

**Saint Mary's College of California**  
**Institutional Learning Outcomes – Master's Degree**  
**(GPSEPC 11-22-13)**

This document describes what all students—regardless of the field of specialization—should be expected to know and be able to do when they earn their master's degree at Saint Mary's College of California. The achievement of these learning outcomes are both specific to the mission and distinctive vision of the Saint Mary's College of California and also generally consistent with national standards for master's level education in the United States. These learning outcomes are designed to prepare students for excellence in their disciplinary specialties and also prepare them for professional opportunities, citizenship in our global society, and a meaningful life characterized by lifelong learning and respect for the dignity of others.

Saint Mary's College delivers the M.A., M.B.A., M.Ed., M.F.A., and M.S. degree in 23 distinct programs. Like the bachelor's degree, the master's degree at Saint Mary's College follows both normative national standards for the degree and also emphasizes particular knowledge and capacities flowing directly from the College's Catholic, Lasallian, and Liberal Arts traditions.

Graduate education at Saint Mary's College is framed around four primary areas of learning: knowledge, advanced skills, applied knowledge, and engaging the world. Learning in these areas prepares students for excellence in their disciplinary specialties and also for professional success, for citizenship in our global society, and for a meaningful life characterized by lifelong learning and respect for the dignity of others.

**I. KNOWLEDGE**

The attainment of knowledge at the master's level at Saint Mary's College includes both mastery in specialized academic fields and also the ability to think broadly about relationships among other related fields of study. This focus on integrating specialized and broad knowledge follows from the College's mission to emphasize the integration of knowledge within the whole person.

The student who successfully achieves the learning outcomes described below will become a member of a community of scholars and practitioners, able to define the field in context and articulate contemporary trends and challenges. In addition, the student will, like all successful scholars, understand how the history and practice of his/her field relates to other fields, and will understand the impact of the field on culture and society in a global context.

**Broad Integrative Knowledge**

The student

--articulates how the field has developed and how it currently relates to other domains of

inquiry and/or practice;

--designs and executes an applied, investigative, or creative work that draws on a range of perspectives and/or methods from related fields;

--articulates the significance and implications of his or her own specialized work for a social and/or global context; and

--demonstrates knowledge of issues related to the common good that are likely to arise in his or her field of study.

### **Specialized Knowledge**

The student

--elucidates the major theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry in the field;

--assesses the social, cultural, political and historical context of the field and delineates its leading edges;

--articulates a full range of challenges involved in practicing in the field.

## **II. ADVANCED SKILLS**

Advanced skills at the master's level follow from established competencies at the bachelor's level and are demonstrations of advanced cognitive capacities and developed skills. These competencies are integrally connected to, if not the foundation for, both knowledge and applied learning. In addition, they become habits of mind as well as foundations for successful professional and civic life. In addition to the vital competencies related to scholarly research, information literacy and quantitative fluency, Saint Mary's College emphasizes a high expectation at the master's level in three additional areas connected to the College's liberal arts tradition: communication fluency, critical thinking, and shared inquiry.

### **Communication Fluency**

The student

--creates sustained, coherent arguments, explanations of, and reflections on his or her work to both general and specialized audiences, and

--demonstrates this in both oral and written communication.

### **Critical Thinking**

The student employs critical thinking skills to analyze underlying assumptions, ideas, techniques, or methods in the field of the study.

### **Quantitative Fluency**

The student understands how to use and apply quantitative methods to his/her field as appropriate.

### **Scholarly Research and Information Literacy**

The student

--understands when information or research is needed;

--acquires and critically evaluates data, information, and research appropriate for the

field;

--makes appropriate and ethical use of data, information, and research in projects, papers or performances.

### **Shared Inquiry**

The student

--engages creatively in reflective dialogue among peers;

--becomes aware of her or his own ways of making meaning and those of others with whom s/he interacts in ways that generate dialogue and discussion in respectful and productive ways;

--develops through this dialog a capacity for inclusiveness, for expansiveness of spirit and for embracing differences;

--demonstrates critical thinking by participating in sustained, coherent dialogue and reflections with both general and specialized groups.

## **III. ENGAGING THE WORLD**

Engaging the world requires the integration of knowledge and intellectual competencies and very often makes use of capacities related to applied knowledge. It requires a high level of critical thinking and shared inquiry as defined above. It involves the ability to engage with others and to reflect critically on his/her assumptions and biases (as well as assumptions and biases of a given field of study).

Students receiving the master's degree at Saint Mary's College will leave the college with the ability to reflect deeply on their place in our diverse culture and will possess skills to approach, analyze and engage with the diverse global culture in which they live and work as scholars, professionals and citizens.

### **Common Good**

The student

--investigates and analyzes common problems that impact the wellbeing of his or her community;

--identifies the consequences of economic, social and environmental injustice and how such injustice is rooted in values and social practices.

### **Diversity**

The student

--engages in self-reflection and cultivates self-understanding in the context of personal and global diversity;

--investigates and analyzes issues that arise from the diversity of experience in areas such as (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, and politics.

### **Global Competency**

The student investigates and analyzes the social, cultural, economic, religious, or political structures in different communities within a global context.

#### **IV. APPLIED LEARNING**

Applied learning emphasizes not what the student knows but what the student can do with what he/she knows. The learning outcomes below require students to be active learners, problem solvers, and both critical and creative thinkers. Achieving these outcomes, students are prepared for a range of professional and civic responsibilities.

The student

- integrates knowledge acquired in coursework, practicum, work, community, and/or research activities;
- creates, designs, and implements a project or performance that requires the application of advanced knowledge to a challenge as appropriate to his/her field;
- employs creative thinking to imagine beyond existing frameworks and paradigms, expressing the uniqueness of individual experience; and
- reflects upon and articulates the insights gained from the activities above.