

RESEARCH COMPETENCIES

for graduating seniors

By the completion of their undergraduate career, all Cedarville University students will be able to:

1.

Determine the nature and the extent of an information need by:

- a. Selecting a research topic, developing an investigative question, and continually modifying the information need to achieve a manageable focus.
- b. Identifying key concepts and terms that describe the information needed.
- c. Defining a realistic overall plan and timeline to acquire the needed information.
- d. Exploring general information sources to increase familiarity with the topic.

2.

Access needed information effectively and efficiently by:

- a. Recognizing that knowledge can be organized into disciplines that influence the way information is accessed.
- b. Recognizing core information sources appropriate to the information need.
- c. Selecting the most appropriate investigative method or retrieval system.
- d. Constructing, implementing, and refining search strategies.
- e. Retrieving information from appropriate sources depending on the need, discipline, source, and cost.
- f. Understanding the limitations of resources.
- g. Extracting, recording, and managing the information and its sources.

3.

Evaluate information and its sources critically by:

- a. Identifying the variety of types (primary/secondary, scholarly/popular) and formats (books/periodicals, print/electronic) of potential sources for information.
- b. Articulating and applying initial criteria (such as accuracy, authority, bias, currency, etc.) for evaluating both the information and its sources.
- c. Analyzing the structure and logic of supporting arguments and methods in the sources used.
- d. Determining whether the information found satisfies the information need.
- e. Synthesizing the main ideas and interrelationships of various sources and constructing new concepts with supporting evidence.

4.

Incorporate selected information into their knowledge base and worldview by:

- a. Comparing new knowledge with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information.
- b. Determining whether the new knowledge has an impact on their worldview and taking steps, if necessary, to reconcile differences.
- c. Validating the interpretation and discernment of the information through discourse with other individuals, subject-area experts, and/or practitioners.
- d. Reflecting on past successes, failures, and alternative strategies and transferring knowledge gained to future endeavors.

5.

Access and use information ethically and legally by:

- a. Demonstrating a basic grasp of intellectual property, copyright, fair use, laws and regulations, and using this knowledge ethically and legally.
- b. Understanding what constitutes plagiarism.
- c. Using an appropriate documentation style consistently to cite sources.

6.

Use information effectively, both individually and as a member of a group, to accomplish a specific purpose by:

- a. Integrating the new and prior information in a logical and useful manner for the creation of a product or performance.
- b. Communicating clearly to the intended audience.

Based on the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, January 18, 2000, available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm>

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