



General Education @ SHIP

A **proposal** for program renewal.

A Proposal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is a General Education program?

A general education program is a university curriculum that is shared by all undergraduate students because it provides a foundation for career readiness and informed citizenship in a democratic society. It is intentional, has clearly-defined goals, and provides students with ample opportunities to accomplish essential learning objectives. A general education program that also prompts students to learn across multiple traditions and disciplines will help them to acquire a breadth of knowledge and to develop skills that foster knowledge integration, innovation, and adaptability. These are reasons why general education courses comprise a big part of each student's entry year experience.

Whether they know it or not, many of our students are preparing for careers and pathways that do not yet exist. Our alumni and regional employers have given us many reasons to expect that many emerging careers and pathways are requiring highly developed reading, listening, ethical reasoning, creative thinking, and problem solving skills. Such personal attributes cannot be turned on like a light switch or found using a search engine; rather, they must be consciously developed within us, practiced, and honed.

Our students have already witnessed rapid changes in the technologies we use, the labor markets we compete in, the ways families and social networks form, and the ways people pursue happiness. Our students are also learning that we are living amidst demographic, economic, and political changes, which were set in motion decades ago, and climatic changes, which were set in motion nearly a century ago. With change come disruptions - abrupt changes to the knowledge bases and skill sets that are prized in the marketplace. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect our students will rely increasingly on their general educations as they react to and move with the disruptive forces that create, expand, or shrink highly specialized labor markets. Moreover, our nation will hold together to the degrees we communicate respectfully, solve problems ethically, and place premiums on evidence, reasoned debate, and lifelong learning.

We have an opportunity to become a student-ready university

With so many needs for change comes an opportunity to boldly improve how we attract, engage, and retain students - by putting students first. Rather than continue asking ourselves, "Why aren't more students ready for college?" and focusing on the things we cannot change, we could be asking "Why aren't we more ready for students?" As a university, we can do a better job of demonstrating how our General Education Program and our other programs support each other. We can do a better job of demonstrating and marketing how students with strong general educations are better prepared to adapt and respond to change after graduation. And, importantly, we can stop advising students to "get their Gen Eds out of the way" and show them, instead, how we are helping them to develop their capacities for thinking integratively and for choosing different pathways after graduation.

Structure of this document

The General Education Council's (GEC) Program Committee has prepared **recommendations** for program renewal and reform, which, in no uncertain terms, would change the culture of General Education and assessment at Ship. What follows are arguments for change and a **proposed** path forward.

Summary of Recommendations

1. To better communicate what Shippensburg University will do for students, the Program Committee **recommends** adopting a set of clear General Education Program goals that can be used to direct intentional teaching practice and student learning. The proposed goals are aligned with the competency requirements listed in the new MSCHE (2014) standards and they will foster meaningful program assessment.¹
2. To better communicate what Shippensburg University expects students to accomplish or learn, the Program Committee **recommends** a set of intentional and clear student learning objectives. These learning objectives are aligned with the competency requirements listed in the new MSCHE (2014) standards and they will foster meaningful assessment of student learning outcomes.
3. To better communicate how student learning outcomes will be assessed, the Program Committee **recommends** adopting a set of rubrics, one for each learning objective, that describe what constitutes unsatisfactory, emerging, developing, proficient, or mastery levels of competency.
4. The Program Committee **recommends** a system of tagging courses that will help students and the faculty to recognize each program goal and the courses that will help them to achieve learning objectives.
5. To better communicate the major threads of our general education curriculum to students, parents, and the public at large, the Program Committee **recommends** that the program goals, objectives, and rubrics be organized further into five broad themes that present the major components of the program without academic jargon.

We want our students to:

develop solid **Foundations**

recognize **Interconnections**

consider **Culture, Reflection, and Responsibility**

understand the **Natural World and Technologies** that surround them

and to appreciate **Creativity & Expression**.

6. Nearly half of all students that enter our university do not immediately declare a major and, so, begin exploring potential majors via our General Education Program. Given the large number of entry-year students in the Exploratory Studies Program, the Program Committee **recommends** the GEC amend its bylaws to create a seat for the Office for Exploratory Studies.
7. Last but not least, the Program Committee **recommends** opening its General Education Program to departments and programs outside the College of Arts and Sciences. Doing so can build capacity within the program to address new competency requirements and help students to see the interconnections that exist between their specific major programs and the general education program that all students share.

¹ Our proposed system of tagging courses would emphasize the “portability” of skills by replacing rigid subject boundaries with competencies that encourage “interdisciplinary collaborations” (AMP goal 4.6) and new courses that don’t fit neatly into the ‘categories of knowledge.’ There will be increased flexibility for students to build the skills they need from a more diverse combination of courses across the university, consistent with the AMP goals (1.3 and 1.4) that promote a “core program that works in concert with major programs”, and “students’ abilities to navigate the interconnectedness of knowledge.”

The needs for reform are clear and present

Shippensburg University maintains its General Education Program in accordance with its Mission, our regional accreditors' standards for accreditation, and several Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) Board of Governor (BOG) policies. Our Mission states our university's commitment to student learning and personal development. The policies and standards provide our university with the required framework for accomplishing its mission.

Unfortunately, our General Education Program does not reflect the complete list of competencies described in the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE, 2014) *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation* and, soon, it will be out of compliance with two amended PASSHE BOG policies (1993-01-A, 1999-01-A). Clear and present needs exist to reform our General Education program.

Argument #1: The credit requirement of our program is too large

As of August 2018, the size of our program will be out of compliance with the amended PASSHE policy on General Education (1993-01-A), which recognizes that students are required to complete a minimum of 40 credits and states "the maximum shall not exceed 48 credits." In contrast, our current program requires all students to complete a *minimum* of 48 credits and, because many students are directed by their major program to take the 4-credit versions of courses, many are required to complete more than 48 credits.

Shippensburg must reduce its minimum credit requirement (to 45 or 42 credits) so it can bring its program into compliance with the amended PASSHE BOG policy. Doing so will also provide Shippensburg students with much needed relief and flexibility to pursue depth via certificate, minor, or dual-major programs. Doing so could also help the university to compete better for transfer students (see SU, 2013: AMP Strategy B.4), for most PASSHE institutions that have revised their general education programs since 2009 have reduced their credit requirements to 45 credits or fewer and, so, made our program grow comparatively large (and old).

Argument #2: Middle States expects all of its institutions to assess student learning

The MSCHE issued new accreditation standards in 2014 that become effective for all affiliated institutions starting with those that have self-studies due during the 2017-18 academic year (e.g., Shippensburg). Notably, MSCHE eliminated its General Education standard (formerly Standard 12) and placed some former parts of it into *Standard 3: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience*. According to Standard 3, an accredited institution possesses or demonstrates:

- A. a general education curriculum that helps students to develop competency in *at least*:
 - Oral communication
 - Written communication
 - Scientific and quantitative reasoning
 - Critical analysis and reasoning
 - Technological competency
 - Information literacy
 - Study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives
- B. student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty ... who are rigorous and effective in: 1) teaching, 2) assessment of student learning, 3) scholarly inquiry, and 4) service;
- C. organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty or appropriate professionals using defined and meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether [or not] students are achieving those goals.

It is clear that MSCHE expects Shippensburg to place assessment of student learning on par with teaching, service, and scholarly growth, and that it considers its core competencies to be cross-disciplinary.

The new standards contain competencies that our current program does not address squarely or at all. Yes, MSCHE omitted competencies associated with reading and creative expression, which was surprising and short-sighted, but their list is not a complete checklist; rather, a list of minimum (“*at least*”) requirements that can be augmented. So, *at the very least*, our General Education program needs to be reorganized around these new required competencies.

