

Faculty Guidelines for The General Education Program at California State University, Chico

A compilation of requirements essential to GE course instruction

Endorsed by the General Education Advisory Committee, Fall 2002.



The General Education program at California State University, Chico is driven by and reflects the core values of the University, as outlined by the Vision and Mission statement and the Strategic Plan. It also conforms to statewide requirements as specified by the Education Code and related systemwide directives.

General Education coursework is intended to initiate students into a lifetime of learning, thinking, and acting as healthy, informed, ethically mature, and productive people in a diverse and technologically complex world. Our goal is to develop citizens who can sustain and nurture our historic democratic ideals.

General Education Program Goals

- to improve reading, writing, critical thinking, discussion and speaking skills; mathematical reasoning, analysis and problem solving; and the ability to access, evaluate, and apply information;
- to instill efficient, effective learning skills that will keep the student on a path of perpetual intellectual curiosity;
- to enhance general knowledge and attitudes so that students have a well-informed, integrated, and coherent picture of the universe and humanity, including the living and non-living physical universe; human cultures, societies, and values; and the artistic and intellectual legacy of humanity;
- to broaden knowledge about the impact, perspectives, and contributions provided by cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, cognitive, and global diversity; and
- to provide, for each student, coherence, connectedness, and commonality within broad areas of undergraduate education.

General Education Teaching Goals

- Each course must be committed to the improvement of students' writing, oral, and thinking skills.
- Each course must make a major contribution to understanding of the relevant GE Area and Sub-Area through the perspectives of one or more particular discipline(s), with some use of seminal primary texts.
- Each course must be able to stand as a sufficient and exemplary first and only course a student might ever take in that Sub-Area or Area. A student should acquire from each course in the GE program a distinctive sense of what a scholar in this GE Sub-Area or Area does by way of an intellectual endeavor, and a sense of what it means to study and understand the world in this way.
- Each course must be demonstrably focused on student learning. Practices and approaches that are associated with good student learning include
 - frequent student-faculty contact,
 - cooperative work among students,
 - prompt feedback,

- active practice,
 - time on task,
 - high expectations, and
 - respect for diversity among students and faculty.
- Each course must contribute to the ideals and goals of the vision, mission and five strategic priorities of the university. Where applicable, it should
 - connect with the campus community;
 - use innovative technologies and learning environments;
 - connect and apply learning to disciplinary perspectives and methods of inquiry;
 - demonstrate currency and rigor in scholarship;
 - prepare students for life and work in a world of diverse ideas;
 - apply learning to public service; and
 - assess how GE program, teaching, Area, and Sub-Area goals are met.

Organization

The General Education program is organized into three principal components: Core, Breadth, and Capstone. The fundamental skills -- writing, thinking, speaking, and mathematics -- are the focus of the Core requirement. The study of the natural, behavioral, and social sciences, literature, art, and humanities is contained in the Breadth requirement, while the integration of those disciplines into a broader understanding of the world is emphasized in the Capstone requirement, found in the Upper-Division Themes. In every course, relevant skills of the Core must be applied as essential to the process of mastering content and making applications.

The General Education Program (48 semester units)

Core Courses (Area A: Skills)	Breadth Courses (Areas B - E)	Capstone (U.D. Themes)
Oral Communication (A1) Written Communication (A2) Critical Thinking (A3) Mathematics (A4) <i>All completed with C- or better.</i>	Science (Area B) The Physical Universe (B1) Life Forms (B2) Humanities and Fine Arts (Area C) The Arts (C1) Languages and Literatures (C2) Philosophy, Religion & Humanities (C3) Behavioral and Social Studies (Area D) Individual & Society (D1) Political & Economic Institutions (D2) Cultural & Social Institutions (D3) Lifelong Learning (Area E)	<i>Nine units, integrated and integrative, incorporating content from Sub-Area A4 or Area B, and Areas C & D.</i> <u>Capstone Prerequisite:</u> Completion of at least 45 semester units, including all Core courses.

