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Academic Program: Undergraduate Studies

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM-GATEWAY

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General Education Curriculum

Definition

General education is a program of study that introduces students to a broad, liberal course of instruction in the major areas of knowledge (the arts and sciences). Its aim is to cultivate the intellect by educating students to reason logically, to think critically, to express themselves clearly, and to foster an understanding of the human condition and the role of value judgments in the human experience. As an integrated educational experience, the general education program helps to provide the foundation for further intellectual growth and holistic development. In addition to giving a sense of the various academic disciplines, and their interrelationships, general education serves as the common element for all degree programs leading to the baccalaureate.

Purpose

Consistent with Millersville University's mission to provide a liberal arts-based education, the purpose of general education is to provide breadth of knowledge as a balance and complement to the depth provided by the major. This is necessary for the holistic development of Millersville graduates as responsible citizens in a diverse, and technologically complex, global community.

Characteristics of the General Education Program

The program is intended to exhibit identifiable organization and coherence of course orientation and development. The interrelatedness of the areas of knowledge should be discernible to the students throughout the program, with the academic disciplines represented as interpretations of and contributions to knowledge rather than as self-serving entities. Indeed, the program accommodates the design and implementation of course offerings outside the traditional departmental units of the disciplines constituting the arts and sciences.

The liberal arts component of a "general education" program is designed to prepare students to live, not simply to make a living. While a narrowly focused or highly technical program may provide for success in the marketplace and make competent technicians, the general education program provides broad competence that helps produce complete, mature, responsible leaders and citizens of the world; that is, the program is "practical" in that it helps students prepare for the wide variety of problems with which they must contend in a complex world.

Its value resists obsolescence. The program is meant to reflect the reality of a culturally pluralistic and interdependent world. The common survival of humanity in a world of finite resources demands an unprecedented level of understanding and positive engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities. Our students must be made aware of the global perspectives which can enhance this understanding. In a society compelled to emphasize technical specialization, the need for courses in the liberal arts becomes ever more important to assure the development of an educated person who can communicate, reason, and solve problems intelligently.

Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Apply writing skills to write effectively for diverse audiences.
2. Apply oral communication skills to present effectively to diverse audiences.
3. Make connections in their learning across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences.
4. Apply critical thinking skills — including problem-solving, quantitative & scientific reasoning — to the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of civic and social responsibility.
6. Create meaningful connections across diverse cultural contexts.
7. Identify, assess, select, and use technology effectively and responsibly to accomplish a task or solve a problem
8. Demonstrate lifelong healthy behaviors in any dimension of wellbeing (emotional, environmental, financial, physical, social, spiritual, and vocational).

General Education Guidelines

1. Primary major courses may only count towards capstone.
2. Minor or secondary major courses may count.
3. Unlimited directed general education (formerly known as "required related") courses may count.
4. No more than three courses from any one subject code in the Gateway stage.
5. No more than four courses from any one subject code within the 45 credits.

6. There are seven labels and eight courses minimum totaling at least 24 credit hours required in the Gateway Stage, meaning that students must take two courses from one label area to meet the minimum.
7. The Keystone Stage is two courses — one AW and one DCC— at the 300 Level or above totaling at least 6 credit hours.
8. Departmental capstones may also serve as General Education Capstones if they meet the defined student learning outcomes
9. Number of Credits for Capstone Courses
 - a. The Capstone is one course at the 300-level or above with 3 to 4.5 credit hours. Departmental (major) capstones, including student teaching, practicums, internships, co-op experiences, exhibitions, Honors and departmental theses, portfolio courses, and the like may also serve as General Education Capstones if they meet the defined student learning outcomes.
10. Number of Labels within Stages
 - a. The General Education Gateway Program includes four stages: Cornerstone Stage, Gateway Stage, Keystone Stage, and Capstone Stage. Each of these four stages carry course labels, specific to each stage.
 - b. No course may carry labels from more than one stage in the General Education Gateway Program.
 - c. A course may not carry more than one label at the Cornerstone Stage: *First Year Experience (FYEX)*, *Introductory Writing (IW)*, *Oral Communication (OC)*, and *Quantitative Literacy (QL)*.
 - d. A course may carry a maximum of two labels at the Gateway Stage: *Creative Explorations (CE)*, *Ethical Action and Citizenship (EAC)*, *Information Literacy (IL)*, *Investigations in Scientific Reasoning (SCI)*, *Personal Wellness (PWEL)*, *Problem Solving (PS)*, and *Technological Competency (TC)*.
 - e. A course may not carry more than one label at the Keystone Stage: *Diverse Cultural Contexts (DCC)* and *Advanced Writing (AW)*.