Argument #3: Assessment is good reflective teaching practice

Program and course assessments are reflective processes that professional educators use to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their programs, teaching practices, and student learning. In the past, reflective assessments were conducted informally; rigor varied among programs, disciplines, and educators. In the present, program and course assessments are nationally recognized as formal peer-review processes that improve communication, normalize expectations across disciplines, and reveal strengths, weaknesses, and tacit assumptions (Berrett, 2015).

Assessments are earnest attempts to answer questions like:

- Are we communicating clearly with students about what they are expected to learn and why they are expected learn it?
- Are we communicating clearly with students about how their work will be evaluated?
- Do our assignments, quizzes, exams, etc., that evaluate students on the material they are expected to learn or on other material that we tacitly assume they know or should know?
- Are we providing our students with ample and sufficient opportunities to learn what they are expected to learn?
- Are we providing our students with ample and sufficient opportunities to demonstrate that they’ve learned what they are expected to learn?
- What have our students learned and how well have they learned it?

The answers to such questions, if acted upon, can prompt and guide valuable improvements to student learning, teaching practice, student retention, and the institution as a whole. To not ask these questions or to not reflect on the answers to these questions has simply become unprofessional practice.

Argument #4: The structure of our program makes it impossible to assess student learning sustainably

The current structure of our General Education program reflects a list of recommended cross-disciplinary competencies in the deprecated PASSHE BOG policy on General Education (PASSHE BOG 1993-01), yet many of our program goals and learning objectives are not cross-disciplinary or expressed clearly. In fact, most of our learning objectives contain nested sets of objectives, which makes assessing student learning cumbersome or nearly impossible to do.

Since Shippensburg last tried to evaluate its program (2006-2008), it has become unavoidably clear that we are unable to conduct meaningful assessments of our program, nor can we demonstrate consistently and clearly which general education objectives our students are achieving. These fatal flaws stem not from the tremendous efforts that faculty members put into teaching and helping students to learn, but from the structure of the current program. The structure of our program in many ways reflects “the pattern of university organization that creates vested interests in traditionally defined departments” (Boyer Commission, 1998) and not, as it should, an intentional curriculum built to serve entry-year and other students. Therefore, the structure of our General Education program needs to be reorganized around a set of clear goals and a small set of cross-disciplinary objectives that will foster better communication, better student learning, better assessment of student learning, and better program assessment.

The Academic Master Plan

Local leadership in the Association of Pennsylvania State College & University Faculties (APSCUF) and the Provost, in 2009 and in anticipation of changes to the MSCHE accreditation standards, collaboratively formed the Academic Master Plan Task Force to develop new visions for the division of Academic Affairs and the academic future of the university. The Academic Master Plan (SU, 2013: AMP Strategy E) describes these new visions and identifies desired General Education Program reforms:

- Establish a process and mechanism for the *periodic review and revision* of the general education curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of 21st-century students and workers
- Create and support a process to identify, develop, and implement *core experiences and cross-curricular initiatives*.
- Develop strategies for the *continual emphasis of core competencies* (writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, developing habits of the mind, and global understanding) *throughout the curriculum*.
- Explore the rationale and feasibility of including courses from all three academic colleges in the general education curriculum.
- Explore the incorporation of technology fluency in the curriculum in a systematic way.

The roles of the General Education Council

The General Education Council (GEC) is the campus body of faculty members, deans, and students that is responsible for General Education Program.

The GEC's Assessment Committee stays informed about the applicable assessment standards and policies and about how good reflective assessments are accomplished at other universities. It is also responsible for coordinating assessments of student learning within our current program and for advising the GEC on how the assessment process can be improved.

The GEC's Budget Committee manages the annual budget, reviews general education grant proposals and makes recommendations to the council.

The Entry Year Experience Committee is composed of faculty members and others that work primarily with first-year students (e.g., in our ENG, HCS, HIS, Residence Life, and Exploratory Studies programs) and it advises the GEC on how students' experiences in the all-important transition into college can be improved.

The GEC's Program Committee must stay informed about standard and policy changes and periodically surveys the landscape of changes being made at other institutions. It reviews and makes recommendations for nearly all UCC proposals that affect the program. It is also responsible for leading the effort to renew our current General Education Program.

The GEC take direction from our Mission, the MSCHE standards, PASSHE policies, and Shippensburg University's Academic Master Plan (AMP). The GEC also recognizes the work accomplished by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). All are prompting our university to adopt new program goals and learning objectives that place *primary* emphasis on the acquisition of the skills, values, awareness, understandings, perspectives and appreciations that are the foundation for informed citizenship in a democratic society and career readiness, and *secondary* emphasis on the mastery of disciplinary content.

Proposed General Education Program: 45 credits - themes and program goals

The Program Committee is recommending that the new Program be organized into five broad themes that are easy to remember and communicate to students, parents, and the public. Each theme organizes two or more goals, which provide the conspicuous basis for program assessment – *are we doing what we say we are doing?*

We want our students to develop sound Foundations – 15 credits

Foundational courses provide students with opportunities to develop the requisite quantitative, analytical, written communication, and oral communication skills needed to succeed while in college and throughout life after college. Four program goals express what we will do for students. Each goal has an associated rubric that outlines what we expect students to learn or accomplish. All students are required to earn 15 credits in this foundational curriculum. Because most students complete these courses during their first year, the GEC’s Entry Year Experience Committee is working to develop the entry-year curricular elements already embedded in these courses into a unified and conspicuous experience that engages the broader set of resources on our campus. Best practices suggest enrollments in entry year courses should be capped appropriately and coordinated to create cohorts.

Program Goals	Course(s)	Required Credits	Assessment Rubric / Tag	Assessment Cycle 1
Guide and prompt students to locate and organize information with appropriate evidence and language for clear written communication .	ENG 114	3	W	Every 4 years
Guide and prompt students to develop oral communication skills necessary to organize and deliver a clear message with appropriate supporting material.	HCS 100	3	O	Every 4 years
Guide and prompt students to understand major historical themes , applying critical analysis to generate arguments based on appropriate evidence.	HIS 105 + 1 more	6	H	Every 4 years
Guide and prompt students to interpret mathematical forms, analyze through calculations, and communicate quantitative reasoning .	MAT by placement	3	Q	Every 4 years

We want our students to recognize Interconnections – 6 credits

This curriculum will provide students with opportunities to use language and the social sciences to study local, regional, national, and global communities. The interconnectedness of societies can be revealed by examining traditions and structures. Two program goals express what we will do for students. Each goal has an associated rubric that outlines what we expect students to learn or accomplish. Students must complete two (2) courses in this curriculum, with at least one (1) course being a global perspectives course (‘G’ tag).

Program Goals	Course(s)	Required Credits	Assessment Rubric / Tag	Assessment Cycle 2
Guide and prompt students to develop global perspectives by analyzing systems and evaluating interrelationships.	TBD	at least 3	G	Every 4 years
Guide and prompt students to understand and demonstrate oral and written communication in a foreign language as well as awareness of a foreign culture.	TBD	-	L	Every 4 years

We want our students to consider Culture, Reflection, & Responsibility – 9 credits

This curriculum will provide students with opportunities to explore the self and interaction with others as they understand their place and responsibilities in a diverse world. Tools for exploration can include study of principles and research in social and behavioral science, logical reasoning, and critical thinking about ethics and values. Three program goals express what we will do for students. Each goal has an associated rubric that outlines what we expect students to learn or accomplish. Students are required to complete three (3) courses (or their equivalents) in this curriculum, with no more than two (2) courses being attributed with the same tag.

