

General Education Learning Outcomes University of California, Irvine

The purpose of this document is to describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes that faculty expect students to achieve as a result of fulfilling the General Education requirements for the baccalaureate degree. The overall goals of General Education are described in the Revised CEP Plan for General Education which was approved in June 2007. Here is an excerpt from that report:

UCI is committed to the values of a liberal education. One component of that commitment is the requirement that all undergraduates complete a set of general education requirements. General education courses introduce students to a range of ideas and intellectual activities that engage UCI scholars, providing both scope and balance to a university degree beyond the study of a major.

The general education requirements are intended to help undergraduates place the specialized study undertaken in the major within a broader context. They are designed to cultivate skills, knowledge and understanding that will make students effective contributors to society and the world. The general education requirements should enable UCI undergraduates to apply the abilities developed in their studies to identify significant issues, gather and evaluate available data, analyze alternatives, reach conclusions, communicate the results effectively, and take considered actions.¹

The CEP Plan further defines general education using a set of goals for liberal education in three areas:

- practical abilities (Categories I, V, and VI)--what students should be able to do;
- foundations of knowledge (Categories II, III, and IV)--what they should know; and
- qualities of educated citizens (Categories VII, VIII, and IX)--what they will do with the ability and knowledge.²

The following statements are more explicit statements about what students are expected to learn as they complete each of the nine general education categories. For each General Education Category, the text at the beginning is taken from the UCI General Catalogue 2008-09. The learning outcomes that follow are derived from expanded descriptions of each category found in the CEP Plan for General Education.

Category I: Writing

Because of the importance of visual, oral, electronic, and written communication in every academic discipline, in the professions, and in public life, the University is committed to developing a variety of communication abilities in students at all levels and in all areas. The Writing Requirement expresses this broad commitment, but the concern for and attention to rhetorically effective, accurate writing is expected in all courses. The Writing Requirement

¹ *Revised CEP Plan for General Education, May 2007, p. 50.*

² *Revised CEP Plan for General Education, May 2007, p. 5.*

consists of two courses at the lower-division level beyond the UC Entry Level Writing requirement and one upper-division course in a discipline.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

Lower-division writing:

- Demonstrate rhetorically effective, accurate academic writing and communication across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences and media using appropriate stance, genre, style, and organization,
- Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading texts.
- Develop abilities in critical reading across a variety of genres and media.
- Demonstrate information literacy skills by locating, evaluating and integrating information gathered from multiple sources into a research project.

Upper-division writing:

- Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate academic, professional, and public audiences.
- Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific research methods, genres, modes of development, and formal conventions.
- Demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by locating, evaluating and integrating information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.

Category II: Science and Technology

Understanding the nature of scientific inquiry and the operation of the biological, physical, and technological world is essential for making personal and public policy decisions in a technological society. Students must complete three courses in this Category.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of the fundamental laws of science, the principles underlying the design and operation of technology, and the interrelations among science and technology disciplines.
- Demonstrate a broad understanding of various natural phenomena that surround and influence our lives.
- Describe how scientists approach and solve problems.
- Solve problems and draw conclusions based on scientific information and models, using critical thinking and qualitative and quantitative analysis of data and concepts.
- Explain the scope and limitations of scientific inquiry and the scientific method.

Category III: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Courses will focus on principles, sources, and interpretations of human behavior and on how people organize, govern, understand, and explain social life. This category includes the analysis

of human behavior at all levels, individual to collective social, economic, and political life, and on the scientific methods used in the acquisition of knowledge and the testing of competing theories. Students must complete three courses in this Category.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of principles, sources, and interpretations of human behavior and how people organize, govern, understand, and explain social life.
- Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary and historical perspectives on human behavior.
- Understand and explain the scientific methods used in the acquisition of knowledge and the testing of competing theories in the social and behavioral sciences.
- Critically evaluate methods, findings, and conclusions in the research literature on human behavior.

Category IV: Arts and Humanities

Study of the Arts and Humanities expands the student's sense of diverse forms of cultural expression, past and present. Students develop their critical capacity as they discover how meaning is created and experience variously interpreted. Students must complete three courses in this Category.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how visual and verbal communication is used in literature and film, art and music, and philosophy and history.
- Communicate an understanding and appreciation of diverse forms of cultural expression, past and present.
- Understand and explain the research methods used in the acquisition of knowledge and the testing of competing theories in the arts and humanities.
- Think critically about how meaning is created and how experience is variously interpreted.

Category V: Quantitative, Symbolic, and Computational Reasoning

This requirement enables students to evaluate quantitative and symbolic arguments and to model and solve real-world problems using systems of abstract symbols. Students must complete three courses in this Category.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate competency in quantitative, symbolic and computational reasoning.

- Demonstrate an ability to solve real-world problems using quantitative, logical, or computational approaches that are typical of mathematical thinking.

Category VI: Language Other Than English

Study of a language other than English expands students' horizons by encouraging understanding of another culture through its language and heightens awareness of one's own language through the investigation of another linguistic system. Students must demonstrate competency in language other than English by completing college level course work equivalent to UCI's third quarter of study in a language other than English.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate competency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in a non-English language.
- Demonstrate an understanding of another (non-English speaking) culture through its language.
- Demonstrate an understanding of one's own language through the investigation of another, non-English linguistic system.

Category VII: Multicultural Studies

This requirement develops students' awareness and appreciation of the history, society, and/or culture of one or more underrepresented groups in California and the United States. Students must complete one course in this Category.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge of one or more historically underrepresented groups' culture, history, and development in California and the United States.
- Demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of cultural differences and inequities.
- Demonstrate an understanding that cooperation and mutual understanding among all cultural groups is needed to interact successfully in a culturally diverse society.

Category VIII: International and Global Issues

Courses in this category focus on significant cultural, economic, geographical, historical, political, and/or sociological aspects of one or more countries other than the United States. Students must complete one course in this Category.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate specific knowledge of the cultural, historical, social, economic, scientific, and political aspects of one or more foreign countries, and the connections among these aspects.
- Develop a broader understanding of the formation of different cultures and countries through the world.
- Be prepared to engage in positive interaction with peoples of different cultures and nationalities.

Category IX: Laboratory or Performance

Every student at UCI should have at least one academic experience that goes beyond traditional classroom delivery. To support that goal, Category IX requires students to complete at least one course that involves significant activity outside the usual classroom, independent study, or other academic environment. Examples include courses in which students conduct lab experiences, prepare and complete a performance in the fine arts, study abroad, an internship, field study or practicum, or participate in outreach efforts. Courses approved for this category must carry academic credit or be affiliated with a course that carries academic credit.

Students must spend a minimum of 10 hours engaged in non-classroom activities and produce a tangible product such as a written report, a completed project, a presentation, or a performance that is shared with others, or be actively involved in an internship, teaching, or tutoring experience. Students must complete one course in this Category.

After completing this General Education requirement, successful students should be able to do the following:

- Describe the connections between theory and practice as demonstrated within the context of the student's own experiential learning.
- Demonstrate enhanced development in at least two of the following areas: professionalism, communication skills, technology, interpersonal skills, working on a team, leadership, and problem-solving.