

At JMU, we define civic engagement as advancing the legacy of James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, by preparing individuals to be active and responsible participants in a representative democracy dedicated to the common good.

Participation is enhanced by **knowledge** of:

- political levers for influencing change
- universal democratic principles - popular sovereignty, individual rights and freedoms, responsibilities, rule of law, and the common good
- purpose and power of political institutions
- the legal aspects of citizenship, voting, and representation
- how democracy developed and why
- how historical events, social and political movements, conflicts and debates relate to the development of the American state
- how key primary sources (e.g., the Constitution, the Federalist papers, Emancipation Proclamation, the Seneca Falls Declaration, Letter from a Birmingham Jail) relate to development of American democracy
- the sources of individual identity and the influence of these sources on civic values and behaviors
- diverse cultures, histories, and values that have shaped the American experience
- basic global values, traditions, and problems
- the interrelationship between domestic and global practices, events, and values
- how the world is organized politically, including the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations
- political issues at local, state, national, and international level

Participation includes, but is not limited to:

- campaigning – volunteering for a political campaign
- being a member of a political party or organization devoted to a political cause or societal issue
- financially contributing to a campaign or cause
- running for or holding public office
- contacting public officials
- attending meetings of town or city government
- following politics/staying informed
- discussing political issues with others
- making voice heard or voicing an opinion through blog, social media, newspaper, magazine, talk show, political buttons/bumper stickers
- protesting, boycotting, buycotting, marching, demonstrating
- civil disobedience
- joining or originating petitions
- participating in community service/volunteer activities as a mechanism for political action
- participating in deliberative and collaborative groups with friends and community members
- analyzing and navigating systems (political, social, economic) in order to plan and engage in public action
- voting (or deliberate acts of non-voting or blank voting)

Participation is enhanced by **skills**:

- capacity to read, write, and speak effectively and persuasively in forums appropriate to civic life and public affairs
- ability to explain diverse positions on democratic values and practices; take a position and defend it
- ability to apply ethical reasoning skills (e.g., 8KQs) to evaluate public policies and guide civic behaviors
- ability to apply ethical reasoning skills (e.g., 8KQs) to evaluate and guide political decision-making and principled dissent
- ability to distinguish reliable and valid evidence and facts from unsubstantiated claims
- recognize the impact all forms of media have on personal attitudes and political beliefs
- ability to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of potential approaches to civic and political problems and be reflective about decisions and actions
- ability to use critical inquiry, analysis, and reasoning to identify a contemporary problem, research solutions, analyze results, evaluate choices, and make decisions
- ability to effectively work across differences in order to reach collaborative decisions that best support democracy and civic life
- ability to listen to a variety of perspectives on political issues

Participation is characterized by **values and dispositions**:

- appreciation of empathy, open-mindedness, and diversity
- positive attitudes toward pluralism and diverse perspectives
- commitment to universal democratic principles – e.g., popular sovereignty, individual rights and freedoms, responsibilities, rule of law, and justice
- sense of civic responsibility and commitment to the public good over private interests
- development of a civic identity, where addressing public issues is considered central to one's sense of self
- development of confidence in individual and collective ability to address political/civic/social issue

Outcomes were created by the Civic Engagement Assessment Committee at James Madison University in Spring 2018 and informed by the following resources. Some outcomes were directly or partially adopted from these resources.

- 1) National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012). *A crucible moment: College learning and democracy's future*. Washington, DC: Association of American College and Universities.
https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/crucible/Crucible_508F.pdf
- 2) Torney-Purta, J., Cabrera, J. C., Roohr, K. C., Liu, O. L., & Rios, J. A. (2015). *Assessing civic competency and engagement in higher education: Research background, frameworks, and directions for next-generation assessment* (Research Report No. RR-15-34). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
https://www.ets.org/research/policy_research_reports/publications/report/2015/jvdz
- 3) Civiced.org's outline of essential elements of constitutional democracy
<http://www.civiced.org/component/content/article/12-publications/390-constitutional-democracy>
- 4) Massachusetts Board of Higher Education's student civic learning and engagement assessment framework
www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/2014-03PreparingCitizensReportOnCivicLearningAndEngagement.pdf
- 5) JMU's Cluster 4 learning outcomes
<https://www.jmu.edu/gened/about/Cluster%20Four%20Requirements.shtml>
- 6) JMU's I am Madison's Legacy
<https://www.jmu.edu/civic/madisons-legacy.shtml>