Program Goals	Course(s)	Required Credits	Assessment Rubric / Tag	Assessment Cycle 2
Guide and prompt students to evaluate the diversity of human behavior, evaluate the interplay between humans and natural or social forces, and develop self-awareness regarding diversity.	TBD	-	D	Every 4 years
Guide and prompt students to identify ethical theories or guidelines and apply appropriate ethical reasoning to reach conclusions and support moral judgments.	TBD	-	E	Every 4 years
Guide and prompt students to use appropriate logical reasoning to explain and analyze concepts, and apply concepts to issues to determine significance or value.	TBD	-	R	Every 4 years

We want our students to better understand the Natural World and the Technologies that surround them – 9 credits

This curriculum will provide students the opportunity to learn how new knowledge is created by applying scientific principles and technology to address historical and contemporary questions. Two program goals express what we will do for students. Each goal has an associated rubric that outlines what we expect students to learn or accomplish. Students must complete 3 courses in this curriculum, with at least two (2) courses (or their equivalents) involving the natural world ('N' tag).

Program Goals	Course(s)	Required Credits	Assessment Rubric / Tag	Assessment Cycle 3
Guide and prompt students to understand the scientific method and resulting principles and theories, critically evaluating data to answer questions about the natural world .	TBD	at least 6	N	Every 4 years
Guide and prompt students to achieve technological competency through appropriate use of common software to gather, analyze, and manipulate data.	TBD	-	T	Every 4 years

We want our students to recognize and appreciate Creativity & Expression – 6 credits

This part of the curriculum will provide students with opportunities to explore artistic disciplines and their modes of expression, and to consider the processes by which artistic works are imagined and created as well as the analytical tools for describing and appraising artistic works. Each goal has an associated rubric that outlines what we expect students to learn or accomplish. Students must complete two (2) courses (or their equivalents) in this curriculum, with at least one (1) course involving the arts or literature ('A' tag).

Program Goals	Course(s)	Required Credits	Assessment Rubric / Tag	Assessment Cycle 3
Guide and prompt students to describe, analyze, and respond to the scope of works in arts or literature .	TBD	at least 3	A	Every 4 years
Guide and prompt students to demonstrate and apply creative competencies , problem solving and preparation in the realization of a creative work.	TBD	-	C	Every 4 years

To ensure breadth and provide for depth

To ensure students develop a breadth of knowledge and skills across multiple traditions and disciplines, all students will be prohibited from counting more than two (2) courses from the same participating academic program toward their General Education Program requirements.

As described above, reducing the size of the General Education Program credit requirement will provide all students with more capacity to pursue depth of knowledge via the free electives or the certificate, minor, or dual-major program of their choosing.

Proposed General Education Program learning objectives and assessment rubrics

Each program goal and tag (above) is linked to a small set of student learning objectives via an assessment rubric (below). Each assessment rubric outlines clear expectations about what students are expected to learn or accomplish (rows) and an ordinal competency scale (columns) that describes how well students are accomplishing the objectives. The rubrics presented below were developed over two years by willing faculty members in all three colleges and in all three divisions of the College of Arts & Sciences. The rubrics emphasize core competencies across the curriculum. The rubrics do not protect traditional barriers to interdisciplinary engagement. Rubrics like these will not only help us to assess student learning in the program, but they can be adopted by other programs and used to connect those programs with the General Education Program. Use of rubrics that focus on a small number (3) of key outcomes, and recognize the spectrum of accomplishment from freshmen to seniors make meaningful aggregation of results across disciplines possible as well as the capacity to follow student development over time. Such a system can help us realize and evaluate the continual emphasis of core competencies throughout the 4 year curriculum.

ARTS AND LITERATURE CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to describe, analyze, and respond to the scope of works in **arts or literature**.

Learning objectives / Desired outcomes	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
<p>Descriptive Communication <i>The student writes or speaks clearly and precisely, with sufficient observational detail about the work of Art or Literature.</i></p>	Fails to demonstrate an ability to describe the artistic work.	Begins to demonstrate an organized approach to communication, but the description is vague or subjective with an absence of concrete detail or detailed language.	Demonstrates consistent application of organization and uses some details to describe the work of art through language choices that are accurate and mostly appropriate to the artistic discipline.	Demonstrates clear organization and disciplinary appropriate vocabulary that provides sufficient details to objectively describe the work of art.	Demonstrates skillful use of written or oral communication style, organization, detail and disciplinary vocabulary to concisely, thoroughly, and objectively describe the work of art.
<p>Analysis and Context <i>The student uses appropriate and discipline specific vocabulary to identify and prioritize the significant artistic elements found in the work while also analyzing the context surrounding its creation.</i></p>	Fails to identify the artistic elements of the work.	Employs some analytical tools to identify artistic elements, however some aspects of the analysis or citations are incorrect, incomplete or vague.	Employs some analytic tools to identify artistic elements, with clear and accurate use of disciplinary vocabulary and documentation of sources.	Employs analytical tools and source materials to successfully identify and prioritize artistic elements, as they provide accurate and discipline appropriate evaluation of the work's structure and genesis.	Employs analytical tools and diverse sources to masterfully identify and prioritize artistic elements, as they provide accurate and original evaluation of the work, cited according to the highest standards of the academic discipline.
<p>Interpretation and Response <i>The student provides interpretation that expresses an articulate, thoughtful and personal response to the meaning of a work of art, considering the relevance of the work at a variety of levels [symbolic, metaphorical, emotional, cultural, artistic, historical, contemporary].</i></p>	Fails to provide interpretation or expression of meaning.	Begins to assign a personal response to the work, although the interpretive expression is vague, generalized or clichéd.	Exhibits a clear and personal response to the work that conveys some meaning, or relevance of the work	Demonstrates a consistently clear, personal and confident response to the work while thoughtfully articulating the relevance of the work.	Demonstrates a personal response to the work that is thought provoking, perceptive, articulate and provides evidence to validate or to challenge existing interpretations or inferences about the work.

See the other rubrics for definitions of competency, program goals, learning objectives, and student learning outcomes.

CREATIVE CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to demonstrate and apply **creative** competencies, problem solving and preparation in the realization of a creative work.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
Artistic/Creative Competencies <i>The student demonstrates competency that implies a commensurate level of technique and training appropriate for realizing the artistic work.</i>	Fails to demonstrate the discipline specific artistic or creative competencies appropriate for realization of the work.	Begins to demonstrate discipline specific artistic or creative competencies which are appropriate for the realization of the work.	Demonstrates satisfactory competencies necessary for realizing the work of art, however the work would benefit from further development of these competencies.	Demonstrates proficiency in discipline specific competencies appropriate for realizing the work.	Demonstrates consistency and mastery of those discipline specific competencies necessary for realizing the work.
Problem Solving and Process <i>The student demonstrates the ability to successfully imagine, plan and cultivate a work.</i>	Fails to apply a process or plan for exploration appropriate for the scope of the work.	Applies a process for exploration, however only a single approach is considered and the plan is not sufficiently thought out.	Applies multiple approaches of process and preparation, capable of predicting some potential problems presented by the project without the skill or experience to cope with unexpected challenges.	Applies multiple approaches to process and preparation, capable of predicting the potential problems presented by the project as well as the skill to cope with challenges and adjust work accordingly.	Applies multiple approaches to process and preparation, capable of predicting the potential problems presented by the project as well as flexibility in the face of change. Possesses the ability to articulate choices and recognize consequences to develop new and successful strategies.
Creativity and Transformation <i>The student exhibits a unique interpretive and conceptual approach to creating a work.</i>	Fails to exhibit any unique interpretive or conceptual approach.	Relies on a predictable collection of familiar and clichéd ideas or approaches.	Exhibits some examples of novel ideas or unique approaches, however ideas may lack coherence or need more development.	Creates a new and expressive approach that displays unity and coherence, and on an interpretive level these expressive touches make a familiar work appear new and vital.	Creates a new direction in the realization of the project that moves beyond clichés and constraints, exhibiting a degree of risk or tackling controversial topics. The final project is highly expressive, imaginative, coherent, and leaves a lasting impression.

