

The Role of the Surveys in Tuning

The Tuning process includes surveys of students, alumni, faculty, and employers to identify, in ranked order, the most important general competencies for the degree or qualification in the discipline. “General” competencies are competencies that are not specific to the discipline, e.g. ability to express oneself clearly in writing; ability to think abstractly, analyze and synthesize; ability to apply knowledge in practical situations; etc. The surveys also identify the level at which each of the general skills or abilities is achieved in current programs. This information is used to guide the development of learning outcomes for degrees in the discipline and curriculum construction. It is used to prioritize student learning and to guide assessment of learning.

An additional survey of faculty is undertaken in the Tuning process to review discipline-specific competencies. This allows the Tuning team to obtain responses from a much larger group of faculty in the discipline than could participate directly on the team. These responses help the team to calibrate the importance and current level of achievement of proposed discipline-specific competencies.

The process that has been developed involves the following steps:

- Faculty help compile a list of potential competencies (using all available resources)
- Typically, the survey asks respondents to grade each competence and rank their “Top 5”
- Results are analyzed, including comparisons across groups
- A final list of the most important competencies is arrived at to help define the discipline
- The team takes particular note of important competencies that are judged low in achievement by current programs

The survey process serves to initiate joint reflection from updated information as the faculty/student team deliberates. It stimulates questions and debates, deepening the team’s discussions. It brings in the views of the most relevant stakeholders to inform the analysis of the discipline.

Example Results:

Competence	Academics	Graduates	Students	Employers
Ability for abstract thinking, analysis and synthesis	1	2	2	2
Ability to apply knowledge in practical situations	2	1	1	1
Knowledge and understanding of the subject area and understanding of the profession	3	4	4	4
Ability to identify, pose and resolve problems	4	3	3	3
Capacity to learn and stay up-to-date with learning	5	5	7	9
Capacity to generate new ideas (creativity)	6	9	8	8
Ability to be critical and self-critical	7	11	9	19
Ability to communicate both orally and through the written word in native language	8	12	13	12
Ability to search for, process and analyse information from a variety of sources	9	8	12	15
Ability to undertake research at an appropriate level	10	15	18	22
Ability to work in a team	11	7	5	5
Interpersonal and interaction skills	12	14	14	11
Ability to work autonomously	13	17	15	16
Ability to plan and manage time	14	6	6	6
Ability to adapt to and act in new situations	15	10	10	7
Ability to make reasoned decisions	16	13	16	10
Ability to act on the basis of ethical reasoning	17	25	23	24
Ability to communicate in a second language	18	16	11	18
Skills in the use of information and communications technologies	19	20	19	23
Ability to motivate people and move toward common goals	20	19	17	13
Ability to work in an international context	21	23	21	28
Determination and perseverance in the tasks given and responsibilities taken	22	21	20	14
Ability to evaluate and maintain the quality of work produced	23	24	24	21
Ability to act with social responsibility and civic awareness	24	27	27	27
Ability to design and manage projects	25	18	22	20
Appreciation of and respect for diversity and multiculturalism	26	28	26	31
Ability to communicate with non-experts of one's field	27	26	29	26
Commitment to the conservation of the environment	28	29	28	30
Spirit of enterprise, ability to take initiative	29	22	25	17
Commitment to safety	30	30	30	25
Ability to show awareness of equal opportunities and gender issues	31	31	31	29