

General Education Curriculum and Courses Distribution Proposal

Submitted by the Faculty General Education Advisory Committee (FGEAC)
Approved by the Faculty Senate

7 May 2009

Introduction

It is generally agreed that in this era of increasing specialization and emphasis on vocational preparation, it is essential that colleges and universities remain committed to providing a General Education. Morehead State University (MSU) remains committed to the idea that a university education is more than preparation for a career. It must also provide a General Education -- a foundation of knowledge and skills vital for any life students choose. Such preparation will provide students the attributes needed to participate intelligently and responsibly in the discourses that shape the communities in which they live. General Education is more than the acquisition of information or skills for daily life; it transcends the merely factual to raise and engage evaluative and philosophical questions. General Education submits the fundamental principles and suppositions of a body of knowledge to inquiry and discussion. It challenges students to uncover and examine the assumptions under which they operate. General Education aims to form in students a questioning spirit that will continue through their college career and their life as a whole and provide the grounds for development of the kind of people who can secure their own well-being while contributing to their communities, their professions, and the world in which they live.

We assume the following as part of the General Education curriculum and course distribution:

1. The General Education Curriculum is based on best practices as articulated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, particularly in "Liberal Education and America's Promise" and "Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree," and it is designed to reflect the centrality of General Education goals and outcomes in MSU's curriculum. Therefore, the fifteen hours of 100 level core courses, although best taken in the first year, must be completed within the first 60 hours of university credit-bearing coursework. (See *General Education Course Distribution Proposal* on page six)
2. The General Education curriculum, the student learning outcomes, and assessment and improvement of student learning are all owned by the entire faculty. Consequently, faculty should acknowledge the stake their departments, and the institution as a whole, have in each course and in the student outcomes that course is intended to produce and

measure. As they plan and map curricula, advisors should emphasize sequence and intentionality to help students make the most of the courses they take.

3. All curricula, including that of majors, minors, and areas of concentration, should address relevant student learner outcomes of General Education so that students develop general and integrative, as well as discipline-specific understanding, perspectives, and skills. (See *Student Learner Outcomes* in Appendix A)

4. Student learner outcomes and the General Education curriculum will be published in the university catalog and on the university website so that faculty, students, parents, administrators, and others understand the types of achievement that are expected. Such public statements reveal our intentionality in promoting learning and show that the curriculum is designed to enable students to meet the learning outcomes. In addition, student learner outcomes will be included in course syllabi and materials. Open and clear statements of learning outcomes, directly linked to proficiency standards, enable students to understand the link between assigned grades and their level of performance.

5. The General Education curriculum promotes not only intellectual growth but integration of knowledge and skills across and within disciplines, beginning with the interdisciplinary First Year Seminar and concluding with the General Education Capstone. The First Year Seminar (FYS 100 CORE) and General Education Capstone will meet the university requirements of addressing and assessing the General Education student learner outcomes 1a, 1b, 1c, 2e and 2f. (See *Student Learner Outcomes* in Appendix A)

a. The First Year Seminar is a required course for all first-time first-year students and transfer students with fewer than 24 credit hours. It will be an interdisciplinary, three credit hour course. (See *First Year Seminar Proposal* in Appendix B)

b. The General Education Capstone will be in the discipline to demonstrate the integration of General Education knowledge and skills with the discipline, to be taught by faculty in the discipline. (Note: Programs may choose to create a three or more hour course to fulfill this requirement.)

c. To meet the Council for Postsecondary Education requirement of nine hours in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, the First Year Seminar (FYS 100 CORE) will be required to meet the student learner outcomes listed in 2d and 4c. (See *Council for Postsecondary Education requirements* in Appendix C)

d. To fulfill Morehead State's mission of improving the quality of life while preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the university's service region,

the First Year Seminar will be designed to explore a regional theme. Themes will be determined by the instructors.

6. In addition to the Core, there will be three categories of courses: Humanities, Natural Sciences and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Each of these is further divided into subcategories that correspond with specific student learner outcomes. Each subcategory will be limited to a total of fourteen courses (see General Education Course Distribution on page 7 below). These fourteen courses will be approved by the appropriate standing committee and require re-approval every three years. For proposals of equal merit, preference will be given to a representation of disciplines within the subcategory. Faculty submitting course proposals must follow the Council on Postsecondary Education requirements for course placement in the appropriate category. (See *Council for Postsecondary Education requirements* in Appendix C) If necessary, a rotation of courses may be implemented to allow for new course offerings.

