

**Committee on General Education and Intercollegiate Programs**  
**Proposed General Education Learning Goals and Outcomes**  
**Missouri State University**  
**March 28, 2012**

**Purpose:**

This document is designed to convey to faculty, and others who are interested, the basic structure of general and specific learning outcomes for general education at Missouri State University (MSU). The approved learning outcomes will then be used to prepare a curricular structure and recommend an assessment plan.

**Process:**

MSU's Task Force on General Education Revision, drawing from the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) and other institutions in Missouri and across the country (for a complete list see <http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/GenEdReview/default.htm>), proposed a set of general education rationales, general learning goals, and specific learning outcomes for Missouri State University faculty and students. Those proposed rationales, goals, and outcomes were then taken up by the Committee on General Education and Intercollegiate Programs (CGEIP). CGEIP revised the proposed document based on further input from the campus community. This document represents literally years of work and comes to Faculty Senate for consideration with a strong endorsement from CGEIP.

Upon approval of the learning goals and related curricular structure by Faculty Senate, a call for course proposals will be issued by CGEIP. The call for course proposals will include clear guidelines for incorporating the proposed learning outcomes and their corresponding assessment plans within the approved general education curricular structure.

**Major Categories:**

The categories listed do not necessarily correspond to specific courses. Rather, the general education curriculum as a whole should accomplish the learning goals.

## **General Education Learning Goals and Rationales**

### **I. Intellectual and Practical Skills**

#### Rationale:

In order to succeed in one's chosen field of study, make informed and responsible life choices, and participate successfully in contemporary society after graduation, students must be competent at a variety of cognitive, interpersonal, and communicative skills that are considered fundamental to being an educated person. These competencies will enable and encourage life-long learning.

### **II. Knowledge of Human Cultures**

#### Rationale:

In an increasingly interconnected world, students' professional, social, civic, and personal lives are affected by the complexity of human interaction. Thus, students must understand the nature and underlying mechanisms of that interaction in a broad variety of contexts.

### **III. Knowledge of the Natural World**

#### Rationale:

By studying the natural and physical sciences, students must understand the basic workings and interconnectedness of the universe and develop disciplined habits of thought that strengthen their abilities to reason inductively and deductively and understand the role of science in contemporary society.

### **IV. Public Affairs**

#### Rationale:

Students must prepare for their roles as world citizens by cultivating civic virtues, understanding the bonds that unite people, exploring and executing citizenship obligations, understanding the effects of private behavior in the public sphere, and recognizing and reflecting on public issues.

### **V. Integrative and Applied Learning**

#### Rationale:

Educated persons must be able to apply their knowledge, abilities, and skills appropriately to real-life situations.

## General Learning Goals with Specific Learning Outcomes

### I. Intellectual and Practical Skills

#### a. Critical Inquiry, Analysis, and Problem Solving

General Goal (1): Students will be able to develop the disposition and skills to gather, organize, refine, analyze, and evaluate critically information and ideas.

1. Identify and follow through on personally and socially relevant problems and reasonable solutions to those problems.
2. Identify relevant information sources, make reasoned choices among those sources, and open-mindedly follow where those sources lead.
3. Justify and defend conclusions reached in the analysis of information.
4. Analyze evidence, statements, alternative viewpoints, graphics, and other forms of information.

#### b. Creative Thinking and Expression

General Goal (2): Students will be able to develop new ideas, products, or solutions and explore novel perspectives and approaches.

1. Develop creative and novel solutions to personally and socially relevant problems.
2. Take account of novel, alternative, contradictory, and even radical viewpoints in creating new ideas, products, or solutions appropriate to the domain or subject matter.

#### c. Written Communication

General Goal (3): Students will be able to develop and express themselves clearly and appropriately in writing for a range of social, academic, and professional contexts and use appropriate writing technologies.

1. Demonstrate consideration of context, audience, and purpose with a clear focus on the assigned tasks (e.g., the writing aligns with audience, purpose, and context).
2. Use relevant and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and to shape the pieces they are writing.
3. Demonstrate consistent use of important conventions particular to specific disciplines and writing tasks, including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.
4. Demonstrate consistent and proper use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the disciplines and genres of the assignments.
5. Correctly use language that conveys meaning to readers.

#### **d. Oral Communication**

General Goal (4): Students will be able to listen critically and speak thoughtfully, clearly, and appropriately to a variety of social, academic, and professional audiences.

1. Convey the central message clearly and consistently, using supporting material.
2. Demonstrate clearly and consistently an organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) within the presentation.
3. Demonstrate language choices which support the effectiveness of the communication and are appropriate to the intended audience(s).
4. Employ interesting and effective delivery techniques (e.g., posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness).
5. Employ supporting materials (e.g., explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, and quotations from relevant authorities) in a manner that establishes the speaker's credibility/authority on the topic.

#### **e. Quantitative Literacy**

General Goal (5): Students will be able to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of contexts and everyday life situations; understand and create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence; and clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (e.g., words, tables, and mathematical equations) as appropriate.

1. Understand and explain information presented in mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, and words).
2. Convert relevant information into various mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, and words).
3. Calculate successfully and sufficiently to solve a problem.
4. Analyze data quantitatively as the basis for competent, valid, and reliable inferences in order to draw reasonable and appropriate conclusions.
5. Explicitly describe assumptions and provide a compelling rationale for why the assumptions are appropriate.
6. Express evidence in support of the argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized).

#### **f. Information literacy**

General Goal (6): Students will be able to know when there is a need for information and then be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for a particular problem.

1. Completely define the scope of research questions or theses. Select information sources needed to answer these research questions.
2. Access information using a variety of search strategies and relevant sources.

