blakefield, M., Frank, K., & Pomper, M. (2016). State Mandates and General Education: One Campus Responds to Challenges and Opportunities. *The Journal of General Education*, 65(1), 36–47.