GENERAL EDUCATION AT LSU

The General Education Component of Undergraduate Education

The general education of LSU students spans the four years of undergraduate study. In courses designated as general education, students begin a process of developing competencies or essential learning outcomes which continues through their study in upper-level elective courses and courses in the major field of study. LSU's General Education Component represents a conviction on the part of the faculty that LSU graduates will be able to communicate effectively through multiple media; will have a basic appreciation of historical, cultural and philosophical complexity; will be aware of the economic, political, cultural, and linguistic factors which inform global interdependence; will be able to identify and solve important problems through research-based inquiry which employs scientific and mathematical methods, and appropriate technology; and will have the requisite abilities and motivation to participate effectively in the civic life of communities.

Recognizing that the fundamental characteristics for effective participation in the marketplace and the community necessarily involve multidisciplinary study, each student designs a unique curriculum based on a major field of study and including 39 hours of general education courses across six areas of focus: English Composition, Analytical Reasoning, Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. In general education courses students begin the development of the essential learning outcomes, which are refined and focused in disciplinary courses taken during the junior and senior years, with the intention that all graduates, regardless of major, will develop a set of intellectual abilities, a degree of sophistication, and a civic-minded perspective that correspond to the high level of functionality represented in the outcomes taken as a whole.

General Categories of Learning

1. Knowledge of the Sciences, Mathematics, Histories, Social Sciences, Humanities, Languages, and Arts
2. Communication through Written, Spoken, Visual, and Technological Media
3. Critical and Creative Thinking
4. Performance of Research-Based Inquiry, Analysis, and Problem Resolution
5. Personal Responsibility, Intercultural Competence, and Civic Engagement

Learning Competencies

1. LSU graduates will demonstrate effective communication of complex knowledge and ideas through written, oral, visual, and technological media.
2. LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated discourse.
3. LSU graduates will conduct research-based inquiry, including articulation of complex disciplinary and interdisciplinary problems, effective evaluation and analysis of primary and secondary sources, and integration of relevant information into original discourse.
4. LSU graduates will employ scientific and mathematical methods and technology in the resolution of laboratory and real-world problems.
5. LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of factors associated with global interdependence, including economic, political, psychological, cultural and linguistic forces.
6. LSU graduates will have the knowledge, skills, and disposition that attest to a commitment and ability to recognize and to participate in processes that improve the civic life of communities

Students must complete 39 hours of course work in six general education areas.

• English Composition (six hours)
• Analytical Reasoning (six hours)
• Arts (three hours)
• Humanities (nine hours)
• Natural Sciences (nine hours)
• Social Sciences (six hours)

Criteria for Listing a Course as General Education

Revised Criteria for Listing a Course as General Education. The following criteria for designation as a General Education course will pertain to all proposals as they are reviewed during the five-year cycle. Departments should review these criteria carefully, and if changes are needed to meet the criteria—such as dropping a prerequisite or changing a course number—they should make the necessary changes through courses and curricula prior to submission of the proposal to renew the course.

1. Courses listed as 3000 or 4000 level courses will not be approved for General Education credit.
2. General Education courses may have no more than one prerequisite, and that prerequisite must be a General Education course.
3. General Education courses cannot limit enrollment to students in a specific major or in a cohort. They must be open to all students.
4. Courses that are cross-listed must either file a joint proposal to have General Education courses renewed, or, alternatively, each department must submit a separate proposal for the course. If one of the cross-listing departments does not participate in the process to have the course approved for General Education credit, the cross-listing must be deleted, or the course will not be approved for General Education credit.
5. Courses can be listed in only one area of General Education. Honors courses offered as seminars are exempted from this criterion, but Honors seminars listed in multiple General Education areas must complete the assessment of the General Education student learning competency associated with each of the General Education areas for which credit can be given.
6. It is the responsibility of the Honors College to ensure that seminar courses approved for credit in General Education are not identical to courses taught in the home academic department under other course numbers.

