

Wheaton College Library Undergraduate Information Literacy Outcomes: *Preparing Virtue-Driven Scholars for Lifelong Learning*

Introduction: Virtue-Driven Information Literacy

Information literacy is a set of skills and habits that help students find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically in pursuit of truth. At the Wheaton College Library, we view information literacy as both a practical skillset and a formational practice that prepares students to navigate information wisely in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

Information literacy is more than a set of competencies; it is a moral and intellectual practice oriented toward truth, wisdom, and human flourishing. A virtue-driven researcher is motivated not by the desire to complete a task, win an argument, or achieve personal ambition, but by a love of truth—and thus exhibits traits such as curiosity, humility, open-mindedness, perseverance, carefulness, and integrity. Beyond academic or vocational goals, virtuous engagement with information is a way of thinking that shapes all of life. When Christ-followers pursue truth with humility and care, their information practices become acts of formation—honoring God and loving their neighbors.

This program integrates this vision into four stages of the undergraduate experience (FYS, AIS, CIM, and Capstone), each stage focused on building both research competencies and intellectual virtues. The program aligns with Wheaton's Vision for Graduates and the Institutional Learning Outcomes, preparing students to be thoughtful, lifelong learners and faithful participants in scholarly, professional, and civic conversations.

1. Goals and Vision

The Wheaton College information literacy program aims to form *virtue-driven scholars*—students who approach information with both *skill and character*. The program is designed to equip students with essential research competencies while also cultivating intellectual virtues that shape the way they seek, evaluate, and use information.

Research Competencies

Students will develop transferable research competencies that allow them to navigate across different information landscapes, including the ability to:

1. **Identify and refine research questions:** Use inquiry-based thinking to develop and refine research questions across academic and professional contexts.
2. **Locate information across information landscapes:** Use strategic search processes and tools to locate information within diverse and evolving information landscapes.
3. **Evaluate information for credibility, authority, and context:** Assess sources critically, recognizing how context, discipline, and perspective shape information.

4. **Synthesize and communicate information:** Integrate ideas from multiple sources and communicate findings effectively, contributing to scholarly, professional, and faith-informed conversations.
5. **Use information ethically, recognizing its value and impact:** Demonstrate integrity in using and citing information, acknowledging intellectual property and the broader impact of information use.

These competencies provide the foundation for academic and professional research, but they are only part of what it means to be a thoughtful and discerning scholar. Developing research ability without cultivating the character and habits that guide those skills can lead to shallow or even misdirected engagement with information.

Intellectual Virtues

To complement these competencies, the program emphasizes intellectual virtues—excellences of character that relate to thinking and learning, enabling students to pursue truth and understanding:

- **Curiosity:** a desire to ask questions, explore, and seek understanding.
- **Humility:** acknowledging one's limitations, remaining open to continuous learning, and valuing the insights and contributions of others.
- **Open-mindedness:** a readiness to consider new ideas and perspectives, valuing truth over the need to be right.
- **Perseverance:** persistence in inquiry, even when tasks are complex or information is difficult to find.
- **Carefulness:** diligent attention to detail and accuracy, marked by intellectual rigor and thoughtfulness.
- **Integrity:** responsible and ethical use of information, grounded in the consistency of moral and intellectual character.

Together, these competencies and virtues shape a vision of information literacy as a moral and intellectual practice oriented toward truth, wisdom, and human flourishing.

2. Alignment with Wheaton's Institutional Learning Outcomes

The library's information literacy program is designed to form virtue-driven scholars who approach information with both intellectual competence and Christ-centered character. This vision aligns closely with Wheaton College's goal of graduating students who think critically, engage diverse perspectives, and honor God in their intellectual and vocational pursuits. To put

this vision into practice, the information literacy plan supports Wheaton's five Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). These outcomes are listed below, followed by a table that summarizes how the program outcomes contribute to their achievement.

Wheaton College Institutional Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate broad knowledge across liberal arts disciplines and deep understanding within a specific discipline.
2. Conduct scholarly inquiry, analyze evidence, and communicate effectively through written, verbal, and creative expression.
3. Cultivate Christian faith, character, and practice within a Christian community and in relation to the Church.
4. Develop a grace-filled, Christ-centered understanding of diversity.
5. Integrate disciplinary and liberal arts learning with biblically and theologically anchored belief and practice.

Program Outcome	Relevant ILO(s)
Identify research questions	2, 5
Locate information	1, 2
Evaluate information	2, 5
Synthesize information	2, 5
Use information ethically	3

3. Program Structure

Information literacy instruction is scaffolded across four stages of the undergraduate curriculum:

1. **First-Year Seminar (FYS):** An online tutorial introducing foundational research skills and virtue-driven scholarship.
2. **Advanced Integrative Seminar (AIS):** An online tutorial emphasizing scholarly conversations, authority, and faith-and-learning integration.
3. **Course-in-the-Major (CIM):** Discipline-specific instruction taught through online modules or in-person instruction and focusing on research methods and tools relevant to each discipline.

4. **Capstone:** Online or in-person instruction that emphasizes the transfer of academic research competencies to workplace and lifelong learning contexts.

In addition to the four core components of this program, the library provides regular research instruction in First-Year Writing and occasionally partners with other courses to support specific assignments and curricular needs.

4. Learning Outcomes

The following outlines the learning outcomes for each component of the information literacy program. Intellectual virtues that support each outcome are noted in parentheses.

