

General Education Program (GEP) Course Review Guidelines

The following guidelines incorporate policies and precedents developed by the Undergraduate Council under the former GFR program as well as address modifications provided for under the revised General Education Program, approved by the Faculty Senate in May, 2005.

1. General Education courses should provide broad introduction to the content or method of an academic field. They should be broadly foundational, not narrow or limited to the interest of specialists. GEP courses should familiarize students with a discipline's particular way of obtaining knowledge and teach some of the most important insights of the discipline. GEP courses should be available and taught in a manner accessible for non-majors.

2. GEP Distribution courses shall meet

a) one of the Distribution Requirement area definitions:

Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Sciences, Culture (see Catalog statement); the Language requirement is completion (or proficiency) at the 201 course level;

and

b) satisfy at least one of the Functional Competencies:

Oral and Written Communication, Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning, Critical Analysis and Reasoning, Technological Competency, Information Literacy
([See Functional Competencies statement, attached](#)).

3. Courses shall not carry more than one distribution designation, except in the case of Culture courses, to assure that students experience the breadth of exposure to academic fields envisioned by the General Education Program.

4. Special consideration may be given for GEP approval to interdisciplinary courses (including those offered in the First Year Seminar program). In these cases, the topic should be broadly defined, or, if more narrow, the range of interdisciplinary perspectives must be demonstrated. For such courses the distribution requirement designation should be assigned to the academic area providing the principal grounding of the course.

5. To emphasize the general foundational nature of GEP courses and to assure their accessibility, lower level General Education courses should either have no prerequisite or no more than one prerequisite.

6. The graduation requirement of 45 upper level credits means that some students, particularly transfers, may need to complete some GEP courses at the 300 or 400 level. Such courses may be somewhat more narrow in focus than is generally the case for lower level courses. They should also have minimal prerequisites (usually no more than one). Upper level GEP courses should not be restricted to a small segment of students, nor have a highly specialized pre-professional focus, nor have any other curricular limitation that places unusual restriction on the opportunity of undergraduates to enroll (adapted from UGC, 10/29/98).

7. “Courses designated for the Culture requirement generally focus on subject matter beyond the borders of the United States, while recognizing the multi-cultural perspectives of global experience and the value of inter-cultural and comparative approaches to culture study” (see Public [Catalog] Statement). Like other GEP courses, their scope should be broad and foundational, not narrow or highly specialized.

8. Language courses (both ancient and modern) above the 201 level may carry Culture designation when they meet the objectives of the Culture requirement (see above).

9. GEP Distribution courses may also satisfy the Writing Intensive requirement course requirement, provided they have been approved by the General Education Committee as conforming to the “Guidelines for the Writing Intensive General Education Course Requirement.”

10. Special topics courses do not qualify for GEP designation, because their content may vary from semester to semester.

11. Submission of a standard syllabus with all requests for GEP designation is required. The syllabi for GEP-approved courses must state a) the Distribution area and b) Functional Competency(ies) they satisfy; and, when also approved for Writing Intensive designation, the specific requirements which they employ to fulfill the WI guidelines.

12. UMBC is committed to making General Education courses as available as possible for students; therefore, departments are urged to distribute GEP course offerings throughout the schedule, including the evening hours.

13. The GEP Committee requests of Academic Services that, whenever possible, the semester class schedule include a list of course availability for the General Education Program in each of the GEP requirement categories.

General Education Program Committee policy, approved 11/18/05 and 12/9/05