

Section Six – General Education

General Education is an important part of the undergraduate educational experience. It is, as the Association of American Colleges & Universities notes, a critical component of a “high quality education that develops intellectual and ethical capacities; expands cultural, societal, and scientific horizons; cultivates democratic and global knowledge and engagement, and prepares graduates for successful participation in a dynamic and rapidly evolving economy.” A well-planned General Education program of study will provide students with the skills they will need to excel in whatever disciplines and careers they choose to pursue.

The components of an undergraduate education include the *Major*, in which the student acquires depth of knowledge in a chosen discipline; *Electives* that allow a student to explore personal or career-related interests; and *General Education*, in which students develop competency in academic skills that are essential to student success. General Education offers students broad knowledge beyond the focus of the major, as well as exposure to the rich diversity of the human experience. General Education (sometimes referred to as GE) should foster habits of mind that lead to lifelong learning and prepare graduates for full and productive lives.

Authority

General Education Breadth Requirements are specified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 40405. This authority is further defined in CSU Executive Order No. 1065 governing General Education. On the CSULB campus, General Education is regulated by Policy Statement 12-00.

The authority to review and approve courses for inclusion in the General Education Master Course List belongs to the General Education Governing Committee (GEGC), with final authority residing with the Curriculum and Educational Policies Council (CEPC).

Proposals for approval of specific courses for General Education credit are submitted by the College Dean or designee directly to the Chair of the General Education Governing Committee (GEGC) via the Office of Undergraduate Studies and Advising. The GEGC reviews each course proposal and recommends action to CEPC. The CEP Council reviews GEGC’s recommendation and submits its recommendations to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for final action. Upon completion of this process, those courses approved will be placed on the General Education Master Course List.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes

Each CSU campus defines its GE student learning outcomes to fit with the framework of the four “Essential Learning Outcomes” drawn from the **Liberal Education and American Promise** (LEAP) campaign, an initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

The “Essential Learning Outcomes” are:

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Achieved through study in the Sciences and mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities, Histories, Languages, and the Arts

Intellectual and Practical Skills, including

- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Information Literacy and Technology Literacy
- Teamwork
- Creativity, Inquiry, and Discovery

Personal and Civic Responsibility, including

- Global Competencies
- Intercultural Competence (cultural values/traditions-U.S.)
- Ethical Reasoning and Social Responsibility
- Self-Understanding
- Foundation and skill for Lifelong Learning

Integrative Learning, including

- Synthesis and Interdisciplinary Methods of Inquiry

Framework of the General Education Curriculum

The General Education program sequentially introduces students to the mastery of academic skills along with a pattern of course work that will provide graduates with an understanding of 1) self, 2) the physical world, 3) the development and function of human society and its cultural and artistic endeavors, 4) methodologies and value systems, and 5) processes employed in human inquiries.

The General Education curriculum is organized into three (3) sequential phases: Foundation, Explorations, and Capstone. Students who begin their college careers at

CSULB will complete all three stages, while community college transfer students who enter the university with a fully certified lower division General Education transfer program will be expected to complete the Capstone stage only, which may include Global and/or Human Diversity.

Foundation: Foundation courses are designed to provide development and improvement of fundamental academic skills that are critical to student success in college. Skills most central to academic success include 1) Written Communication, 2) Oral Communication, 3) Mathematical Concepts/Quantitative Reasoning, 4) Analytical and Critical Thinking, 5) Reading for Information, 6) Information Retrieval Literacy, and 7) Basic Technology Literacy.

Explorations: Exploration courses are intended to provide an opportunity to explore the various ways of acquiring and examining knowledge while continuing to develop the fundamental academic skills. Additional skills and attributes include 1) ethical reasoning, 2) analytical reading, 3) creativity, 4) respect for difference, 5) awareness of other cultures, 6) questioning of stereotypes, 7) values of citizenship, 8) negotiating skills, and (9) other attributes of use in a diverse society.

