Conversations with Program Reviewers (CPR)
SUNY General Education Implementation – Updated Guidance
February 21, 2023
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SUNY General Education Framework

- Updated guidance issued February 17, 2023
- Changes were incorporated into the original guidance (issued December 21, 2021) to create one comprehensive guidance document
  - The original will be maintained for historical record, but is superseded by the updated version
- Campus questions and suggestions led to this opportunity to clarify, expand, or introduce new language
  - Seven previously existing parts have been revised
  - Five parts are newly memorialized in the guidance document
- Draft version of the updates distributed in October 2022 and campus feedback, as well as consultation with the faculty governance leadership, resulted in the February 17th updated guidance
- The slides that follow highlight parts that have been changed
Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

Who is qualified to teach a DEISJ course?

As is the case for all courses, faculty teaching courses approved for this category must meet the applicable NYSED regulation:

- All members of the faculty shall have demonstrated by training, earned degrees, scholarship, experience, and by classroom performance or other evidence of teaching potential, their competence to offer the courses and discharge the other academic responsibilities which are assigned to them.
Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning)

Why are courses outside of natural sciences approvable for this category?

The required Knowledge and Skills Area of Natural Science (and Scientific Reasoning) is included in SUNY GE to be consistent with the Middle States general education requirement for Scientific Reasoning.

During the policy development process, overwhelming feedback from SUNY campuses indicated that many courses in the social sciences (and possibly other disciplines) include scientific reasoning in their learning outcomes.

For this reason, campuses have the latitude to approve a social science course or courses in other disciplines for this category, if the learning outcomes for the course include demonstrating scientific reasoning applied to the respective disciplinary area(s), as described in the student learning outcomes.
How are the terms “well-being” and “sustainability” defined?

The terms “well-being” and “sustainability are not centrally defined

Instead, campuses are to interpret these terms within the context of the course(s) being considered for approvability for this category.

Sustainability, for example, is meant to be interpreted broadly as in the sustainability of a culture, civilization, etc. (e.g., see the UN Sustainable Development Goals, https://sdgs.un.org/goals, which include access to education, economic vitality, etc.). Although the environment may quickly come to mind when thinking about sustainability, it is quite possible for courses across a variety of disciplines to have a focus on sustainability (e.g., an investment and finance course might be designed to explore the impact of the World Bank on sustaining economies and reducing poverty).
Hold Harmless

Focus the transition to the new SUNY GE from the perspective of the student experience

In this transition, students are to be ‘held harmless’

• Create conditions and outcomes that promote student success, provide for seamless transfer, and support timely degree completion

• Provide appropriate exceptions, substitutions, and allowances to the benefit of a student while satisfying the goals and outcomes of the SUNY GE framework

• First enrollment is the first point of matriculation, but campuses are permitted to consider non-matriculated enrollment when determining the time of first enrollment
Hold Harmless (continued)

No interruption of study beyond two academic years: campuses must grant students the opportunity to pursue the GE requirements in place at the time of first enrollment.

Interruptions in study longer than two academic years: campuses may grant students the opportunity to pursue the GE requirements in place at the time of first enrollment.

Students who were concurrently enrolled and successfully completed SUNY credit courses in the high school that were designated as meeting SUNY GE (either the sunsetting General Education Requirements or the new General Education framework): campuses shall grant SUNY GE credit for those courses regardless of the term of matriculation and/or the general education program being completed.

Transfer students: general education requirements identified as complete (fully or partially) on the General Education Transcript Addendum (GETA) shall be accepted as complete at the receiving campus; course transfer may not be denied based on modality alone.
Campus Course Review, Approval, and Reporting of SUNY GE

Will SUNY System Administration be approving SUNY GE courses?

Campuses shall be responsible for reviewing and approving SUNY GE courses to meet the new SUNY GE Framework Knowledge and Skills areas and Core Competencies.

SUNY System Administration will no longer review individual campus courses for approval; however, SUNY System Administration will provide guidance on an as-needed basis.

How will campuses report SUNY GE courses to SUNY System Administration?

Campuses will submit locally approved SUNY GE courses via the SIRIS catalog function and SUNY System Administration will maintain the System-level database of approved SUNY GE courses, both current and historic.
General Education Courses do not need to be Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) Courses

Are SUNY GE courses required to be LAS courses?