The Four Stages of the Gateway General Education Program

Cornerstone Stage: Approved Categories, Descriptions, and SLOs

QUANTITATIVE LITERACY (QL)

Definition: Quantitative Literacy courses utilize mathematics and/or statistics to formulate and/or solve equations and interpret numerical data. These courses incorporate critical thinking and problem-solving skills to help students develop an understanding of numbers to build a foundation for understanding mathematics and statistics in real-world contexts and solving more complex mathematics problems.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Explain information presented in mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words).
2. Convert relevant information into various mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words).
3. Make judgments and draw appropriate conclusions based on the quantitative analysis of data and/or mathematical models of phenomena or processes, while recognizing the limits of this analysis.

4. Make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modeling, and data analysis.
5. Express quantitative evidence in support of the mathematical/ statistical argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized).

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR (FYEX)

Definition: First-Year Seminar (FYEX) courses are designed to support students' successful transition to university life. These courses use at least one high-impact educational practice to develop and foster skills that will lead to success in college, career, and personal life. Each seminar focuses on a different topic/theme of strong interest to faculty and students.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate autonomy and competence in planning for personal and academic goals.
2. Identify resources and practice strategies to support personal and academic success.
3. Develop effective communication, critical thinking skills and dispositions, and information literacy skills to explore academic content.
4. Recognize the value of diverse perspectives as a citizen of the university community.

ORAL COMMUNICATION (OC)

Definition: Oral communication courses focus on prepared, purposeful speaking designed to do one or more of the following, to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, to entertain and comfort audience members, to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of communication concepts, theories, and processes.
2. Appropriately research, analyze, organize and synthesize a variety of reliable source materials into effective oral and visual presentations.
3. Demonstrate ethical responsibility and cultural sensitivity towards audiences by adapting oral presentation delivery and visual messages.
4. Utilize critical thinking and evaluative skills to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of presentational strategies.
5. Manage public speaking anxieties to deliver effective and engaging oral presentations.

INTRODUCTORY WRITING (IW)

Definition: Introductory Writing courses facilitate the development of college-level proficiency in the use of writing processes, critical awareness when reading and writing, stylistic fluency, and technical accuracy.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to

1. Identify impacts of the composing process on the final product.

2. Write persuasively by distinguishing and applying effective strategies of argumentation appropriate to a given rhetorical situation including audience, purpose, and context.
3. Generate conclusions about texts that arise from rhetorical analysis to inform their own choices as writers.
4. Produce texts that demonstrate ethical writing by effectively synthesizing sources and conscientiously using conventions of academic discourse including citation, format, and style.

Gateway Stage: Approved Categories, Definitions, and SLO's

INVESTIGATIONS INTO SCIENTIFIC REASONING

Definition: Investigations in Scientific Reasoning courses primarily focus on an empirical study of the natural world while providing training in the tools, processes, and subject matter appropriate to the discipline to address theoretical and/or practical issues. These courses emphasize that the scientific meaning of fact, theory, and law are not a hierarchy, and give students an appreciation of essential creative aspects of scientific process and discovery. Students must spend at least two contact hours per week (preferable consecutive) in hands-on (in person or approved online) lab, because of the applied nature of science labs.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Apply the scientific method to investigate natural phenomena, solve problems, and gain a better understanding of the natural world.
2. Make observations, generate questions, develop a testable and falsifiable hypothesis, collect data, and interpret results.
3. Recognize that scientific explanations offer falsifiable predictions, that claims must be supported by evidence and logical reasoning, and that the nature of scientific discovery and knowledge is fluid.
4. Interpret and create scientific representations—such as formulas, graphs, and tables—by utilizing course-specific knowledge and understanding.

INFORMATION LITERACIES

Definition: Information literacy is a set of integrated abilities requiring students to recognize when and what information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the needed information to participate ethically in communities of learning and/or practice. Students proficient in information literacy critically reflect on the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the creation, access, and use of information. As a result, students will be able to incorporate new understandings into their perspectives, questions, or works (academic, professional, or creative).