Capstone: Capstone courses are designed to bring the strands of General Education into focus and reinforce knowledge and skills acquired from many areas and to incorporate depth in the form of more sophisticated tools and analysis. These upper division courses develop advanced college skills, including 1) writing, 2) synthesis, 3) analysis, 4) critique, and 5) research and 6) application of knowledge. Capstone courses are intended to help students bring interconnectivity to the essential general education skills, disciplinary knowledge, the university experience, work, and life.

Other Components Found Within the General Education Curriculum

- Global Issues: All students must take one 3-unit course that focuses on Global Issues or world societies and cultures. Global Issues courses may be found in the Explorations and the Capstone stages.
- Human Diversity in the U.S.: All students must take one 3-unit course that focuses on instructive examples of Human Diversity in the U.S. Human Diversity courses may be found in the Explorations and Capstone stages.
- U.S. History: At CSULB, the GE curriculum integrates one 3-unit course in U.S. History. The U.S. History course is mandated by Section 40404 of Title 5 as part of the Social Sciences and Citizenship requirements.
- U.S. Constitution and American Ideals: At CSULB, the GE curriculum integrates one 3-unit course in U.S. Constitution and American Ideals. The U.S. Constitution and American Ideals course is mandated by Section 40404 of Title 5 as part of the Social Sciences and Citizenship requirements.

Subject Area Distribution

Each baccalaureate graduate shall complete a minimum of forty-eight (48) semester units of GE courses in the subject area distributions as described in the general education governing documents: California Code of Regulations, Title 5; CSU Executive Order; and campus Policy Statement.

CSULB General Education Framework (Effective Fall 2012)

- English Language Communication and Critical Thinking (Category A, 9 units)
- Science, Technology, and Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning (Category B, 9 units)
- The Arts and Humanities (Category C, 9 units)
- Social Sciences and Citizenship (Category D, 9 units)
- Lifelong Learning and Self-Development (Category E, 3 units)
- Capstone (Category F, 9 units)

Course Approval Process

1. A request for GE approval originates in one of three places: 1) at the department level; 2) college level (college-based courses); or 3) at the university level via CEPC (e.g. University Honors Program or other university-level course). A course proposal specifically for General Education is prepared. The course proposal must explicitly outline and assess General Education learning outcomes. The [Essential General Education Student Learning Outcomes](#) are located on the General Education Program web site.
2. The GE course proposal is reviewed by Department Curriculum Committee and Department Chair. If the course proposal is approved, then the Department Chair forwards it to the College Curriculum Committee for review.
3. The College Curriculum Committee reviews the GE course proposal. If the course proposal is approved it is then forwarded to the College Dean (or designee).
4. After reviewing and signing off, the College Dean (or designee) forwards the GE Course Proposal to the General Education Governing Committee (GEGC) (a standing committee of the Curriculum and Educational Policies Council (CEPC). The Department Chair is copied on the transmittal to the GEGC.

5. GE course proposals approved by the department and college curriculum committees are submitted electronically by the College Dean (or designee) to the GEGC Chair via the [Office of Undergraduate Studies](#).
6. The GEGC reviews the GE course proposal (written materials that are submitted). The GEGC Chair places the GE course proposal on a meeting agenda; department, college and Deans (or designees) are notified of the meeting date/time/location. Departments are not required to attend the GEGC meeting. If the GEGC requires more information, the department will be invited to the next meeting. Should the GEGC Chair anticipate a need for clarification, representatives for the proposal will be invited to attend the initial meeting. GEGC reviews the GE course proposal.
7. GE course proposal actions include: 1) approval of a new course; 2) reconfirmation of an already approved course; 3) reclassification of an already approved course (addition or deletion of classification); 4) pend an action to request additional information from the Department; 5) decertification of an already approved course; and 6) denial of approval of a course.
8. GEGC course proposal final actions are reflected in the GE Supplement for that semester. The GE Supplement is a report of GEGC actions/recommendations in regards to courses on the General Education Master Course List reviewed during that semester.
9. The GE Supplement is forwarded to CEPC for review prior to the end of each semester. If approved, it is forwarded to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for final action.
10. After the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs' approval, the approved changes are updated on the GE Master Course List twice each academic year. The GE Master Course List is maintained by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and Advising. If the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs does not approve the GE Supplement, the Supplement is returned to the CEPC for revision.
11. Courses **new** to general education are effective on the GE Master Course List the next semester after approval. For courses **continuing** on the GE Master Course List that request a change of any type, the effective date of the approval will be one (1) year after the approval.
12. Departments with courses on the GE Master Course List must report ongoing progress in their annual assessment reports.