Procedure for Proposing Changes to the General Education Component

The FSCGE will consider proposals (1) to add, delete, or alter the language of general education competencies or of criteria associated with a general education area or (2) to consider any other formal requests pertaining to the structure or content of the General Education Component of Undergraduate Education. Proposals are to be submitted with approval of the Chair and Dean of the academic undergraduate degree granting unit where they originate. Proposals submitted by October 1 will be reviewed by the FSCGE and a recommendation will be made by October 31, in time for the changes to meet the November deadline for inclusion in the following academic year's General Catalog.

Assessment of Student Learning Competencies in the General Education Component

Students develop the learning competencies associated with the General Education Component of undergraduate education through work in General Education courses, in upper-division elective courses, and in courses in the major field of study. Assessment of General Education competencies occurs at two levels: first, at the General Education course level, utilizing the procedures described in the "Proposal to List a Course as General Education" approved by the FSCGE for each course; second, through a general process involving a sample of graduating seniors during their final (Spring) semester. Regarding course-level assessment, if a course is taught during the academic year, the department must post a learning outcomes report on the LSU Planning and Assessment Matrix by June 15, documenting the results and explaining any changes the faculty are considering or implementing as a result of the assessment. Regarding assessment at the senior level, information generated through formal interviews of students in the sample group will be triangulated with information provided in academic departments' Learning Outcomes Assessment Report on students' achievement of degree program learning outcomes and with data associated with commercial assessment instruments such as the NSSE and the CLA.

The competencies, and their particular associations with respect to responsibility for assessment, are as follows:

1. LSU graduates will demonstrate effective communication of complex knowledge and ideas through written, oral, visual, and technological media.

    All major fields of study (assessed at the degree program level)

2. LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated discourse.

    All Humanities General Education courses

3. LSU graduates will conduct research-based inquiry, including articulation of complex disciplinary and interdisciplinary problems, effective evaluation and analysis of primary and secondary sources, and integration of relevant information into original discourse.

    All English Composition General Education courses

    All Arts General Education Courses

    All major fields of study (assessed at the degree program level)

4. LSU graduates will employ scientific and mathematical methods and technology in the resolution of laboratory and real-world problems.

    All Analytical Reasoning General Education Courses

    All Natural Science General Education Courses

5. LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.

    All Social Sciences General Education Courses

6. LSU graduates will have the knowledge, skills, and disposition that attest to a commitment and ability to recognize and to participate in processes that improve the civic life of communities.

All major fields of study (assessed at the degree program level)

Analytical Reasoning

Learning Competency. Every course designed to fulfill the Analytical Reasoning requirement for General Education must explain how the course instructor(s) will assess the degree to which students have met this competency: **LSU graduates will employ scientific and mathematical methods and technology in the resolution of laboratory and real-world problems.**

Goal. The goal of the General Education Analytical Reasoning requirement is for students to gain an understanding of the reasoning processes used in drawing conclusions, and to gain competence in using these processes.

Analysis connotes some aspects of clearly identifying hypotheses or assumptions, delineating the reasoning processes used in drawing conclusions, and understanding the significance of the conclusions. Reasoning involves applying systematic methods of investigation.

Course Criteria. Courses meeting Analytical Reasoning criteria will typically address problem solving by employing one or more of the following:

- elementary logic
- formal languages
- statistical reasoning
- probability
- algebraic or geometric reasoning

Aspects of Analytical Reasoning include understanding and applying algebra, probability and statistics, geometry, calculus, or logic for computational problems in theoretical and real world situations; interpreting, making appropriate judgments, and drawing logical conclusions based on quantitative information; translating problem situations into symbolic representations and use those representations to solve problems; and analyzing data and using probability and statistical methods to make inferences about real world situations.

