

Appendix H

General Education Assessment Plan 2016 - 2021

Overview

Based on major reform of General Education (GE) and Graduation Requirements (GR) that was approved by the University Faculty Senate in Spring 2016, this document replaces the University of Baltimore (UB) 2013 – 2017 GE Assessment Plan. The reform was designed to simplify and streamline UB's GE requirements by making them easy to navigate by students and easy to communicate by faculty and advisors; to ensure that UB's program is the most transfer friendly GE program in the USM system; to bring UB's GE program into compliance with the most recent USM, COMAR, and MSCHE GE guidelines; and to make certain that the GE program is something that each of the Schools/Colleges values, since effective GE requires broad participation and is sustainable only when there is university-wide engagement in the interest of student learning.

Mission

The mission of the University of Baltimore General Education (GE) program is to engage undergraduate students in the development of essential skills and competencies that will enable them to make knowledge work. Courses and experiential learning opportunities within this program prepare students to communicate effectively in many different modes; to gather, synthesize, and critically evaluate information; to make ethical and evidence-based decisions within real-world contexts; to understand systems and to think systemically; and to negotiate divergent and competing perspectives. Spanning the lower division and upper division and featuring high-impact educational practices, the program offers all UB students an integrative experience that transcends individual majors and helps fulfill University-wide learning goals.

Goals

The goals of the University of Baltimore General Education Program are:

1. UB students and faculty should articulate the value of General Education in the collegelevel learning experience by identifying General Education outcomes in all courses that are GE approved.
2. UB's General Education program is aligned with its institutional motto: "Knowledge that Works."
3. UB's General Education program has a positive impact on recruitment, retention, and persistence towards degree completion.
4. General Education policies and procedures are reviewed for their accessibility to students.

5. The skills and knowledge established in the General Education program are coherently aligned to UB degree programs and to UB's strategic initiatives and directives (including mission, vision, and the UB strategic plan).

The University of Baltimore's *uniquely UB* approach to General Education is designed:

1. To provide a statement of requirements in a way that motivates individual students and provides a framework for a unification of academic areas particularly at the freshman and sophomore levels.
2. To provide a rationale to all university stakeholders for these requirements.
3. To cast all requirements in the context of the UB learning goals.
4. To allow the university to better articulate its programs to current and potential students.
4. To foster integration of co-curricular activities.
5. To prepare students for their majors by providing the fundamental building blocks of education and lifelong learning.

Update since 2015: GE Reform

Since 2015, improvements to GE curriculum and procedures have focused on improving ease of transfer and ease of progression in order to support enrollment growth. As a result, GE has received significant attention, culminating in recommendations for improvements to the GE curriculum and framework in 2016. Based on discussions driven by assessment results, the need had emerged for a more transparent and intentional GE pathway: one that students could easily understand and navigate in order to reach graduation without hitches, and, just as important, one that students could recognize as playing a key role in helping them meet their own educational and professional goals.

In Spring 2016, the new Executive Vice President and Provost formed a faculty-led task force, with support from advising and records, to revise GE into a transfer-friendly structure, streamline and clarify requirements in accordance with system and state requirements, and foster universitywide engagement in GE. Building on the work of the General Education Council (GEC), this provided a welcome opportunity not only to continue to strengthen the curriculum by scaffolding GE requirements in a cohesive vertical framework, but also to instigate sustainable implementation resources for advising, assessing, communicating, and advocating GE across campus.

The goals of this reform were:

1. Simplifying and streamlining the University of Baltimore's GE requirements by making them: (a) easy to navigate by students; (b) easy to communicate by faculty and advisors.
2. Ensuring that the University of Baltimore's GE program is the most transfer friendly GE program in the USM system.

3. Bringing the University of Baltimore's GE program into compliance with COMAR, MHEC, and MSCHE General Education guidelines.
4. Making certain that the GE program is something that each of the Colleges value since effective GE requires broad participation and is sustainable only when there is universitywide engagement in the interest of student learning.

The Task Force recognized throughout the importance of a process that includes faculty buy-in, the relevance of GE to major pathways, and optimal transparency of SLOs to all stakeholders. Extending the work already undertaken by the GEC, the reform simplifies pathways for both native and transfer students through GE to support their chosen pathways through the majors; streamlines transfer-friendly GE course requirements consisting of 38 credits which align with COMAR requirements; and includes leadership and accountability structures guiding communication and assessment. Thus, this faculty-led process, facilitated by an implementation team comprising a newly-created GE leadership position (Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs), GE Task Force, and the GEC, produced definitions and Student Learning Outcomes for the new GE areas, which align explicitly with the COMAR areas, a clear communications plan for advising and records, and a smooth entry/transfer for new students and returning students.