A **competency** is the ability to do something successfully.

A **program goal** is a clear statement that expresses what our program will do for students. Each goal is designed to prompt and guide teaching practice and program assessment.

A **student learning objective** is a clear statement about what we expect students to learn or accomplish. Like any type of objective, a student learning objective is a desired outcome.

A **student learning outcome** is the result of a learning process; in other words, it is an actual outcome. To foster assessment of student learning, student learning outcomes must be observable, observed, measurable, and measured. Student learning outcomes can be characterized using an ordinal scale of competency (e.g., unsatisfactory, emerging, developing, proficient, and mastery).

DIVERSITY CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to evaluate the **diversity** of human behavior, the interplay between humans and natural or social forces, and develop self-awareness regarding diversity.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
Knowledge of Human Behavior (Individual and Groups) <i>The student understands theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluates and applies this knowledge.</i>	Fails to identify knowledge of human behavior at individual or group level.	Identifies minimal knowledge about human behavior at individual or group level.	Demonstrates knowledge of human behavior at the individual or group level.	Applies knowledge of theories of human behavior and the social environment to make relevant connections.	Integrates knowledge of theories of human behavior and the social environment to make relevant connections.
Knowledge of Human Diversity (Individual, Group, Institutional) and its Impact on Behavior <i>The student understands how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity.</i>	Fails to demonstrate knowledge of human diversity and does not recognize impact.	Describes minimal knowledge of human diversity but cannot draw conclusions.	Demonstrates some knowledge of human diversity but not enough to fully support conclusions or viewpoints.	Recognizes the impact of human diversity on behavior, supporting relevant conclusions or viewpoints.	Compares and contrasts knowledge of human diversity and its impact on behavior that is broad-based with depth, fully supporting relevant conclusions or viewpoints.
Awareness of own attitudes, beliefs, behaviors regarding diversity. <i>The student applies self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases.</i>	Fails to apply self-awareness or does not express awareness.	Identifies minimal awareness of own biases, even those shared with own cultural group.	Identifies own biases, expresses preference for those shared with own cultural group.	Recognizes new perspectives about own biases; seeks out complexities that new perspectives offer.	Articulates insights into own biases; aware of how context shapes them, can recognize and respond to biases in self and others.

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ETHICAL REASONING CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to identify ethical theories or guidelines and apply appropriate **ethical reasoning** to reach conclusions and support moral judgments.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
<p>Conceptualization <i>The student identifies and explains the ethical theory's or guidelines' essential moral principle or value and its relation to the theory as a whole.</i></p>	Fails to identify the theory's essential moral principle or value.	Identifies the theory's essential moral principle or value, but cannot explain it or relate it to the theory as a whole.	Identifies the theory's essential moral principle or value, but explains it incompletely and does not relate it to the theory as a whole.	Identifies and explains the theory's essential moral principle or value, but does not relate it to the theory as a whole.	Identifies and explains the theory's essential moral principle or value, and relates it correctly to the theory as a whole.
<p>Application <i>The student applies the moral principle or value to an action, decision, or issue and generates the correct moral judgment and its implications.</i></p>	Fails to apply the moral principle or value to an action, decision, or issue.	Applies the moral principle or value to an action, decision, or issue in an incomplete way and cannot generate the correct moral judgment or explain its implications.	Applies the moral principle or value to an action, decision, or issue and generates the correct moral judgment, but cannot explain the implications.	Applies the moral principle or value to an action, decision, or issue and generates the correct moral judgment, but explains the implications incompletely.	Applies the moral principle or value to an action, decision, or issue, and generates the correct moral judgment, as well as explains the implications completely.
<p>Comparison and Evaluation <i>The student identifies, compares, and evaluates similarities and differences between ethical theories or guidelines, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the ethical theories or guidelines.</i></p>	Fails to identify similarities and differences between the theories or guidelines and fails to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the ethical theories or guidelines.	Identifies either similarities or differences between the ethical theories or guidelines or the strengths and weaknesses of the ethical theories or guidelines.	Identifies both similarities and differences between the ethical theories or guidelines and the strengths and weaknesses of the ethical theories or guidelines.	Compares similarities and differences between the ethical theories or guidelines and the strengths and weaknesses of the ethical theories or guidelines.	Compares similarities and differences between the ethical theories or guidelines and the strengths and weaknesses of the ethical theories or guidelines and evaluates the ethical theories or guidelines based upon their strengths and weaknesses.

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A **program goal** is a clear statement that expresses what our program will do for students. Each goal is designed to prompt and guide teaching practice and program assessment.

A **student learning objective** is a clear statement about what we expect students to learn or accomplish. Like any type of objective, a student learning objective is a desired outcome.

A **student learning outcome** is the result of a learning process; in other words, it is an actual outcome. To foster assessment of student learning, student learning outcomes must be observable, observed, measurable, and measured. Student learning outcomes can be characterized using an ordinal scale of competency (e.g., unsatisfactory, emerging, developing, proficient, and mastery).

FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to understand and demonstrate oral and written communication in a **foreign language** as well as awareness of a foreign culture.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
<p>Oral Communication</p> <p><i>The student communicates ideas and thoughts orally at the Intermediate-Low level minimum according to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines.</i></p>	<p>Fails to demonstrate attainment of oral achievement when engaged in a simple conversation. Most of the utterances are made in English, sometimes with a translation into L1.</p>	<p>Uses mainly memorized sentences and phrases. Uses basic vocabulary from the textbook. Uses memorized questions from the textbook. When having difficulty, negotiation of meaning is initiated, but not sustained. With difficulty, can handle simple transactions that were introduced in class.</p>	<p>Attempts to use sentences and phrases of his/her own although with some inaccuracies. Attempts to use varied vocabulary from across lessons. Attempts to ask both memorized questions and questions of his/her own. Negotiation of meaning is used. With relative easiness, can handle simple transactions that were introduced in class.</p>	<p>Demonstrates the ability to use complete sentences when dealing with some familiar topics. Uses mainly memorized words and phrases. Asks and answers simple questions although not always accurately. Can handle unknown simple transactions with some difficulty.</p>	<p>Skillful use of original sentence level text to express ideas and thoughts orally on familiar topics mainly in the present tense; excellent use of new vocabulary and verb forms. Creates with the language. Negotiates meaning effectively. Asks and answers simple questions accurately. Can handle an unknown simple transaction with accuracy.</p>
<p>Written Communication</p> <p><i>The student communicates ideas and thoughts in writing at the Intermediate-Low level minimum according to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines.</i></p>	<p>Fails to demonstrate attainment of writing achievement when engaged in a simple writing task. Most of the sentences are done in English, sometimes with a translation into L1.</p>	<p>Writes mainly memorized sentences and phrases. Uses basic vocabulary from the textbook. With difficulty, can handle simple writing tasks that were introduced in class.</p>	<p>Attempts to write sentences and phrases of his/her own although with some inaccuracies. Attempts to use varied vocabulary from across lessons. With relative easiness, can handle simple writing tasks that were introduced in class.</p>	<p>Demonstrates the ability to use complete sentences when writing about familiar topics. Uses mainly memorized words and phrases. Can handle unknown simple writing tasks with some difficulty.</p>	<p>Skillful use of original sentence level text to express ideas and thoughts in writing on familiar topics mainly in the present tense; excellent use of new vocabulary and verb forms. Creates with the language. Can handle an unknown simple writing task with accuracy.</p>
<p>Cultural Awareness</p> <p><i>The student demonstrates understanding of some basic elements of the target culture in terms of its products, its practices and its perspectives.</i></p>	<p>Fails to demonstrate target culture awareness. Unable to identify key products and the relationship with the practices and the perspectives of the target culture.</p>	<p>Identifies, but cannot explain the relationship of a few cultural products with the practices and the perspectives of the target culture.</p>	<p>Identifies and explains minimally the relationship of some cultural products with the practices and the perspectives of the target culture.</p>	<p>Identifies and explains the relationship of the most familiar cultural products with the practices and the perspectives of the target culture.</p>	<p>Identifies and explains in detail the relationship of well-known and less well-known cultural products with the practices and the perspectives of the target culture.</p>