7. The new General Education curriculum will start with an entirely new set of courses. Core courses bear discipline codes and the designation CORE, and non-core courses bear category designators such as HUM, SBS, and NSC. Any existing General Education course may be revised in order to meet the new student learner outcomes of General Education and be submitted for approval. All General Education course designs must be approved. A course design refers to 1) identification of required student learner outcomes; 2) assessment methods for meeting those outcomes; and 3) course content. All instructors of a course must follow the approved course design. Variation in sections is allowed, as long as the approved course design is still being met.

8. All courses accepted for General Education must be designed around an appropriate set of student learner outcomes. Each General Education course proposal must include an assessment plan that provides for course embedded assessment. All faculty who teach General Education courses must participate in the prescribed assessment plan. (See the document *Assessment Plan for General Education*)

9. Course proposals in the Natural Sciences are encouraged to include a lab or inquiry-based experiences.

10. General Education courses that address student learner outcomes 1b or 1c will be reading and/or writing intensive. Faculty should receive a four hour credit teaching load for these courses in consideration of the additional time and skills that will be required to teach with intensive reading and/or writing responsibilities. A reading intensive course requires close reading of collegiate-level course materials to facilitate substantive learning; course assessment should demonstrate student improvement in reading comprehension (*e.g.*, quizzes over assigned readings, summary or paraphrase

assignments, outlining exercises). A writing intensive course requires the production of 10 or more pages of substantive written work; course assessment should demonstrate student improvement in the quality of written work (*e.g.*, on demand writing, essay exams, response or research papers).

11. To recognize the time-intensive nature of instruction and assessment in reading and/or writing intensive courses, class size will be capped between 20 and 25 students.

12. The Council on Postsecondary Education, in response to recommendations in “Securing Kentucky’s Future: A Plan for Improving College Readiness and Success,” has redefined college readiness by establishing minimum ACT subtest scores at 18 for English, 19 for Mathematics, and 20 for reading. 13KAR 2:020 states that institutions shall use placement exams to assure that students who do not meet these statewide standards are enrolled in the proper courses; shall offer appropriate developmental courses in the relevant disciplines; and that they may offer supplementary academic support for college credit bearing courses as a means of remediation. Placement in these courses must take place within the first two academic terms that a student is enrolled and institutions must track student progress. A pending amendment would delay implementation from the fall semester 2009 to the fall semester 2010 and allow three semesters instead of two. The state’s 2020 educational goals emphasize the importance of meeting readiness standards prior to college enrollment and seek to minimize the need for collegiate developmental education in the coming years.

Given the high numbers of entering students who require remediation, the Faculty General Education Advisory Committee (FGEAC) recommends that: A) Developmental Math and English courses be directly linked, in terms of content knowledge and skills development, to the core General Education requirements in those disciplines and that reading courses be coordinated with the interdisciplinary First Year Seminar and other General Education courses; B) that the same curriculum committee that approves General Education courses shall approve any new or revised developmental courses; C) institutional data tracking developmental students shall be shared with the appropriate General Education curriculum and assessment groups and committees.

13. MSU should develop and administer a skills-based, applied exam to assess the computing competency of all entering students. Students who do not pass specific sections of the test, or the test in general, should be required to complete training modules in a given area of computing or an entire computing course. General Education courses will utilize these skills and will assume that students already possess them.

14. The FGEAC recommends careful planning of assessment cycles. From its implementation in 2010 until 2015, course AND program assessment shall take place annually with the goal of establishing effective cycles for course and program review. It

is anticipated that in 2015, the General Education program should be robust and mature enough to enter the university's 5-year program review cycle. The FGEAC endorses course-embedded assessments, continuous collection of data, and data analysis on a rotational basis. It supports the use of data for continuous improvement of courses and the program and the use of professional development and workload adjustment to sustain faculty in the time and labor intensive maintenance of the General Education program.

15. Programs of study are allowed to exchange two courses in the program for two General Education courses if the student learner outcomes of those General Education courses are met by the courses being exchanged. The program is required to submit convincing evidence that courses address and assess those student learner outcomes from the General Education course. If approved, the courses are required to follow the *Assessment Plan for General Education*.