Ancillary Requirements

"Code" Courses (6 semester units)	Cultural Diversity Courses (6 semester units)
U.S. History Constitution & American Ideals	U.S. Ethnic Groups ("Ethnic") Non-U.S. Culture(s) ("Non-Western") <i>Many GE Breadth courses and Theme courses concurrently satisfy Cultural Diversity requirements.</i>

GE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Core (Area A)

The principal charge to this area of General Education is to provide students, early in their university educations, opportunities to learn and demonstrate

- effective reading, writing, thinking, listening, and speaking;
- effective mathematical reasoning;
- fundamental links between thinking, writing, speaking, and mathematical reasoning;
- application of current technology, where appropriate, to gather and convey information; and
- their ethical obligations as communicators.

Oral Communication (Sub-Area A1)

Students enrolled in courses meeting the oral communication requirement must

- devote substantial class time to preparation, practice, and participation in oral communication, including providing and receiving feedback about both the content and form of such communication;
- demonstrate the ability to discover, critically evaluate, and accurately report information; engage in sound reasoning; organize presentations effectively; adapt to the audience and situation; and present their views with persuasive force;
- demonstrate effective listening skills; and
- demonstrate understanding of the psychological, social, and cultural basis and significance of oral communication as it occurs in dyads, small and large groups, and public settings.

Written Communication (Sub-Area A2)

Students enrolled in courses meeting the written communication requirement must demonstrate

- ability to select worthwhile subjects to write about and to generate interesting ideas about;
- ability to state a clear thesis, build support for it, and reach an appropriate conclusion;
- effective use of description, narrative, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, and other patterns of development;
- ability to tailor writing to various purposes and audiences; and
- ability to edit prose to make it more clear, fluent, and concise and to minimize errors in usage, spelling, and punctuation.

Critical Thinking (Sub-Area A3)

Students enrolled in courses meeting the critical thinking requirement must demonstrate

- ability to distinguish between fact and judgment and between belief and knowledge;
- ability to distinguish between correct and incorrect reasoning, including an understanding of the formal and informal fallacies in language and thought;
- knowledge of and skill in using elementary methods and patterns of reasoning, including induction and deduction; and
- ability to criticize, analyze, and advocate ideas with logical force within human discourse, both oral and written.

Mathematics (Sub-Area A4)

Students enrolled in courses meeting the mathematics requirement must demonstrate

- understanding of one or more of the following mathematical fields: statistics, algebra, trigonometry, calculus, finite mathematics, or matrix theory and show application of these concepts to a variety of fields; and
- understanding of more than computational skills -- they must also demonstrate understanding of basic mathematical concepts and apply these concepts to complex real-world activities.

Breadth

The primary purpose of breadth courses is to engage students in a variety of distinct disciplines, selected from the natural sciences, the humanities and fine arts, and the behavioral and social sciences. Introductory and survey courses, both lower- and upper-division, are used to satisfy the breadth requirements in each of the B, C,

D, and E areas. The primary goal in teaching these courses is to engage students in the fundamental principles and concepts of an academic discipline as an effective first, and possibly last, exposure a student may have to that discipline.

Science (Area B)

The principal charge to this area of General Education is to provide students opportunities to inquire into the physical universe and its life forms. Students will demonstrate understanding and appreciation of the methodologies of the natural sciences as investigative tools and the limitations of scientific inquiry.

The Physical Universe (Sub-Area B1)

- Students must have a laboratory component or similar activity in the physical sciences and inquire into the physical universe.
- Student learning must demonstrate understanding of the fundamental concepts of matter and energy or must emphasize these concepts in a study of some specific part of the physical universe.

Life Forms (Sub-Area B2)

- Students must have a laboratory component or similar activity in the life sciences and inquire into the life forms of the universe.
- Students must demonstrate an introductory understanding of the fundamental concepts of life science as illustrated in plants and animals (e.g., structure and function, heredity, evolution, and ecology), or the course must emphasize these concepts in a study of some specific part of the life sciences.

Humanities and Fine Arts (Area C)

The principal charge to this area of General Education is to provide students opportunities to develop understanding of human creativity, arts, values, and reasoning. *Class, race, ethnic, and gender issues should be integrated into courses in this area.*

In each course, students must

- attend, where feasible, at least four relevant public events or arts events and demonstrate an integration of the event and their course subject matter;
- demonstrate a foundation experience that is focused on issues and content that are basic and central to the discipline; and
- demonstrate research and learning from scheduled and specific library assignments, including computer access to information resources.

