

University Scholar Self-Assessment Tool



"Education isn't preparation for life; education is life itself."

John Dewey

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

William Butler Yates

"All of life is a constant education."

Eleanor Roosevelt

"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten."

B. F. Skinner

"An educated person is never bored."

MUSE Professor Karen Reynolds

"There are many paths to a career, but education must be the goal. ... While financial success is important, college graduates also bring to their careers a broadened world perspective, heightened analytical and problem-solving skills, and the ability to apply their knowledge in the service of society. Education is the key to the individual's future, the company's future and to the future of society."

SJSU President Robert L. Caret

** Metropolitan University Scholar's Experience*

Please send any comments on the format, content and use of this rubric to Professor Annette Nellen at anellen@email.sjsu.edu. Thanks to the following SJSU professors for their assistance in developing this rubric: Rita Manning, Malu Roldan, Jo Sprague, and Emily Wughalter.

What is a University Scholar?

A university scholar is a master learner and thinker. A university scholar is someone who has acquired and perfected communication and qualitative skills, as well as study and research skills. University scholars have breadth and depth of broad knowledge (such as acquired through a university's general education program) who can use that knowledge in various contexts, critically analyze arguments and assumptions, find relevant information, communicate what they know, and utilize a variety of learning techniques. A university scholar is an educated person prepared to pursue a life of learning, exploration, and discovery, who exercises personal responsibility for their learning and intellectual development. These skills are valued not only in a university, but also in the work world. Mastering these skills will help you to be able to re-tool and prepare yourself for the many phases of your careers.

Becoming a university scholar requires that students understand the learning process and their responsibility and role in it. This is one of the two goals established for the MUSE* Program for SJSU freshman.¹ The “rubric” on the following pages is designed to help you plan and measure your progress towards becoming a university scholar and independent learner (Goal #1). As a university-educated independent learner, you will find you are prepared to be a lifelong learner - that you will know how to explore a subject matter on your own and continue to broaden your horizons, knowledge, intellect and learning skills. This rubric is designed to help you to understand this goal - becoming a university scholar (and master learner) and what is involved in reaching that goal. The rubric describes four levels to becoming a master learner (beginning, continuing to improve, competent, and master). Please note that these four levels do not correspond to frosh, sophomore, junior and senior class standings. You will progress towards higher levels of becoming a university scholar at a different pace than you change class standings. The rubric breaks down the meaning of becoming a university scholar into four key abilities: (1) having the basic skills for learning, (2) being able to lay a foundation to understand a subject, (3) being able to engage in critical inquiry and exploration, and (4) taking responsibility as a student, learner and citizen of the university, your community and the world.

As an analogy, consider what it takes to become an expert golfer. You'd need (1) the basic skills of using different types of clubs, (2) to understand the rules of the game so you can understand the strategy of winning and dealing with different courses and players, (3) to be able to analyze every play and hole as you see it to determine how to effectively play, and (4) to be responsible for your playing ability, rather than relying on your golf pro or fellow players, and to continue to improve your skills, game knowledge, and playing strategies. This is similar to the four key abilities of a university scholar.

You will use this rubric in your MUSE seminar course. You should also use it beyond that course. Pull it out at the beginning and end of each semester and ask yourself which level you are at for each basic component of becoming a university scholar. Ask yourself what you should do to improve; ask yourself these questions with a fellow student; and seek assistance from one or more of your professors to gauge your level and what you can do to continue to move to the master level. Good luck!

¹ The two goals of the MUSE Program are:

MUSE Goal #1: To establish a strong foundation for becoming a university level student and scholar.

Learning Outcome: For students to understand the learning process and their responsibility and role in it.

MUSE Goal #2: To become acclimated to both the intellectual and social activities of university life.

Learning Outcome: To know what it means to be a member of a metropolitan university community.

The MUSE Program includes a 3-unit special seminar that incorporates the goals and learning objectives of a particular lower division GE Area as well as the MUSE goals. The MUSE Program also includes a series of workshops and activities that also aim to help frosh achieve the two goals listed above. For more information, see <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/>.

