

Pluralism and Worldview Engagement Rubric

Developed collaboratively by



Evaluators may assign a zero to any sample or body of evidence that does not meet the benchmark level.

	CAPSTONE 4	MILESTONE 3	MILESTONE 2	BENCHMARK 1
Knowledge of one's own worldview	Situates own evolving worldview within a pluralistic context.	Reflects upon and clarifies own worldview in pluralistic context.	Recognizes own worldview within context of external processes (e.g., personal history and social norms) and how processes shape life choices.	Articulates personal worldview and how it impacts own life.
Knowledge of other worldviews	Articulates knowledge of multiple worldviews with appreciative and nuanced understanding.	Understands that worldviews are dynamic and have multiple expressions.	Recognizes traditions, practices, beliefs, and values of other worldviews within a cultural context.	Articulates basic traditions, practices, beliefs, and/or values of some other worldviews.
Attitudes toward pluralism	Committed to navigating complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions among worldviews, including own, with the goal of fostering pluralism.	Willing to be vulnerable and uncertain when grappling with tensions among worldviews and inherent in pluralism.	Open to engaging differences among worldviews.	Open to exploring similarities among worldviews.
Interpersonal engagement	Adept at interfaith dialogue among diverse participants. Able to navigatedifferences among participants to foster pluralistic ethos.	Thoughtful about asking and responding to questions to deepen understanding when conversing with those of different worldviews.	Sensitive to those who hold other worldviews while learning to navigate reactions of self and others.	Somewhat self-aware and empathetic when discussing own views with those who hold different views.
Interfaith action and reflection	Creates and sustains formal and informal opportunities for ongoing interfaith action and dialogue. Ongoing reflection yields new insights for overcoming challenges to pluralism.	Seeks out formal and informal opportunities for interfaith action and dialogue and readily reflects on the impact of such activities on self and others.	Engages in formal and/or informal interfaith action and dialogue and, when prompted, reflects on impact of participation.	Participates in formal opportunities to engage in interfaith action and dialogue when prompted (e.g., through requirement or extra credit) with little or no reflection.

Pluralism and Worldview Engagement Rubric

Pluralism, for the purposes of this rubric, refers to proactively engaging diverse religious, spiritual, and secular identities to foster respectful relationships and a shared commitment to the common good. Pluralism requires neither relativism nor full agreement; rather, it requires understanding and meaningful interaction among people with differing worldviews.¹ **Worldview**, for the purposes of this rubric, is a commitment to a religious, spiritual, or secular tradition that informs an individual's tenets, values, and meaning making. While we recognize the expansive nature of the term worldview, we choose this term intentionally to challenge presuppositions of and to broaden the conversation in higher education about religion, faith, and pluralism. For example, in many cultures, the dividing lines among one's economic, political, and religious worldviews might be quite blurry or even non-existent.

Rationale

Higher education often aspires to create global citizens. To that end, students must have knowledge and experience with diverse religious, spiritual, and secular worldviews in order to navigate effectively our increasingly pluralistic nation and world. Research demonstrates that when a diverse society finds ways to bring people of different backgrounds together in intentional ways, the community is more resilient and strengthened by its diversity; in addition to social cohesion, creativity, and productivity are likely to increase for that community.² Diversity initiatives in higher education tend to focus on key components of social location such as race, class, and gender; this rubric extends the conversations to another social indicator, that of religious identity. The ideas might be difficult, the terms might be contested, but the conversations are crucial.

Potential Uses

This rubric is designed to help faculty and staff members identify and measure students' learning, growth, and engagement across lines of religious, spiritual, and secular difference, and it is intended for use in curricular and/or co-curricular initiatives. The five criteria are not listed hierarchically, but movement toward a higher level in one area is likely to promote and encourage growth in the others. Further, all five criteria might not be relevant to every piece of evidence and several pieces of evidence together might be more effective in gauging student progress than individual assignments or experiences alone. The rubric is intended to stimulate conversation and is most effective when adapted to suit institutional context (e.g., graduate or undergraduate, private or public). This rubric is not intended as a grading tool, but instead as a tool for assessment of student learning and development goals. The rubric may also serve as a guide for thinking strategically about institutional goals and charting institutional progress. Explore [this case study](#) to learn more about how the rubric has been used on campus.

Glossary

The following definitions were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

Interpersonal engagement: Formal and informal interactions with people of different worldviews that foster appreciative knowledge, meaningful encounters, and conflict avoidance or resolution.³

Appreciative understanding: The accurate and positive knowledge one holds about a religious, spiritual, or secular worldview, in contrast to inaccurate or selective negative knowledge. Also called interfaith literacy.⁴

Interfaith: Inclusive term for the potential interaction among people representing the vast diversity of worldviews.

Interfaith action/cooperation: Meaningful encounters among people of diverse worldviews with a focus on civic action or issues of shared social concern.⁵

Interfaith dialogue: Conversation among individuals of diverse worldviews that reveals commonalities and real differences, increases understanding of each worldview, and builds relationships among participants.

References

- ¹ See "What is Pluralism" by Diana Eck. Available at http://pluralism.org/pages/pluralism/what_is_pluralism.
- ² Robert D. Putnam, 2007. "E pluribus unum: Diversity and community in the 21st century". *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 20(2). Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2007.00176.x>.
- ³ Ashutosh Varshney, 2001. "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond." *World Politics* 53: 362-98. Retrieved from http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world_politics/v053/53.3varshney.html.
- ⁴ Eboo Patel and Cassie Meyer, 2012. "Interfaith Cooperation on Campus: Teaching Interfaith Literacy." *Journal of College and Character* 12(4): 1-7. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2202/1940-1639.1836>.
- ⁵ Eboo Patel and Cassie Meyer, 2011. Introduction to "Interfaith Cooperation on Campus": Interfaith Cooperation as an Institution-Wide Priority. *Journal of College and Character*, 12(2): 1-6. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2202/1940-1639.1794>.