



General Education Outcomes & Criteria

Draft Statements

The Joint Boards Articulation Commission (JBAC) is working to improve the transferability of lower division General Education throughout the state through a collaboratively-developed framework that is based on commonly agreed-upon learning outcomes and course criteria. Not only would this model improve the transferability of coursework among community colleges and universities, it could strengthen the statewide commitment to General Education without compromising the uniqueness of individual institutions' General Education curricula. Both faculty and students would benefit from such a framework. By adhering to general principles rather than a rigid template, faculty would have the freedom to design General Education courses that take advantage of their individual expertise and that reflect significant new insights. Students would benefit from faculty innovation in the classroom, while retaining assurance of the transferability of their coursework.

The focus of initial efforts has been the development of broad outcomes and criteria statements based on the 6 areas of general education included in Oregon's transferable degrees (AA/OT and AS/OT–Business) and Transfer Module (the OTM).

- The **outcomes statements** are intended to be broad, and to describe the habits of mind, skills, or insight that we want students to acquire as a result of taking courses in a particular area.
- The **criteria statements** are also broad and aim to identify the characteristics of courses within a general disciplinary area that we think have the best chance of producing the desired outcomes for students.

Faculty from Oregon community colleges, public universities and private colleges and universities came together in February and again in April 2006 to write drafts, and we are now inviting input from all faculty, as well as from anyone else who is interested in General Education.

Potential for the Future

Although the impetus for this initiative was a legislative directive ([Senate Bill 342](#), which became law in Spring, 2005), the practical effect of that prompt is greater faculty input into the General Education we offer to transfer students. We now have an opportunity for direct communication among faculty from different institutions that is new and powerful. We think it is the key to sustained educational quality at the college and university level.

Next Steps

- **IN PROCESS:** Solicitation of feedback: This is an important way for you to help guide this work in its current stage. The public forum available at http://www.ous.edu/news_and_information/forums.php provides a place for you to join your colleagues for a conversation. We would be grateful for your thoughts, concerns and suggestions for improvement of these drafts. We will continue to ask for this input into fall term and beyond.
- Fall 2006 – Winter 2007: Campus visits and conversations: We will be visiting individual campuses to collect feedback and revise the statements. Once the statements are refined we will ask campuses to put them through a normal curricular review process for approval.

For questions on this process, please contact:

Jonathan Jacobs
Administrative Assistant
Oregon University System
541.346.5725
jonathan_jacobs@ous.edu

WRITING

Outcomes

As a result of taking General Education Writing courses, a student should be able to read actively, think critically, and write purposefully, capably, and ethically for a variety of audiences; use appropriate reasoning and artful communication to address complex issues in the service of learning, discovery, reflection, justice, and self expression.

Criteria

A course in Writing should:

- 1) Emphasize college-level readings that challenge students and invite them to think through complex ideas.
- 2) Create a classroom environment that fosters respectful free exchange of ideas.
- 3) Use guided discussion for students to consider and respond to the ideas of others.
- 4) Develop the ability to respond in writing to ideas generated by reading and discussion.
- 5) Require a significant and substantial amount of formal and informal writing.
- 6) Emphasize writing as a process which contributes to complete, polished texts.
- 7) Encourage the discovery and use of forms and conventions appropriate to audience needs and rhetorical situations.
- 8) Encourage self-reflection and analysis of own work.
- 9) Provide opportunities to offer and respond to comments and critiques on written drafts.
- 10) Develop skills of editing and revision to craft clear and effective writing.
- 11) Teach organization, reasoning, style, and conventions in relation to students' purposes and in response to their writing.
- 12) Engage appropriate technologies in the service of writing and learning.

Speech/Oral Communication

Outcomes

As a result of taking General Education Speech/Oral Communication courses, a student should be able to engage in ethical communication processes that allow people to accomplish goals, respond to the needs of diverse audiences and contexts, and build and manage personal and community relationships.

Criteria

A course in Oral Communication should provide:

- 1) Instruction in fundamental communication theories.
- 2) Instruction and practice of appropriate oral communication techniques.
- 3) Instruction and practice in the listening process -- including comprehending, interpreting, and critically evaluating communication.
- 4) Instruction and practice in adapting communication for the listener and communication contexts.
- 5) Instruction in the responsibilities of ethical communicators.
- 6) Instruction in the value and consequences of effective communication.