Arts

Learning Competency. Every course designed to fulfill the Arts requirement for General Education must explain how the course instructor(s) will assess the degree to which students have met the following competency: **LSU graduates will conduct research-based inquiry, including articulation of complex disciplinary and interdisciplinary problems, effective evaluation and analysis of primary and secondary sources, and integration of relevant information into original discourse.**

Goal. The goal of courses in the General Education Arts Area is to reveal the order, diversity, and beauty of the arts and in so doing enable students to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the present world as the result of a rich cultural heritage. This understanding and appreciation is critical because citizens should understand artistic processes and be able to engage in intelligent public discourse and debate about the arts. Without this understanding, the people may take their cultural heritage for

granted or make incorrect assumptions about cultural artifacts.

The General Education requirement for the Arts Area introduces students to the arts through a focus on a single art in a one-semester, 3-credit course; therefore, courses in this area must be both intensive and broadly based. Students should acquire factual information about the art under consideration, understand concepts and methods involved, and develop an appreciation of the world of the artist. Students should understand the arts as modes of expression, as sciences requiring technical mastery, and as visual and/or aural languages.

Course Criteria. General Education courses in the Arts Area will:
- expose students to broad themes and underlying concepts;
- include a study of acknowledged masters and masterworks in order that the student may learn from these masters and catch a glimpse of greatness from an artistic perspective;
- encourage an understanding of historical, literary, visual, performance, and aesthetic paradigms, as the arts are a reflection and refraction of the culture from which they come;
- allow for the recognition and appreciation of something beyond and larger than the student, a skill that encompasses and transcends all disciplines of inquiry.

English Composition

Learning Competency. Every course designed to fulfill the English Composition requirement for General Education must explain how the course instructor(s) will assess the degree to which students have met the following competency: **LSU graduates will conduct research-based inquiry, including articulation of complex disciplinary and interdisciplinary problems, effective evaluation and analysis of primary and secondary sources, and integration of relevant information into original discourse.**

Goal. The goal of the English Composition requirement is to prepare students to become good written communicators, thinkers and researchers.

Course Criteria. General Education courses in the English Composition Area are centered on writing pedagogy and developing basic skills in written communication. In these courses students will:

- Demonstrate Ability in written analysis and synthesis;
- Undertake writing as a recursive process that develops and transforms thought;
- Learn how to conduct basic research and use it effectively in written works;
  - Learn how to use the resources of the LSU library;
  - Interpret, evaluate, integrate, and document information gathered from print and online sources;
  - Understand a research assignment as a series of tasks that include finding, analyzing, and synthesizing information from primary and secondary sources;
  - Integrate information from sources into writing, and document this information appropriately;
- Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations, with a focus on purpose and the needs of various audiences, using appropriate genre conventions;
- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality;
- Apply knowledge of structure and organization, paragraphing, and mechanics.

Humanities

Learning Competency. Every course designed to fulfill the Humanities requirement for General Education must explain how the course instructor(s) will assess the degree to which students have met this competency: **LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated discourse.**

A. In literature students will demonstrate an ability to:
    1. Read a variety of texts—comprehending and interpreting both literal and figurative meaning, and paraphrasing passages accurately
    2. Identify larger themes, structures, literary devices, and rhetorical patterns in texts;
    3. Place and interpret texts within a discursive tradition and within broader cultural and historical contexts.
B. In history students will demonstrate an ability to:
    1. Make sense of the past by reconstructing causal patterns, identifying trends, and making informed comparisons between different historical cases;
    2. Grasp the influence of varied and complex historical factors on the lives of individuals in societies.
C. In philosophy and religion students will demonstrate an ability to:
    1. Understand positions which humans have developed on fundamental issues like truth, knowledge, goodness and values, beauty, and spirituality and to arrive at an informed position oneself.

Goal. Every disciplinary course designed to fulfill the Humanities requirements for General Education must impart an understanding of how knowledge is acquired in the discipline.

Course Criteria: General Education courses in the Humanities Area should

- Give students an understanding of their own cultural traditions and those of other cultures, locally, nationally, and internationally;
- Lead students to reflect on fundamental questions that human beings have faced, whatever their diverse backgrounds and cultures;
- Introduce students to the humanities disciplines, such as literature, history, philosophy, religious studies, and language.