The Arts (Sub-Area C1)

Students must demonstrate

- involvement in the experience of visual, musical, or theatrical art, either as makers or as informed audiences. In these courses students may "think in" and "think up" art, as well as "think about" art. Their experiences of art will occur within a context that is culturally and historically diverse; and
- their knowledge, understanding, and experience of the creative process and expand their aesthetic sensibilities.

Languages and Literatures (Sub-Area C2)

Students must demonstrate

- knowledge of languages and literatures and the diverse cultural traditions they represent through the study of creative writing, literature, or language acquisition; and
- understanding, appreciation, and interpretation of language as a literary and cultural artifact and use language as a literary, cultural, or creative vehicle of communication.

Philosophy, Religion, and Humanities Studies (Sub-Area C3)

Students must demonstrate

- knowledge of major philosophical or religious traditions, perspectives, or communities or major figures or issues in the humanities;
- understanding, appreciation, interpretation, and critical engagement of world views, institutions, symbol systems, and ethics in the context of history and culture; and

- knowledge of major philosophical, religious, literary, or artistic figures or issues, in historical context.

Behavioral and Social Sciences (Area D)

The principal charge to this area of General Education is to provide students opportunities to develop understanding of human behavior and the use of social theory, concepts, and analysis in application to human interaction. Class, race, ethnic, and gender issues should be integrated into courses in this area.

All courses must, in a significant way, deal with human behavior. In each course, students must demonstrate learning

- in social science methods and perspectives,
- in historic as well as contemporary perspectives and influences, and
- in several relevant theoretical and methodological approaches.

Individual and Society (Sub-Area D1)

Students must demonstrate learning in the nature and behavior of individuals and their effects on and adaptations to other individuals, groups, institutions, and their environments.

Political and Economic Institutions (Sub-Area D2)

Students must demonstrate learning in

- relationships between political and economic institutions and behavior;
- the roles power and scarcity play in the issues that face society, based upon social scientific perspectives and approaches; and
- some of the diversity of approaches that are or have been used in addressing the political and economic issues in human societies.

Cultural and Social Institutions (Sub-Area D3)

Students must demonstrate learning in

- the development and variation of cultural and social institutions; and
- how cultural and social development and variations affect groups, institutions, and behavior.

Lifelong Learning (Area E)

The principal charge to this area of General Education is to encourage student understanding of, and stimulate curiosity about, the self as an integrated and complex being. Students must

- demonstrate learning about issues that are substantial and are likely to be important to them throughout their lifetimes;
- recognize, incorporate, and integrate theory, evidence, and perspectives from each of three broad areas of human life: the physiological, the psychological, and the social; and
- apply the ideas and materials of the course to themselves, as individuals.

Capstone -- Upper-Division Themes

General Education is more than an accumulation of skills and a mastery of content. It also gives students sufficient opportunity to integrate a variety of skills and content areas by applying them to issues and areas of life they will face as citizens of a complex world. Students should be able to relate the major to seemingly unrelated areas of knowledge. Such an effort will be a unique contribution that this institution gives its graduates. The Upper-Division Themes provide opportunity to investigate such seminal issues crossing disciplinary boundaries in a manner that exemplifies the skills and knowledge that both students and professors can bring to bear. Prior completion of 45 semester units, including all GE Core (Area A) courses, is a prerequisite to students beginning the Capstone requirement.

Upper-Division Themes will identify clearly a set of basic enduring questions which humans have asked about themselves and their world, across time, place, and cultures. Themes should also explore the alternative answers which different peoples have arrived at for the same questions. Each theme will

- incorporate, build upon, and nurture skills from Area A;
- encourage investigation by a variety of perspectives and integrate significant content from Areas C and D and at least one of Sub-Areas A4, B1, or B2;

- show planning and coordination among instructors and subject matters of the courses with notable points of connection among course materials and the theme's principal unifying topics; and
- have the support of relevant department chairs and deans to offer sufficient sections of the theme's courses.