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Identify the most appropriate sources and information to meet the scope of their need.
2. Create, execute, and refine search strategies with iteration utilizing search outcomes to find relevant sources and information.
3. Evaluate the credibility of sources to critically select and interpret information relevant to their need.

4. Contextualize and synthesize selected information to engage in ongoing scholarship and communities of learning and/or practice.
5. Contribute to ongoing scholarship and communities of learning and/or practice through ethical reflection, proper attribution, and respect of intellectual property.

PERSONAL WELLNESS

Definition: Personal Wellness encompasses multiple dimensions that are interconnected to promote optimal health and well-being. Students will select a course that focuses on one or more of the following: emotional, environmental, financial, physical, social, spiritual, or occupational. These courses emphasize the personal choices and responsible actions that lead to success.

Dimensions of Wellness

1. Emotional Wellness addresses mental health issues, emotional well-being, and/or addiction, while covering empirically supported strategies for addressing issues and identifying when and how to seek the help of a professional.
2. Environmental Wellness involves promoting sustainability, adopting stewardship practices, and making conscious choices to minimize one's ecological footprint. Emphasis is placed on personal connections with the environment such as implementing eco-friendly transportation options, personal resource conservation, recycling practices, and promotion of outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, gardening, etc.
3. Financial Wellness covers a range of issues related to financial literacy. Topics include budgeting, creation of an emergency fund for unforeseen circumstances, and the importance of planning. Examples such as paying for college, and eating balanced, healthy meals on a budget are highlighted to help decrease anxiety and promote peace of mind during difficult times.
4. Physical Wellness focuses on the importance of exercise, nutrition, sleep, and stress management. It aims to educate students on maintaining a healthy lifestyle by making informed dietary choices, engaging in regular physical activity, strategies for quality sleep, and managing stress effectively.
5. Social Wellness explores interpersonal relationships, communication skills, conflict resolution, and healthy human connections. It covers topics such as micro-aggressions, cultural competence, bystander intervention strategies, obtaining consent in romantic relationships, and setting boundaries to foster positive relationships.
6. Spiritual Wellness investigates what it means to have guiding principles that give meaning and purpose to life. It covers topics such as a supportive spiritual community, introspection activities, cultivating gratitude and compassion, and recognizing the connection between values, beliefs, and morals to reach life goals.
7. Occupational Wellness refers to finding satisfaction in relation to a career. Topics include work-life balance, self-care, avoiding burnout, and positive mental attitude. An emphasis is placed on discovering occupations that align with one's skills and abilities and identifying characteristics of healthy work cultures that promote personal fulfillment.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Analyze how lifestyle choices and personal responsibility influence well-being within the focused dimension of wellness they have selected (emotional, environmental, financial, physical, social, spiritual, or occupational).

2. Evaluate how preventive wellness practices build protective factors and lower risk factors for illness, injury, and/or harm. a) Protective factors are characteristics that decrease the likelihood of negative outcomes. Examples may include emotional support, resource conservation, avoiding debt, maintaining physical activity, resolving conflicts, cultivating gratitude, or appreciating work-life balance, etc. b) Risk factors are characteristics at the psychological, biological, community, family, and/or cultural level that are associated with higher likelihood of negative outcomes. Examples may include abuse, trauma, genetics, pollution, poverty, access, etc.
3. Apply an evidence-based framework that describes the process of behavior change for personal wellness development.

CREATIVE EXPLORATION

Definition: Creative Explorations courses focus on creating, combining and/or synthesizing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways. In these courses, students think, respond, communicate, and work in imaginative ways, characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and risk-taking.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate creative thinking skills that foster ways of looking at problems and solutions from a new or imaginative perspective.
2. Develop critical and analytical skills to promote the advancement of creative ideas.
3. Describe the influence and context of historical and/or contemporary creative endeavors while developing an appreciation of the impact of creativity on culture and identity.
4. Engage in the practice, development, and communication of creative insights or works, including creation, transformation, analysis, and synthesis.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Definition: Problem Solving courses involve designing, evaluating, and implementing strategies to answer questions or achieve stated goals using foundational critical thinking and/or logical problem-solving skills and processes. Students will research and evaluate evidence, collect, and analyze information, formulate conclusions, and communicate results effectively.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Define problems and/or generate questions in clear and concise terms.
2. Identify appropriate methods and apply knowledge/facts to synthesize new ideas and generate solutions to problems.
3. Collect relevant information from credible sources to address the problem(s).
4. Use critical thinking skills to recognize patterns and draw logical conclusions.
5. Present problem-solving processes and findings clearly and persuasively in written and/or oral communication.