Level	Key Abilities of a University Scholar			
	Has the Basic Skills for Learning	Is Able to Lay a Foundation to Understand a Subject	Is Able to Engage in Critical Inquiry and Exploration	Takes Responsibility as a Student and Learner
Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You are starting to get a better idea of your abilities to communicate verbally and in writing, as well as to think critically and where improvement is needed.² ▪ You are not certain as to your learning style (visual, auditory or kinesthetic) and how to study to make the most of that style. ▪ You are not completely confident that your skills at notetaking, studying, time management, reading techniques are as good as they should be for college level work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You primarily rely on your instructor to identify a plan of study and the appropriate materials. ▪ Your instructor specifies the subject matter to be studied/learned. ▪ You tend to rely on your instructor to point out the foundation of a subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your questions tend to be focused on comprehension (understanding), rather than going beyond the materials provided to explore other concepts or views. ▪ You have some difficulty and/or low confidence in comparing and contrasting the subject matter to other areas studied. ▪ Your confidence level is low that you will find the best and most relevant reference materials for a research project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You primarily rely on your instructor to set the tasks for learning the material. ▪ You are beginning to learn of resources and steps to understanding a subject matter. You are learning the skills to be an information competent (or literate) person.³ ▪ You are experimenting with techniques for effective studying. ▪ You are likely to take instructor comments about your work (criticism) as a setback (or even mean spirited) rather than as a learning opportunity. ▪ Your motivation to learn is focused more on getting a good grade rather than learning the subject matter to broaden your knowledge base, skill set and move on to more challenging work. ▪ You are fairly unreflective about your values.

² The SJSU General Education program defines basic skills as written and verbal communication skills, quantitative skills, and critical thinking. The rubric takes a broader view to also include study and learning skills, such as effective reading techniques, notetaking, test taking and time management. For tips on improving your skills in this area as appropriate for university-level study, be sure to read *A Spartan Scholar from the Start*, SJSU's student handbook for academic success and university life.

³ For more on information competency, please see page 23 of *A Spartan Scholar from the Start* and the web links at <http://www.sjsu.edu/spartanguide/>.

Level	Key Abilities of a University Scholar			
	Has the Basic Skills for Learning	Is Able to Lay a Foundation to Understand a Subject	Is Able to Engage in Critical Inquiry and Exploration	Takes Responsibility as a Student and Learner
Continuing to Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your confidence to ask questions in class and of your instructor during office hours is fairly high. ▪ You are able to explain (both verbally and in writing) the key issue(s) and point(s) in a book or presentation. ▪ You are able to identify some flaws in arguments and missing assumptions. ▪ You continue to work on weaknesses in your written and verbal skills. ▪ You know what your learning style is and how to use it to maximize learning and best utilize study time. ▪ You continue to improve notetaking, reading, study and time management skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You see that most subjects and disciplines have a set of principles, rules, and concepts. ▪ You see the importance of understanding the underlying principles, rules and concepts to comprehend, utilize and appreciate a subject or discipline. ▪ You continue to gain breadth and depth of knowledge through your General Education curriculum, which covers social systems and issues, physical and biological sciences, the arts, technology, philosophy, and human interaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You are beginning to recognize similarities and differences in topics. ▪ You are feeling more confident in being able to separate relevant from irrelevant information. ▪ You are starting to appreciate that learning is an interactive process (with other learners and/or authors); you can learn through dialog and debate with professors and fellow students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You always come to class prepared. ▪ Your course work (readings, notes, calendar, additional resources) are organized. You are aware of the importance of having a good study environment and schedule and of working with others sometimes (such as a study group). ▪ You appreciate the importance of being information literate and practice these skills and seek assistance in further developing them. ▪ You are becoming better aware of university rules and policies and working within them. ▪ You feel more confident asking questions in class and during professors' office hours. ▪ Your motivation to learn is increasing and you find yourself discussing course subject matter with people outside of class and seeking additional resources. ▪ You are starting to appreciate that even a subject that you don't particularly enjoy offers opportunities to improve your academic foundation, intellect and ability to learn. ▪ You are aware of your values and beginning to critically assess them.

