

COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Guidelines for Approval of General Education Courses
Approved May 2011

I. Executive summary of General Education Submission Procedures

A) New Courses:

When submitting a *NEW* course for consideration for meeting General Education (GE) requirements, units most follow the existing procedures for submission of a course. All of the relevant paperwork/forms are submitted to the Register and routed from there. The course will be evaluated by the Subcommittee on Courses (SCOC) for approval as a course and GE approval. To be considered for GE, the course submission packet must include:

- A completely filled out and signed Course Action Form (CAF)
- A syllabus that includes as a minimum a grading scheme, list of course topics, and student learning outcomes.
- Completion of the GE questionnaire. (Reference may be made to information on the CAF or in the syllabus as appropriate.)

Faculty may also submit any other documentation as justification for the course meeting the GE requirement. The request for GE credit will be reviewed by the relevant subcommittees of CEP and relevant administrative units, with final approval being given by the full CEP.

B) Existing Courses:

When submitting an *EXISTING* course for consideration for meeting General Education (GE) requirements, units still submit the course materials to the Registrar, where it is routed for approvals. Review is made by SCOC. To be considered for GE, the course submission packet must include:

- A completely filled out and signed Course Action Form (CAF)
- A syllabus that includes as a minimum a grading scheme, list of course topics, and student learning outcomes.
- Completion of the GE questionnaire. (Reference may be made to information on the CAF or in the syllabus as appropriate.)

Faculty may also submit any other documentation as justification for the course meeting the GE requirement.

C) GE Questionnaire:

The rest of this document contains the background to the GE requirement and the specific criteria used by CEP, its subcommittees, and administrative units that review the GE request. To aid in the review process, all requests for GE credit must fill out the following questionnaire:

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUEST QUESTIONNAIRE:

II. GENERAL EDUCATION GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are based on the principles used to establish the current General Education requirement and are meant as a guide to departments proposing new GE courses as well as a guide for CEP and its Policy Subcommittee in approving them. For details of the general principles, see Section III.

General

- GE courses should be fundamental in nature and the experience they provide should be relatively broad.
- GE courses are selected based on their content rather than the academic unit that offers them.
- The general education requirement is a graduation requirement. With the exception of the lower division writing requirement GEs need not be completed in the first two years of college.

Double counting

- Double counting refers to students receiving credit for TWO GE categories by taking a single course. Double counting is approved and encouraged between single quarter (4-unit) courses in Category V (A and B), VII and VIII and single quarter courses in Categories II, III or IV. (Clarification was included in a memo to Associate Deans and Directors of Counseling on December 10, 2007.)
- Double counting is not allowed between single quarter (4-unit) courses in Categories I, II, III and IV.
- Three quarter sequences (e.g. Humanities Core and FIP) may fulfill up to 3 GE categories (II through VI) plus writing, if they include extra units for writing.
- A course maybe be approved in more than one category but can only count towards one requirement for Categories I, II, III and IV and only one of VII or VIII. (This is referred to as *Double Listing*.) Approval of a course in two foundations categories (II, III and IV) or in both VII and VIII will require careful documentation of the interdisciplinary nature of the course and a convincing argument that this generates a synergy such that the course is focused primarily on both disciplines.

LD and prerequisites

- GE courses should be lower division courses*.
- GE courses may not have prerequisites, with the exception of one other GE-approved course.

GEs and majors

- GE courses are intended for non-majors and should be general enough to be accessible to non-majors.

* Beginning Fall 2011 CEP will reassess previously approved GE courses in view of the recently approved GE Learning Outcomes. Upper division courses (especially in Categories VII and VIII) previously approved as GEs will retain approval during the CEP review. CEP strongly encourages instructors who consider proposing new GE courses to design and propose them as lower division courses.

—There may be some instances of overlap between GE courses and courses required for majors, if well-justified. If so, these courses satisfy both GE and major requirements. Examples of such overlap are lower division introductory courses that serve as both an entry into a major and general service to non-majors.

—GEs can be limited to majors only under special circumstances/with justification and CEP approval. Examples for which this is likely are specialized Category V courses required for impacted majors. (For further clarification see CEP Addendum to the Policy on Enrollment Restrictions, August 26, 2010)

Frequency and evaluation

—GE courses should be taught regularly, ideally once a year (or at least 3 times in 5 years).

—If a course is revised substantially, the revisions must be approved by CEP.

—GE courses will be reviewed by CEP approximately every 5 years following a process to be established by the assessment committee.

Learning Outcomes

—Each time the GE course is proposed, the course syllabus should contain a justification as to how the course addresses the learning outcomes for the associated GE category.

Special topics

—When topics vary, the course description must justify the GE designation.

Cross-listing

—A general education course may be cross-listed with another course when that course is also approved for the same category.

Satisfying GE requirements

—To satisfy the GE requirements, students must complete the number of courses indicated for each GE Category with a grade of D- or better, or if electing P/NP grading, with a grade of P. For Category I (Writing) a grade of C (or a Pass or Credit grade equivalent to C) is required.

—No GE requirements may be satisfied with Individual or Group Studies, Internships, Special Topics, Directed Studies, or similar courses.

Policies for individual categories

—Category VIII may be satisfied by one quarter's participation in the UC Education Abroad Program (EAP) or one quarter's participation in an International Opportunities Program (IOP) with an approved IOP Credit Contract. Summer study abroad on an EAP, IOP (with approved IOP Credit Contract), or UCI Summer Session Travel Study program satisfies this requirement when the program is worth at least four (4) quarter units.

III. BACKGROUND ON GE REQUIREMENTS

UCI's General Education requirement, adopted in May 2007 and updated in 2011, represents a major change from the former Breadth Requirements, best described as a distribution model with variations in foundations and depth of knowledge. Under the Breadth Requirements, in most cases, students were required to take three-course sequences within disciplines which built knowledge in sequential steps. In addition, many of the three-course sequences were the same as those taken by majors, assuring that non-majors were exposed to the same depth of knowledge expected of majors.

By implementing a new General Education curriculum effective Fall 2008, CEP took a completely different approach to defining these requirements, one which is "entirely cognitive," in which the goals of liberal education are less about specific content needed by subject-matter experts than about teaching students how to think and exposing them to the ways that different disciplines approach and develop new knowledge. Instead of topics and content to be covered, CEP's approach starts with a set of goals for liberal education in three areas which are further defined in terms of what students will learn:

- Essential skills and abilities, including clear and effective writing, and basic communication skills in a non-English language;
- Foundations of knowledge, which explore how different knowledge systems employ different methods of inquiry, in three broad areas: arts and humanities, science and technology, and social and behavioral sciences; and,
- Responsibilities of educated citizens, ensuring that students understand issues and appreciate differences at the multicultural, international and global and quantitative or computational reasoning levels.

CEP adopted the phrase "General Education" instead of "Breadth" to signal, in part, a break with the former requirements and to emphasize the change in philosophy from a distribution model to important learning outcomes of a liberal arts education.

"General education courses introduce students to a range of ideas and intellectual activities that engage UCI scholars, providing both scope and balance to a university degree beyond the study of a specific major.

"The general education requirements are intended to help undergraduates place the specialized study undertaken in the major within a broader context. They are designed to cultivate skills, knowledge, and understanding that will make students effective contributors to society and the world. The general education requirements should enable UCI undergraduates to apply the abilities developed in their studies to identify significant issues, gather and evaluate available evidence, analyze alternatives, reach conclusions, communicate the results effectively, and take considered actions.

"Ultimately issues raised by proposed courses should be measured against this statement of intent rather than by formal definitions of each subcategory."