When designing undergraduate degree programs, campuses must ensure that SUNY GE requirements and NYSED Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) requirements are both met.

In many cases, SUNY GE courses may also meet the NYSED LAS definition and it may be useful for courses to serve a dual purpose as both SUNY GE and LAS, but courses are not required to be LAS in order to be approved for SUNY GE.
Approval of a Single Course in Multiple SUNY GE Categories

Can a single course be approved to meet multiple SUNY GE categories?

Campus faculty will determine whether a course satisfies student learning outcomes in multiple SUNY GE categories.

A course approved in multiple SUNY GE categories must contain sufficient content and learning activities to address the learning outcomes for each category.

Campuses shall ensure sufficient breadth in its general education program(s).

There must be an assessment plan to evaluate student attainment of all learning outcomes for each of the multiple SUNY GE categories.

Credits for a single course may only count once toward the total SUNY GE credit requirement (e.g., although one three-credit course may fulfill two categories, only three—not six—credits may be counted toward the total SUNY GE credit requirement).
Multiple Courses to Complete a Single SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area

Can a campus require a student to complete multiple courses in order to complete a single SUNY GE?

With the exception of the Communication SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills area, it is not recommended to require multiple courses to complete a single Knowledge and Skills area.

To facilitate student transfer, campuses are strongly encouraged to implement a one-to-one requirement-to-course relationship in which each SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area requires completion of a single course.
Multiple Courses to Complete a Single SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area (continued)

If a campus determines a single SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area must be met by the completion of multiple courses, campuses must understand the implications and responsibilities associated with this decision:

• The SUNY GE student learning outcomes associated with each required course must be identified on the GETA and the amount of credit provided for each learning outcome must correspond to contact/credit hour requirements (see SUNY policy: https://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc_id=168)

• Campuses shall avoid distributing a single SUNY GE student learning outcome over multiple courses

• The assessment plan for a SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area that requires completion of multiple courses must account for the assessment of learning outcomes for the category in each course required to meet the category

• For a student who transfers with partially fulfilled student learning outcomes for a SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area, the receiving campus may advise the student to complete coursework that satisfies the remaining learning outcome(s) listed on the GETA; however, the qualifying course(s) shall not extend the student’s time-to-degree or require unnecessary cost and/or duplication of effort. Where this is not feasible at the receiving campus, the sending campus shall provide cross-registration options for the student that allow for completion of the remaining learning outcome(s), which shall not extend the student’s time-to-degree or require unnecessary cost and/or duplication of effort.
Syllabi for SUNY GE Courses

Must syllabi include SUNY GE Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) verbatim?

Courses approved for SUNY GE must meet the student learning outcomes, but it is not expected that all course syllabi contain the SUNY student learning outcomes verbatim.

For example, faculty have the discretion to adjust language to be more accessible to students (i.e., to rephrase in language that students use) and/or to make the language specific to the course (e.g., “...in one of the natural sciences” could be rewritten as “...in biology” for a course in the biological sciences).

When there are language differences, campuses should maintain internal record to document alignment with SUNY GE through a ‘crosswalk’ or similar mapping mechanism.
Core Competencies (Critical Thinking and Reasoning; Information Literacy)

For the purpose of SUNY GE, Core Competencies are to be completed within the first 60 credits of the program.
• However, campuses may continue to develop core competencies in an advanced manner beyond that which is required for SUNY GE.

If a course meets a Core Competency, but not a Knowledge and Skills area, the credits for this course are not applicable to the SUNY GE credit requirement.
• However, if a course that meets a Core Competency also meets a Knowledge and Skills area, the credits for this course are applicable to the SUNY GE credit requirement due to its designation as meeting a Knowledge and Skills area.

In order for meaningful assessments of the Core Competencies to be conducted, curriculum maps should be developed that show in which courses the learning outcomes are delivered and assessed.

Student completion of Core Competencies must be documented on the GETA.
Programmatic Waivers

Campuses may seek a waiver of a SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area and/or maximum credits for a degree for a specific academic program in cases where the program’s curriculum is governed by external standards such as specialized accreditation.

The four specifically required Knowledge and Skills Areas will not be approved for waiver.

