

UNK General Studies Program Course Submission Guidelines for Foundational Core and Distribution Courses

This document describes the process, guidelines and submission procedure used in evaluating courses for inclusion in the Foundational Core and Distribution categories of UNK's General Studies program.

Foundational Core includes courses in the Written Communication, Oral Communication, Math, and Democracy in Perspective categories. Distribution includes courses in the Aesthetics, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Analytical & Quantitative Thought, and Wellness categories.

Course Approval Process

Course proposals are submitted electronically (in Word format) to the Director of General Studies (general.studies@unk.edu). Course proposals are presented to the GSC at a regularly scheduled meeting. If the course meets established criteria, then the Council will vote to disseminate the proposal to campus; if not, the Council can either reject the proposal or return the proposal for revision and resubmission for consideration at the next scheduled GSC meeting. Upon approval, the Director of General Studies disseminates the proposal for campus comments for a minimum of two weeks. The Council will vote on the proposal at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Council's decision will be forwarded to the SVCASA for final approval. Course approvals will go into effect the following fall semester.

Note, the course approval process takes time. Making sure submitted proposals are complete and allowing adequate time for necessary revisions can facilitate the process.

Faculty are strongly encouraged to meet with a General Studies Council representative during the preparation of their course proposal. Faculty must meet with a General Studies Council representative prior to submitting the proposal for consideration.

The GSC will follow the Guidelines below in reviewing each GS course proposal to determine the extent to which the proposed course addresses the GS learning outcomes. A GS course must reinforce at least one of the program-level learning outcomes, and will ordinarily meet several of the GS category learning outcomes. (See Appendix B for a list of GS program-level and category outcomes.)

Submission Procedure

Course proposals consist of three parts: **Part 1:** Course Proposal Checklist; **Part 2:** Course Information; and **Part 3:** Course Syllabus. *Course proposals must be reviewed by a college representative to the GSC prior to submission.* Completed proposals must be submitted electronically (in Word format) to the General Studies Office (general.studies@unk.edu); proposals that are incomplete will be returned to the author.

Faculty should use the Course Proposal Checklist as a guide to ensure their proposal includes all requested information and that information is complete; the completed checklist – signed by GSC representative - must be submitted with Parts 2 and 3 of the proposal.

Part 1: Course Proposal Checklist

Course Information (Part 2). Proposal includes requested information and information is complete:	Y	N
A. Basic course information (course title and number, instructor, contact information)		
B. Type of GS course (new or existing)		
C. GS category identified		
D. GS Program level learning outcomes identified		
Evidence presented on how those learning outcomes will be achieved		
E. Category learning outcomes identified		
Evidence presented on how those learning outcomes will be achieved		
Course Syllabus (Part 3)	Y	N
Syllabus submitted		
Syllabus includes purpose statements (General Studies and Category)		
Syllabus identifies which Program Level and Category learning outcomes are addressed in the course		
Syllabus identifies how achievement of those learning outcomes will be demonstrated through course activities.		
Syllabus complete and includes all requested information in the specified order.		
GSC Representative reviewing proposal:		
Name (please print):		
Signature:		

Part 2: Course Information

- A. Indicate:
- Course title
 - Course number
 - Credit hours
 - Department proposing the course
 - Contact person
- B. Indicate if the proposed course is:
- A new course at UNK (note - all new courses must go through the formal Academic Affairs process); or
 - An existing UNK course that is not currently in the GS program
- C. Indicate which GS category the course is being proposed. A GS course may be in only one category.
- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Written Communication | Aesthetics |
| Oral Communication | Humanities |
| Math | Natural Sciences |
| Democracy in Perspective | Social Sciences |
| | Analytical & Quantitative Thought |
| | Wellness |
- D. Indicate which PROGRAM-LEVEL learning outcome(s) will be reinforced by this course. A minimum of one program-level outcome must be addressed by the course and these outcomes should be clearly reflected in the course syllabus as objectives for the course. (See Appendix B for list of program-level outcomes.) Explain clearly how the course meets the stated program-level learning outcomes and how achievement of those outcomes will be demonstrated. In other words, describe what specific opportunities (i.e. activities, assignments) the course offers the students to:
- 1) Acquire knowledge / skills in the GS program-level outcomes
- and**
- 2) Demonstrate achievement of the GS program-level outcomes.
- E. Indicate which CATEGORY learning outcomes will be met by this course; these outcomes should be clearly reflected in the course syllabus as objectives for the course. (See Appendix B for list of category outcomes.) Explain clearly and briefly how the course meets the category learning outcomes and how achievement of those outcomes will be demonstrated. In other words, describe what specific opportunities (i.e. activities, assignments) the course provides students to:
- 1) Acquire knowledge / skills in the GS category outcomes
- and**
- 2) Demonstrate achievement of the GS category outcomes.