General Education Area Student Learning Outcomes

Approved by the University Faculty Senate in May 2016 for Fall 2016 implementation, the new GE Areas, Definitions, and Student Learning Outcomes are:

Arts & Humanities

Arts & Humanities courses consider what it means to be human and cultivate empathy with peoples across cultures and time. Courses in this area encourage the critical investigation of value systems, and apply aesthetic frameworks to a variety of intellectual and artistic issues. Students produce work in multiple genres, and study texts from disciplines including literature, philosophy, history, art history, design, and the performing arts.

Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Using appropriate concepts and vocabulary, describe how a text, performance, work of art, or other artifact leads the audience to achieve insight(s) into the human condition.
2. Explain how historical, intellectual, or cultural context influences the creation or interpretation of texts, artworks, or artifacts.

Subsection of Arts & Humanities--**Upper-Division Ethics:**

Ethics courses require students to explore and critically examine moral and ethical issues as they arise in their personal, professional and public lives. Students will gain an understanding of major moral frameworks, how they inform ethical decision-making, and their distinctive importance in the human experience.

Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to meet the Arts and Humanities SLOs and all of the following:

3. Identify moral and ethical issues as distinct from legal, social, economic and practical issues.
4. Using appropriate concepts and vocabulary, provide reasoning and support for a moral and ethical conclusion.

Mathematics

Students will apply mathematical and scientific methods in problem-solving. Coursework in this area will build upon the content standards, essential skills, and knowledge statements developed for mathematics in the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards to engage students in using technology, modeling, and oral and written communication to express fundamental and more advanced concepts, theories, and issues within their fields of study.

Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Apply arithmetical, algebraic, geometric, measurement, statistical or technological methods to solve problems.
2. Describe connections between mathematics and other disciplines.

English Composition

Composition courses promote the value of writing as a tool for learning, thinking, and communicating. In a portfolio-based environment, students develop the rhetorical tools necessary to compose effective documents in academic, professional, and civic discourse.

Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Apply effective writing strategies to produce revised, polished documents.
2. Interpret written documents, including their own, based on audience, purpose, context, and genre.
3. Employ appropriate format, structure, and style conventions.

Subsection of English Composition—Upper-Division Writing:

Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to meet the English Composition SLOs and all of the following:

- Produce a variety of texts for multiple purposes and audiences.
- Engage in recursive reading, writing, and research processes to participate in the meaning-making of their field.

Social & Behavioral Sciences

Social and behavioral sciences courses examine the ways in which individuals, groups, institutions, or segments of societies behave, function, and influence one another. They introduce students to the variety of methods to collect, analyze, interpret, and apply qualitative and quantitative data as related to social phenomena and individual behavior.

Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Interpret events or actions of individuals, cultures, society or the institutions within which they interact using concepts of social/behavioral science by applying major concepts, theories, or models within the field of study.
2. Describe social or behavioral science-based methods to identify solutions to problems faced by members of our communities.

Biological & Physical Sciences

Biological and physical sciences courses examine living systems and the physical universe. They introduce students to the variety of methods used to collect, interpret, and apply scientific data, and to an understanding of the relationship between scientific theory and application. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Access specific scientific information on a topic related to course material.
2. Discriminate among sources of information through the use of peer reviewed and nonrefereed literature or through the discernment of scientific and non-scientific material.
3. Demonstrate comprehension of the quantitative aspects of science and of hypothesis construction and testing through observation and evaluation of data.

Lab courses only:

4. Use technology to gather and process data.

Graduation Requirements Areas Student Learning Outcomes

The 2016 reform also includes a set of Graduation Requirements (GR) areas which provide opportunities for overlapping requirements to promote timely degree completion. Approved by University Faculty Senate in May 2016 for Fall 2017, the new GRs solidify UB's commitment to teaching employer-preferred skills in the following areas:

1. Technology Fluency.
2. Information Literacy.
3. Global Awareness & Diverse Perspectives.
4. Oral Communication.
5. Capstone Course.

The new GRs support the UB mission by filling some gaps left by the 2013 revisions. In January 2017, UFS approved GR Area Descriptions, Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and Course Requirements for the first four areas.