See the other rubrics for definitions of competency, program goals, learning objectives, and student learning outcomes.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to develop **global perspectives** by analyzing systems and evaluating interrelationships.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
Factors and Interactions <i>The student understands, compares and contrasts the factors in human and/or natural systems that contribute to the range of interactions (i.e., and/or inequality, complexity, instability) among/between groups, cultures, states, regions or nations.</i>	Fails to understand the factors that contribute to the possible range of interactions among/between groups, cultures, states, regions or nations.	Understands but is unable to compare and contrast the factors that contribute to the possible range of interactions among/between groups, cultures, states, regions or nations.	Describes an understanding of the factors that allows them to compare and contrast the possible range of interactions among/between groups, cultures, states, regions or nations.	Analyzes and evaluates the relative contributions of the factors that contribute to the possible range of interactions among/between groups, cultures, states, regions or nations.	Produces sophisticated and workable solutions to address complex social problems through analysis and synthesis of the study of such factors that contribute to the possible range of interactions among/between groups, cultures, states, regions or nations.
Representation and Sources <i>The student understands and/or uses appropriate quantitative data representations (e.g., graphs, maps, data sets, models, etc.) and/or qualitative sources relevant to the topic of study.</i>	Fails to understand or use appropriate quantitative data representations or qualitative sources in even relatively simple cases.	Understands when quantitative data representations and/or qualitative sources in relatively simple cases are appropriate.	Explains which kind of quantitative data and/or qualitative sources are appropriate for relatively simple cases.	Evaluates the pros and cons of the appropriateness of quantitative data representations and/or qualitative sources in more complex cases.	Synthesizes across various quantitative data representations and/or qualitative sources to develop a conclusion.
Perspectives <i>The student has developed the capacity to understand the interrelationships among multiple perspectives (such as personal, social, cultural, disciplinary, environmental, local, and global) when exploring subjects within natural and/or human systems.</i>	Fails to exhibit understanding of the interrelationships among multiple perspectives when exploring subjects within natural and/or human systems.	Identifies multiple perspectives while maintaining a value preference for own perspective when exploring subjects within natural and/or human systems.	Identifies and explains multiple perspectives in a neutral way when exploring subjects within natural and/or human systems.	Evaluates and applies multiple perspectives to complex subjects within natural and/or human systems in the face of multiple and even conflicting positions, acknowledging own.	Synthesizes multiple perspectives when exploring subjects within natural and/or human systems, including critique of own perspective.

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HISTORICAL THEMES CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to understand major **historical** themes, applying critical analysis to generate arguments based on appropriate evidence.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
<p>Knowledge and Understanding <i>The student demonstrates knowledge and understanding of major historical themes or trends.</i></p>	Fails to demonstrate awareness of the major historical themes or trends.	Demonstrates a limited awareness of major historical themes or trends.	Describes some historical background support in discussion of major historical themes or trends.	Applies appropriate historical background that supports discussion of major historical themes or trends.	Incorporates appropriate and thorough historical background that supports discussion of major historical themes or trends.
<p>Sources and Evidence <i>The student uses persuasive evidence that demonstrates an awareness of historical chronology, causation, and context while employing disciplinary standards.</i></p>	Fails to use evidence of any kind; disciplinary standards not carefully followed.	Uses limited historical evidence to explain ideas with little to no understanding of the roles of chronology, causation, and context; disciplinary standards not carefully followed.	Uses some historical evidence to further explore ideas that are not fully integrated or coherent with respect to chronology, causation, and context; shows awareness of disciplinary standards.	Uses persuasive historical evidence that is well integrated with respect to chronology, causation, and context to support the development of ideas; disciplinary standards are followed.	Uses persuasive and appropriate historical evidence that is expertly drawn upon with respect to chronology, causation, and context to advance coherent ideas; disciplinary standards are carefully followed.
<p>Application of Language and Critical Thinking Skills in an Historical Context <i>The student uses language that is organized and clear, and demonstrates an ability to draw comparisons and/or construct historical arguments.</i></p>	Fails to establish historical comparisons or connections and meaning is lost by lack of language control.	Presents limited understanding of historical comparisons or connections and meaning is partially lost by lack of language control.	Illustrates language and analysis that are largely clear, but some gaps in syntax, analytical rigor, and/or historical knowledge are still a distraction.	Applies language that is readable and historical analysis is logical with few errors or conceptual gaps.	Incorporates language that is correct, edited, proofread, and contains no or very few errors; analysis incorporates an ability to make sophisticated comparisons and connections.

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LOGICAL REASONING CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to use appropriate **logical reasoning** to explain and analyze concepts, and apply concepts to issues to determine significance or value.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
Conceptualization <i>The student identifies and explains an essential concept, as well as the relation to other relevant concepts.</i>	Fails to identify the concept.	Identifies the concept, but the explanation is inaccurate, incomplete, and not related correctly to other relevant concepts.	Identifies the concept and the explanation is accurate, but incomplete and not related correctly to other relevant concepts.	Identifies the concept and the explanation is accurate and complete, but it is not related correctly to other relevant concepts.	Identifies the concept and the explanation is accurate, complete, and related correctly to other relevant concepts.
Analysis <i>The student identifies the basic parts of the concept and their relation to each other, as well as demonstrating understanding of the concept based upon the analysis.</i>	Fails to identify the basic parts of the concept.	Identifies the basic parts of the concept, but cannot restate their relation to each other and cannot demonstrate understanding of the concept based upon the analysis.	Identifies the basic parts of the concept and restates their relation to each other in an incomplete way and cannot demonstrate understanding of the concept based upon the analysis.	Identifies the basic parts of the concept and summarizes their relation to each other completely, but cannot demonstrate understanding of the concept based upon the analysis.	Identifies the basic parts of the concept and establishes their relation to each other completely, and demonstrates understanding of the concept based upon the analysis.
Evaluation <i>The student applies the concept to a case or issue and determines the significance or value of the case or issue in relation to the concept, as well as its implications.</i>	Fails to apply the concept to a case or issue.	Applies the concept to the case or issue, but cannot demonstrate the significance or value of the case or issue in relation to the concept, and cannot analyze the implications.	Applies the concept to the case or issue and demonstrates the significance or value of the case or issue in relation to the concept accurately but incompletely, and cannot analyze the implications.	Applies the concept to the case or issue and demonstrates the significance or value of the case or issue in relation to the concept accurately and completely, but cannot analyze the implications completely.	Applies the concept to the case or issue and demonstrates the significance or value of the case or issue in relation to the concept accurately and completely, as well as distinguishes the implications accurately and completely.

