

Learning Outcomes of General Education

(Approved by the University Senate December 8, 2008)

I. Students will demonstrate an understanding of and ability to employ the processes of intellectual inquiry. [12 credit hours]

Outcomes and Assessment Framework

Students will be able to identify multiple dimensions of a good question;¹ determine when additional information is needed, find credible information efficiently using a variety of reference sources, and judge the quality of information as informed by rigorously developed evidence; explore multiple and complex answers to questions/issues/problems within and across the four broad knowledge areas: arts and creativity, humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and natural/ physical/mathematical sciences; evaluate theses and conclusions in light of credible evidence; explore the ethical implications of differing approaches, methodologies or conclusions; and develop potential solutions to problems based on sound evidence and reasoning.

Curricular Framework

Students will take four 3-credit courses, one in each of the four broad knowledge areas defined above.

II. Students will demonstrate competent written, oral, and visual communication skills both as producers and consumers of information. [6 credit hours]

Outcomes and Assessment Framework

Students will demonstrate the ability to construct intelligible messages using sound evidence and reasoning that are appropriate for different rhetorical situations (audiences and purposes) and deliver those messages effectively in written, oral, and visual form. Students will also demonstrate the ability to competently critique (analyze, interpret, and evaluate) written, oral, and visual messages conveyed in a variety of communication contexts.

Curricular Framework

Students will take one 3-hour course focusing on the development of effective writing skills, and one 3-hour integrated communications course focusing on oral and visual communication skills, along with continued development of written communication skills.²

¹ i.e., interesting, analytical, problematic, complex, important, genuine, researchable...

² This proposal assumes the continuation of the Graduation Writing Requirement currently in place.

III. Students will demonstrate an understanding of and ability to employ methods of quantitative reasoning. [6 credit hours]

Outcomes and Assessment Framework

Students will (a) demonstrate how fundamental elements of mathematical, logical and statistical knowledge are applied to solve real-world problems; and (b) explain the sense in which an important source of uncertainty in many everyday decisions is addressed by statistical science, and appraise the efficacy of statistical arguments that are reported for general consumption.

Curricular Framework

Students will take one 3-hour course on the application of mathematical, logical and statistical methods, and one 3-hour course devoted to a conceptual and practical understanding of statistical inferential reasoning.

IV. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of citizenship and the process for making informed choices as engaged citizens in a diverse, multilingual³ world. [6 credit hours]

Outcomes and Assessment Framework

Students will recognize historical and cultural differences arising from issues such as ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, race, religion, sexuality, and socioeconomic class; students will demonstrate a basic understanding of how these differences influence issues of social justice, both within the U.S. and globally; students will recognize and evaluate the ethical dilemmas, conflicts, and trade-offs involved in personal and collective decision making.

Curricular Framework

Students will take two courses, each with a topical or regional focus. The first course will include critical analysis of diversity issues as they relate to the contemporary United States. The second will be a non-US based course that includes critical analysis of local-to-global dynamics as they relate to the contemporary world. In addition, each course must address at least 2 of these 4 topics: societal and institutional change over time; civic engagement; cross-national/comparative issues; power and resistance.⁴

³ Current University of Kentucky entrance requirements include 2 years of second-language study in high school; this knowledge requirement should be assessed upon students' entrance to the University, as a prerequisite for the fulfillment of Learning Outcome IV.

⁴ This proposal recognizes also that such issues will be addressed throughout the students' course of study, building effectively upon the foundation of the General Education core curriculum.