Information Literacy

Area Definition: Students will learn the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in personal and professional environments.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Use a discipline-specific research tool, mechanism, or strategy to address an information need.
2. Apply discipline-specific evaluation criteria to an information source.

Course Requirements: (Note: The following are the minimum required course elements needed to satisfy the information literacy graduation requirement. More than the minimum is encouraged if this can be accommodated by the instructor(s).)

- Includes Area Definition and GR SLOs on course syllabus.
- Includes assignments that produce written artifacts demonstrating these SLOs.
- Details assessment criteria for each SLO.
- Uses class time or specific time on task to model and address information literacy concepts, and to have students practice evaluating sources and using/selecting research tools.
- Includes a required research journal, research log, research narrative, or similar assignment in which students document their searches and reflect on the search process and selection of material.

Oral Communication

Area Definition: Students will learn the craft of transmitting ideas clearly and concisely to a range of audiences. Coursework in this area will build skills in expressing ideas verbally and nonverbally; listening; communicating in one-on-one and group settings; conveying informative and persuasive messages; and making effective use of information resources and visual aids.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Deliver an effective oral presentation for which the selected topic, supporting materials, and language are appropriate to the audience and occasion.
2. Employ appropriate rhetorical, organizational, and delivery techniques before an audience in real time.*

* In real time will mean different things in different course delivery contexts. In addition to face-to-face instruction, this requirement could be met in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- a. Synchronous online class: Material and speeches presented live in a Go-To-Meeting-like environment.
- b. Hybrid asynchronous online class: Material online; class meets for speeches in a Go-To-Meeting-like environment.
- c. Online class: Speeches recorded by students in front of an audience of academic peers or a professional setting with an appropriate audience and submitted.

Course Requirements (Note: The following are the minimum required course elements needed to satisfy the oral communication graduation requirement. More than the minimum is encouraged if this can be accommodated by the instructor(s).):

- Includes Area Definition and GR SLOs on course syllabus.
- Details assessment criteria for each SLO.
- Uses class time or specific time on task to address oral communication concepts including effective listening techniques.
- Requires students to complete a minimum of 2 required presentations, at least one of which is a group presentation.
- Requires students to complete self-evaluation and peer-response exercises.

- Emphasizes strategic and practical aspects of interpersonal communication, group discussion, and public speaking.
- Recommended class cap of 22 students.

Global Awareness and Diverse Perspectives

Area Definition: Students will engage in assigned course work that requires identification of the components of global systems or the elements of diverse cultural perspectives that differ from their own.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Discuss causes of and reasons for explicit and implicit biases.
2. Describe ways that global forces and/or diversity shape people and institutions.

Course Requirements (Note: The following are the minimum required course elements needed to satisfy the global awareness and diverse perspectives graduation requirement. More than the minimum is encouraged if this can be accommodated by the instructor(s).):

- Includes Area Definition and GR SLOs on course syllabus.
- Includes assignments that produce artifacts demonstrating these SLOs.
- Details assessment criteria for each SLO.
- Uses class time or specific time on task to engage in thoughtful, respectful conversation about cultural practices different from one's own.
- Requires students to complete a reflection activity as appropriate to the discipline.

Technological Fluency

Area Definition: Students will discuss key components in information technology and examine its limitations and societal impacts. Students will develop general or discipline-specific strategies to identify, access, and apply relevant technologies. Courses in this area will build skills in using digital technologies to communicate, manipulate, and create artifacts such as documents, graphics, or computer programs, and apply theories for effective, ethical use of technology for personal and professional problem-solving.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Describe key components in information technology.
2. Discuss the limitations of information technology and its societal impact.

Course Requirements (Note: The following are the minimum required course elements needed to satisfy the technology fluency graduation requirement. More than the minimum is encouraged if this can be accommodated by the instructor(s).):

- Includes Area Definition and GR SLOs on course syllabus.
- Includes assignments that produce written artifacts demonstrating these SLOs.
- Details assessment criteria for each SLO.
- Uses class time or specific time on task to address technology fluency concepts such as the computing eco-system, information systems, networks, programming, storage, databases, the cloud, software tools, cybersecurity, and privacy.
- Requires students to create at least one complex digital product integrating multimedia, business productive software, or other advanced software as appropriate to the discipline.