Mathematics

Outcomes

As a result of taking General Education Mathematics courses, a student should be able to use mathematics to solve problems. A student should also be able to recognize when mathematics is applicable to a scenario, apply appropriate mathematics in its solution, accurately interpret and communicate the results.

Criteria

A collegiate level mathematics course should require students to:

- 1) Use the tools of arithmetic and algebra to work with more complex mathematical concepts.
- 2) Design and follow a multi-step mathematical process through to a logical conclusion.
- 3) Create mathematical models, analyze these models, and, when appropriate, find and interpret solutions.
- 4) Choose from a variety of mathematical tools to determine the best method of analysis.
- 5) Analyze and communicate both problems and solutions in ways that are useful to others.
- 6) Use mathematical terminology and notation appropriately and correctly.

Arts & Letters

Outcomes

As a result of taking General Education Arts and Letters courses, a student should be able to:

- Interpret and engage in the Arts and Letters, making use of the creative process to enrich the quality of life.
- Critically analyze personal values and ethics within the stream of human experience and expression to engage more fully in local and global issues.

'Arts and Letters' refers to works of art, whether written, crafted or designed, and performed, and documents of particular poignancy and significance in statement or design.

CRITERIA

A course in Arts & Letters should:

- 1) Provide grounding in theory THAT informs application and practice of the discipline.
- 2) Elicit analytical and critical responses to historical and/or cultural artifacts, including literature, music, visual and performing arts.
- 3) Actively explore conventions and techniques of significant forms of human expression.
- 4) Place the discipline in historical and cultural context, and demonstrate its relationship with other areas.

Each course should also do at least one of the following:

- 5a) Foster creative individual expression with analysis, synthesis, and critical evaluation, or
- 5b) Compare/contrast attitudes and values of specific eras or world cultures, or
- 5c) Introduce and apply established ethical traditions as a tool for resolving ethical dilemmas.

Social Science

Outcomes

As a result of taking General Education Social Science courses, a student should be able to:

1. Apply analytical skills to historical and contemporary social phenomena so as to explain, evaluate, and predict human behavior
2. Apply knowledge and experience critically so as to realize an informed sense of self, family, community, and the diverse social world in which we live.

Criteria

A Social Sciences General course should:

- 1) Be broad in scope. Courses may focus on specialized subjects; however, there must be substantial course content locating the subject in the broader context of the discipline.
- 2) Provide an understanding of the structures and processes of social institutions and individual behavior as part of social interaction.
- 3) Provide perspectives on the evolution of theories and concepts utilized in the discipline.
- 4) Present basic methods of inquiry in the discipline, including limitations and understanding of the distinction between normative and empirical analysis.
- 5) Provide information literacy in the discipline (the ability to critically analyze, synthesize and evaluate various forms of information).
- 6) Provide understanding of the diversity of human experience and thought, individually and collectively.
- 7) Provide an opportunity for students to apply course knowledge and skills to their personal, social or professional lives.

Science, Computer Science, Math

Outcomes

As a result of taking General Education Science, Computer Science, Math courses, a student should be able to:

1. Use scientific modes of inquiry, individually and collaboratively, to critically evaluate diverse ideas, solve problems, and make evidence-based decisions for self, family, community and the world.
2. Gather, comprehend, and communicate scientific and technical information to generate new ideas, solutions, models and further questions confidently, creatively, and joyfully.

Criteria

A course in Science/Computer Science/Math should:

1. Require students to apply scientific/mathematical knowledge and skills, and reason from evidence to solve problems.
2. Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas.
3. Examine the fundamental concepts and theories in physical and biological sciences, mathematics, and/or computer science.
4. Engage students in gathering, reading, comprehending, and communicating scientific and/or technical information.
5. Use scientific, mathematical, or computer science approaches to develop critical, analytical thinking that includes synthesis, evaluation and creative insight.
6. Develop understanding of mathematical reasoning and/or the process of science through collaborative, hands-on, real-life, and/or laboratory applications.
7. Science courses shall provide scientific tools to evaluate the interactions of science with society and environment.
8. Science courses shall examine the development, limitations, and value of scientific methods, models and theories.
9. Laboratory courses in the biological or physical sciences shall provide examples of how scientific theories develop through confrontation of theory with experiment or observation.
10. Courses in computer science shall engage students in the design of algorithms and their translation into computer programs that solve problems related to science or other areas of human endeavor.

(These criteria are designed to mesh with the current Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer Degree, which requires a minimum of fifteen credits in Science/Math/Computer Science including three laboratory courses of at least twelve credits in the biological or physical sciences.)