Information Literacy Core Competencies
Eastern Kentucky University

What is information literacy?
Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.

Why is information literacy important?
Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) fosters personal growth and prepares students to contribute to the success and vitality of their communities, the Commonwealth, and the world. In support of this mission, EKU values “intellectual vitality, which is characterized by knowledge, scholarly inquiry, creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity.” Information literacy empowers learners to be both consumers and creators of information who participate successfully in collaborative spaces.

What is the purpose of these competencies?
EKU librarians and teaching faculty alike recognize the importance of strengthening students’ information literacy skills. In this context, information literacy is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders; it requires awareness of what others are doing in programs and initiatives across the university and in the community and, after awareness, a willingness to take deliberate, mindful action. To that end, these competencies are an attempt to provide a shared language to spark dialogue within the broader academic community. Such dialogue lays a foundation for integrating information literacy into learning opportunities: collaborating on assignment creation; coordinating syllabi across a department; providing direction for faculty workshops and training; or writing learning outcomes for assessment. These actions ultimately make information literacy more explicit to faculty and students and encourage ongoing conversation.

How are these competencies structured?
The skills goals are numbered in order to make conversations about this document easier. However, when this collection of competencies is used as a tool it need not be used in this linear fashion. The order in which information literacy skills are learned is dependent on one’s specific information needs and existing skills.

While the skills goals are not necessarily linear, the objectives within each goal are intended to build upon one another. A scaffolding hierarchy was used throughout the objectives in order to delineate a deepening understanding of information literacy as students progress in their education. For example, students in their major programs are expected to have already learned the information literacy skills listed under the General Education sections.

The objectives also may be used to begin identifying deficiencies in information literacy skills. For example, it might be necessary for a graduate student to relearn skills ordinarily expected of students at the general or major level.

How might individual faculty and departments interpret this collection of competencies?
Every effort was made to use inclusive language and to make concepts adaptable to any academic discipline. Individual faculty, departments, and units are encouraged to modify these competencies to better address the unique requirements of their disciplines. These competencies may be used as a lens through which to view existing assignments and to edit them to better elucidate information literacy skills goals.

Faculty may also use the document to:
· collaborate on assignment creation
· coordinate syllabi across a department
· provide a framework for faculty workshops and training
· write learning outcomes for assessment
· make information literacy more transparent

This collection of competencies is not intended to be an assessment document with measurable outcomes. The outlined teaching objectives are intended to shape instruction; measurable outcomes could be written to create a separate assessment document, however, that is currently outside the scope of this document.
The Six Skills Goals and Corresponding Objectives by Course Level

1. Construct a question or problem statement:
   Able to articulate need for existing information and literature and develop a research question or thesis statement

   **General Education Courses:**
   - Define the topic and the information needed
   - Seek information beyond course materials as necessary
   - Develop a manageable focus appropriate to criteria of assignment

   **Major Program:**
   - Actively and independently seek sources beyond course materials
   - Articulate research question or thesis statement within confines/context of discipline
   - Use discipline-specific terminology

   **Capstone Courses/Graduate Programs:**
   - Develop an original research question which contributes to the body of knowledge in the field

2. Locate and gather information:
   Able to locate information by developing a research strategy and identifying sources of information

   **General Education Courses:**
   - Create a research strategy (e.g., identify keywords, create a search statement, use appropriate information sources, etc.)
   - Identify various sources of help in searching (e.g., library and classroom faculty, library staff, peers, library guides, etc.)
   - Recognize that research is an iterative process that involves trial and error

   **Major Program:**
   - Identify core subject research databases
   - Use advanced search features in subject research databases
   - Identify a breadth of primary and secondary sources of information in the field (e.g., scholarly journals, trade publications, books, government information, web-based resources, subject experts, etc.)
   - Interpret and use citations to find additional literature
   - Recognize tools for acquiring resources outside of EKU collections (e.g., Library Express, WorldCat Discovery, etc.)

   **Capstone Courses/Graduate Programs:**
   - Identify sources from foundational theorists and practitioners
   - Construct advanced searches that yield discipline-specific results

3. Evaluate Sources:
   Able to evaluate the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the information they discover

   **General Education Courses:**
   - Differentiate between scholarly, trade, and popular sources and use them appropriately
   - Evaluate resources (e.g., books, articles, websites, social media, etc.) in context for authority, accuracy, currency, fairness, and relevance
   - Adjust topic after evaluating found resources as needed

   **Major Program:**
   - Define peer reviewed
   - Make use of review tools (e.g., book reviews, annotated bibliographies, etc.) to evaluate information sources

   **Capstone Courses/Graduate Programs:**
   - Differentiate between types of research (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, etc.)
   - Evaluate research methods within studies
   - Identify research biases within studies
   - Apply evaluation criteria (e.g., journal impact factors) in the identification and use of key sources of information

4. Manage Information:
   Able to manage information from a variety of sources

   **General Education Courses:**
   - Develop a strategy for organizing and storing information (e.g., Dropbox, email folders)

   **Major Program:**
   - Identify and use tools to facilitate the creation and dissemination of knowledge (e.g., Google Drive)

   **Capstone Courses/Graduate Programs:**
   - Preserve/archive research, data, portfolio, thesis, project, etc. to ensure its future accessibility
   - Use a citation management system (e.g., Zotero)

5. Use Information Ethically:
   Understand the legal and ethical implications of using information appropriately and responsibly

   **General Education Courses:**
   - Recognize the basics of plagiarism and copyright
   - Cite sources appropriately

   **Major Program:**
   - Develop an increasing awareness of responsible use of information, including copyright and types of plagiarism

   **Capstone Courses/Graduate Programs:**
   - Develop an awareness of author rights and open access publishing
   - Adhere to professional ethical guidelines

6. Communicate Knowledge:
   Understand the disciplinary and societal context in which information is presented and created, and is able to contribute to that body of information

   **General Education Courses:**
   - Synthesize information from various sources
   - Develop awareness of the information cycle

   **Major Program:**
   - Apply content knowledge to service learning environments
   - Identify post-graduate resources for professional development, leadership, scholarly communication, and community involvement

   **Capstone Courses/Graduate Programs:**
   - Contribute to associations and networks related to the discipline
   - Participate in the academic process of one’s discipline (e.g., discovery, proposal, funding, research design, dissemination, etc.)
   - Share findings with peers in open forums
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