First-Year Seminar (FYS)

By the end of the FYS tutorial, students will be able to:

1. **Define Information Literacy:** Describe information literacy and explain the skills, behaviors, and habits of mind that support effective inquiry.
2. **Recognize Information Types and Context:** Explain how context shapes information, distinguish between popular and scholarly sources, and describe the role of peer review. (*Curiosity, Carefulness*)
3. **Locate Information Using Library Website Tools:** Use website resources, such as Library Search and Research Guides, to find sources and connect with Subject Librarians for expert help. (*Curiosity, Perseverance, Humility*)
4. **Evaluate Information for Credibility and Authority:** Use reliability indicators and the 5 Ws to evaluate sources carefully and thoughtfully. (*Carefulness, Humility, Open-mindedness*)
5. **Use Information Responsibly:** Explain why citation matters, recognize successful paraphrasing, and identify key elements of a citation to avoid plagiarism. (*Integrity, Carefulness*)

Advanced Integrative Seminar (AIS)

By the end of AIS, students will be able to:

1. **Formulate and Refine Research Questions:** Develop and adjust open-ended questions through exploration of scholarly conversations. (*Curiosity, Perseverance*)
2. **Engage with Scholarly Conversations:** Identify key voices and perspectives in a scholarly conversation and remain open to revising ideas in light of new evidence. (*Curiosity, Humility, Open-mindedness*)

3. **Locate Information Using Advanced Strategies:** Apply advanced search techniques using academic databases and resources, incorporating theological resources thoughtfully to support faith-and-learning integration. (*Carefulness, Perseverance*)
4. **Evaluate Authority and Context:** Assess markers of authority and consider how context shapes credibility and relevance. (*Humility, Carefulness, Open-mindedness*)
5. **Synthesize and Communicate Thoughtfully:** Organize and integrate information from multiple sources, connect faith and learning where appropriate, and present original ideas in ways that demonstrate virtue. (*Carefulness, Integrity, Humility, Perseverance*)

Course-in-the-Major (CIM)

By the end of CIM instruction, students will be able to:

1. **Understand the Disciplinary Information Landscape:** Recognize the key types of publications, resources, genres, and scholarly conversations within their discipline. (*Curiosity, Carefulness*)
2. **Apply Discipline-Specific Research Strategies:** Use specialized databases, tools, and methods essential for research in their discipline. (*Carefulness, Perseverance*)
3. **Evaluate, Synthesize, and Use Sources Ethically:** Assess sources using disciplinary standards of credibility and relevance, integrate them effectively into their own work, and apply proper citation practices. (*Carefulness, Integrity*)

Capstone

By the end of Capstone instruction, students will be able to:

1. **Explain the Concept of an Information Landscape:** Define what an information landscape is, describe how context shapes information, and explain why this understanding is helpful for transferring research competencies to new settings. (*Open-mindedness*)
2. **Compare Academic and Workplace Information Environments:** Describe how sources, systems, and information behaviors differ between academic and professional settings. (*Open-mindedness*)
3. **Connect Virtue-Driven Information Literacy to Lifelong Learning:** Reflect on how their current research skills may need to shift or expand in professional contexts and explain how virtue-driven information literacy supports ongoing growth and adaptability. (*Curiosity, Perseverance, Integrity*)

5. Summary and Alignment

The Wheaton College information literacy program provides a scaffolded approach to building research competencies and cultivating intellectual virtues. Through the four components (FYS, AIS, CIM, and Capstone), students progress from foundational information literacy skills to advanced disciplinary research and reflective transfer to workplace and lifelong learning contexts. This plan aligns with both the ACRL Framework and Wheaton's ILOs, preparing students to engage with information as virtue-driven scholars who pursue truth with curiosity, humility, and integrity.

For a summary of how the program outcomes align with the ACRL Framework and key virtues across all components of the plan, see Appendix A.

Appendix A: Alignment of Program Outcomes, ACRL Frames, and Intellectual Virtues

This table demonstrates how the five program outcomes are integrated across the four components of the information literacy plan (FYS, AIS, CIM, Capstone), mapped to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy, and aligned with the key intellectual virtues emphasized throughout the program.

Program Outcome	ACRL Frame(s)	Component Coverage (FYS, AIS, CIM, Capstone)	Key Virtues
Identify research questions	Research as Inquiry	- FYS: Intro to inquiry - AIS: Formulate/refine research questions	Curiosity, Perseverance
Locate information	Searching as Strategic Exploration	- FYS: Library Search & guides - AIS: Advanced database strategies - CIM: Discipline-specific methods - Capstone: Workplace contexts	Curiosity, Perseverance
Evaluate information	Authority is Constructed and Contextual; Information Creation as a Process	- FYS: Authority/credibility - AIS: Authority and context - CIM: Disciplinary evaluation - Capstone: Academic vs. workplace info	Carefulness, Humility, Open-mindedness
Synthesize information	Scholarship as Conversation	- AIS: Scholarly conversations - CIM: Integrating disciplinary sources - Capstone: Reflecting on transfer	Carefulness, Integrity
Use information ethically	Information Has Value	- FYS: Citation/plagiarism - AIS: Presenting ideas with integrity - CIM: Ethical citation and use - Capstone: Virtue-driven information literacy	Integrity, Humility