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A **student learning outcome** is the result of a learning process; in other words, it is an actual outcome. To foster assessment of student learning, student learning outcomes must be observable, observed, measurable, and measured. Student learning outcomes can be characterized using an ordinal scale of competency (e.g., unsatisfactory, emerging, developing, proficient, and mastery).

NATURAL WORLD CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to understand the scientific method and resulting principles and theories, critically evaluating data to answer questions about the **natural world**.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
Scientific Method <i>The student understands how the scientific method involves experimentation or empirical observations that are used for the development, testing, and application of models, theories, or laws.</i>	Fails to demonstrate understanding of the scientific method.	Recalls some steps of the scientific method but does not understand how experimentation or empirical observations are used for the development, testing, and application of models, theories, or laws.	Recalls all steps of the scientific method and begins to offer an explanation of how experimentation or empirical observations are used for the development, testing, and application of models, theories, or laws.	Accurately explains how experimentation or empirical observations associated with the scientific method are used for the development, testing, and application of models, theories, or laws.	Thoroughly explains and evaluates which results from experimentation or empirical observations are most significant in the development, testing, and application of models, theories, or laws.
Scientific Principles <i>The student demonstrates a broad understanding of scientific principles and theories specific to the discipline, and can explain their origins.</i>	Fails to demonstrate understanding of scientific principles and theories.	Defines some basic scientific principles and theories, with some errors in understanding.	Accurately describes basic scientific principles and theories and able to make some connections to their origins.	Explains more complex scientific principles and theories as well as their origins.	Goes beyond explanation and synthesizes complex scientific principles and theories with clear understanding of their origins.
Data and Problem-Solving <i>The student critically evaluates scientific information and/or solves problems using scientific data.</i>	Fails to critically evaluate scientific information and/or solve problems.	Begins to recognize when scientific information is either accurate or flawed or begins to identify the appropriate way to use scientific data to solve a problem.	Consistently recognizes when scientific information is either accurate or flawed and attempts to develop solutions to problems with some errors in logic or calculations.	Provides an accurate interpretation of scientific information or develops solutions to problems with few errors and draws reasonable conclusions from the solution.	Critically analyzes scientific information and thoughtfully solves problems using scientific data and makes intuitive conclusions from the solution. Generalizes patterns of data to larger systems.

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A **student learning objective** is a clear statement about what we expect students to learn or accomplish. Like any type of objective, a student learning objective is a desired outcome.

A **student learning outcome** is the result of a learning process; in other words, it is an actual outcome. To foster assessment of student learning, student learning outcomes must be observable, observed, measurable, and measured. Student learning outcomes can be characterized using an ordinal scale of competency (e.g., unsatisfactory, emerging, developing, proficient, and mastery).

ORAL COMMUNICATION CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to develop **oral communication** skills necessary to organize and deliver a clear message with appropriate supporting material.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
<p>Organization <i>The student clearly organizes text to convey a central message.</i></p>	Fails to demonstrate an organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) within the presentation, central message not conveyed.	Employs some elements of organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) within the presentation, but central message not fully conveyed.	Employs consistent organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) within the presentation, but central message not fully conveyed.	Employs clear and consistent organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) within the presentation, and central message conveyed.	Employs clear and consistent organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) with cohesive content and compelling central message.
<p>Supporting Material <i>The student uses supporting material (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) that is generally credible, relevant and derived from reliable and appropriate sources.</i></p>	Fails to use supporting materials or establish the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Uses insufficient supporting materials to document information or analysis, and establish the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Uses some appropriate supporting materials to document information or analysis, and begin to establish the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Uses sufficient supporting materials to document information or analysis, and establish the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Uses a variety of well-chosen supporting materials to document information or analysis, and convincingly establish the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
<p>Delivery <i>The student delivers presentation with posture, gestures, eye contact, and use of the voice to enhance the effectiveness.</i></p>	Fails to use delivery techniques that minimize distraction and promote understanding of the presentation.	Uses delivery techniques that occasionally detract from the understandability of the presentation, speaker appears uncomfortable.	Uses delivery techniques that make the presentation understandable, but speaker appears tentative.	Uses delivery techniques that make the presentation understandable and interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Uses delivery techniques that make the presentation compelling and speaker appears polished and confident.

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A **student learning outcome** is the result of a learning process; in other words, it is an actual outcome. To foster assessment of student learning, student learning outcomes must be observable, observed, measurable, and measured. Student learning outcomes can be characterized using an ordinal scale of competency (e.g., unsatisfactory, emerging, developing, proficient, and mastery).

QUANTITATIVE REASONING CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to interpret mathematical forms, analyze through calculations, and communicate **quantitative reasoning**.

Learning objectives / Desired outcomes	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
Interpretation <i>The student is able to explain information presented in mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, and words).</i>	Fails to demonstrate ability to explain information presented in mathematical forms.	Attempts to explain information presented in mathematical forms, but draws incorrect conclusions about the information.	Provides somewhat accurate explanations of information presented in mathematical forms, but occasionally makes minor errors related to computations or units.	Provides accurate explanation of information presented in mathematical forms.	Provides accurate explanation of information presented in mathematical forms and develops appropriate inferences based on that information.
Analysis <i>The student is able to perform calculations and draw appropriate conclusions based on them.</i>	Fails to demonstrate the ability to perform appropriate calculations.	Calculations attempted are both unsuccessful and not comprehensive; tentative judgments are drawn from the calculations, but uncertain about drawing conclusions.	Calculations attempted are either unsuccessful or not comprehensive; commonsense judgments or plausible conclusions are drawn from the calculations.	Calculations attempted are essentially correct and comprehensive; competent judgments or reasonable conclusions are drawn from the calculations.	Calculations attempted are correct and comprehensive, and presented elegantly; thoughtful judgments or insightful conclusion are drawn from the calculations.
Communication <i>The student can express quantitative evidence in support of an argument (considering what evidence is used, and how evidence is formatted, presented, and contextualized).</i>	Fails to demonstrate the ability to present an argument for which quantitative evidence is pertinent.	Presents an argument for which quantitative evidence is pertinent, but does not provide adequate numerical support.	Uses quantitative information, but does not effectively connect it to the argument.	Uses quantitative information in connection with the argument, though evidence may be presented in a less-than-completely effective format or some parts of the explication may be uneven.	Uses quantitative information in connection with the argument and presents it in an effective format; explicates with consistently high quality.

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TECHNOLOGICAL COMPETENCY CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to achieve **technological competency** through appropriate use of common software to gather, analyze, and manipulate data.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
Information Technology <i>The student is able to leverage information systems and technology concepts to gather, analyze, and manipulate data to complete projects and tasks.</i>	Fails to leverage information systems and technology to gather, analyze, and manipulate data to complete the project or task.	Able to leverage information systems and technology to gather data to complete the project or task.	Able to leverage information systems and technology to gather and analyze data to complete the project or task.	Able to leverage information systems and technology to gather, analyze, and manipulate data to complete the project or task.	Able to leverage information systems and technology in sophisticated or novel manner (beyond expectations) to gather, analyze, and manipulate data to complete the project or task.
Software Tools/Applications <i>The student is able to use common software applications, for example spreadsheets, databases or data analytics tools to complete projects and tasks.</i>	Fails to use appropriate tools such as spreadsheets, databases, or data analytics tools to complete the project or task.	Uses tools such as spreadsheets, databases, or data analytics tools but not appropriate to complete the project or task.	Uses tools such as spreadsheets, databases, or data analytics tools that are related but not the best choice to complete the project or task.	Correctly uses tools such as spreadsheets, databases, or data analytics tools to complete the project or task.	Uses features of tools such as spreadsheets, databases, or data analytics tools in a sophisticated or novel manner (beyond expectations) to complete the project or task.
Appropriate Use <i>The student demonstrates awareness of ethical and security standards while using technology.</i>	Fails to demonstrate awareness of ethical and/or security standards when using technology.	Demonstrates minimal awareness of the importance of ethical and/or security standards when using technology.	Demonstrates limited awareness of ethical and/or security standards when using technology.	Demonstrates satisfactory awareness of ethical and/or security standards when using technology.	Demonstrates superior awareness of ethical and/or security standards when using technology.