In its review of proposals for GS courses, the General Studies Council will consider the following questions:

- Does the course include at least one or more of the GS program level learning outcomes as objectives for the course and is it reflected in the course syllabus?
- Does the course clearly address the approved GS learning outcomes for the given GS category (such as Aesthetics or Wellness) and list those outcomes in the syllabus as being part of the objectives for the course?
- Does the course provide students opportunities to develop the knowledge/skills necessary for successful achievement of the learning outcomes and list those opportunities in the syllabus?
- Does the course provide students opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes and identify those opportunities in the syllabus?
- Does the syllabus clearly identify how the achievement of the stated learning outcomes will be evaluated? In other words, does the syllabus incorporate the GS approved assessment instrument and rubric in the evaluation of students' demonstrating achievement of stated learning outcomes.
- Does the syllabus include all of the requested items in the specified order?

Part 3: Course Syllabus All syllabi should follow the template provided below; syllabi may include additional information but the following must be provided at a minimum.

All syllabi must include the following information ***in the order listed***:

- a) Course Title
- b) Course prefix, number, and section
- c) Instructor Name
- d) Instructor office location and office hours
- e) Instructor phone number and email address
- f) Office hours
- g) Required text / course readings (identify required textbooks, readings, viewings, or other course material; are these materials to be purchased or will they be available on Canvas?)
- h) Course Prerequisites
- i) Statement identifying that the course is a General Studies course (identify area and type of course, e.g., ECON 270 is a General Studies course within the Social Sciences distribution area)
- j) Purpose statement for General Studies (*see Appendix A*)
- k) Purpose statement for course's category (area) (*see Appendix A*)
- l) Course description (from undergraduate catalog)
- m) Course objectives (brief explanation of objectives of the course, including an overall learning objective for the course and a description of how the course fits into an academic plan (e.g., required for major or minor))
- n) Indicate which GS PROGRAM-LEVEL learning outcome(s) will be reinforced by this course. Explain clearly and briefly how the course meets the stated program-level learning outcomes and describe what specific opportunities (i.e. activities, assignments) the course provides students to:
 - 1) Acquire knowledge / skills in the GS program-level outcomes

and

 - 2) Demonstrate achievement of those GS program-level outcomes.
- o) Indicate which CATEGORY learning outcomes will be met by this course. Explain clearly and briefly how the course meets the category learning outcomes and describe what specific opportunities (i.e. activities, assignments) the course provides students to:
 - 1) Acquire knowledge / skills in the GS category outcomes

and

 - 2) Demonstrate achievement of those GS category outcomes
- p) Course outline / format (e.g., lecture laboratory, discussion, etc.)
- q) General grading criteria and weighting for all course projects and other forms of student assessment. (A complete description of each individual assignment is not necessary. However, students need to have a general understanding of the work requirements for the course (e.g. a 3 page paper every 2 weeks; a meaningful paragraph at the beginning of each class, etc.) and how these will be graded (e.g. graded on mechanics and content or graded solely on content, etc.). Students also need to be able to understand which projects carry more, or less, weight in regards to the final grade.)
- r) Grading scale for the determination of final course grades, including how many points or what percentage is required for each letter grade.
- s) Course policy / expectations on academic honesty / integrity, attendance, class participation, email communications, and conduct.
- t) UNK's Academic Dishonesty policy.

- u) University statement on disabilities and those who are pregnant.
- v) University statement on reporting student sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual assault.

Optional information that may be included:

- w) Policy on extra credit
- x) Tentative course schedule, including due dates for major assignments or dates of major examinations. (It is recognized that course dates will change from semester to semester and year to year, but if there is a major project due every 3 weeks and an examination during the middle of the semester and during finals week, these need to be indicated.)