Many extant courses that currently meet GE and/or major requirements could also meet the criteria to be a GR in one or more areas. The fulfillment of Graduation Requirements by more than one course, that is, by a combination of courses, is discouraged, but not prohibited. Requests that a combination (or series) of required courses in a major effectively satisfy one or more graduation requirement(s) must be submitted to and approved by the GEC. GEC is leading a rigorous, transparent GR approval process (Spring 2017) for Fall 2017 full GR implementation. GEC will facilitate campus-wide discussion of the Capstone GR in Spring 2017.

Coordination and Accountability for Assessing GE and GR

This 2016 Assessment Plan reflects our new GE and GR curriculum and reinforces our commitment to coordinated assessment of those requirements. The reorganization plan moving Undergraduate Studies and FYE from the Yale Gordon College of Arts and Sciences into the Office of the Provost (July 2016) institutes centralized leadership for the communication, consistency, and assessment of these new requirements across Academic Affairs in coordination with GEC and the colleges, while providing a clear locus for collaborative institutional efforts to integrate co-curricular activity. Designed to improve consistency of SLOs and assessment across campus, the new level of coordination ensures the integrity of GRs across campus through a clear, GEC-led course proposal process, and through an Assessment Plan which designates responsibility for assessment of each GE and GR area and also articulates a substantial, faculty-led periodic course review process. The plan includes direct and indirect measures for assessment of student learning within each GE area, and now adds assessment of GR areas at any level of the undergraduate curriculum. This builds in a process for verification of program cohesiveness using developmental rubrics (to be developed by GEC by June 2017) which tracks student learning from emerging skills in the lower-division to a higher, more thorough level of proficiency in the upper-division. In the process of beginning coordinated assessment of capstone experiences in partnership with major programs, GEC will lead identification and definition of the exciting range of experiential learning opportunities that are being offered in all capstones (Spring 2017). The plan also adds to GEC's responsibilities a rigorous course certification process and five-year periodic course review for all GE and GE courses. This provides a structure for continued deliberate, data-informed curricular decisions while demonstrating the high value of UB's GE Program to all stakeholders: students, faculty, staff, and Baltimore community partners and employers.

Responsibilities for GE and GR Assessment and Closing The Loop

In each assessment, following the schedule set out below, GEC will complete the following tasks, led by the GEC Chair, and with the support of the Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Studies & Academic Affairs.

1. Notify all GE area faculty of GE area requirements and SLOs before semester begins.
2. Notify all GR area faculty of GR area requirements and SLOs before semester begins.

3. Notify current semester GE area faculty about current area assessment; provide rubric; coordinate artefact collection; set deadline; and invite participation in GEC Assessment day. Assess artefacts provided.
4. Notify current semester GR area faculty about current area assessment; provide rubric; coordinate artefact collection; set deadline; and invite participation in GEC Assessment day; assess artefacts provided. **OR** Coordinate with Associate Dean when GR SLO assessment is included as part of program assessment; provide rubric; offer GEC participation in program assessment day; review program assessment report.
5. Notify Associate Deans and Division Chairs of current GE and GR Periodic Course Review; provide forms; set deadline. Review of Courses includes syllabi review and Area Learning Outcomes Compliance review (approval for up to 5 years).
6. Solicit GE and GR Course Proposals to address gaps or overlaps in mapping; provide forms; review materials (approval until next Periodic Course Review for that area).
7. Analyze GE and GR assessment results for all areas; record in TaskStream (if not recorded by program); close loop with report to Associate Deans via ACAT and to UFS; follow up with CELTT as needed for focused faculty development.

Five-Year Cycle: Timeline for GE and GR SLO Assessment

<i>General Education (GE) areas</i>	<i>Year (s)Assessed</i>
<i>Arts & Humanities</i>	Fall 20

<i>Upper Division Ethics</i>	Fall 15, Fall 20
<i>Social & Behavioral Sciences</i>	Fall 17
<i>Biological and Physical Sciences</i>	Fall 16
<i>Biological and Physical Sciences—Lab</i>	Fall 16
<i>Mathematics</i>	Fall 18
<i>English Composition</i>	Fall 15, Fall 19
<i>Upper Division Writing</i>	Fall 15, Spring 20
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<i>Graduation Requirement (GR) areas</i>	<i>Year (s)Assessed</i>
<i>Technology Fluency</i>	Spring 20
<i>Information Literacy</i>	Spring 18
<i>Global Awareness & Diverse Perspectives</i>	Spring 19
<i>Oral Communication</i>	Spring 16, Spring 21
<i>Capstone Courses</i>	Spring 17