Each course participating in an Upper-Division Theme must

- be integrated with all other courses in the theme and be integrative with the unifying thematic conception of the theme;
- be principally an integration of two or all three content areas;
- deal with the value assumptions and issues raised by two or more disciplines or perspectives;
- use primary sources and data sets in analyzing the theme's major issues; and
- have assignments that allow the student to integrate materials, deal with value assumptions or issues, and creatively speculate about the theme and its impact on humanity.

The Academic Affairs office maintains a list of all current theme coordinators. Faculty teaching theme courses should work closely with their theme's coordinator to ensure that GE requirements are met. Brief descriptions of the overarching thematic focus of each theme are available on the Web, in the University Catalog, in the TRACS Book, and at http://www.csuchico.edu/catalog/req/ge_req.7.html. Detailed information describing theme objectives, content and organization is available in the Academic Affairs office.

Cultural Diversity

The principal goal of this requirement is for students to gain insight into intercultural relations and the variety of cultures and peoples present both in the United States and the world at large. Since many Breadth and Capstone courses concurrently satisfy Cultural Diversity requirements, students may choose to "double-count" this portion of their general education.

Students must complete both aspects of the Cultural Diversity requirement, either through two 3-unit courses with each satisfying one aspect or through a 6-unit course that will satisfy both aspects:

- one course that focuses on one or more U.S. ethnic groups that are distinct from the dominant U.S. culture (commonly called an "Ethnic" course); and
- one course that focuses on non-U.S. culture(s) distinct from the dominant U.S. and European experience (commonly called a "Non-Western" course).

Among the elements that must be included in all courses satisfying the Cultural Diversity requirement are the following:

- the introduction and examination of basic concepts of intergroup and intercultural relations, such as racism, ethnocentrism, the impact of cultures on each other, perception, and the intersection of differing value systems; and
- the intersection of ethnicity and culture with gender, class, and other important social categories, such as religion.

Students, after completing the cultural diversity courses, will understand

- relationships among different ethnic groups;
- interactions, values, and perceptions of cultures distinct from the dominant U.S. and European cultures; and
- the social construction of class, race, ethnicity, and gender.

Special Requirements for GE Courses

Various special features are required of courses participating in the GE program. These include issues of content, pedagogy, course assessment, and administration. Summaries of some of the more significant requirements are provided here. The stated requirements apply to all courses in the GE program except the "course syllabi" and "course work" requirements, which do not apply to stand-alone Cultural Diversity courses.

Course Syllabi

The syllabus for each course section will include, but will not be limited to, the following information:

- the GE requirements satisfied by the course,
- the significance of the course with respect to relevant goals and objectives of the General Education program,

- any special course requirements which may be dictated by the GE program (e.g., the writing requirement, attendance at public events for Area C courses),
- a listing of course topics, and
- descriptions of relevant expectations and grading policies.

Course work

- Each course section will have a writing requirement (at least 2,500 words), or comparable problem or laboratory requirement, in the genres and forms appropriate to the discipline. This requirement is intended to engage students in a rigorous study of the bodies of knowledge represented by the course, including the ways in which writing constructs and communicates knowledge.
- Multiple graded writing assignments are required, at least one of which is to be returned to students prior to the due dates for subsequent assignments.
- Each course section will require some significant written work the first week of each semester, or as soon as is reasonable, and the work will be returned to students with informative feedback as soon as is practical. This requirement is intended to collect information from students about their entry skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes, and to provide students initial feedback on course-work expectations.

Course Assessment

The goal of course assessment is to improve the quality of the learning environment. Faculty should consider what practical information they will need to determine whether or not course objectives and learning outcomes are met. Course assessment will address applicable categories of learning outcomes (i.e., some of the following):

- subject matter learning goals,
- GE program goals,
- fundamental GE Core and Breadth goals,
- specific Sub-Area goals,
- Upper-Division Theme and Theme course goals,
- Cultural Diversity goals.

The host faculty of the course will determine subject-matter learning goals. All other goals are determined from EM 99-05, according to the area(s) of GE that the course satisfies.