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WRITTEN COMMUNICATION CURRICULUM - RUBRIC OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DESIRED OUTCOMES) & COMPETENCIES

Program goal: Guide and prompt students to locate and organize information with appropriate evidence and language for clear **written communication** of ideas.

<i>Learning objectives / Desired outcomes</i>	Levels of Competency				
	Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Mastery
Logic and Order <i>The student employs disciplinary expectations to produce clearly worded and organized text that makes a valid assertion.</i>	Fails to demonstrate awareness of the correct form or structure for this discipline.	Begins to develop a sense of order to convey an idea; an emerging structure is apparent.	Shows awareness of the disciplinary expectations of form; uses some elements of structure and language appropriate to support assertion.	Adheres to disciplinary conventions, terms, and methods, and demonstrates the ability to develop a clear and succinct assertion for the reader.	Skillfully uses field-specific conventions, terms, and methods to make a clear assertion that contributes to the discipline in an innovative way.
Sources and Evidence <i>The student uses appropriate evidence to support assertions, with documentation of sources in accordance disciplinary conventions.</i>	Fails to use evidence to support assertions.	Uses scarce support to explain or substantiate assertions; attempts to document sources.	Provides some support for assertions but ideas not fully integrated with the argument; documents sources but may not fully adhere to disciplinary conventions.	Provides support for assertions with credible evidence that it is well integrated into the argument; shows an awareness of the standards for documentation in the discipline.	Uses advanced reasoning and engaging scholarly evidence to support original argument; carefully documents evidence in accordance with disciplinary conventions.
Control of Language and Syntax <i>The student uses language that is controlled, readable, clear, proofread, and suitable for the discipline.</i>	Fails to convey meaning due to lack of control.	Attempts to control language but meaning impeded because of weak syntax and consistent errors in usage.	Controls language to convey meaning clearly, but syntax and grammar are still a distraction.	Controls language such that it is readable with few exceptions, but contains some errors in usage and grammar.	Thoughtfully controls language that is correct, edited, proofread, and contains very few errors.

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Participating programs and tagging courses

To become a participating program, an academic program may choose to follow one of two paths. The first is to submit a regular course proposal to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) that:

1. is designed to help students develop competency with a general education learning objective, which is called **tagging a course proposal**; and
2. has been recommended by the GEC and approved by the UCC, which is called **tagging a course**.

To remain a participating program, a program must:

1. offer its general education courses within the assessment cycle;
2. foster assessment of actual student learning outcomes; and
3. foster periodic assessment of the General Education Program.

General education course proposals may be submitted by any academic program to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) for peer review and approval. As part of its normal review of general education-related course proposals, the UCC seeks and receives a recommendation from the General Education Council (GEC). The GEC's recommendation to the UCC will reflect: 1) whether or not students taking the course, as it has been proposed, will have ample opportunities to develop the competencies associated with the proposed learning objective; and 2) whether or not the sponsoring program has agreed to foster assessment of student learning outcomes and help the GEC to periodically assess the General Education Program.

Alternatively, a program may choose to submit a General Education "190" Special Topic proposal directly to the General Education Council. The "190" Special Topic option was created to promote creativity, flexibility, and timely topics within the General Education Program. The GEC's decision to approve (or not approve) will reflect: 1) whether or not students taking the course, as it has been proposed, will have ample opportunities to develop the competencies associated with the proposed learning objective; and 2) whether or not the sponsoring program has agreed to foster assessment of student learning outcomes and help the GEC to periodically assess the General Education Program. Like all special topic courses at Shippensburg, each may be offered up to a maximum of four times. Should a participating program find reason to continue offering the special topic, then it must apply to the UCC for regular course status and approval.

Academic programs may propose to offer different courses that support different student learning objectives (and assessment via the attendant assessment rubrics), but all sections of the same course must support the same learning objective (i.e., carry the same tag) and work toward the same level of competency. Academic programs may propose to offer and offer courses at any undergraduate level (100, 200, 300, or 400), but they should be aware of PASSHE's (2016) directed general education course policy and its effect on courses that are cross-listed in both the General Education and a major program. Finally, each General Education course may be attributed with one tag only. There may come a time for allowing courses to participate in more than one objective as long as the sponsoring program demonstrates the course has the capability of meeting the criteria and expectations associated with those objectives, but that time is not now.

Periodic assessment of student learning

Periodic assessment of student learning outcomes must be organized and accomplished at the program level, in regular cycles, and by student learning objective (not by course). For each learning objective, students will be selected randomly and artifacts will be collected from across the curriculum, stripped of personal identifiers, evaluated for competency against the applicable rubric, and the results summarized. The GEC will be looking for answers to the questions described above (see Argument #3).

This new workflow will require faculty members to work collaboratively through a peer-review process that seeks to improve communication, normalize expectations about what ‘competency’ means, and reveals strengths, weaknesses, and tacit assumptions (Berrett, 2015). In other words, participating programs will have to cooperate and engage in open discussions about expectations, assessment methods, and teaching practices. The GEC will initiate and support such conversations ahead of each assessment cycle. Participating programs that promised to foster assessment of student learning outcomes and program assessment, but do not, risk having their courses removed from the General Education Program.

It is important to note that the results of assessing student learning outcomes must be used to improve programs and satisfy mandatory reporting requirements and **will not** be used to evaluate any student, any faculty member or staff member, or to make high stakes decisions.

Each and every faculty member that leads students through a general education course has the academic freedom to prompt and guide students to:

1. achieve general education learning objectives in accordance with the best practices of their discipline or academic program; and
2. develop discipline-specific knowledge or skills in accordance with the best practices of their discipline or academic program.

Each faculty member also has the attendant professional responsibilities to:

3. tell students what they are expected to learn or accomplish;
4. provide students with ample opportunities to achieve the desired learning outcomes associated with the student learning objective (see the rubric for guidance).

Periodic program assessment

Periodic assessment of the General Education Program will be accomplished at the program level and organized by program goal (not by course or department). The GEC (via its Assessment Committee) will look for answers to four questions: 1) Are we doing what we say we are doing? 2) Are students learning what we want them to learn? 3) Do students have ample opportunities to learn what we want them to learn? and 4) If no to any question above, then how can we better allocate resources to improve the program?

Ideally, the periodic program assessment cycle will dovetail with MSCHE’s new 8-year reaccreditation cycle (Figure 1), which requires annual reporting and a mid-point review (i.e., every 4th year).