Level	Key Abilities of a University Scholar			
	Has the Basic Skills for Learning	Is Able to Lay a Foundation to Understand a Subject	Is Able to Engage in Critical Inquiry and Exploration	Takes Responsibility as a Student and Learner
Competent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your work product is first rate - organized, with good use of topic and subtopic headings, and easy to follow and understand. ▪ Your written and oral communication is very clear and you receive few, if any, corrections for grammar or clarity. ▪ You have developed skill in making and supporting arguments and defending a position. ▪ You interact effectively in group discussions and use group work as a learning technique. ▪ You are able to adapt to new technologies that aid the learning process. ▪ You know how to approach new assignments using the skills and knowledge gained from working on other assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You appreciate the importance of the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills gained through your General Education curriculum as you apply it to learning in your major and minor courses of study. ▪ You have the research skills and knowledge to find the basic or core information about a subject matter. You use knowledge gained in studying other subjects to be able to lay out the foundation for studying new areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You do not take information at face value, but instead ask questions to help determine its validity. ▪ You can identify and explain flaws in arguments. ▪ You are able to derive examples of your own to explain information. ▪ You "think outside of the box." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You know the techniques of an information literate person and practice them regularly as part of the learning process. ▪ You are well aware of university rules and policies and work within them. ▪ You don't rely solely on your instructor for assistance in learning a subject, but instead see that your professor is a facilitator to aid you in learning a particular subject. You use the professor's knowledge and skill in their area of expertise to broaden your understanding of a particular area. You see that you must apply your learning, inquiry and critical thinking skills to be a successful student and learner. ▪ After careful reflection, you have developed your own values and you are aware of values different from your own.

Level	Key Abilities of a University Scholar			
	Has the Basic Skills for Learning	Is Able to Lay a Foundation to Understand a Subject	Is Able to Engage in Critical Inquiry and Exploration	Takes Responsibility as a Student and Learner
Master	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You are known as an excellent writer and speaker and have little to no doubts as to your ability to communicate effectively. ▪ You are able to act as a leader in group discussions and in structuring learning opportunities for others. ▪ You are able to help others learn a subject matter and use effective learning and study skills. ▪ You communicate effectively in a variety of settings and with a variety of people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You can tackle a new subject or topic with very little, if any, assistance because you know to look for the foundation of the subject and how to find and gain an understanding of that foundation. ▪ You can integrate and apply knowledge from one discipline to help learn another, but are aware that significant differences and special rules and concepts likely exist in varying disciplines. ▪ You appreciate the challenge that exists in truly mastering a subject matter (that one reference tool or book won't do it). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You are willing and able to take risks in asking questions and exploring innovative paths to learning and discovery. ▪ You can raise arguments and questions about new data and information because of your skills honed in other subjects. ▪ You are able to lead discussions on critical analysis of information. ▪ You can "recognize and deal with complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty. [You] can think logically, critically, and, where necessary, abstractly, in order to synthesize reasoned conclusions from information."⁴ ▪ You "think outside of the box" and exercise creativity in looking at and exploring new areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You are information competent. ▪ You can act as a leader in assisting others in learning new things and becoming better learners. ▪ You appreciate that there is always more to learn and that continued learning is important to be a productive member of society and to effectively deal with the constant change in the world around you. ▪ You are clear about your own values and your reasons for holding them, and you live by them. You are an engaged and informed citizen. ▪ You have a very good understanding of yourself and your abilities and limits.

⁴ From CSU Academic Senate Policy - *Baccalaureate Education in the California State University*; available at <http://www.calstate.edu/acadsen/actions/1997-98/2388a.shtml>.