

Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience
Framework for the Undergraduate Experience at CWRU
Part I: Philosophy of the Undergraduate Experience

Case Western Reserve University offers an undergraduate experience explicitly designed to enable high-achieving students to identify and connect their academic interests with their long-term ambitions. As members of a vibrant, engaged, and comprehensive university community, students and faculty at CWRU are purpose-driven. They value knowledge in itself, but are particularly drawn to how academic inquiry can be applied outside the classroom, how it affects their lives and the lives of others, and how their lived experience at CWRU can help them achieve their personal and professional goals.

On our campus – which encompasses the many cultural, historical, and medical institutions of University Circle – and through local, national, and international community activities, students encounter people, ideas, and experiences that shape their values and guide their personal trajectories. The CWRU experience gives our graduates the confidence to approach new situations with intellectual rigor, integrity, and leadership. They have the inclination and the tools to continue learning, growing, and thriving in the multiple pursuits that they will embrace. As alumni, they will enrich the university community as mentors, advocates, and exemplars of the value of a CWRU education.

The undergraduate experience at CWRU intentionally develops the following qualities and skills in our students.

CWRU graduates are:

- **Passionate Scholars** – CWRU graduates gain both deep disciplinary knowledge and diverse perspectives on the questions that they explore through their comprehensive programs of study. They are interdisciplinary inquirers who are able to examine questions from multiple perspectives, to apply knowledge gained in a variety of settings, and to solve complex problems.
- **Engaged & Ethical Citizens** – CWRU graduates are reflective, ethical, and responsible citizens. They are active participants and team leaders, rather than passive consumers, within their local, national, and global environments. They consider the implications of their positions, and they are able to understand and collaborate effectively with individuals whose experiences and viewpoints differ from their own.
- **Successful Change Agents** – CWRU graduates use their skills and knowledge to chart their own path to success, while making the world a better place. They are catalysts for innovation, applying their knowledge and skills to assess problems and opportunities and to design and communicate effective solutions. They are persuasive and articulate advocates for their solutions; they are comfortable using a variety of media to deliver their messages to diverse audiences.

CWRU graduates are proficient in their:

- Disciplinary knowledge and field-specific skills (i.e., major program of study);
- Critical thinking, which requires the skills of discovering, analyzing, and evaluating information presented in a variety of forms (e.g., numerical, rhetorical, visual, and textual information);
- Problem-solving abilities, which require the ability to combine, apply, and integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines, as well as the ability to think and act with an awareness of one's own values and reasoning, and with a responsible engagement with others' perspectives;
- Persuasive and ethical communication practices (including a facility with multiple modes of communication: oral, written, visual, digital, and/or multi-modal) that are appropriate to varied settings (e.g., disciplinary versus general public audiences); and,
- Reflection on their own intellectual and personal development, including their sense of self-efficacy, emotional health, physical well-being, and interpersonal interactions.

Students select and pursue at least one disciplinary major, which affords them the opportunity to develop a deeper and more complex understanding of a subject in which they are passionate.

Disciplinary knowledge alone is too narrow; it is enhanced by the ability to examine ideas, information, and problems from a variety of perspectives. Therefore, students pursue modes of inquiry beyond their major, developing their critical thinking skills as they investigate topics across a range of academic disciplines.

Acquiring knowledge and developing skills is not enough; students must be able to apply their understanding and skills, often in collaboration with others whose experiences and perspectives are different from their own, to find creative and innovative solutions to the complex problems of the future.

Communication, whether in written, oral, or digital form, is the means by which ideas materialize, innovations succeed, and knowledge is discovered and disseminated. Our students achieve proficiency in identifying and articulating problems, and they are persuasive and ethical in disseminating their creative, scholarly, design, and experimental responses to those problems.

The ability to reflect on outcomes and select successful, and improve upon less successful, strategies is essential to remaining flexible, adaptable, and fulfilled. Our students reflect not only on their intellectual journeys, but also on their own physical, emotional, and social well-being. Our students cultivate relationships and strategies that enhance their own strengths and that supply complementary skills and knowledge.