13. Departments undergoing program review must complete the specific questions within the “Elements of the Self Study for Program Review of Degree Granting Programs.

General Regulations and Guidelines

1. Faculty developing a general education course proposal should be familiar with the [general education policy](#) and its expectations. (Please see Academic Senate web site - University Policy Statements or the GE Program website.)
2. The GEGC will look for documentation that the course is appropriate for and meets the criteria for the requested designation(s) and level. (Please see the current General Education Policy for the description of the designations and criteria.)
3. GEGC’s central focus in course proposal review is the achievement of the [Essential General Education Student Learning Outcomes](#) and not the traditional “discipline exclusiveness” (i.e. Foundation). Burden of proof for the development, achievement, and assessment of the student learning outcomes within a specific designation rests with the unit (e.g. program or department or college) developing the course proposal.
4. Departments should strive to design courses in which the GE learning objectives are integrated throughout the course.
5. Normally, a course should have a formal curriculum certification by the University and be listed as “active” in the Department’s Active Courses file (CS Link / Class Management – Active Courses) to be eligible for review by the GEGC.
 - a. Exception: New course proposals to the university that are requesting general education approval are eligible for GEGC review concurrent with the university curriculum festival provided the GE course proposals have been approved by the department and college curriculum committees and the College Dean (or designee).
6. Course proposals and supporting documents, must be in electronic PDF format.
7. A GE Course Proposal consists of the following:
 - a. General Education Course Proposal Action Form
 - i. Available on the General Education Program website.
 - ii. Courses cross-listed in more than one department/college must have been approved by both parties and submit to the GEGC coincidentally.
 - b. Standard Course Outline (SCO)

- i. Standard course outlines should adhere to their college or disciplines template.
 - ii. Should your department/college not have a template, a standard course outline template and sample are available in the curriculum handbook.
 - iii. General Education Student Learning Outcomes are clearly identified.
 - iv. [GE Student Learning Outcomes](#) are clearly assessed.
 - c. Supporting documents:
 - i. Statement on how the course meets the requested designations.
 - ii. Statement about multiple sections/instructors conformity and uniformity.
 - iii. Sample(s)
 1. Course Syllabus
 - a. General Education Student Learning Outcomes are identified.
 - b. GE Student Learning Outcomes are assessed.
 2. Examination questions, term paper topics, course projects, homework, or other assignments or activities, as appropriate.
 - iv. The GEGC may request additional information if the course proposal appears to be inadequate.
8. Courses in the Foundation phase are numbered 100-199.
9. Exploration courses include courses not in the Foundation phase or Capstone phase.
10. Courses can be designated as Global Issues or Human Diversity in the U.S. but not both.
11. Upper division GE courses - those numbered 300 or higher - must have the entire GE Foundation as prerequisites.
12. Capstone courses:
 - a. Types: Advanced Skills, Service Learning, Interdisciplinary, Integrative Learning, and Writing Intensive.
 - b. Demonstrably develop advance college skills, including synthesis and application of knowledge, analysis, critique, and research.
 - c. Shall be upper-division.
 - d. Entire GE Foundation as prerequisite.
 - e. One or more Explorations courses as prerequisite.
 - f. Writing Intensive courses enrollments shall not exceed 35 students.

- g. Writing component is a minimum of 2500 words with feedback and revisions (with the exception of Writing Intensive courses).
- h. Writing Intensive designation has a writing component minimum of 5000 words with feedback and revisions.
- i. Writing Intensive designated courses have specific final grade criteria.
- j. All capstones eligible for writing intensive designation

13. Exploration Courses:

- a. All areas outside the Foundation curriculum.
- b. Excludes Capstone courses.