ETHICAL ACTION & CITIZENSHIP

Definition: Courses in Ethical Action and Citizenship apply ethical principles to investigate real-world issues in cultural, economic, environmental, historical, political, and/or social

contexts. Students in these courses will identify and communicate about challenges on local, national, and/or global levels in civically responsible ways.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Identify and reflect on the cultural, economic, environmental, historical, political, and/or social contexts of real-world issues.
2. Reflect on how the student's experiences and perspectives form their understanding of an issue.
3. Analyze potential courses of action.
4. Apply ethical principles to real-world issues.
5. Communicate in a range of verbal and written formats about those issues, the frameworks in which they can be analyzed, one's perspectives, and potential courses of action.

TECHNOLOGICAL COMPETENCY

Definition: Technological Competency courses address the ability to identify, assess, manage, adapt, and use tools, applications, and systems to effectively and responsibly accomplish tasks.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student will be able to:

1. Apply knowledge, techniques, skills, and modern tools to solve broadly defined technology problems appropriate to the discipline.
2. Responsibly manage data, tools, applications, and/or systems.
3. Evaluate the results of the application of the technology.

Keystone Stage: Approved Categories, Definitions, and SLO's

Definition: Keystone courses - *Diverse Cultural Contexts and Advanced Writing* - support students as they extend Gateway stage exploration and skill-building into engagement with the cultural, environmental, economic, political, and social contexts of today's global issues. It is recommended that these courses are linked to create learning communities and taken after the completion of the Gateway stage courses or completion of 54 credits. The two Keystone courses must be at the 300 level or above and total at least six credit hours.

DIVERSE CULTURAL CONTEXTS (DCC)

Definition: Diverse Cultural Contexts courses promote student exploration and analysis of cultural, environmental, economic, political, and social contexts in the world today. Students will engage in conversation to examine issues, proactively seek to understand multiple perspectives, and consider possible outcomes. DCC courses also provide extended practice with oral communication in modalities appropriate to the course.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Examine issues from multiple perspectives and contexts with attention to origins and viewpoints.
2. Exhibit active listening and civil discourse to engage in respectful interactions.
3. Clarify elements of conflicts by defining stakeholders and recognizing biases.
4. Analyze the impact of their actions from multiple perspectives and contexts.

ADVANCED WRITING (AW)

Definition: Advanced Writing courses extend students' writing processes and rhetorical awareness to align with writing domains and situations that students might encounter in their professional lives. Students will learn to write to professional and public audiences, compose in a variety of genres, and adapt their writing style based on the needs of typical rhetorical situations.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Adapt composing processes to negotiate tensions between writer intentions/choices and reader responses/expectations.
2. Analyze and address various audiences, purposes, and texts in authentic writing settings.
3. Identify, explain, and transform genres as forms of social action in disciplinary and public writing sites.
4. Plan and execute effective document organization and design.
5. Explain and integrate effectively the role that research plays in different writing settings, including how groups document and present research to public audiences.

Capstone Stage: Approved Categories, Definitions, and SLO's

CAPSTONE

Definition: The Capstone is the culminating experience where students apply knowledge from across the stages of the General Education Program to their discipline(s) to explore a big idea, issue of practice, or complex problem. Students will gain a broader understanding of the idea, issue, and/or problem and its context, making connections between their learning and their personal experiences, to demonstrate their understanding.

The Capstone is one course at the 300-level or above with 3 to 4.5 credit hours (i.e. CAP 300). Departmental (major) capstones, including student teaching, practicums, internships, co-op experiences, exhibitions, Honors and departmental theses, portfolio courses, and the like may also serve as General Education Capstones if they meet the defined student learning outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Apply knowledge and skills from the stages of the General Education Program across a discipline or multiple disciplines to explore a big idea, issue of practice, or complex problem.
2. Synthesize research on a big idea, issue of practice, or complex problem, culminating in an externally focused, professional genre, text, or product (e.g., a unit plan, exhibition, performance, poster session, research paper, website, etc.).
3. Reflect on their personal experiences as a learner and how they have applied knowledge in meaningful ways.