Natural Sciences

Learning Competency. Every course designed to fulfill the Natural Sciences requirement for General Education must explain how the course instructor(s) will assess the degree to which students have met the following competency: **LSU graduates will employ scientific and mathematical methods and technology in the resolution of laboratory and real-world problems.**

Goal. The goal of the Natural Sciences requirement is to reveal the order, diversity and beauty of nature and in so doing enable students to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the world around them. This understanding is critical because citizens in a scientifically literate society are expected to use appropriate scientific processes and principles in making personal decisions, and to engage intelligently in public discourse and debate about matters of scientific and technological concern.

Courses in the Natural Sciences Area give students an understanding of the nature of science through exposure to broad divisions that include physical, biological, earth, and applied sciences. All disciplines

of science employ the scientific method to establish theories and laws of nature. Observation, deductive reasoning, and experimentation are used to draw conclusions based on these theories and laws. Such reasoning is applied to the study of both living and non-living matter. Accordingly, in a course in the Natural Sciences Area, students should acquire factual scientific information in a specific discipline, develop an appreciation of the natural world, understand how scientists reason and draw conclusions, and be able to interpret scientific material presented through the media or in the world around them.

In the review of course proposals, the General Education Committee will examine whether the proposal meets the General Education course criteria. Proposals for inclusion as a General Education Natural Sciences course should denote whether the course is a Life Science or a Physical Science course, and demonstrate how the course will introduce students to broad themes and concepts underlying scientific research and discourse.

Course Criteria in the Life Sciences: For inclusion as a Life Sciences course, a significant fraction of the course must be devoted to one or more of the following criteria:

- the cellular organization of life;
- the molecular basis of heredity and genetics;
- biological evolution; the interdependence of organisms;
- the matter, energy, and organization in living systems;
- the behavior of organisms.

Course Criteria in the Physical Sciences: For inclusion as a Physical Sciences course, a significant fraction of the course must be devoted to one or more of the following criteria:
- the structure and properties of atoms and matter;
- chemical reactions, motions and forces;
- the conservation of energy and the increase in disorder;
- the interactions of energy and matter;
- energy in the earth system, geochemical cycles, and the origin and evolution of the universe and the earth system.

Social Sciences

Learning Competency. Every course designed to fulfill the Social Sciences requirement for General Education must explain how the course instructor(s) will assess the degree to which students have met the following competency: **LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of factors associated with global interdependence, including economic, political, psychological, cultural and linguistic forces.**

Goal. The Social Sciences inquire systematically into the nature of human association, the bonds and interactions among human beings. The goal of the General Education requirement in the Social Sciences is to introduce students to this systematic inquiry so that they will better appreciate the complexity of the social world and act as free and responsible citizens, able to make informed choices in governing their own lives and participating in their communities. As there is a diversity of associations – both in that everyone associates with others in various ways (for example, as members of families and as citizens of states), and in that these associations take a variety of forms (for example, the different forms of government) – so there is a diversity of method and approach to the study of human society.

General Education courses in the Social Sciences should make students aware of diversity in society and in approaches to the study of society, while pursuing in some depth a particular topic with a specific approach. Two three-hour courses in the Social Sciences are required, leaving to the students' discretion

whether to pursue one avenue of study through a sequence of courses or to sample courses from different fields.

Course Criteria. Although no course in the Social Sciences can capture the full diversity of forms of association or approaches to social analysis, courses in the Social Sciences will address in a sustained way many of the following criteria:

- The nature of the human person;
- The different levels of association, from friends and family, to economy and polity, even to civilizations of global significance;
- The patterns by which societies organize how people relate not only to each other but to the world around them, ranging from relations to their physical environment to relations to the divine;
- The diversity of cultures, across time and space, as well as universal social characteristics and global networks;
- Approaches to social analysis, from historical inquiry, to data analysis, to formal modeling;
- Patterns of imagined best societies as well as discoveries of unintended consequences.