14. GE courses are not designed for majors only unless it is an Integrative Learning Capstone.

15. No course identified as available for credit in a graduate program will be permitted for GE Credit.

16. Double numbered courses (400 and 500 level) may not be used for GE Credit.

Course Recertification

A department's courses approved for General Education credit will be reviewed periodically. Typically, the standard period between reviews is seven (7) years.

GE course recertification was integrated into a department's program review cycle using the "Departmental Model of GE Skills Assessment." Previously, course recertification was based on the review of individual course proposals review compliance with the designation's subject area criteria. Under this new model all departmental general education offerings will be reviewed for recertification at the same time.

The "Departmental Model of GE Skills Assessment" focuses on the department's ongoing assessment of the essential general education skills in the department's general education approved courses. This model of "course recertification" is based on the assumption that a general education course after initial approval is awarded "lifetime approval" by remaining in "good standing" via the outlined process in the "Departmental Model of GE Skills Assessment". Courses failing to maintain a "good standing" will be General Education (GE) decertified.

Assessment in General Education Courses

Annually, departments will report on their ongoing general education assessment progress in their annual assessment reports. The GEGC will review appropriate sections of the department's annual assessment reports for continued "good standing."

Departments will include the assessment of the [Essential General Education Skills](#) in their GE courses in their degree program reviews. Specific questions within the “Elements of the Self Study for Program Review of Degree Granting Programs” relative to General Education will be completed as part of the program review cycle. All departmental general education offerings will be reviewed for recertification at the same time of the program review. The GEGC will review appropriate sections of the department’s self-study and program review to evaluate “good standing” of all of the department’s general education offerings. It is anticipated that the full review of all of the department’s general education courses will coincide with the seven-year program review cycle or the department’s accreditation cycle.

Coordination of Multi-Section and Sequential Courses

Multi-section courses are those with the same prefix and course number offered in the same semester. Sequential courses consist of two or three, rarely more, courses that follow one another, must be taken in sequence, and together cover a field or topic.

I. Standard Course Outline

- A. All multi-section and sequential courses shall have a written standard course outline that details the content and student learning outcomes expected for all sections and, where appropriate, the entire sequence.
- B. Departments/programs are responsible for assuring that all faculty teaching multi-section and sequential courses adhere to the content and student learning outcomes set forth in the standard course outline. Instructors teaching multi-section and sequential courses may vary in their pedagogical approach to the course, providing it is consistent with the standard course outline.

II. Departmental/Programmatic Responsibility

- A. Departments/programs have responsibility for course content, for assuring continuity in sequential courses, and for assuring that multiple sections of a course have common student learning outcomes.
- B. Departments/programs may adopt a policy that requires use of the same text(s) (or one of a small number of designated texts) for all sections of a multiple-section course or all semesters of a sequential course.
- C. The department chair/program director is responsible for the coordination of multi-section and sequential courses and may delegate their responsibility to an

appropriate faculty member or committee.

III. Course Coordination

Course coordination may include but is not restricted to:

- A. Management of the standard course outline;
- B. Distribution of common course materials;
- C. Coordination of course assessment efforts;
- D. Provision of guidance and resources to faculty new to teaching the courses (including the review of the content and student learning outcomes set forth in the standard course outline);
- E. Efforts to enhance achievement of the student learning outcomes;
- F. Provision of advice to course faculty when their practices deviate widely from the guidelines in the standard course outline;
- G. Facilitation of information sharing among course faculty;
- H. Maintenance of a catalog of best practices; and
- I. Revision of the standard course outline as appropriate.

Resources

Academic Senate web site – CSULB
 California Code of Regulations, Title 5
 CSU Executive Order 1065
 Department Model of GE Skills Assessment – CSULB
 General Education Program web site - CSULB
 General Education Requirements web site – CSULB

CSULB Policy Statements

PS 12-05 Coordination of Multi-Section and Sequential Courses
 PS 12-00 General Education
 PS 11-07 Course Syllabi and Standard Course Outlines
 PS 09-07 Final Course Grades, Grading Procedures, and Final Assessments
 PS 08-02 Cheating and Plagiarism
 PS 03-11 Academic Technology and the Mode of Instruction
 PS 01-01 Attendance Policy
 PS 98-06 Assessment Policy