Waiver requests must be submitted through the campus Provost to the SUNY Office of the Provost (an updated waiver form will soon be posted).
Assessment of the General Education Program

The Memorandum to Presidents for the SUNY Policy on Assessment (MTP Vol. 10, No. 2, II. D) requires each campus to develop and implement a plan for the organized and systematic assessment of its general education program that meets or exceeds the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

- MSCHE requires a general education program to be available to students in all undergraduate degree programs

- Because SUNY GE has four required Knowledge and Skills areas and two Core Competencies that must be addressed in all undergraduate degree programs, it is reasonable to suggest that these comprise a de facto program of general education at the institution level that could be assessed institution-wide and thus meet the MSCHE expectations
Assessment plans are expected to indicate where in the curricula the student learning outcomes for the SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Areas and Core Competencies are addressed and assessed (typically through curriculum mapping), and how the results are used to improve teaching and learning.

Conclusions resulting from assessment of the general education program are expected to be drawn at the institutional level in order to meet Middle States expectations.

Results from any course assessments would therefore need to be aggregated in order to provide an institutional picture of assessment results and data trends.

These results should then be disaggregated to determine what improvements may be needed in specific courses.

Assessment of the general education program is expected to occur frequently enough to provide for timely interventions for the improvement of teaching and learning.

For assistance on matters of assessment, the SUNY Council on Assessment (SCOA) has available resources (see https://scoa.suny.edu/)
Program Reregistration Due to Changes from Implementing SUNY GE

For non-licensure programs, changes in general education will require reregistration only if such changes contribute to exceeding cumulative changes since the most recent registration of one-third or more of the minimum credits required for the award (e.g., 20 credits for associate degree programs, 40 credits for baccalaureate degree programs)

- Changes to category names (e.g., Foreign Language to World Languages) or course titles, curricular content updating to ensure an existing course meets the new student learning outcomes for a category, and shifting a general education course from elective to required are examples of changes that are not appliable to the one-third threshold
- Changes in general education, in and of themselves, are not likely to prompt the need to reregister non-licensure programs
- If a campus anticipates a significant number of revisions to non-licensure programs, please consult with your SUNY academic program reviewer (https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/app/find-your-campus-reviewer/), so that we can work with the campus and NYSED to determine the best way to proceed

For licensure-qualifying programs, please consult with your SUNY academic program reviewer if your campus anticipates making any changes to the curriculum so they can work with your campus and NYSED to determine the best way to proceed, including whether an exception can be granted because the changes do not impact the required content for the profession

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Seamless Transfer

All aspects of the 2013 Seamless Transfer policy (located here: https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/academic-affairs/mtp/MTP13-3SeamlessTransfer6-14-13.pdf) referring to SUNY GER (General Education Requirements) also apply to the new SUNY GE framework for A.A., A.S., and all baccalaureate programs.

There shall be no conditions that require a student to repeat successfully completed SUNY GE courses, content, or credits that would result in extended time-to-degree, unnecessary cost, and/or duplication of effort.

A.A.S. and A.O.S. programs are not designed for transfer; however, students do transfer to baccalaureate programs from A.A.S. and A.O.S. programs, much more so from A.A.S. programs and especially in certain disciplines such as nursing, business, and criminal justice.
For A.A.S. programs, campuses should develop general education courses for the Knowledge and Skills areas for which the SUNY GE learning outcomes are foundational to the course (these are often, but not exclusively, liberal arts and sciences courses). Completion of these courses is to be recorded on the GETA. If an A.A.S. student transfers, the completed SUNY GE categories and associated credits recorded on the GETA are guaranteed to transfer as described in the 2013 Seamless Transfer policy for A.A., A.S., and baccalaureate programs. Under no circumstances should a general education course be denied transfer solely because it is part of an A.A.S. program.

For A.O.S. programs, campuses are more likely to need to embed across the curriculum the SUNY GE learning outcomes for the required Knowledge and Skills areas. In these cases, a GETA is not required for A.O.S. students. Campuses shall develop an internal mechanism to verify completion of the SUNY GE for A.O.S. students. If an A.O.S. student transfers, the receiving campus is expected to review the student’s transcript to determine the transferability of SUNY GE categories and credits.
Other Questions?

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Online form available at:
https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/general-education/suny-ge/