Each course in the GE program will have an assessment plan, which will evaluate whether students achieve the learning outcomes identified for the course. A course assessment plan does not need to provide an exhaustive assessment each time a course is offered, but must provide a cumulative comprehensive assessment between periodic GE program reviews. The assessment plan will include the following identifiable components and will be employed each time a course is offered:

- collection of assessment information,
- summary and analysis of assessment information, and
- application of the assessment results to the betterment of the learning environment and of the assessment plan.

A variety of different assessment means and sampling techniques should be considered, such as

- written and oral student surveys,
- portfolios,
- student and faculty reflective writings, and
- summaries of discussions by course faculty.

Course Coordination

- All courses will have coordination from semester to semester to ensure long-term uniformity, both in content and rigor.
- Each section of multi-sectioned courses must meet all applicable criteria, have multi-section coordination, and have its faculty meet regularly to ensure uniformity in meeting program requirements and learning outcomes.

Course Prerequisites

- Core, Breadth, and stand-alone Cultural Diversity courses should rarely have prerequisites.

- Upper-Division Theme courses should be limited to prerequisites associated with the Theme (such as a foundation course) and/or completion of a GE Breadth Area or Sub-Area.

Teaching Frequency

- Each course in the GE program will be taught at least every academic year, preferably each semester.
- Any course not taught for any continuous two-year period will be automatically dropped from the General Education program.

Course Enrollment

- Enrollment in each course section will normally exhibit a diversity of students from different majors.
- Each course section will ordinarily be available for enrollment by any qualified student, regardless of major. Enrollment priority, either explicit or implicit, for any special group is not acceptable, unless a course solely serves a specific program (e.g., EFL courses and courses in the GE Courselink program).

Administration of the General Education Program

- Principal responsibility for a General Education course resides with the faculty of the program in which the course is taught. Consequently, it is essential for all faculty who instruct GE courses to be knowledgeable of the GE requirements related to their courses.
- The provost has oversight of the entire General Education program, with day-to-day management provided by the vice provost for Academic Affairs/dean of Undergraduate Education and with the assistance of the coordinator of General Education. The General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) provides recommendations to the provost on the implementation, monitoring, and development of the GE program. The GE coordinator is appointed from the faculty representatives who sit on GEAC; the coordinator also chairs the committee.
- GEAC numbers nine members, comprised of five faculty elected by the colleges, one faculty member selected from the Educational Policies and Programs Committee, one student, and two ex-officio officers -- a provost designee and a member of Academic Advising Programs.
- One of GEAC's primary responsibilities is the periodic review of the GE program. Each year a selected component of the program is reviewed for conformance to applicable GE criteria, which also provides an opportunity to review associate proposals for new course entries in the General Education program. In this way, the entire GE program is reviewed on a five- to seven-year cycle.

Want More Information?

- Call the Academic Affairs office to make contact with the vice provost for Academic Affairs or the GE coordinator.
- Visit the GE Web site at <http://www.csuchico.edu/vpaa/manual/#ge>
- Visit the Academic Affairs office to view additional information, including sample models for course assessment.

Three documents, available at the GE Web site, define the requirements and procedures for the GE program:

- Executive Memorandum 99-05 addresses general curricular requirements;
- the GE Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of May 9, 2001, expands upon EM 99-05 and speaks to associate administrative criteria; and
- Web-based GE forms and guidelines, designed for faculty use, summarize relevant criteria from EM 99-05 and the GE MOU. These forms and guidelines are used both when reporting on a GE course during scheduled periodic reviews and when proposing new or modified GE status for a course.



Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

1. Good practice encourages student-faculty contact.

Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

2. Good practice encourages cooperation among students.

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding.

3. Good practice encourages active learning.

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

4. Good practice gives prompt feedback.

Knowing what you know and don't know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. In getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college, and at the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

5. Good practice emphasizes time on task.

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for students, faculty administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis for high performance for all.

6. Good practice communicates high expectations.

Expect more and you will get it. High expectations are important for everyone—for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations for themselves and make extra efforts.

7. Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learning in new ways that do not come so easily.

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