Appendix A: Purpose Statements (GSC approved 4/2017)

Purpose of General Studies: *The UNK General Studies program helps students acquire knowledge and abilities; to understand the world; to make connections across disciplines; and to solve contemporary problems. The GS program is intentionally structured to allow students to build necessary skills in the Foundational Core classes while making the transition to college level coursework and forming critical thinking skills in the Portal class. Students then explore a broad cross-section of academic topics in the Distribution Area and finally finish their GS program in the Capstone course that is designed to help students synthesize, through interdisciplinary instruction, their knowledge, skills, and experiences across the curriculum.*

Purpose of Foundational Core Courses: *The purpose of the foundational core is to ensure students have a basic skill set in written and oral communication, mathematics, and democracy that build into the critical thinking techniques introduced in the portal courses. These skills are necessary both for continued success in the Distribution Area of the GS program as well as within each student's major.*

Purpose of Distribution Area Courses: *Building on the fundamental skills developed in the Foundational Core and the critical thinking skills of the Portals, courses within the distribution area give students a broad exposure across a variety of disciplines in Aesthetics, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Analytical & Quantitative Thought, and Wellness. True intellectual development is a powerful combination of the general and the specific - students need to explore multiple perspectives across disciplines and build a strong general foundation.*

Appendix B: General Studies Learning Outcomes (SVCASA approved 4/2011)

PROGRAM-LEVEL OUTCOMES (GS courses must meet at least one program-level outcome)

Students can:

- 1) Evaluate information appropriate to the task.
- 2) Apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning.
- 3) Communicate effectively in spoken form.
- 4) Communicate effectively in written form.
- 5) Analyze cultural issues within a global context.
- 6) Evaluate in context significant concepts relating to democracy.

I. FOUNDATIONAL CORE

Written Communication outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Discern a writer's argument or purpose.
- 2) Use appropriate sources responsibly.
- 3) Use context-appropriate conventions of written English.
- 4) Form and support a coherent position on an issue.
- 5) Write in a manner appropriate to the audience and context.

Math outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Apply mathematical logic to solve equations.
- 2) Describe problems using mathematical language.
- 3) Solve problems given in mathematical language using mathematical or statistical tools.
- 4) Interpret numerical data or graphical information using mathematical concepts and methods.
- 5) Construct logical arguments using mathematical language and concepts.
- 6) Use mathematical software effectively.

Oral Communication outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Evaluate appropriate sources.
- 2) Utilize effective verbal and non-verbal expressions.
- 3) Deliver effective speeches appropriate to the context.
- 4) Orally present a coherent position on an issue.
- 5) Assess oral argumentation as a critical consumer.

Democracy in Perspective outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Explain the roles that democratic concepts, including individual rights, play in a just democracy.
- 2) Analyze how citizens engage in democracy.
- 3) Evaluate democratic practices across different contexts (such as settings, time, socioeconomic conditions, cultures, and political boundaries).

III. DISTRIBUTION (Distribution courses must meet learning outcome #1 and a majority of the remaining outcomes in their respective category.)

Aesthetics outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Aesthetics course to their general education.
- 2) Explain the significance of a work of art within its context (i.e. cultural, historical).
- 3) Identify the structure of a work of art by describing its elements.
- 4) Interpret a work of art using concepts appropriate to its medium.
- 5) Distinguish between works of art from various time periods and cultures.

Humanities outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Humanities course to their general education.
- 2) Analyze primary sources using methodologies appropriate to disciplines in the Humanities.
- 3) Create coherent positions based on the interpretation of primary sources.
- 4) Communicate effectively using the modes of discourse appropriate to the discipline.
- 5) Evaluate primary sources in cultural, historical, literary, or philosophical contexts.

Social Sciences outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Social Science course to their general education.
- 2) Describe basic concepts and methods used in a social science discipline.
- 3) Demonstrate how basic concepts and methods from a social science discipline explain individual or group behavior.
- 4) Evaluate the connection between social science research and social or political policy.
- 5) Apply concepts and methods from a social science discipline to social science research.

Natural Sciences outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Natural Science course to their general education.
- 2) Explain how knowledge of natural science is applicable to their lives.
- 3) Apply appropriate scientific methodology within one of the natural sciences.
- 4) Evaluate the validity and limitations of scientific theories and claims.
- 5) (Required for lab courses only) Analyze scientific data acquired through laboratory experiences in one of the natural sciences.

Analytical & Quantitative Thought outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Analytical & Quantitative Thought course to their general education.
- 2) Express formal relationships using various forms of analytical reasoning.
- 3) Define problems using techniques appropriate to the discipline.
- 4) Solve problems using techniques appropriate to the discipline.
- 5) Draw appropriate inferences from data in various forms.
- 6) Evaluate analytical results for reasonableness.

Wellness outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Wellness course to their general education.
- 2) Describe components of wellness.
- 3) Recognize the potential consequences of personal choices.
- 4) Analyze the roles of society in wellness promotion.
- 5) Develop an action strategy for wellness.