3. Evaluate critically the accuracy and validity of information sources and the relevant contexts in which they are presented.
4. Organize, synthesize, and communicate information from sources so the intended purpose is achieved.
5. Distinguish between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution. Correctly choose between paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting when incorporating citations.
6. Demonstrate a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.

**g. Collaboration**

General Goal (7): Students will be able to understand the collaborative process and work collaboratively with others to solve problems and make informed decisions.

1. Demonstrate understanding of the roles, skills, and behaviors required for effective teamwork and goal attainment.
2. Demonstrate values, knowledge, and skills, such as building upon the ideas of others and treating team members with respect, which support a collaborative culture.
3. Understand conflict and employ responses that strengthen collaboration; formulate productive responses to criticism and conflict.
4. Appraise alternative solutions or courses of action that build on the ideas of others.

**II. Knowledge of Human Cultures**

**a. Social and Behavioral Sciences**

General Goal (8): Students will be able to understand various institutions (e.g., cultural, political, economic, religious, and educational) and their historical backgrounds, as well as principles of human behavior and social interaction.

1. Explain and compare social institutions, structures, and processes across a range of historical periods and cultures around the globe.
2. Understand the past and how it influences present world societies and contemporary problems.
3. Use social science methods to explain or predict individual and collective human behavior.
4. Articulate interdependence of people and places around the globe.
5. Understand and differentiate biological, cognitive, and social environmental factors that influence human behavior.
6. Understand and apply behavioral science principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.

## **b. Humanities and the Arts**

General Goal (9): Students will cultivate their intellect, imagination, and creativity as they develop an understanding of how social, cultural, linguistic, artistic, religious, philosophical, and historical contexts have shaped the thoughts and actions of people worldwide.

1. Understand how various forms of written, oral, and bodily expression contribute to human knowledge and experience.
2. Utilize knowledge of various critical and theoretical frameworks to analyze and respond to works in humanities and the arts.
3. Develop creative capabilities.
4. Interpret texts and other cultural products in ways that reflect informed understanding of relevant contextual factors, including socio-cultural influence and cultural traditions, perspectives, and behavioral patterns.
5. Analytically compare the influences of community, institutions, and other constructions such as class, gender, and race on the ways of thinking, believing, and acting in cultural and historical settings other than one's own.

## **III. Knowledge of the Natural World**

### **a. Environmental Sciences**

General Goal (10): Students will understand basic concepts of environmental study, the nature of scientific knowledge, and relevance of knowledge of one's environment to personal and group affairs.

1. Understand the ways the environment impacts humanity, how human choices affect the environment, and some creative or responsible choices of individual citizens.
2. Understand and use the processes by which scientific knowledge of the environment is generated.
3. Develop knowledge of the environment through hypothesis testing and gain the ability to draw defensible conclusions regarding that knowledge.
4. Make logical connections between key concepts in the environmental sciences and describe the interaction between humans and the environment.

### **b. Life Sciences**

General Goal (11): Students will understand basic concepts of living things, the nature of scientific knowledge, and relevance of biological knowledge to human affairs.

1. Understand living systems by describing their nature and organization.
2. Understand and use the processes by which scientific knowledge of living things is generated.

3. Develop knowledge of living things through hypothesis testing and gain the ability to draw defensible conclusions regarding living things.
4. Make logical connections between key concepts in the life sciences and describe the interaction between human lives and other living things.

### **c. Physical Sciences**

General Goal (12): Students will understand and actively explore fundamental principles in physical sciences and methods of developing and testing hypotheses used in the analysis of the physical universe.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the physical universe and planet earth, including its origin and physical processes.
2. Understand and use the processes by which knowledge of the physical world is generated.
3. Develop knowledge and principles of the physical world through hypothesis testing and gain the ability to draw defensible conclusions regarding the physical world.
4. Make logical connections between key concepts in the physical sciences and describe the interaction between human lives and the physical world.

## **IV. Public Affairs**

### **a. Community Engagement**

General Goal (13): Students will be able to recognize the importance of contributing their knowledge and experiences to their own communities and the broader society.

1. Identify the rights and responsibilities they have in their own communities and the broader society.
2. Recognize the ways in which they should exercise their rights and responsibilities as well as the impact of not exercising those rights and responsibilities.
3. Utilize knowledge from academic fields, making relevant connections to civic and political participation.
4. Recognize the needs of the communities to which they belong and understand how to address those needs.

### **b. Cultural Competency**

General Goal (14): Students will be able to recognize and consider multiple perspectives and cultures.

1. Examine and articulate perspectives and behaviors they acquired in their homes, schools, and communities.

2. Understand and critically examine key similarities and differences between their own cultural practices and perspectives and those of other cultures.
3. Identify the importance and best practices of developing skills for working/interacting with others.
4. Explain why they continue to embrace their original perspectives and behaviors or have modified them.

**c. Ethical Leadership**

General Goal (15): Students will be able to articulate their value systems, understand the ethical implications of their actions based on those values, and demonstrate engaged and principled leadership.

1. Engage in self-evaluation of their personal values and the degree to which their ethical values and behaviors are congruent.
2. Understand the foundations for ethical thought and action.
3. Identify areas of difficulty in responding to situations demanding ethical inquiry.
4. Analyze complex ethical dilemmas currently facing the world.

**V. Integrative and Applied Learning**

General goal (16): Students will be able to synthesize information and integrate material from a variety of courses, as they apply their knowledge, abilities and skills to specific situations.

1. Utilize academic knowledge to develop solutions to complex problems.
2. Integrate knowledge, abilities and skills across disciplines to understand real life experiences and/or social situations.
3. Evaluate and integrate issues from multiple perspectives in order to develop creative solutions.
4. Adapt and apply knowledge gained in one situation to subsequent situations.