16. The University will work with the Faculty Senate and the appropriate committees to assure adequate fiscal and human resources to make the redesigned General Education program effective.

a. The new General Education program requires significantly more faculty time particularly in: collaboration with colleagues in course and syllabus design and coordination; assessment design, implementation, and analysis; interacting with students in an active learning environment; preparing and grading writing and/or reading intensive assignments; and in many cases, serving on General Education related committees and work groups. Therefore, it is recommended that General Education courses carry an additional hour of faculty workload. If the course is designated three credit hours, faculty workload would be four.

b. Additionally, time needed to participate in faculty development workshops related to assessment, participating in the development of common assessment instruments and rubrics for program assessment, evaluating sample student work using a common rubric, reviewing assessment data, and working together with other faculty to revise courses and/or teaching and learning strategies in continuing courses so as to facilitate progress toward student learner outcomes should be appropriately compensated at the department level either in direct remuneration, workload adjustment, or service credit.

General Education Course Distribution

Core – 15 Hours

FYS 100 CORE Interdisciplinary First Year Seminar..... 3 hours (SLO – 1a, 1b, 1c, 2e, 2f, 2d, and 4c)

ENG 110 CORE Writing I 3 (SLO – 1b, 1c, 2a and 2c)

ENG 120 CORE Writing II 3 (SLO – 1b, 1c, 2a and 2c)

CMSP 130 CORE Oral Communication3 (SLO – 1a, 1b, 2a and 2c)

MATH 140 CORE Math..... 3 (SLO – 1d, 3a, 3b, and 3c)

*Courses in the CORE need not be limited to one course option.

Distribution Requirements – 18 Hours

2 Humanities, 2 Natural Sciences, 2 Social and Behavioral Sciences

Area	Group	Courses Required from Group	Course Options Within Group	SLOs Addressed and Assessed in Course
Humanities	HUM 1	1 course	Maximum of 14 courses, four of which are reserved for interdisciplinary courses	1b and/or 1c 4b 6a 6b
	HUM 2	1 course	Maximum of 14 courses, four of which are reserved for interdisciplinary courses	1b and/or 1c 4b
Natural Sciences	NSC 1 (Life Sciences)	1 course	Maximum of 14 courses, four of which are reserved for interdisciplinary courses	1b and/or 1c 1d 2b 4d 5a 5b 5c
	NSC 2 (Physical Sciences)	1 course	Maximum of 14 courses, four of which are reserved for interdisciplinary courses	1b and/or 1c 1d 2b 5a 5b 5c

Social and Behavioral Sciences	SBS 1	1 course	Maximum of 14 courses, four of which are reserved for interdisciplinary courses	1b and/or 1c 1d 2c 4a
	SBS 2	1 course	Maximum of 14 courses, four of which are reserved for interdisciplinary courses	1b and/or 1c 1d 2c 4c and/or 4d

General Education Capstone – 3 hours total

General Education Capstone -- *Three hours* in the discipline to demonstrate the integration of General Education knowledge and skills with the discipline, to be taught by faculty in the discipline. (SLO - 1a, 1b, 1c, 2e, and 2f) (Note: Programs may choose to create a three or more hour course to fulfill this requirement.)

Total Hours: 36

Appendix A – Student Learner Outcomes

1. Communication Skills

Students will demonstrate ability to:

- 1a. Listen and speak effectively in conversational, small group, public and intercultural contexts
- 1b. Read college-level critical, creative and technical texts for comprehension
- 1c. Write effectively for a variety of target audiences using conventions associated with standard English
- 1d. Convey quantitative and qualitative relationships using symbols, equations, graphs, and tables

2. Intellectual Skills

Students will demonstrate ability to:

- 2a. Employ current technologies to locate, analyze, evaluate and use information in multiple contexts and for a variety of purposes
- 2b. Recognize and effectively utilize both deductive and inductive reasoning
- 2c. Thoughtfully analyze and evaluate diverse points of view
- 2d. Perceive and articulate ethical consequences of decisions and actions
- 2e. Apply knowledge and skills to new settings and complex problems
- 2f. Explore the connections among practical, esoteric, critical and creative thinking

3. Quantitative Skills

Students will demonstrate ability to:

- 3a. Analyze situations and/or problems using arithmetic, geometric, algebraic and statistical methods
- 3b. Use deductive reasoning in a formal, symbolic, axiomatic system
- 3c. Verify answers to mathematical and scientific problems in order to determine reasonableness, identify alternative methods of solution, and select the most reliable results

4. Knowledge of Human Cultures

Students will demonstrate ability to:

- 4a. Examine the history of the United States and explain the basic principles and operation of the United States government with a view to being a responsible citizen
- 4b. Investigate the worldview and/or history of cultures outside the United States
- 4c. Analyze cultural, social, economic, geographic and historical dynamics that influence individuals and groups
- 4d. Comprehend the cycle of human growth necessary to provide sustained health and individual well-being

