

Committee on General Education and Intercollegiate Programs
General Education Learning Goals and Outcomes
Missouri State University

(approved by Faculty Senate April 26, 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: The general education curriculum provides students with a broad educational experience that will encourage an appreciation of lifelong learning. By focusing on a variety of cognitive, interpersonal, and communicative skills, the curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed both in their chosen field of study and as informed and responsible citizens in contemporary society.

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 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. Demonstrate consistent use of important conventions particular to specific disciplines and writing tasks, including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.
3. Correctly use language that conveys meaning to readers.
4. Use writing for inquiry, learning, and thinking to find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize appropriate primary and secondary sources and integrate their own ideas with those of others.

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 that 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 logical 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. Interpret and communicate information presented in mathematical forms (e.g., equations, functions, graphs, diagrams, tables, or words).
2. Convert relevant information into various mathematical forms (e.g., equations, functions, graphs, diagrams, tables, or words).
3. Calculate numerically and symbolically 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. Use appropriate mathematical tools to explicitly describe assumptions, mathematical relationships, and conclusions.
6. Express evidence in support of an argument by employing an appropriate form of presentation (e.g., equations, functions, graphs, diagrams, tables, or words).

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 and decision-making.
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, musical, visual, 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. Life Sciences

General Goal (10): 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, organization, and evolution.
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.
5. Understanding the human species as a biological organism
6. Understand the ways the environment impacts humanity and how human actions affect the environment.

b. Physical Sciences

General Goal (11): 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
5. Understand the ways the environment impacts humanity and how human actions affect the environment.

IV. Public Affairs

a. Community Engagement

General Goal (12): 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 can exercise their 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 (13): Students will be able to recognize and consider multiple perspectives and cultures.

1. Examine and articulate perspectives and behaviors they acquire in their homes, schools, and communities.
2. Understand, critically examine, and articulate key similarities and differences between their own cultural practices and perspectives and those of other cultures, past and present.
3. Identify the importance and best practices of developing skills for working/interacting with others.

c. Ethical Leadership

General Goal (14): Students will be able to articulate their value systems, understand the ethical implications of their actions based on those values, and develop skills consistent with having a positive impact on individuals, groups, or communities.

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 facing the world.
5. Understand and evaluate the causes of societal problems and potential solutions.
6. Understand the importance of actions related to personal health, well-being, and self-awareness to the effective leadership of others.

V. Integrative and Applied Learning

General goal (15): 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.