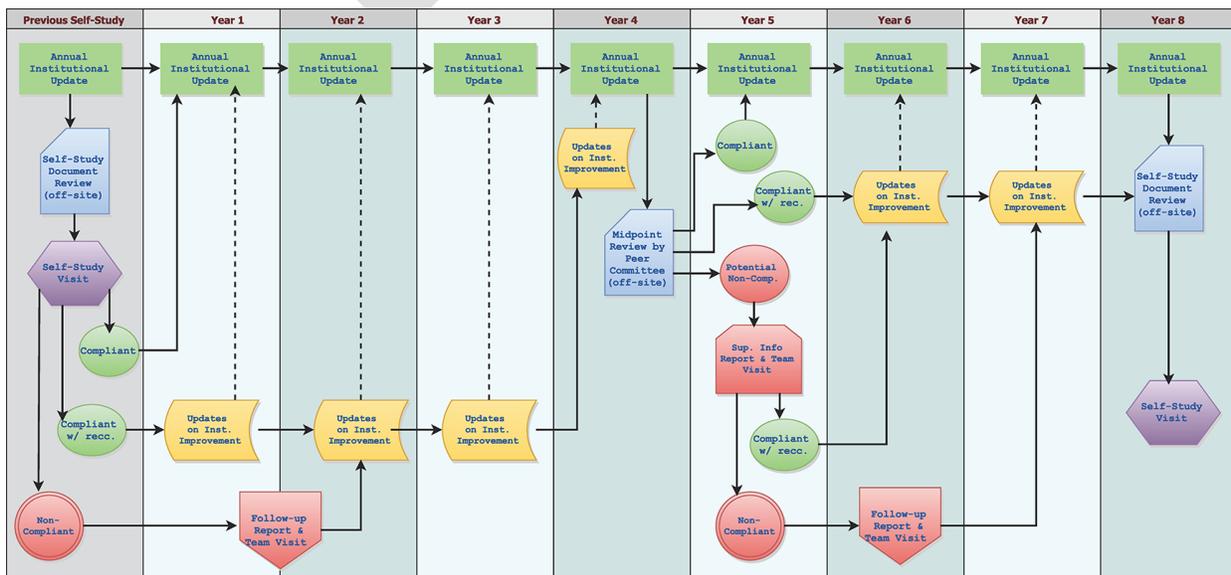


Figure 1. The new MSCHE cycle for reaccreditation is an 8-year cycle with a “mid-point” review.

Proposal approval process

On October 24, 2013, the GEC approved a workflow (Figure 2) for moving a proposal to revise the General Education Program out of committee and onto the UCC for consideration.

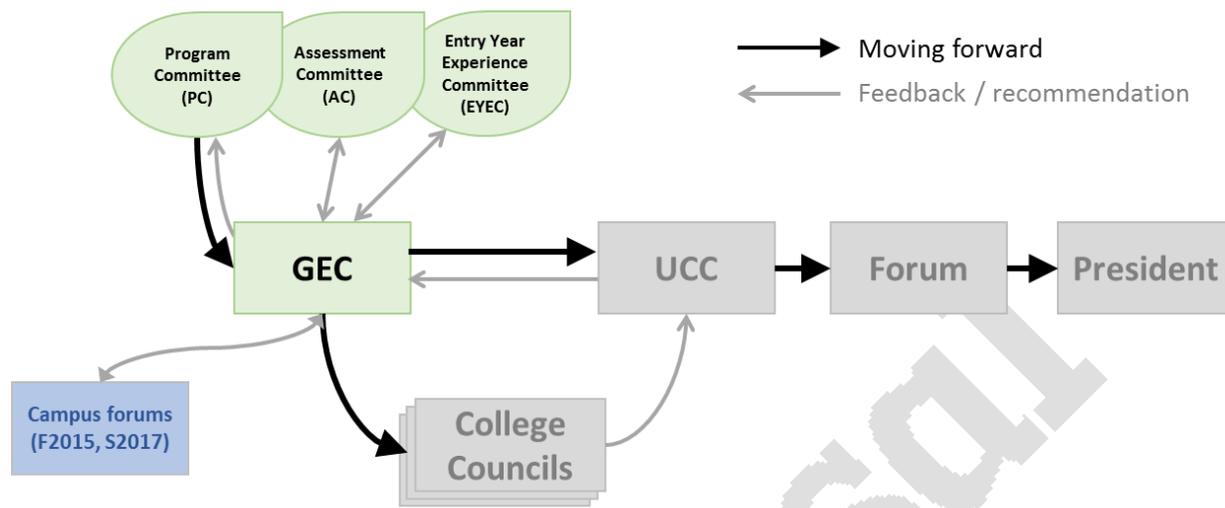


Figure 2. The approved plan for moving forward with this proposal.

Open forums

A proposal of this size and scope requires public discussion, so open forums are being scheduled for February and early March, 2017.

Implementation

Because many standards and policy changes will be in effect by the 2017-2018 academic year, this proposal seeks to implement a renewed General Education Program by **August 2017** for entry year students² (current students will likely have to complete the old program). By **August 2020**, all students would be enrolled in the new Program.

Student Transfer and Articulation

The amended PASSHE BOG *Student Transfer Policy* (PASSHE BOG, 2016) goes into effect in August 2017. The amended policy operates on the principle that competencies and learning outcomes developed and documented through prior learning are the basis for recognizing transfer credit, not course matching. The General Education Program revisions proposed above will create no foreseeable conflict with this amended policy because all PASSHE institutions are subject to the same MSCHE (2014) *Standards for Accreditation and Affiliation*, which list the competencies that are required, and all are subject to the same PASSHE BOG policies regarding Academic Degrees, General Education, and Student Transfers.

² Alternatively, the implementation period could be shortened by rolling sophomores directly into the new program, for second-year students have typically completed the entry-year series of general education courses and a few others.

Glossary

A **competency** is the ability to do something successfully.

A **general education course** is an approved undergraduate-level course (or its equivalent) that 1) prompts and guides students to achieve general education learning objectives; 2) is used to foster assessment of student learning outcomes; and 3) prompts and guides students to develop knowledge, values, or skills that are associated with a specific field of study. General education courses are organized by program goal.

A **foundational general education course** is a required general education course (or its equivalent) that all undergraduate students must complete and pass before graduation, for they prompt and guide students to develop foundational competencies that are needed for success in college and life after college. Required foundational courses typically comprise the academic components of the university's Entry Year Experience Program.

An **elective general education course** is a general education course (or its equivalent) that undergraduate students can choose to take to achieve one or more general education learning objectives.

A **directed general education course** is a general education course that is prescribed or required by a major program. Directed general education courses may be used by students to satisfy the major or cognate requirements of major programs, but any credits associated with such courses must be counted toward the general education credit requirement and not counted toward the major credit requirement. This PASSHE policy took effect August 15, 2015 and was clarified on October 6, 2016.

A **participating program** is an academic program that offers one or more general education courses, fosters assessment of student learning outcomes, and helps the GEC to periodically assess the General Education Program.

A **program goal** is a clear statement that expresses what our program will do for students. Each goal is designed to prompt and guide teaching practice and program assessment.

A **student learning objective** is a clear statement about what we expect students to learn or accomplish. Like any type of objective, a student learning objective is a desired result or outcome.

A **student learning outcome** is the result of a learning process; in other words, it is an actual result. To foster assessment of student learning, student learning outcomes must be observable, observed, measurable, and measured. Student learning outcomes can be characterized using an ordinal scale of competency (e.g., unsatisfactory, emerging, developing, proficient, and mastery).

A general education **theme** is an organizational device that is used to describe a set of related general education program goals without academic jargon. Each theme is easy to express to students, parents, faculty members, and the public. A theme does not guide program assessment or assessments of student learning outcomes.

NOTE: We found the terms 'learning objective' and 'learning outcome' defined differently and applied inconsistently throughout the body of literature that describes assessment of student learning and how to assess student learning. Therefore, we adopted the plain English meanings of the words outcome (i.e., a result) and objective (i.e., a desired result) in this document.

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