5. Knowledge of the Natural World

Students will demonstrate ability to:

- 5a. Comprehend and apply basic scientific, quantitative, and technological methods and knowledge of natural systems to the solution of scientific problems
- 5b. Employ scientific methods and theories to analyze and address open and debated questions in the sciences
- 5c. Analyze explanations to classify them as scientific or nonscientific

6. Knowledge of Aesthetics

Students will demonstrate ability to:

- 6a. Analyze the significance of diverse creative productions and explain how ideas are communicated effectively through the expressive arts (literature, theatre, dance, music, and visual arts)
- 6b. Describe and analyze the aesthetic value of creative productions in cultural and historical context

Appendix B –First Year Seminar Proposal

The FGEAC subcommittee on First Year Programs recommended substantial revision of MSU 101. The proposed First Year Seminar would replace MSU 101 but designate certain non-academic functions of the course to SOAR, New Student Days, or other orientation events for first year students.

1. The First Year Seminar (FYS 100 CORE) is an interdisciplinary 3 hour course, to be taught by approved faculty.
2. The First Year Seminar is a required course for all first-time, first-year students and transfer students with fewer than 24 credit hours.
3. The intent of the course is to establish the expectations of an academic life and life as a local, national and global citizen. Because of the importance of communication and intellectual skills as outlined in the learner outcomes within the General Education program, the foundations of these skills will be introduced in this course. Thus, this course will address and assess student learner outcomes 1a, 1b, 1c, 2e, 2f, and 4b. These skills will be built through the interdisciplinary exploration of a regional, national or global theme. Choosing a regional, national or global theme for this course will allow the course to also address and assess student learner outcomes 2d, 4c, and 4b. These student learner outcomes place this course in the Council for Postsecondary Education's category of the Social and Behavioral Sciences; helping the program to meet the requirement for nine hours in this category. Faculty teaching the First Year Seminar will be required to follow the Assessment Plan for General Education.
4. Faculty from all colleges are eligible to submit a proposal to teach this course. Faculty should receive a four hour credit teaching load for the First Year Seminar, in consideration of the additional time and skills that will be required to teach an interdisciplinary course with intensive assessment responsibilities.
5. The First Year Seminar will include a common reading assignment designed to provide new students with a common introduction to academic life at Morehead State University. The reading assignment should be an interdisciplinary, multi-themed book chosen by a committee of First Year Seminar faculty. MSU should encourage the use of this book in courses to create a campus-wide dialogue.
6. To recognize the time-intensive nature of instruction and assessment in reading and/or writing intensive courses, such as the First Year Seminar, class size will be capped between 20 and 25 students.
7. Assessment data will be collected from the First Year Seminar and compared to data collected from the General Education Capstone for longitudinal General Education program analysis. It

will also be used to measure student progress towards integration of General Education skills. Therefore, data should be collected for each student, rather than samples.

8. A First Year Seminar committee should be created to oversee the course. It should work with a General Education standing committee.

Appendix C – Council for Postsecondary Education Requirements

33-HOUR GENERAL EDUCATION CORE SPRING 2005
<p><i>Communications – 9</i> Written Communications - 6 Oral Communications - 3</p>
<p><i>Humanities - 6</i> The discipline(s) represented in this category must be different from those in Behavioral/Social Sciences. Courses may be chosen from, but not necessarily limited to, the following: Fine Arts (excluding studio and performance) Philosophy Literature History Foreign Language (same language) Cross-Cultural Inter/Multi-disciplinary (e.g., courses which include literature, history, art, etc.)</p>
<p><i>Mathematics – 3</i> Minimum: college algebra or approved general education mathematics course at sending institution</p>
<p><i>Natural Sciences - 6</i> Courses may be chosen from, but not necessarily limited to, the following disciplines: Biology Chemistry Physics Astronomy Geology Physical Science</p>
<p><i>Behavioral/Social Sciences - 9</i> At least two disciplines must be represented and must be different from those in Humanities. Courses may be chosen from, but not necessarily limited to, the following: Psychology Anthropology Sociology Economics History Geography Political Science Cross-Cultural Inter/Multi-disciplinary</p>
<p>CERTIFICATION LEVELS for SPRING 2005: Category Certification: Complete at least one, but not ALL of the categories listed above. Core Certification: Complete ALL of the categories listed above. Full General Education Certification: Complete ALL of the categories listed above PLUS any additional general education requirements of the sending institution.</p>