Gateway Program Certificates: Approved Categories, Definitions, and SLO's

GATEWAY PROGRAM CERTIFICATES

Gateway Program Certificates are intended to include courses and experiences that address real-world issues by utilizing integration, synthesis, and innovative thinking from multiple perspectives and fields of study. Students can use these optional curricular pathways to build thematic learning experiences by completing focused study around interdisciplinary themes, concepts, and settings.

Definition: Gateway Program Certificates are optional curricular pathways designed by at least three academic departments that include a selection of interrelated courses from the Gateway stage plus a designated final course: a 3-credit Keystone (DCC or AW) or Capstone course. Certificates will total 12 to 17 credits (18 credits would be considered a minor). Students may earn a maximum of two certificates within the context of their Gateway Program.

Students may use the same courses to satisfy both Gateway Program requirements and Gateway Program Certificate requirements. Students may also use the Capstone course of their major program as the Capstone course for a Gateway Program Certificate if that course is an approved General Education course.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the requirements of the certificate, students will be able to:

1. Select, use, and coordinate knowledge, skills, and strategies from multiple fields of study to address the Certificate theme.
2. Apply general education skills and strategies as appropriate in new settings.
3. Articulate connections and tensions among disciplinary approaches to the Certificate theme.
4. Share new learning through a public demonstration, presentation, or publication of competence.

Certificate Design Guidelines for Faculty and Cooperating Departments

Each certificate will:

1. Have a title that indicates its larger purpose, focus, or theme.
2. Require a minimum of 12 credits to a maximum of 17 credits (18 credits would be considered a minor).
3. List up to five courses to choose from (or be required) from the Gateway stage.
4. List one required or "selected" Keystone or Capstone stage course.
5. Utilize courses from at least three subject codes.

Certificate Approval Process Guidelines

Certificate proposals will be submitted in CAP (Coursedog) and must:

1. Be agreed upon by all departments with listed courses.
2. Include an assessment plan of the certificate's learning outcomes from the combined completion of these courses.
3. Be reviewed by all CCCs associated with listed courses.
4. Require a lead faculty member (which may or may not be the proposer), who will:
 - a. Keep track of course availability and students' ability to complete the certificate (in general, not at the individual student level).
 - b. Submit recertification documentation as required.
 - c. Submit Certificate stage assessment data as required.

RECERTIFICATION

- If a department wishes for a course to retain the General Education label, the department must submit each existing labeled course to GEOAC during the fall of the year designated for recertification of its courses.
- Recertification of a department's courses with general education labels occurs in the same year as the department's Program Review.
- The GEOAC Chair, in concert with the General Education Coordinator and Associate Provost responsible for General Education, will send a reminder to Department Chairs about the need to submit courses for recertification. Failure to submit courses for review during the academic year will result in the General Education label being removed in the following academic year.

Recertification Process

For an existing course that is to retain a general education label, the department offering the course must demonstrate how the course has met each of the student learning outcomes for that label.

- The department will submit to GEOAC (electronically) the following documents for each course:
 - A brief evaluation form in which the proposer identifies how the course meets the student learning outcomes based on the course's previously-approved assessment plan.
 - If the current approved assessment plan has not been followed or data have not been collected, the course will not be approved for recertification.
 - If the assessment plan has been revised and approved since initial approval, a rationale explaining the revisions and any impact on the data will need to be submitted.
 - A course syllabus.
 - A summary or snapshot of assessment data that demonstrates the extent to which students in the course met the student learning outcomes.
- GEOAC will review the certification documents and makes one of three recommendations:
 - Recertification of the label
 - Recertification of the label pending revisions to the original proposal.
 - No recertification. Reasons will be clearly provided in writing to the proposer.
- GEOAC will communicate final decisions regarding each course to the proposer.
 - Upon a decision of no recertification, the department must submit a course change proposal removing the label from the course.
- GEOAC will inform UCAPC of the recertification status of general education courses.