

Distinctive Institutional Context:

***A Small Research University***

An ethos of discovery, creativity, and rigorous questioning of extant knowledge permeates all aspects of UC Merced. The skills, knowledge and attitudes of a researcher are synonymous with attributes essential for post-graduate success.

***In Merced, California***

Merced is at a crossroads – culturally, socioeconomically, environmentally, geographically, historically -- for addressing problems of local, regional, and global significance.

***With An Undergraduate Student Body Unique in the UC System***

UCM undergraduates are predominantly first generation students from groups under-represented in higher education (e.g., race, ethnicity, family income).

These shape the following.

**Hallmarks of Baccalaureate Degrees at UC Merced**

1. *Depth and breadth in academic and intellectual preparation, consistent with the values of a research university, such that UC Merced graduates*
  - a. Demonstrate a strong disciplinary foundation
  - b. Engage in interdisciplinary thinking which could include appreciating different approaches to problem solving, informed by an understanding of humanities, arts, STEM, social sciences
  - c. Bring a critical, evaluative lens to problems, questions, situations
  - d. Employ effective problem-solving skills in multiple settings
  - e. Evaluate facts, knowledge and information, applying the varied aspects of information literacy
  - f. Know what they know, as well as *how* they know it, and monitor and guide their own learning
  - g. Describe the origins of knowledge, informed by cultural and disciplinary epistemological and ontological assumptions
  - h. Demonstrate an inquiry-oriented approach to the world; possess curiosity, employ inquiry, and take appropriate and creative action in response to ambiguity
2. *Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness, such that UC Merced graduates*
  - a. Respect and value diversity
  - b. Seek and recognize new cultures; join a new community anticipating and engaging in potential cultural differences or intersections
3. *Community engagement and citizenship -- local and global--, such that UC Merced graduates*
  - a. Understand what it means to be a member of a community, including an academic community
  - b. Contribute to the communities of which they are members
  - c. Possess a sense of place, and the ability to determine own place within local community and global context, and affect own community through giving back
  - d. Act ethically, including in the realm of environmental stewardship and sustainability
  - e. Are responsive to the needs of society – through application of knowledge and research to address problems, challenges, and opportunities
4. *Interpersonal skills necessary to the outcomes identified above, as well as to lead productive lives after graduation, such that UC Merced graduates*
  - a. Are proficient in collaboration and teamwork
  - b. Possess strong communication skills, oral, written, and visual, academic and professional
  - c. Are leaders in their professional and civic lives
  - d. Are ethically aware and proficient in ethical reasoning

5. *Self-awareness and intrapersonal skills, such that UC Merced graduates*
  - a. Demonstrate initiative, including an entrepreneurial, innovative, pioneering spirit
  - b. Respond with resiliency to obstacles and challenges, and learn from failure
  - c. Assume responsibility for their own education and develop the skills and attitudes of life-long learners

\*The draft of this document was created by participants in the UCM GE Retreat in May, 2014. The draft was distributed to faculty and staff groups in AY 2014-2015 for discussion and suggestions; the revised draft was reviewed by the Academic Senate in 2015.